

**AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND
ENVIRONMENT BOARD
WAS HELD ON 21 JULY 2008**

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber); Councillors Beavis (P), Burgess (P), Chegwyn (Chairman) (P), Edgar (P), Mrs Forder (P), Langdon (P), Murphy (P), Salter (P), Smith and Wright (P).

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillor Ms Ballard would replace Councillor Smith for this meeting.

Also In Attendance:

Roger Edwards, David Maidman and Ian Reck from Verdant

17. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of The Mayor (Councillor Kimber) and Councillor Smith.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19. DEPUTATIONS

It was reported that no deputations had been received.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from the public.

PART II

21. PRESENTATION BY VERDANT

A presentation was given to Board Members by Roger Edwards (RE) and David Maidman (DM) of Verdant. They stressed that their business was not based on a model contract but that each one was tailored to the needs of the local authority with whom they were contracted. Their business had gone through a number of changes during recent years as demand for recycling had increased. There was a growing interest in food waste collection and Verdant operated a successful subscription based Green Waste Club system for some authorities.

Verdant emphasised the importance of staff development, stating that they employed a number of trainees who had become valued staff members, the result of which was that no agency staff were employed on the Gosport

contract. This helped strengthen the partnership working ethos between the Council and Verdant.

Education was seen as the way forward to encourage recycling. There was a need to educate the general public to develop correct recycling habits and visits to schools was seen as the best way to encourage the recyclers of the future.

The representatives from Verdant had had a meeting during the afternoon with Council officers to discuss the letter from the Health and Safety Executive. Verdant were considering making operational changes to facilitate the use of smaller sacks for green waste collection.

The Chairman thanked RE and DM for their presentation.

22. GREEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager which informed the Board of further details of the contract with Verdant on the green waste service.

Members were advised that the green waste collection service observed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspectors in April was not the usual way the service operated. The vehicle normally used for green waste collection had a tail lift and tipping mechanism. However, this vehicle had been broken on the day of the inspection and another vehicle used which necessitated the increased manual handling of the green waste sacks. This would be pointed out to the HSE by Verdant.

Members discussed the letter received from the HSE which was attached to the report of the Environmental Services Manager. The use of green sacks was discussed and the Board were advised that the current sacks should only be filled to a weight of 13 kilos. Most members of the public were unaware of the correct weight and fitted as much into them as they could. As a result, the sacks were frequently too heavy. It was felt that the introduction of smaller sacks would address this problem as, even if filled to capacity, they were less likely to become too heavy.

Members raised concern that if the size was altered the price should reflect the fact that households would use a greater number of sacks to collect their green waste. It was acknowledged that Verdant's costs would also increase as a greater number of sacks would be handled to collect the same volume of waste. The cost of fuel for the vehicles had also increased since the original contract was entered into.

Members were committed to keeping the green waste collection and working with Verdant to find an affordable response to the HSE's concerns. At the present time the service was being double manned at an additional cost of around £6,000. It was suggested that this sum should be met with a 50/50 split

even though the Council were not contractually obliged to make any payment. However the offer was made to demonstrate the commitment to the partnership working with Verdant and in recognition that the intervention of the HSE was not due to any fault on the part of Verdant in operating the current contract.

Members were keen to include glass with the recycling collection. They were advised that glass collection bins could be provided that would fit into the top of the recycling bin. In answer to a Member's question, it was confirmed that the box would not cover the entire opening of the bin so that other recycling material could still be placed inside without the need to remove the box of glass. The box could also be placed alongside the bin for collection if the recycling bin was full.

Members were advised that the cost of collection would increase if glass was included, both for its collection and disposal. A different vehicle would be necessary but there would be no increase in the number of crews required. However, the tonnage of recyclable material collected would increase relative to the cost involved which would assist the Council in achieving its government targets for recycling.

The Borough Solicitor advised that she could not guarantee that there would be no legal challenge should the contract with Verdant be extended without going through a tendering process. The risk of challenge increased if the services provided differed from the original contract. The advice of Counsel could be sought once the details of any extension to the existing contract were known.

It was suggested that a feasibility study should be undertaken and Verdant invited to take part in a benchmarking exercise in order to ascertain the details of any extension to the contract. The cost of fuel would be taken into consideration during this process as well as an operational system for rolling out a glass collection service. The waste collection rounds would need to be reviewed but an increase in recycling collection would lead to a reduction in general waste collection, so the overall operation would remain the same.

The possibility of Verdant operating a Green Waste Club in Gosport was considered. However, Members felt that this type of scheme would preclude many Gosport residents who would not be able to pay by Direct Debit for a year's subscription but who could pay for bags as they were needed. Verdant confirmed that they would not be able to run both a subscribed club and a green waste collection service as they would require different vehicles and rounds and there would not be sufficient volume for both services.

In answer to a Member's question, it was confirmed that the green waste bags were split and emptied at the depot in Fareham. It was not possible at the present time to reuse the bags or use degradable bags. The HSE were keen to eliminate manual handling of bags and use wheelie bins. However, the Integra composting site could not handle green waste in bins.

A Motion was moved by two Board Members that consideration of Agenda items 5 and 6 be deferred until the financial and organisational implications of Streetscene moving from the Wilmott Lane Depot to the Town Hall had been resolved. The Chairman gave an undertaking that a debate would take place at the next meeting of the Board on the proposed move of Streetscene. Following this statement the Motion was withdrawn.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) Council officers liaise with representatives from Verdant on achieving a satisfactory response to the HSE's letter;
- 2) the sum of £3,000 be paid as a one off contribution to the additional costs incurred by Verdant in double manning the green waste service;
- 3) Officers investigate future options for the waste collection service including smaller green bags, glass recycling and an extension to the existing contract; and
- 4) a debate on the proposed move of Streetscene from the Wilmott Lane Depot to the Town Hall take place at the next meeting of the Board.

23. RECYCLING PROMOTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager which advised the Board of the activities of the Recycling Inspectors to address contamination in recycling bins.

Members expressed their appreciation of the Appendices to the report as they provided useful information on the role of the Inspectors.

Members were advised of how the worst contamination areas were identified when the lorries were emptied at the recycling plant. The Inspectors targeted these areas and checked the bins when they were put out in the early morning. Tags were placed on contaminated bins which gave contact information for the householder to seek advice on correct recycling. It was confirmed that some householders did seek advice and that contamination was reduced as a result.

Members considered whether a personal approach by Inspectors to residents living in streets where the worst contamination occurred would be a cost effective use of their time. It was acknowledged that a personal approach may produce better individual results as the Inspectors had good communication skills. However, it was likely that during working hours many residents would be out at work, resulting in wasted visits and the need to call again outside working hours. Members concluded that, in view of the fact that the Inspectors' contracts would end in November and December respectively, it was not cost effective to change the way they currently carried out their roles.

Members were advised that a revised estimate of £8,750.00 had been received for the production of stickers; an example of which was shown at Appendix D to the report of the Environmental Services Manager. It was acknowledged that

this sum was not included in the budget. The possibility of producing a small amount of stickers just to target the areas of worst contamination was considered. However, it was felt this proposal would increase the cost per sticker if only a small number were produced. Members felt that more information was required on the most practical method for distributing and attaching the stickers to the recycling bins.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the Waste Management Team continues to use the general activities protocols to promote and provide educational material relating to kerbside recycling in Gosport; with exception of stand alone contamination monitoring; and
- 2) the Recycling Inspectors continue to inspect and tag bins in the areas of known contamination.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.01pm

CHAIRMAN