

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOUTH TYNE AND WEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, 17 March 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Linda Green in the Chair (Gateshead Council)

Gateshead Council Councillor John McElroy

South Tyneside Council Councillor Allan West and Councillor Jim Foreman

Sunderland Council Councillor Michael Mordey

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council Anthony Alder, Fiona Swinburne, Chris Wilson, Gary Smith,
Colin Huntington and Rosalyn Patterson

South Tyneside Council Tom Turner

Sunderland Council Mark Speed

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Harrison, Andy Whitaker and Paul Scrafton.

2 MINUTES

Minutes of the meetings held on 23 September and 9 December 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were submitted.

4 WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PROGRAMME (WIDP)

The Committee received a presentation by Jim Busby from the Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme (WIDP).

The Committee was reminded of the EU Landfill Directive, as a result of this DEFRA established the WIDP, which aimed at supporting Local Authorities to develop new infrastructure. Its 25 projects around the country currently cost around £1.5bn.

Support provided is through financial credits, special guidance and access to

transactors who work with the relevant Local Authority to procure the best deal in terms of their projects.

WIDP's action plan aims to ensure; effective communication, stable policy, support planning the process, programme affordability, monitoring progress and project direction, offering incentives for local authorities and stimulating capacity and market development.

Challenges of the WIDP were identified, such as; significant acceleration in infrastructure whilst ensuring value for money, availability of funding and the delivery of national policy through Local Authorities.

It is noted that the WIDP programme currently includes:

- 2 PFI Fully Integrated contracts
- 16 PFI Semi-Integrated contracts (excludes waste collection)
- 7 PFI Treatment only contracts

This equates to four million tonnes per annum across all PFI projects.

With most of these projects being classed as EfW (55%) and BMBT (26%), the projects are contributing to a reduction in Green-House gases (GHG) and the increase in operating capacity has helped the rise in total power output.

In terms of the positives of the STWWMP, the following points were identified;

- Delivered within cost and time parameters
- Performing in line with the contract requirements
- Contract delivery/management in line with other high performing Local Authorities
- Excellent collaborative working within the Committee
- Very hardworking team with a strong continuity of staff
- Clear contract management focus
- Partnership is committed
- There is a close working relationship with WIDP

Future aims of the partnership were suggested, for example;

- Explore more areas of collaboration
- Look at a savings agenda
- Continue to work closely with WIDP

The Chair asked for the presentation to be emailed to all members.

Councillor Foreman asked whether STWWMP was used as a case of best practice, it was confirmed that the network groups held in London and Leeds use STWWMP as a stated example of best practice project.

RESOLVED - That the information presented be noted.

CONTRACTS UPDATE

The Committee received a report on the current position regarding the Residual Waste Treatment Contract and other contracts and activities managed by the Partnership.

It was reported that the 2014/15 and 2015/16 reconciliation exercises with South Tyne and Wear Energy Recovery Ltd (STWER) have been completed. The information has been sent to finance officers.

The turbine at the EfW facility is not yet operational following issues in September 2016. It was confirmed that the turbine has been returned to Teesside last week and it is anticipated that it will become operational over the weekend.

Performance for April 2016 until January 2017 was outlined. Turbine availability was 52%, recycling performance was at 4.1%, which exceeded the 2.1% target, and landfill diversion rate remained at 100%.

Shutdowns of lines 4 and 5 have taken place, line 4 took longer than expected because of an issue with an external contractor, however waste was redirected to another EfW facility.

Negotiations are ongoing around the inclusion of Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) within recycling performance figures. It was reported that a conference call was held with Defra and the Environment Agency and Project Integra hosted a visit to the Hampshire EfW which was considered a success.

Engagement work is continuing, with St Mary's RC Primary School in Sunderland becoming involved in a number of waste related activities after identifying that it was producing more waste than was acceptable.

As reported at the last meeting, the VEC outdoor classroom is nearing completion and an opening event will be held on 11 May 2017.

It was noted that the year long Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) project has been completed and has exceeded the 3% target to increase WEEE recycling.

The Jack Crawford House Community Liaison Group meetings continue, with the last meeting being held on 16 February 2017.

Performance of the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) contracts was provided and it was noted that performance has generally improved for Gateshead and South Tyneside. The current MRF contracts are due to end at 31 March 2018 however contract extensions can apply and discussions are ongoing around potential future joint arrangements. Similarly the Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) contracts are due to end in 2017 and work is underway with all partner authorities around a joint approach thereafter.

