

ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday, 8 September 2015 at the Princes Hall, Aldershot at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.E. Clifford (Chairman)
Cllr Sophia Choudhary (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr M.S. Choudhary
Cllr Sue Dibble
Cllr D.S. Gladstone
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr L.A. Taylor
Cllr D.M. Welch

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jeremy Preece.

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th June, 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

9. RECYCLING - IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

The Panel considered appointing a Task and Finish Group to look at improving the Borough's recycling rate.

Mr. James Duggin, Contracts Manager explained that the Veolia Environmental Services contract was due to end in March, 2017 and, as part of the procurement process, the Cabinet had appointed a working group to consider various aspects of the contract, including improving recycling performance. The Working Group had looked at various ideas for improving recycling which had included:

- free garden waste collections;
- incentives;
- increasing the range of recyclable materials;
- education;
- the introduction of smaller residual waste bins; and
- alternate weekly collection.

The Working Group had been divided in opinion about alternate weekly collections and had recommended that the Cabinet consider the issue further. In considering the matter, the Cabinet had felt that a weekly collection of residual waste should be maintained. The current level of recycling was, however, of concern and it

was agreed that the policy of reducing the size of residual waste bins over time should be continued.

The Cabinet was also keen that additional ways of improving recycling levels should be investigated. As recycling performance formed part of the remit of the Environment Panel, nominations were being sought for inclusion in a task and finish group to look at alternative approaches such as:

- learning from best practice, guidance and authorities where alternate weekly collection had been introduced;
- implementing behavioural change initiatives through education and incentive schemes; and
- collecting a wider range of materials.

The Panel **AGREED** that the Chairman (Cr. D.E. Clifford), G.B. Lyon and L.A. Taylor be appointed to the Recycling Task and Finish Group and requests for a further three Members would be sought from the remainder of the Council. Members were informed that initial meetings of the Group would take place in early October, 2015 in line with the contract pre-procurement project, with a report back to a future meeting of the Panel.

10. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Panel received a presentation from Mr. James Duggin, Contracts Manager, which outlined the costs of providing public conveniences as well as the current approach to service provision being pursued under the negotiation process for securing a new contract.

Mr. Duggin explained that there were eight public conveniences in the Borough which were currently managed under the Veolia contract. The Panel was reminded that in September, 2008 Members had agreed to set up a task and finish group to look at service improvements/efficiencies. The group had recommended that no facilities should be closed and that the Rectory Road and Cove Green facilities should be included in the capital programme for refurbishment. In addition, the group had proposed a trial of temporary public conveniences in Aldershot town centre for six months.

With regard to service costs, the Panel was informed that the estimated net revenue expenditure for 2015/16 was £205,050. A small element of this related to organisational staffing costs, £30,000 were premises related and £166,000 would be paid to Veolia to open, close and clean the facilities and to deal with minor acts of vandalism. The projected capital expenditure for 2015/16 was estimated at £44,000 which would include the replacement of sanitary fittings at Manor Park and Aldershot Park toilets and the replacement of male public conveniences at Aldershot Bus Station.

Members felt that the costs involved in maintaining the service were excessive and discussed the scope for removing public conveniences from the pre-contract

negotiations. In response Members were advised that toilet cleaning formed part of a basket of work for:

- refuse and recycling collections;
- street cleansing;
- grounds maintenance; and
- toilet cleaning.

Following market testing, it had become clear that toilet cleaning fitted well within grounds management activities and it had appeared that cost reduction was likely across the board in view of the current market conditions. Furthermore, the overall price was reflective of the whole contract and some elements were more or less profitable than others. It was explained that five of the eight public conveniences were situated in parks and potential contractors would want to manage any public conveniences in the vicinity.

Further discussion took place on the Council's capital investment in public conveniences and Members requested a breakdown of premises related costs.

The Panel was of the view that Rushmoor should consider removing the three public conveniences not located in parks from the procurement process and **AGREED** to request Mr. Duggin to seek legal advice on the matter and to respond to the Panel in due course.

11. UPDATE ON THE HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE OPENING HOURS

The Panel received an update from County Councillor M.S. Choudhary on the reasons for the County Council's decision to reduce the County's Household Waste Recycling Centre opening hours. Cr. Choudhary informed the Panel that, as of 1st April, 2015, the County Council had approved a permanent change to the opening hours of all Household Waste Recycling Centres to:

- Winter: (1st October – 28th February) – 9.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.
- Spring: (1st March – 31st March) – 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
- Summer (1st April – 30th September) – 9.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.

Cr. Choudhary explained that the reason for the decision had been to deliver cost savings from the Household Waste Recycling Centre management contract in order to contribute towards the County Council's savings targets following a decision in principle to reduce opening hours taken by the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment in November, 2014. Hampshire County Council had considered a number of other options but these had been rejected based on: the negative impact on the day-to-day running of the centres, the number of site users that would be affected and the fact that they would not deliver the level of savings required to achieve the targets set for 2015.

As a result of the changes problems had been reported by Members about long queues of traffic waiting to use the facilities, particularly at weekends. The Panel was advised that a report would be considered by the Economy, Transport and

Environment Select Committee at the County Council on 30th October, 2015 which would provide an impact assessment on the consequences of the decision.

The Panel **NOTED** the update and that Cr. Choudhary would provide a further update at a future meeting.

12. **LITTER**

The Panel received an update from Mr. James Duggin, Contracts Manager, on littering in the town centres and the approach that would be taken with regard to the issue under the competitive dialogue process for securing the new contract.

It was explained that the new contract included street cleansing and would be negotiated via a process called 'competitive dialogue'. This was a phased process which would allow for uncertainty in the scope of the work. The new contract had been divided into three 'lots' and contractors were able to bid for all or any part, meaning that specialist contractors could be included in the bidding process. The Council aimed to look at the issues around litter holistically with the contractor.

Members asked about performance management within the new contract and were assured that robust measures had been written in to the contract, with the Council able to recover the costs associated with any breach. It was suggested that bonus options should be considered and this was noted for further investigation.

The Panel **NOTED** the update.

13. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD (CHAIRMAN)
