



REPORT TO THE SOUTH TYNE AND WEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

16 March 2018

REPORT OF: Tony Alder, Project Director, South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership

SUBJECT: Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2018-2022

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Joint Executive Committee of the progress of the five-year review of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) was agreed by each partner authority Cabinet in 2007. It covers the management of municipal waste for the period 2007–2027, including:

- Waste collected from households
- Recycling collections
- Waste taken to recycling banks
- Collections of bulky waste
- Street sweepings
- Collection of household clinical waste
- Commercial/trade waste collected by the local authorities
- Fly-tipped waste
- Waste accepted at household waste recycling centres

- 2.2 It does not consider most industrial, commercial, construction, or demolition wastes, which are generally managed by the private sector.

- 2.3 Whilst there is no statutory requirement on STWWMP to produce a JMWMS, the Partnership considers the publication of a strategy as 'best practice', and has committed to undertake a further review every five years. The first review was undertaken during 2012 and published in January 2013, but this is the first review since service commencement of the residual waste treatment contract in 2014.

3. 2013-17 JMWMS – PROGRESS

- 3.1 Partner authorities' waste services have changed significantly since the last JMWMS review. However, STWWMP is able to celebrate many key successes over the last five years, including:
- Service commencement of the residual waste treatment contract and redevelopment of the waste transfer infrastructure to facilitate the transportation of waste to STWWMP's newly-constructed energy-from-waste facility at Teesside.
 - The development of a community education and engagement programme, managed by Groundwork North East & Cumbria from the new, state-of-the-art, visitor and education centre at Campground, is now well-established across the partnership area. It has now engaged with over 15,000 children, young people, residents, and other community members, both within the centre itself and in local community settings. Even though the programme is linked to the RWTC requirements, activities are waste hierarchy-related and target reuse activities or encouraging residents to become responsible recyclers.
 - The establishment of the joint partnership team and further enhancement of their role to provide Waste Disposal Authority functions and day-to-day contract management roles with a range of external service providers across several waste contracts. This has also enabled back office functions to be harmonised and ensured further data robustness across the partner authorities in the reporting of waste-related data to Government.
 - Across STWWMP, joint procurement exercises are now embedded into ancillary waste contract tendering processes. Working together in this way has brought tangible financial savings to partner authorities, with subsequent joint contract management arrangements ensuring that services remain fit-for-purpose and meet the operational requirements of the partner authorities.
 - The partner authorities have enhanced mutual support arrangements to ensure service continuity during unforeseen circumstances by sharing vehicles and resources, including management and staff expertise between partner authorities.
 - Partner authorities have been able to consider an individual authority's service issues and learn from each other's experiences to develop consistent procedures and processes that meet common goals. This has also enabled other operational benefits to be undertaken, such as shared staff training and toolbox talks.
 - Close and effective working relationships have been developed at all levels with SUEZ, Groundwork North East & Cumbria, and other external recycling contractors.
- 3.2 In 2013, JMWMS objectives and priorities were underpinned by policies targeting the development, delivery, and management of all aspects of waste collection and treatment services. Each policy identified specific actions, sub-

actions, and activities to support their delivery. In many circumstances, actions and activities have now been embedded within the day-to-day functions of the partner authorities and joint partnership team. However, since the publication of the previous review, several actions, whilst well-intended, could now possibly be considered as too aspirational for the ongoing financial challenges facing waste services. For example, several actions were linked to the delivery of voluntary commitments, or identified links to legislation or recommendations from national projects and issues that had, at the time, not yet been published, and the subsequent final outcomes/implications were not as had been previously anticipated.

- 3.3 Other actions that considered potentially significant changes to the delivery of waste services, such as the introduction of separate food waste collection services, have not required further investigation at the current time due to several challenges that would be associated with its implementation. However, key service options such as this remain appropriate to future service delivery models and will remain ‘under consideration’ for further discussion as appropriate.

4. **JMWMS 2018-2022 – KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The UK waste sector is experiencing a period of uncertainty, which the five-year review of the JMWMS must take into account. For example, on a global-level, in China, the National Sword operation and inspection regime has challenged the quality of the materials imported for recycling, with much lower than anticipated contamination rates introduced, which is significantly impacting on the already volatile recycling markets. In addition, the JMWMS and future delivery of waste services must, somehow, also be considered alongside the ongoing, complex, negotiations for the UK to leave the EU and the impact that ‘Brexit’ will have on the retention of EU-led waste-related legislation or how resource management will be delivered in the UK.
- 4.2 Furthermore, the impact of austerity has brought an unprecedented financial landscape to the public sector. These financial constraints have extensively impacted on waste services and it would appear that this will continue in the years to come. However, it is also clear that the waste services provided by the partner authorities have been able to deliver significant changes over recent years to meet these challenges, and the amended service delivery models must also be considered in reviewing the JMWMS.
- 4.3 Service commencement of the residual waste treatment contract in April 2014 has been a major milestone, which has resulted in a significant achievement for STWWMP, with no RWTC waste requiring direct disposal by landfill since April 2015. Furthermore, joint working by the partner authorities has further supported additional efficiencies and savings in service delivery, which has enabled partner authorities to focus on other key operational areas.
- 4.4 Therefore this review of the JMWMS needs to ensure that high-level guidance is provided to support decisions on future service delivery issues/models, and inform short-to-medium term budget planning cycles. The refreshed strategy has been designed to:

