

WIRRAL COUNCIL

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – 16 SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

WASTE AND RECYCLING STAFFING

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the establishment of five new posts within the Waste and Recycling Division of the Technical Services Department at Grades of Band C (£15039-£15725) x 2 posts and Band G (£22221-£25472) x 3 posts. Four of the posts are currently filled with temporary/Agency staff.

The proposals were approved by Cabinet on 22 February 2010 as part of the 2010/11 Budget Proposals in respect of Improving the Environment, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The requirement for additional staffing resource within the Waste and Environment Division has been necessary for several years. The new Environmental Streetscene Contract with Biffa Waste Services (commenced August 2006) saw a significant expansion of services, including the introduction of co-mingled recycling to around 144,000 households and the expansion of the garden waste recycling scheme from around 65,000 households to 108,000 households. A full schools recycling service and enhanced council complex recycling service has also been introduced borough wide. Additional staff have been required to further our engagement with the public to ensure understanding of, and compliance with the new and improved recycling schemes:

2.1 Participation Officers: Roles and Responsibilities

Technical Services currently employs two Participation Officers that have been in post since March 2007. The officers are employed through an environmental consultancy that specialises in providing local authorities with staff who are skilled in undertaking work specifically related to resident engagement and raising awareness of recycling. These posts were funded through external WRAP (Waste Resource Action Programme) funding until March 2009. However, the continued focus on tackling waste related problems is fundamental to the success of the recycling schemes so Technical Services has continued to employ them through the agency (utilising additional recycling credit income until March 2010). Cabinet has since approved a budget from April 2010 onwards to establish two new posts.

The main duties of these officers include responding to all customer enquiries and complaints regarding contaminated bins, including visiting locations where Biffa report bins as contaminated. The face-to-face educational contact with residents allows problems to be cleared up quickly. The officers appointed can expect to visit over 7000 locations per year to resolve problems of contaminated bins, extra waste being placed out at the side of bins and bins being left out on the public highway. They will be responsible for delivering the first and second warnings in line with the Councils Section 46 (EPA, 1990) Household Waste Enforcement Policy.

During 2007 the Participation Officers played a major part in the main recycling service rollout and more recently they have been instrumental in ensuring that the recycling service roll out to multi occupancy properties was delivered correctly. They have minimised negative risks to rollouts and continued to help the Council to increase recycling rates. Two further recycling rollouts are planned this year: to 55

Council buildings and to 600 residential “hard to reach” properties. Their role will be to guide delivery crews ensuring the success of the project and monitor the project once up and running to ensure residents are happy with the service.

The two new officers will also attend road shows and be fully trained to promote recycling related council policies as well as other sub regional promotions such as Real Nappy, home composting and Love Food Hate Waste campaigns.

2.2 Participation Officers: Corporate Fit

All of the work undertaken contributes towards the Council’s corporate strategic objective of “creating a clean safe and sustainable environment”. The work to reduce contamination is also one of the main work streams within the LAA Delivery Plan and Technical Services Business Plan: “To improve the quality and quantity of household recyclate collected”. The essential work undertaken allows the Council to maintain levels of recycling and has resulted in improvements to the service. The focus of the Waste and Environment Division in 2010/11 onwards is to reduce levels of contamination in recycling bins, therefore improving the quality of recycling delivered to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority has a contractual arrangement with the site operator to reduce contamination levels and is therefore relying on Wirral to improve the quality of material that is delivered to the MRF to minimise the real risk of falling recycling performance due to rejected loads.

2.3 Community Liaison Manager: Roles and Responsibilities

Technical Services has employed a Community Liaison Manager for over two years (historically funded through recycling credits). The employee has been employed through an Agency and was initially funded through PSA/LAA ‘pump prime’ funding to help Wirral meet the stretch target for BVPI 199 in 2008. Core duties are based upon engaging with residents on a number of environmental issues, capturing their enthusiasm and turning it into tangible results - primarily focusing on the 5% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) and managing litter picks, environmental education programmes and identifying projects to improve Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) for all.

A database of some 500 willing volunteers throughout Wirral is ready and waiting to engage in the new ‘Environmental Champions’ scheme. The ‘Technical Services Older People’s Parliament Day’, which has now become an annual event has been very well received by all involved.

The team’s contribution to the ‘Oxton: England’s 1st Tidy Business Village’ project last year was instrumental in Wirral being awarded its first ever win in the Keep Britain Tidy National Awards. Many of the projects championed have won recognition and funding from similar bodies:

- Wormeries Project: Merseyside Dragon’s Den 2009 (funding: the ongoing project is currently in the last three of the National Regeneration Awards).
- Woodchurch in Bloom: RHS Britain in Bloom 2009 (Merit).
- Community Engagement Programme: APSE Environmental Initiative 2009 (runner up).

2.5 Trade Waste Officer: Roles and Responsibilities

The Liveability Team within Waste and Recycling Division has employed a Trade Waste officer for over two years via the Regenda Agency.

