



**MINUTES of the Meeting of the  
CHILTERN & WYCOMBE JOINT WASTE COLLECTION COMMITTEE  
held on 28 NOVEMBER 2013  
at WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor P E C Martin (Chiltern District Council) - Chairman  
" Mrs J Teesdale (Wycombe District Council) - Vice Chairman

Councillors: C Harriss (Wycombe District Council) and C J Wertheim (Chiltern District Council)

Officers: S Gordon, K Eastman (Chiltern & Wycombe Senior Waste Officer), A Goodrum (Chiltern District Council & South Bucks District Council), C Hughes (Wycombe District Council), C Marchant (Chiltern District Council & South Bucks District Council), S Markham (Chiltern District Council) Catherine Spalton (Wycombe District Council), and I Westgate (Wycombe District Council)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Tim Guile and Mark Sturgeon (Serco) – for Item 5

**25 ROLL OUT UPDATE**

In light of the attendance of external representatives at the meeting it was agreed that Item 5 - Roll Out Update - be taken as the first item of business.

The Chairman welcomed Tim Guile and Mark Sturgeon, representatives from Serco, to the meeting. Tim Guile provided an overview of the roll out of the joint waste collection service in Chiltern and Wycombe and emphasised that in light of the significant level of service change implemented, it was considered that the roll out was going well overall. Although complaints had been received, positive feedback had also been provided.

The Committee expressed significant concern regarding the high level of complaints received from residents relating to: missed waste collections; overflowing bins; reports of poor behaviour from collection crews; level of abandoned phone calls; receptacles not being put back correctly and food waste container lids being left open.

There was a particular problem with recurring complaints which had not yet been resolved. A sample of some complaints received was circulated and those concerning the collect and return service were highlighted in particular

since they impacted vulnerable residents. There were also concerns regarding the negative media coverage. Members emphasised that the problems identified needed to be resolved as a matter of urgency.

Members acknowledged the positive work being carried out overall, but emphasised the importance of resolving recurring complaints. Although the overwhelming majority of residents were receiving a good service, the recurring complaints received from a small minority of residents had a significant impact on the perception of the waste collection service generally.

The representatives from Serco noted the feedback provided and stated that they would aim to resolve the issues raised by the Committee by the end of December 2013. They pointed out that missed collections were not always due to a failure by Serco. It was noted that Serco had already utilised additional resources from other contracts to help resolve some of the difficulties experienced. A further review of the resources in place for rectifying recurring complaints would also be conducted, with a view to providing additional resources, if required.

In response to reports of poor behaviour of some waste collection staff, it was advised that overall the staff were doing a good job, however Serco would investigate all reports of poor behaviour thoroughly, and where evidence was provided appropriate action would be taken.

Regarding difficulties experienced with vehicles unable to reach properties due to access restrictions it was advised that the collection vehicles used were considered appropriate and that additional information regarding access was being collected in order to modify routes and resolve the problems experienced.

It was agreed that a further partnership meeting would be held in December 2013 and January 2014 to enable representatives from Serco to provide an update to Members of the Joint Waste Collection Committee regarding the progress made in addressing the concerns raised at the meeting.

## **RESOLVED –**

**That the update on roll out be noted.**

*Note: Tim Guile and Mark Sturgeon (Serco) left the meeting at 11:27 am.*

## **26 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

### **Minute 23: Programme Report & Risk Register**

Further to the discussion at the previous meeting, it was noted that the advice provided to residents was not to apply stickers to wheeled bins e.g. endorsing a 30 mph speed limit.

Concerns were raised regarding the length of time taken to answer phone calls and complaints received from residents who had been cut off whilst waiting on the phone. It was felt that the complexity of recurring complaints had contributed to increasing the length of time taken to resolve calls. It was noted that the additional temporary staff resource to handle high call volumes would be retained for longer.

The Committee welcomed the attendance of representatives from Serco to future meetings as a way of facilitating direct feedback from Members.

#### **Minute 24: Recycling Containers**

Further to the Committee's decision at the previous meeting to enable residents to purchase additional recycling bags from the Council, it was felt that this should be advertised on both Councils' websites.

### **27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **28 JOINT WASTE CLIENT BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered the budget monitoring report which outlined the full year budget for 2013/14, the profiled budget and actual spend to 30 September 2013.