- Be easy to understand, follow, and enable progress to be monitored.
- Consider the context of partner authority waste services within the current financial climate.
- Be clear about priorities and not commit partner authorities to deliver actions with unknown external outcomes and/or influences.
- Be proportionate and realistic about issues STWWMP are able to directly influence at a number of levels, e.g. nationally; within their own operational activities; and across other groups and services within their own council

5. JMWMS 2018-2022 - STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Due the ongoing uncertainty in the waste sector and the unknown implications of several external factors highlighted above, at the current time, it is not proposed to realign the JMWMS timeline to complement the residual waste treatment contract timeline.
- 5.2 The existing JMWMS objectives and policies are still relevant to STWWMP aims and aspirations. However, there is currently some duplication across a number of objectives and policies, so it is proposed to merge them into a new set of six simplified objectives, which are shown at Appendix A.
- 5.3 As highlighted above, it is also important to acknowledge that, in reviewing the JMWMS, the partner authorities do not speculate on the delivery of specific actions or activities where the full implications are not yet known. Therefore, to enable the partner authorities to focus on the strategic aims and aspirations of STWWMP, it is not proposed to continue to identify specific actions within the JMWMS. This will support waste services to focus on key service issues and challenges within the resources available. Furthermore, this approach does not ‘second guess’ the outcome of external actions or issues that may result in the partner authorities adopting unsuitable actions or commitments - for example, by continuing to commit to weight-based waste targets if new resource management-focussed targets could be introduced in the UK.
- 5.4 As an alternative, it is proposed that specific actions are replaced by five broad, over-arching, themes which encompass the aspirations of the refreshed objectives (see Appendix B). This will support flexibility in delivering day-to-day services and activities, yet provide opportunities to be considered, as appropriate, to further joint partnership working or new ways of working through the development of trial activities or dedicated ‘projects’ targeting priority issues.
- 5.5 To ensure that the refreshed JMWMS is as accessible as possible, a public-focussed approach has been utilised and the strategy structure will be presented as follows:
- A foreword from the Chair of the Joint Executive Committee;
 - An introduction to the waste framework/ relevant legislation and current issues within the waste sector;
 - A description of waste services delivered to residents across STWWMP and the waste contracts that are in place with external service providers;

- The successes, achievements, and the challenges associated with the delivery of the JMWMS objectives policies, and actions for the period 2013-17;
- The objectives and delivery themes for the 2018-2022 JMWMS; and
- An appendix highlighting a full analysis of 2016/17 waste data across the partner authorities.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The Joint Executive Committee is requested to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report.

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APPENDIX A

JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018-2022: OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to follow the waste hierarchy to prioritise the management of waste and provide opportunities to:

- Reduce the amount of waste that is generated;
- Reuse materials wherever possible;
- Recycle and/or compost waste responsibly, maximising participation and minimising contamination levels; and
- Recover energy from any waste that remains.

Objective 2: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to provide environmentally sustainable waste services and facilities that offer value-for-money and are accessible to all who live, work, and/or visit Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland, so that waste can be managed in a way that avoids environmental damage or danger to human health and considers the potential needs of future generations.

Objective 3: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to develop and deliver a wide-ranging community education and engagement programme across all ages, to raise awareness of waste management and encourage behavioural change through the promotion of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling information.

Objective 4: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to work with Government, other local authorities, trade associations, and industry organisations to support the development of waste strategy and policy.

Objective 5: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to identify opportunities to access external funding to investigate service changes and share the costs and benefits in the delivery of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

Objective 6: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to review the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy objectives as required, and undertake ongoing monitoring of progress in the delivery of their aims and aspirations.

APPENDIX B

JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018-2022: THEMES

Community education, engagement, and communications

To ensure more materials are moved further up the waste hierarchy to improve recycling performance and material quality, and ensure that more people have a better understanding of what happens to their waste and the services available to them.

Joint working opportunities

To continue to deliver joint procurement exercises and day-to-day management of waste treatment contracts and waste disposal authority functions; to work closely with contractors to improve services and identify further efficiencies; to investigate opportunities to further develop links with the third sector; and to consider the further development of joint operational opportunities, where appropriate.

Income generation and external funding

To maximise opportunities for partner authorities to enhance traded waste services, such as commercial waste recycling services; to continue to support economic growth and local prosperity, through the promotion of job opportunities within the waste sector; and to source additional external funding opportunities as appropriate to develop and deliver dedicated waste-related projects and/or trial new, alternative, service delivery models etc.

Environmental benefits

To enable household waste to be managed in the most sustainable methods available, including green treatment services; to reduce the number of high value, high carbon materials (such as plastics and metals) disposed within the residual waste stream; and to reduce the carbon footprint and improve the energy efficiency of the waste transport and vehicle fleet.

Lobbying activities

To ensure that, where it is appropriate to do so, the STWWMP is able to engage with Government, other local authorities, trade associations, and industry organisations, on the implications of changes to relevant waste-related legislation and/or issues affecting local authority waste services.