The existing agency worker has signed up over 130 businesses to the ‘Tidy Business Scheme’ run by Keep Britain Tidy. The adoption of the scheme has marked a watershed in Wirral’s approach to engaging with businesses on

environmental issues. Businesses are becoming allies of the organisation in improving local environmental quality rather than contributors to the problem. Sponsorship for many different schemes has also been acquired, for example, planting cherry trees in Primary Schools (in conjunction with the Cherry Tree Centre). The new post will act as the 'friendly face' of environmental enforcement, approaching business that are not compliant with waste legislation and securing their co-operation to solve many varying issues. This approach leads to an efficient approach in dealing with trade waste issues. A simple visit can often mean that the enforcement team need not get involved as a potential lengthy legislative breach is dealt with there and then.

Future work of the post holder will include greater use of powers to ensure businesses selling fast food and other confectionery take greater responsibility for cleansing issues within their immediate location.

2.6 Community Liaison Manager/Trade Waste Officer: Corporate Fit

Many of the projects run by these two workers have led to extremely positive coverage within the local press. Their work is intrinsically linked to Wirral's vision: *'A more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential'*, and undoubtedly contributes to the achievement of Strategic Objectives 2 (To create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment), 3 (To improve health and well being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society), 4 (To raise the aspirations of young people) and 5 (To create an excellent Council). Many of their projects directly feed into the Local Environmental Quality LAA Delivery Plan.

2.7 Eco Schools Officer: Additional Role

Cabinet has approved a budget for this new post in recognition of the important role that schools play within our communities. Through the new sustainable schools framework, environmental issues are becoming inextricably linked to the National Curriculum and the whole ethos of school life. This post aims to engage with schools over waste related topics by linking in with the Carbon Agenda as a whole and providing mechanisms to help schools teach pupils the importance of recycling both at school and at home. Increasing the recycling rates at all schools is a key objective of this role, as is improving on the already popular annual school Environmental Awards Ceremony. The role will encourage stewardship of environmental issues by learners of all ages. Additional budget has also been approved to provide teaching resources and essential teacher training within Wirral schools and colleges.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Division has currently been able to maximise its efficiency by using a number of Agency Staff but it is clear that this is not a sustainable position. Approval to establish the new posts would have been sought earlier except for some legal employment issues relating to the current agency workers engaged which needed to first be resolved. Clarification has now been received from the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management which has no objection to inviting the agency workers to apply for any new posts established subject to competition from employees on the Council's redeployment list.
- 3.2 The proposals were reported to Cabinet on 22nd February 2010 as part of the 2010/11 Budget Proposals in respect of Improving the Environment, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction.
- 3.3 The Head of Human Resources and trade unions have been fully consulted on these proposals and the proposed grades for the posts have been assessed by the Corporate Job Evaluation Team.

3.4 The following posts are proposed:

- Community Liaison Manager – Band G (£22221-£25472)
- Trade Waste Officer – Band G (22221-£25472)
- Eco Schools Officer – Band G (22221-£25472)
- Participation Officer x 2 Band C (£15039-£15725)

3.5 It is proposed that the existing agency workers be invited to apply for the new posts subject to any competition from Council employees on the Redeployment List. Appointments can then be made on their merits.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 It is proposed that five posts be created and advertised using the Council's procedures.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As part of the Budget Proposals it was agreed to create a new post of Eco Schools Officer to engage with and educate children and community groups in reducing waste and increasing the volume and quality of waste recycled in schools and in childrens' homes. Budget provision of £80,000 was made to cover the cost of the post and associated resources.

5.2 Budget Provision of £100,000 was also made in order to establish the posts of Community Liaison Manager, Trade Waste Officer and Participation Officer X 2. The budgetary provision is being funded from increased recycling credits from April 2010 onwards.

5.3 The total annual saving from moving away from the use of agency workers to creating new posts on the Council's own establishment is £13,600.

5.4 The total cost of these staff including on costs is £136,343.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 There are no implications under this heading.

7.0 HEALTH IMPLICATIONS/IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 There are no implications under this heading.

8.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no implications under this heading.

9.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The creation of the new post of Eco Schools Officer will improve the engagement and education of children and community groups in reducing waste and increasing the volume and quality of waste recycled in schools and childrens homes.

10.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no implications under this heading.

11.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no implications under this heading.

12.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications under this heading.

13.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The work of these officers covers all Wards.

14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None.

15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Committee is requested to:

- (1) Approve the establishment of five posts Band C x 2 and Band G x 3 to be financed from budget sums approved by Cabinet on 22 February 2010;
 - Community Liaison Manager – Band G (£22221-£25472)
 - Trade Waste Officer – Band G (22221-£25472)
 - Eco Schools Officer – Band G (22221-£25472)
 - Participation Officer - Band C (£15039-£15725)
- (2) Endorse the proposal that existing agency workers be allowed to apply for the new posts along with employees on the Corporate Redeployment Register.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES