

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WEST ESSEX AREA WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD ON 24 JANUARY 2007

Present:

Members

Councillor Michael Gage, Braintree District Council
Councillor Tony Sleep, Brentwood Borough Council (Chairman)
Councillor Roger Walters, Essex County Council
Councillor Chris Millington, Harlow District Council
Councillor Alan Thawley, Uttlesford District Council (Vice-Chairman)

Also present

Councillor Sarah Courage, Brentwood Borough Council

Officers

Ian Haines, Braintree District Council
Brian Lawrence, Brentwood Borough Council
John Gilbert, Epping Forest District Council
Nicola Beach, Essex County Council
Clinton Hasses, Essex County Council
Peter Kelsbie, Essex County Council
Derek Beer, Essex County Council
Ron Pridham, Uttlesford District Council

90. Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution

The Secretary to the meeting reported that apologies had been received from Councillors Stephen Metcalfe and Mary Sartin, Epping Forest District Council.

91. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2006 were approved without amendments and were signed by the Chairman.

92. Matter Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

93. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

94. Project Progress Report

The Committee received a presentation (WEWM/01/07) from Peter Kelsbie, Essex County Council, updating members on the progress of the project.

He highlighted that:

- A revised procurement approach paper had been constructed and presented to the Essex and Southend Project Board.
- The Soft market testing results, as well as the results of the first round of KAT modelling, had been presented to all the Joint Committees.
- Following the issue of pre-qualification questionnaire packs to prospective bidders for the interim contract, 12 bids were received and these would be considered by an evaluation panel.
- The timetable of the KAT modeling had been revised to synchronise with the procurement process.
- A meeting with Defra had been held at which the SMT results and emerging procurement approach had been discussed.
- The first of the risk workshops had been completed.

The overall progress had changed from Red to Amber, which reflected the ongoing development of revised project plans and procurement approach, following the Soft Market Testing Event and the successful planning and initiation of the interim LATS mitigation workstream. It was clarified that the project status would not revert to green until the revised procurement approach had been agreed by Defra and the appropriate project governance groups including the Joint Committees.

Peter Kelsbie informed the Committee that the timetable for the KAT modeling was being reconsidered, since an accelerated timetable was needed to allow sufficient time for decision making by the districts, and that two consultants had been engaged to do the KAT modeling with the Districts earlier.

Planning applications have been submitted for the sites at Rivenhall, Stanway and Courtauld Road. There were still some issues regarding covenants on the use of the Courtauld Road site which had to be resolved before the lease for that site could be concluded.

95. Overall Progress Review for 2006 and workplan for 2007

The Committee received a presentation (WEWM/002/07) outlining project achievements in 2006, including progress that had been made on:

- System design modeling;
- Partnership working and joint working between the Basildon, Brentwood and Castlepoint (Baswoodpoint) Waste Collection Authorities;
- The procurement approach and procurement status of the major and interim infrastructure;

- Site delivery;
- Funding, including the rewrite of the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the PFI application, and consideration of alternative funding proposals.

Following a review of the progress in 2006, Peter Kelsbie presented a workplan for 2007, which provided a forecast of progress and milestones on a month by month basis. He emphasized that it was an indicative plan, which would be dependent on a number of factors, including the results of the KAT modeling and the OBC.

Committee members felt that the indicative workplan was useful and Peter Kelsbie said that it could be kept as a rolling 12 month plan, which could be reviewed quarterly.

In reply to a question, Peter Kelsbie said that the Joint Committees' support would be sought for the OBC, and that the OBC reference case would be based on 2005/06 kerbside recycling rates..

Councillor Michael Gage felt that there had to be support on senior level (officer and political) at every district, and also from the County Council for the partnership. He felt that the Chairmen of the Committees had to take a stance on this, and that the 3 committees had to facilitate unity of purpose between the districts and the County Council. The Chair agreed with this and said that the results of the KAT modeling would help, since it would help to establish the best practice.

96. Feedback from meeting with Defra

Peter Kelsbie delivered an update on the meeting which had taken place with Defra.

He informed the committee that Defra had established a Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme (WIDP) of which the aim was to:

- Deliver greater focus on developing the infrastructure for meeting EU Landfill Directive targets;
- Support Local Authorities in England to manage the procurement of new infrastructure and to reduce biodegradable municipal waste consigned to landfill;
- Build on existing streams of work within the Waste Implementation Programme (WIP);
- Bring together the resources of Defra, Partnerships UK, and 4ps.

The project would be allocated a transactor, who would:

- Be the point of contact for all communication with Defra;
- Be a member of project team;
- Complement the existing skills development and procurement processes;
- Work with Authorities at any stage from project development to operational commencement;
- Communicate PFI eligibility rules;

Updating committee members on PFI Funding history, Peter Kelsbie said that 21 projects had been allocated PFI funding. In future, the availability of funding would depend on the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR07) outcome.

PFI credit criteria changed in May 2006, and were now based on Inter-Authority Partnership Working, diversion from landfill / residual waste treatment, municipal waste management strategies, and site availability and planning status.

The impact of the changes and funding criteria on the Essex partnership bid was that the revised draft OBC had to be submitted to Defra by the end April 2007 after which it would go to the WIDP Board, and then to the Project Review Group.

Partnership endorsement and an affordability statement would be needed before it went to the Project Review Group.

In reply to a question, Peter Kelsbie said that the PFI funding application would be for £ 90 million in total.

97. Collection Authority Update

Ian Haines (Braintree District Council) provided an update from the Braintree Collection Authority.

He highlighted that Braintree was semi- rural with a majority of the area consisting of parishes. There were 59 000 households of which 15000 were on weekly black sack collections whilst, 44000 were on alternate weekly collections. Customer satisfaction was higher in areas with alternate weekly collections.

The Authority had received Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) funding for communications to increase recycling by increasing participation and improving the quality of participation. The campaign included quarterly newsletters, a cinema campaign, seasonal bin stickers, and a number of other initiatives. Following the campaign it was found that the recycling rate had increased by 2.5% and that participation had increased by 9.6% to 85%, contamination had also reduced and customer satisfaction was up 8%. Overall, it was felt that the communications campaign was cost effective.

In reply to a question, Ian Haines said that Braintree had a recycling manager and three recycling officers; there was also a communications officer who was working almost exclusively on recycling.

It was agreed that the Committee Secretary would receive and distribute a copy of the presentation.

98. Update on Communications Strategy

Peter Kelsbie informed the committee that the Branding Workshop, which would aim to develop a logo and brand identity for the Essex Waste Strategy Project, would be held the following week. He also provided a brief update on communication surrounding the Courtauld Road planning application.

99. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 2.30pm on Wednesday, 7 March 2007 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford.

100. Urgent Part I Business

There was no urgent part I business.

101. Part II Business

There was no part II business.

Chairman
7 March 2007