Regular budget monitoring reports were welcomed and the importance of the timely sharing of budget monitoring information with each authority was emphasised.

It was suggested that the figures relating to national insurance, pension at current rate and pension deficit contribution be amalgamated to a single cost in future reports. It was noted that the figures relating to travel and subsistence were due to be reviewed. The authorities had yet to be billed for the contribution to the Bucks Waste Partnership, but this was due to be received before the end of the year. Bucks County Council was due to be invoiced for recycling credits payments.

The variance in the predicted income from the collection of school and Schedule 2 waste was explained as these charges were billed in arrears and there had been a delay in issuing invoices. The figures would be reviewed to check the predicted underspend in 2013/14.

A review of underspent budgets for 2013/14 relating to postage, staff parking, internal printing, stationery and photocopying would be carried out. As it was the first year of the joint waste client some variations in predicted and actual costs were anticipated.

The Committee was committed to ensuring the successful delivery of the joint waste collection service and additional resources had been provided where required. This was reflected in the variance in costs relating to agency staff.

## **RESOLVED –**

**That the budget monitoring report be noted.**

### **29 JOINT WASTE CLIENT BUDGET 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report detailing the proposed draft Joint Waste Client budget for 2014/15, direct income and expenditure sharing proposal and support cost sharing proposal.

#### **Draft 2014/15 Budget**

Members discussed the draft budget for 2014/15. The budget had been prepared that neither party would experience additional costs through creating the joint client team as future savings would be shared. It was noted that the costs relating to employees were expected to reduce over time as temporary contracts came to an end. It was felt that the customer services element of the budget should remain at the 2013/14 rate until call volumes had reduced to a stable level.

#### **Direct Income and Expenditure Proposal**

Members reviewed the proposed cost splits as detailed in the appendix. It was noted that an accurate picture of a steady cost share between both authorities would not be known until after the roll out phase and that the cost share arrangements would be reviewed again in 2015/16. An indication of the cost savings achieved by the joint waste client team was requested for a future meeting.

#### **Support Costs**

The Committee, whilst considering whether to share support costs, noted that there was a marginal difference in the estimated support costs for both authorities in 2014/15. Members felt that it was important to keep support costs under review and agreed that each authority continues to bear its own support costs.

## **RECOMMENDED –**

- 1. That the 2014/15 Joint Waste Client Budget be agreed, as detailed in the Appendix.**
- 2. That the 2014/15 Cost Sharing Proposal for direct income and expenditure be agreed, as detailed in the Appendix.**
- 3. That each authority bears its own support costs with any specific additional external costs (including internal audit reviews) to be split 50/50 between both authorities.**

## 30 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC:

### RESOLVED –

**That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

*Note: the relevant paragraph number and description is indicated under the Minute heading.*

## 31 PROGRAMME REPORT & RISK REGISTER

*Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)*

The Committee was pleased to receive an update on the joint waste collection contract and agreed to reduce the risk rating to green, pending sign off of some outstanding documentation. There was a discussion on the performance management arrangements in place with the contractor. It was noted that a contractual mechanism was in place which enabled the Councils' to follow up poor service performance with penalties, once certain thresholds had been reached. The performance management mechanism applied from 15 April 2013 but Key Operating Targets relating to waste and recycling collections specifically were suspended for a period of four weeks in each District immediately following the first collections of the newly rolled out services.

There was a discussion regarding depots and facilities. Members discussed the options for providing vehicle maintenance workshop facilities at Clay Lane. It was agreed that opportunities would be explored as a matter of urgency and that Members be kept abreast of developments.

An update was provided on communications. Although there had been some negative media coverage, overall communications had been generally well received during the roll out in Wycombe.

The County Council was due to arrange a meeting with the districts regarding the countywide inter authority agreement, however as yet no meeting had been arranged.

Concerns were raised about the number of properties that waste collection vehicles were unable to access due to restricted vehicular access. The Committee requested that options be explored to address this problem, including contacting neighbouring authorities who have specialist vehicles.

Members noted the service data and call volume statistics in particular.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the report be noted.**

**32 FUTURE MEETINGS:**

Thursday 13 February 2014, 10.30am

Thursday 10 April 2014, 10.30am

Thursday 26 June 2014, 10.30am

**The meeting ended at 12.57 pm**