

Cabinet Response to the Refuse and Recycling Scrutiny Report

Introduction

At the Cabinet meeting on 2nd April 2008 consideration was given to the report of the Refuse and Recycling Task Group. The Leader invited The Chairman of the Refuse and Recycling Task Group, Councillor C. R. Scurrall to introduce the report. Councillor Scurrall briefly explained the work which the Task Group had carried out and the approach they had taken. He particularly thanked the members and officers for the work they had undertaken.

The Cabinet then considered each of the recommendations in detail.

Response to recommendations

Please find below responses to the recommendations contained within the scrutiny report:

1. NVQ Training for Existing Workforce

NVQ Training in Waste Management from WAMITAB (Waste Management Industry Training Advisory Board) via NEW College is given to all refuse and recycling staff over a 2 year period commencing September 2008 with the following conditions:

- standards for 'performance criteria' and 'knowledge requirements' specific to this Council are built into the awards;
- the preferred primary assessment method is observation (rather than witness testimonies or personal statements); and
- that performance criteria is observed consistently over a certain time period rather than as a one-off

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

2. NVQ Training for New Employees

It is made a requirement of all new employees to either hold the NVQ in Waste Management or achieve it within an agreed timeframe.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

3. **NVQ Training for Team Leaders**

The following NVQ training is given to the three Refuse and Recycling Team Leaders:

Team Leading in Refuse and Recycling via NEW College

BITS (Business Improvement Techniques) via RDI (Resource Development International)

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

(It was understood that recommendations 1, 2 and 3 above would be referred to the Head of Human Resources and the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Recycling for discussions on how the training could best be included in the Training Plan.)

4. **Commingled Recycling Service**

Request that Street Scene and Waste Management Officers monitor the progress Worcestershire County Council is making in relation to building their own sorting plant by 2009, as this will enable a commingled recycling service to be launched (making it easier to recycle and likely to encourage more recycling) and therefore significantly improve this Council's recycling rates.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

5. **Recycling Additional Materials**

Street Scene and Waste Management Officers be requested to continue to encourage Worcestershire County Council officers to investigate recycling more materials through the Waste Management Forum.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

6. **Benchmarking**

Request that Street Scene and Waste Management Officers continue to regularly and systematically benchmark against the top 10-15 local authorities in the recycling league table which are achieving higher recycling rates, with a view to adapting any parts of their services to Bromsgrove which may prove successful in helping to increase our recycling figures.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

7. **Expanding the Recycling Service**

Street Scene and Waste Management Officers be requested to continually investigate ways in which the Council can expand the recycling service to reach the remaining 6% of the District.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

8. **Eco-School Programme**

In order to educate as many children as possible to take responsibility for the future of their own environment and encourage more recycling throughout the District, Street Scene and Waste Management officers be requested to continue to encourage all schools to join the Eco-School programme, particularly primary schools.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

9. **Incentive Schemes**

Request that Street Scene and Waste Management officers keep up to date with developments of the Defra pilot incentive scheme and when the results are known, the option of introducing such a scheme be investigated further.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

10. **Consultation**

Request the Head of Street Scene and Waste Management to make certain there is thorough consultation with local residents in relation to the green bin charging arrangements due to be put in place. Effective communication will help ensure smooth implementation of the charging system which should avoid a reduction in customer service standards.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

11. **Communication with local residents**

Increase communication with local residents wherever possible to encourage reducing, reusing and recycling. For example, ensuring local residents are aware that they can request more recycling boxes free of charge.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

12. **Collection Arrangements**

To ensure that local residents are clear about which containers should be placed on the kerbside and when, officers be requested to investigate trialling wheelie bin stickers during 2008/09 or 2009/10, similar to Lichfield District Council.

The Cabinet requested that the Task Group reconsider this proposal as it was felt that the calendars were very popular with residents as an easily accessible source of information on dates of collections and there appeared to be little evidence that a change to wheelie bin stickers would be welcomed.

13. **Member and Parish Council Training**

Similar to Daventry District Council, training/information sessions be arranged to inform Members of the following to ensure they have a sound knowledge of the Street Scene and Waste Management Services to pass on to local residents:

- the history of the service;
- where the Council is at present; and
- plans to progress the service in future.

Members of Parish Councils should also be invited to attend these sessions.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

14. **Member Updates**

Updates relating to the refuse and recycling service be included in Members' Bulletins.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

15. **Vehicle Tracking and Communication System**

The Head of Street Scene and Waste Management be requested to further investigate the effectiveness of various vehicle tracking and communication systems with a view to trialling a model in the future.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

The Cabinet also resolved that the following be considered by the Scrutiny Steering Board:

16. that the Scrutiny Steering Board be requested to ask the Task Group to undertake further work in more depth on a value for money analysis of the whole service. This work should also include the current situation of the service in relation to where it was intended to be at this stage and how any gaps identified in the service can be met.
17. that the Scrutiny Steering Board be requested to ensure that in future, Scrutiny recommendations are prioritised as being of low, medium or high priority as it will often be impossible for officers to implement all recommendations at the same time.
18. that the Scrutiny Steering Board be requested to ensure that sections are included in Scrutiny reports setting out (i) recommendations involving officer actions which are already being undertaken but which the Task Group wishes to see continued and (ii) issues which were considered by the Task Group but which did not form part of the final recommendations.
19. that the Scrutiny Steering Board be requested to ensure that account is taken of the opportunity costs of certain recommendations which may not appear to have a direct cost but may have a significant cost in terms of officer time and may therefore result in work on other issues being delayed particularly when a large number of recommendations are involved.

In addition, it was resolved that officers be requested to consider further how “key” scrutiny recommendations can be defined and then possibly included within the Improvement Planning process so that progress can be monitored in line with Council priorities.

Following consideration of the Task Group report The Leader and Cabinet expressed their thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Task Group for the thorough scrutiny exercise which had been undertaken so far which had resulted in a useful and clear report.

Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP
Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Recycling