

REPORT OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 5 December 2007)

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr G Beck

2. URGENT ITEM

Members received a briefing on the changes to the previously claimed concession from the EU which allowed refuse collection vehicles to operate under the drivers domestic hours rules, enabling them to operate without tachographs.

Recent changes to legislation had sought to clarify and tighten up the rules relating to HGV vehicle operations that required tachographs to be used. Currently both Councils had relied upon exemption for the domestic waste collection services from using tachographs, however the new regulations suggested that where commercial waste was collected the exemption did not apply. As there was still a lack of clarity as to how this would apply, no action had been taken pending the outcome of a court case challenging the exemption criteria.

A vehicle carrying any amount of non-household waste in any situation, whether or not it was also collecting house waste as well, would not be exempt. Any vehicle which collected commercial waste or recycling or did not collect from door to door would need to be fitted with a tachograph. The estimated cost for this was around £1,000 to £1,500 per vehicle depending upon the type of vehicle involved.

There would also be a training implication as drivers would need to be issued with a tachograph card at a cost of £38 per employee and would need to be trained on how it was to be used. It was anticipated that rather than send every employee on a course, 4 individuals from both authorities were trained to act as trainers for the rest of the staff. The cost of this initial training was £1,000.

It was also considered that the tachographs are monitored by the Freight Transport association at a cost of 25p a driver a day, this equated to £65 a year for each vehicle. Although it was anticipated that card readers would need to be set up and associated software at 4 of the 5 depots across the partnership at a cost of £1,000 per depot.

Rather than fit all vehicles with tachographs, the Assistant Director of Commercial Services would recommend to NFDC Cabinet that 7 NFDC vehicles which were clearly outside the scope of regulations be fitted with tachographs at a cost of £16,260 including training, software, FTA monitoring and cards. The report would also recommend that NFDC carry out a fundamental review of the waste collection service. He would also recommend to TVBC Executive that 3 vehicles be fitted with tachographs at a cost of £5,860 including training, software and cards.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September were confirmed as correct.

4. DIRECTORS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1st APRIL 2007 TO 30th SEPTEMBER 2007

Consideration was given to the Director's Report which covered the period 1st April 2007 to 30th September 2007.

(a) Financial Position

The NFDC half yearly accounts showed an overall increase in expenditure with a £114,000 over spend against the profiled budget. There was a number of service areas which had contributed to the over spend, primarily refuse collection and street scene, building works and engineering works.

Building works had had an over spend of £15,000 which had now been rectified and as of October 2007 was breaking even. Engineering works showed a £13,000 deficit due to difficulties with the HCC (Hampshire County Council) Highways Term Maintenance Contract which was now in its 6th year. The overall over spend had been reported to NFDC Cabinet who had approved the supplementary estimate to bring the accounts back in line with the budget.

TVBC operational accounts to the end of September 2007 showed an overall surplus of £108,000 against a profiled surplus budget of £247,000. The Building works section had experienced a reduction in anticipated turnover of £120,000 due to a reduction in work from Technical Services. This was impacting on the profitability of the business unit. It was anticipated that the section would be in deficit until the end of the financial year.

Following a request by members, TVBC had produced their accounts in line with NFDC's accounts. The accounts were presented in the same way although for TVBC Waste it was still difficult to make direct comparisons with NFDC as both authorities had different collection methodologies and different numbers of properties to collect from. Members discussed whether there were any areas that a direct comparison could be made and decided that if any issues arose then a common unit would be identified. NFDC would investigate the possibility of identifying green waste individually so that a direct comparison could be made.

(b) Operational Issues

Discussions had been held with the landlord at Yokesford Hill to resolve problems experienced at the site. Solutions had been agreed in the short term and proposals discussed for the long term. Any long term changes would be linked to a commitment to a longer lease.

There had been a small improvement in the accident statistics for NFDC compared to the last quarter. NFDC sickness levels were also showing signs of improvement which were hoped to outturn at a lower level than the 11.5 days per employee for 2006/07. Despite the different methods of refuse collection at each authority, neither method was resulting in a higher level of accident rate than the other.

All Grounds Maintenance plant and machinery in TVBC and NFDC had been tagged with vibration ratings and all staff had received training. Monitoring was being set up for equipment outside the scope although most machines were within tolerances. The tagging programme would now be rolled out to the rest of the business units.

The outcome of the tender for the HCC Highways Term Maintenance contract was awaited. Once this was awarded then the local agreement at NF would be discussed with the successful contractor.

The contract with Carillion for reactive maintenance for half the housing stock would expire on 30th June 2008. Approval would be sought to bring the work back in house. The contract for the total housing stock is worth £1.8m per annum.

Confirmation was awaited that Grounds Maintenance would be carrying out the HCC verge spraying contract again for next season across both authorities.

Grounds Maintenance was unsuccessful in gaining the tender for the Basingstoke Schools contract. This would affect 4 members of staff, 2 had terminated their employment and the remaining 2 would be transferred across to the successful contractor.

The future of Ringwood Depot was still unknown. A number of alternative sites had been investigated in the Verwood area. The County had now offered to extend the lease on the existing site.

Following a recent resident satisfaction survey at NFDC, 88% of residents were satisfied with the household waste collection service which was the same as in 2003. The recycling satisfaction rate had improved from 78% to 84% in 2007. The Assistant Director of Commercial Services, Colin Read, would arrange for a letter of congratulations to be sent to staff.

Work on re-launching the TVBC neighbourhood recycling centres was pressing well. New 'igloo' style bins were now in place. NFDC would be monitoring this new arrangement to see if there would be any benefits in adopting a similar system.

As the green glass sections in glass banks fill up frequently, Project Integra were considering collecting all colours of glass in one bank and sorting it out at the recycling plant.

Work was being undertaken across Hampshire Authorities to explore better shared procurement arrangements. NFDC and TVBC were actively taking part in this review.

A review of the NFDC gas and electric supply contracts had secured significant savings. £116,000 reduction had been secured on the gas supply and £23,000 so far on the electric supply with over 100 smaller sites still to be reviewed.

The HSE report relating to further analysis of heavy bin weights and possible solutions was still awaited.

The Joint Committee agreed:

1. To note the content of the report.

Chairman