

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices
Spennymoor

Monday,
18 February 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor G.C. Gray (Chairman) and

Councillors P. Gittins J.P., Mrs. I. Hewitson and B. Lamb

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. P. Crathorne, V. Crosby, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, J.E. Higgin, Ms. I. Jackson, B.M. Ord and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, D.M. Hancock, G.M.R. Howe, Mrs. E. Maddison, J. Robinson J.P, A. Smith, B. Stephens and A. Warburton

P&A.31/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

P&A.32/07 NEW KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE

Gordon Lennon, Technical Services Manager gave a presentation in relation to the new kerbside recycling service. Councillor A. Hodgson, Lead Member for the Environment was also present at the meeting, along with Neil Rippon Managing Director and Kevin Lee Operations Manager from Greencycle, to answer any queries. (For copy of presentation see file of minutes)

It was explained that a new kerbside recycling service, operated by Greencycle, would commence on 1st April 2008. The purpose of the presentation was to provide members with the background to the service and recycling in general.

The Committee was informed that there were good environmental, financial and legal reasons for progressing the new contract for kerbside recycling.

Environmental reasons for recycling related to greenhouse gas emissions, energy conservation and diminishing natural resources. In respect of greenhouse gas emissions the Committee was informed that 50% of emitted methane came from landfill waste. There was therefore a need to reduce waste to landfill. Recycling could also assist in energy conservation. It was noted that reprocessing one plastic bottle would save enough energy to power a 60w light bulb for 6 hours. Bearing in mind the world's diminishing natural resources, there was a need to recycle to reduce the demand on raw materials. It was explained that reprocessing one tonne of recycled glass saved 30 gallons of oil used

when manufacturing from raw materials.

Since 2003 the Government had introduced Best Value Performance targets for recycling for each local authority in the country. The targets had increased year on year with the target for 2007/08 being 20%. The target remained unchanged for 2008/09. However by 2010 the target would reach 40%. The Council was achieving the current target and with Greencycle's assistance it was hoped that the 2010 target would be achieved.

It was noted that the current kerbside collection service recycled 12.5% of household waste in 2006/07. Other recycling services collected around 4,000 tonnes of waste which was around 10%. To achieve the Government's target of 40% by 2010 there was therefore a need to minimize the amount of waste produced and maximise recycling rates.

The Government, as a disincentive for local authorities to take waste to landfill, had introduced a Landfill Tax. The rate of Landfill Tax for 2007/08 was £24 per tonne of household waste taken to landfill sites. By 2010/11 this was to increase year on year to £48 per tonne.

There were therefore sound environmental and financial reasons for continuing to recycle materials.

An Overview and Scrutiny Review Group in 2006/07 had examined recycling services. The outcome of that review was an agreement to continue a kerbside collection scheme after the contract for the existing scheme ended in March 2008. However as the current contract could not legally be extended beyond that date, joint working with the other "Kerb-It" partners, Durham City, Easington and Chester-le-Street was undertaken. Officers from those authorities developed a new contract which was submitted for tender. The returned tender documents were evaluated and reported to Cabinet when it was agreed that Greencycle be awarded the contract.

It was explained that Greencycle was a company which had been formed in 2005. The company already undertook a similar contract for Congleton District Council and were currently investing in material processing plants.

The new service provided an opportunity to maximise recycling by increasing the range of materials to be collected. The company also had a local depot at TurSDale and would create local employment. A dedicated Recycling Education Officer would be provided, for each contract area, to talk to schools and community groups on recycling. As part of the contract £2 per tonne would be donated, by the company, to local environmentally aware organisations.

Members were informed that the recyclate to be collected included mixed glass, mixed cans and metals, mixed paper and card and plastic bottles. Households would retain the existing recycling box for bottles and cans with a bag being provided to each property for paper, newspaper and plastics. Collection would remain on a fortnightly basis.

In response to a query raised regarding the cost effectiveness of the contract it was explained that the cost of collection was £54 per tonne. Taking into account recycling credits which would be received it was anticipated that the service would be provided for approximately £10 per tonne.

A query was raised in relation to participation in recycling and it was noted that more people were recycling and there had been an increase in tonnage collected.

In relation to the provision of bags, in response to questions, it was explained that, if the bags were of insufficient capacity, plastic bags could be used for collection of plastics. It was noted that if bags were lost or needed replacement that would be done free of charge.

Members queried which companies would receive the financial benefits. It was pointed out that it was at the discretion of each local authority as to where the money was distributed.

With regard to publicity it was reported that leaflets and other publicity material would be distributed from 1st March 2008 and be included in the newly provided bags. An article would also be placed in Inform and other free newspapers.

Cabinet members then left the meeting to allow the Committee to deliberate and consider its recommendations.

AGREED: That the information be received and an update be given at a future meeting of the Committee.