It was questioned whether the Community Liaison Group meetings are still beneficial

as concerns were raised that such meetings are becoming more like ward surgeries. It was noted that these meetings were agreed as part of the contract with Suez, therefore it would be a decision of the Partnership if it wished to cease these meetings. It was agreed that Councillors from Sunderland would discuss the issue and feed back to Committee.

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee noted the contents of the report.

6 JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

The Committee received a report on the forthcoming review of the STWWMP Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The strategy was agreed in 2007, and included a commitment to carry out a review every five years.

The Officer Project Board will consider options to review through the establishment of a small officer working group. Regular updates will be brought back to the Committee and Committee will also be consulted on the new strategy draft.

It was suggested that it is timely to look at profit margins and opportunities to generate income, for example, construction waste collection.

RESOLVED -

- (i) That the Joint Executive Committee noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) That the Joint Executive Committee agreed to receive further updates regarding progress of the 2017 review of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, as appropriate.

7 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A presentation was given to the Committee on local, national and local authority waste-related stories that have been in the media.

It was reported that the European Parliament's Environment Committee has voted to amend the European Commission's Circular Economy Package. Thereby, increasing the recycling target from 65% to 70% by 2030, and establishing a 50% food waste reduction target. In addition, at least 5% of the 70% recycling target should be in preparation for re-use. However, the Deputy Director of Waste and Recycling at Defra stated that leaving the EU would provide an opportunity to drive up resource productivity in the UK, as much of the UK's resource policy has been driven by the need to meet EU waste targets. It was noted that a recent report by the Policy Exchange suggested that the EU's approach has significant shortcomings with unclear objectives and badly-designed targets. The UK's Environmental Audit Committee has called on Government to introduce a new Environmental Protection Act during Article 50 negotiations, in order to protect the UK's strong environmental standards.

Committee was advised that the On-Pack Recycling Labels company has

announced the introduction of a simplified system. Some of the words have changed on the 'recycle now swoosh' and will now also include helpful advice for recycling, such as 'cap on' or 'rinse'.

It was reported that there was a collision at the UPM Shotton paper mill in Flintshire in which a male pedestrian, later confirmed as a contract worker, was struck by a large bucket loader in a fibre recovery warehouse which was carrying out standard operations to move waste paper from the floor into the recycling lines. Unfortunately paramedics declared the person dead at the scene. The driver of the vehicle was arrested but later released without charge as the collision had not occurred on a public road and the case was handed to the Health and Safety Executive for sole investigation. Committee was reassured that the Partnership recognises the movement of vehicles on all sites as a fundamentally important aspect of the health and safety inspections that are carried out as part of the contract management role.

It was noted that Government is likely to reject proposals for a deposit return scheme on plastic bottles, despite claims that it would increase the collection rate. It was reported that 38.5 million plastic bottles are used every day in the UK, which makes up approximately 40% by volume of the litter found in the environment. The Green Party, Greenpeace and Coca-Cola have supported such a scheme, as well as a petition signed by 190,000 people. However, Defra is currently developing a new litter strategy for England in which 'single use' plastic bottles may feature.

The think tank 'Green Alliance' has stated that local authorities have an unfair share of the responsibility for reducing waste and increasing recycling. It stated that waste packaging and food waste over Christmas alone will have cost Councils £72m. It was confirmed that the research showed that local authorities spend £300m every year dealing with waste packaging, yet they have no control over how products are designed or packaged. Committee was advised that the research recommended; standardised council recycling collections, producer responsibility payments from packaging companies to Councils, allowing Councils to charge households that are not recycling. In addition a Freedom of Information Act request by Sky News found that less than 10% of councils in England considered their recycling scheme as compulsory for residents. It was noted that this meant that of the 200 councils that responded, only 12 said that they considered their recycling scheme as mandatory and imposed fines for those households not recycling. Committee was advised that no financial penalties have been imposed for households within the partnership area.

It was reported that Aberdeen City Council has recently announce changes to their kerbside waste and recycling collection services, including a reduction in the capacity of their general waste bins. However, collection will continue to be made on a fortnightly basis. Existing bins will be kept to replace the current recycling system and become mixed recycling bins, enabling a wider range of materials to be recycled than previously. It was acknowledged that these changes are linked to the opening of Aberdeen's new materials recovery facility, which is due to begin service in the Spring. It was highlighted to Committee that a key factor in the Aberdeen service changes is because there is also a separate fortnightly food waste kerbside collection service already in place.

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee noted the information presented.

8 DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS (TO BE AGREED)

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee agreed to the following schedule of meetings for 2017/18;

- 23 June 2017 – 1.30pm
- 22 September 2017 – 1.30pm
- 8 December 2017 – 1.30pm
- 16 March 2018 – 1.30pm