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## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE Town Hall, Main Road, Romford 18 June 2015 (7.30 - 9.40 pm)**

### **Present:**

Councillors Barbara Matthews (Chairman), Carol Smith, Barry Mugglestone, Patricia Rumble and Linda Van den Hende (In place of Alex Donald)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael White and Councillor Alex Donald

### **1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 30 April 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

### **2 WASTE MINIMISATION CHALLENGES**

The Sub-Committee received two presentations on Waste Minimisation. The first was from the Managing Director of East London Waste Authority (ELWA), setting out the tonnages and financial aspect of the current 25 year PFI contract with Shanks.

Officers provided the Sub-Committee with a financial forecast; this was based on the present figures and did not take account of inflation. The Sub-Committee noted the rise in tonnage and how this could equate in terms of the cost to the local authority. With a rise in housing growth the tonnage would always increase.

The Landfill Tax Element in the forecast was estimated at approximately £13 million, however this could be close to £20 million if the tonnage was to increase.

Members asked how the percentage of recycling was arrived at. Officer explained that this was derived by European law which stated 50% of all waste in the stream should be recyclable.

The Sub-Committee was shown a breakdown of cost and where they were attributed. The largest area was the tonnage, which was 64%. This was over and above any other cost. ELWA had, where possible, made savings on staffing and subsidiary sites, but were unable to make any more meaningful savings.

It was noted that even if recycling was increased this would not reduce the overall waste produced; it would just be diverted to a different stream. This would still be the subject to weight fee regardless of whether waste was residual or recycling.

Members asked if the recycling was done in this country or sent abroad. Officers explained that the larger recycling goes abroad, as there were no manufacturers in this country that could use the materials. The economy was the driver and whoever paid the most got the waste. ELWA have strict audits about where the waste is sent, the process was transparent and compliance schemes were in place.

The Sub-Committee discussed the issue of incinerators and if they could be run by ELWA. Officers explained that a lot had changed since the current contract was agreed in 2002. There were no benchmarks at the time, and a new contract would look very different from what was currently in place.

Officers explained to the Sub-Committee the cost of every tonne of waste that crosses the weighbridge was approximately £44, together with £67.60 landfill tax. For every 1 tonne of waste not collected and not sent to landfill would save £111.66. It was noted that for Havering 80,000 tonnes of waste a year was collected. The Sub-Committee agreed that alternative measureable solutions needed to be put in place. In the current contract each borough within the ELWA contract, would collect any kerbside waste, and the boroughs would pay a percentage of the overall waste. If all other boroughs were to issue containers (bins) then Havering would bear the most percentage if it continued to collect from kerbside with no restrictions.

The second presentation was on Waste Prevention. The Sub-Committee was shown the Waste Hierarchy. This showed the ideal hierarchy for waste to enter relevant streams. The hierarchy was as follows:

- Waste Prevention
- Re-use
- Recycling/ composting
- Energy Recovery
- Disposal

It was noted that 70% of all waste is from households with the other 30% coming from parks, street cleansing and highways. As well as financial impacts, there were also environmental impacts. The Sub-Committee noted that there had been a good take up on the Green Reward incentive scheme with 25,000 households signing up. Lots of information had been sent out to households.

It was noted that residual waste had reduced from 856.7kg a year in 2007/8 to 675.3kg a year in 2014/15. A recent resident survey had shown high satisfaction with waste and recycling services (85% and 83% respectively), and the new waste and recycling collection contract had started in August 2014, and was proving successful.

Over 40% of all waste nationally was food waste. In Havering, food waste was approximately 45-48%. The National Love Food, Hate Waste campaign had been supported in Havering with over 6000 people going through the cooking workshops. These included simple things like freezing

food that had been made and using at a later date. The Sub-Committee noted that large supermarkets now supported the national campaign too.

Other campaigns included Home Composting, repairing of clothes, repairing of electrical items, real nappies scheme and educating households. Advertisements of workshops had taken place in Libraries, Public Noticeboards, Living Magazine, Local Radio advertisements, e-zines and through the Green Reward scheme. Members suggested included details of the schemes in with the Council Tax Bills as these went to every household.

Officers explained that the commonalities in a high performing borough would be:

- The containment of waste; wheeled bins and no excess taken
- Alternate Weekly Collections for highest performing.
- Food Waste Collections
- Garden Waste Subscription
- Comprehensive recycling service.

The Sub-Committee felt that education and monitoring of large amounts of household waste could affect the amount of waste produced in Havering.

### **3 ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received and agreed its work programme for the coming municipal year. It was agreed that a topic group should be established to look at waste minimisation. A date for the first meeting would be agreed once members had indicated if they wished to be part of the topic group.

### **4 FUTURE AGENDAS**

The next meeting of the Sub-Committee would look at:

- Flytipping and Enforcement
- Trees and Weeds (current pruning policy)

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**Chairman**

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