

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

Friday, 15 March 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Linda Green (Gateshead Council) (Chair)
Gateshead Council Councillor Angela Douglas
South Tyneside Council Councillor Mark Walsh
Sunderland Council Councillor Amy Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council Helen Conway, Colin Huntington, Marc Morley
South Tyneside Council Tom Turner
Sunderland Council Colin Curtis
South Tyne & Wear Waste Management Partnership Chris Wilson, Gary Smith,
Fiona Swinburne, Tony Alder
Suez Anna Bell
GAP Waste Peter Moody

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Deborah Waller, Councillor Jim Foreman and Andrew Whittaker

43 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 June 2018, 21 September 2018 and 7 December 2018 respectively were agreed as a correct record.

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received or declared at the meeting.

45 CHALLENGES AFFECTING RECYCLING IN THE UK - A SUEZ RECYCLING AND RECOVERY UK PERSPECTIVE

Anna Bell from Suez provided the Joint Executive Committee with a presentation on

challenges affecting recycling in the UK.

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

46 GAP GROUP

Peter Moody from GAP Waste provided the Joint Executive Committee with a presentation on the work of the company and its plans for the future.

The Joint Executive Committee were invited on a site visit to the GAP Fridge Reprocessing facility in Gateshead in the near future to see the plant in operation.

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

47 'OUR WASTE, OUR RESOURCES: A STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND'

The Joint Executive Committee received a presentation entitled 'Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England' which is the first significant waste-related statement from Government since the 2011 Waste Review and the subsequent Waste Prevention Programme for England in 2013.

The strategy forms part of the Government's flagship 25-Year Environment Plan, which also includes other publications such as the Clean Growth Strategy, the Industrial Strategy, and the Litter Strategy.

There are 8 chapters in total – some with more of an impact on local authorities than others and they are summarised as follows:-

- 1) Sustainable Production
- 2) Helping Consumers Take More Considered Action
- 3) Recovering Resources and Managing Waste
- 4) Tackling Waste Crime
- 5) Enough is Enough: Cutting Down on Food Waste
- 6) Global Britain – International Leadership
- 7) Research and Innovation
- 8) Measuring Progress – Data, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Executive Joint Committee were advised that a number of the proposals will have a major impact on the future delivery of local authority waste services, such as:

- The requirements to collect a core set of recycling materials, the seemingly mandatory separate collection of food waste, free garden waste collections
- Actions around HWRCs – which will also impact on the contractors who are delivering the service,
- New policy areas that could have a huge impact on local authorities and the waste sector – the external producer responsibility requirements and the introduction of a deposit return scheme.

The Executive Joint Committee were advised that many actions will require significant new investment through local authorities – in both the collection and disposal infrastructure – and government is committed to ensuring that local authorities are resources to meet the new net costs arising from the proposals, there is no description of how this will be achieved or the source of the funding.

The Partnership will now fully participate in relevant consultation exercises following the publication of the strategy, the first series of which were released in late February and will consider collection consistency, the introduction of a deposit return scheme and reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system.

- RESOLVED -
- i) That the information be noted
 - ii) That officers circulate the consultation comments to members of the Joint Executive Committee for information
 - iii) That further updates will be provided to the Joint Executive Committee in due course.

48 MRF MARKET ENGAGEMENT EVENT

The Joint Executive Committee were advised of the recent Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) market engagement event that was held at Gateshead International Stadium.

Gateshead and South Tyneside councils' MRF contract for dry recyclables with Palm Recycling Ltd, commenced service on 1 April 2014. A 36-month contract extension to 31 March 2021 was agreed in 2018.

Sunderland City Council's separate MRF contract commenced service with J&B Recycling on 1 April 2015. Similarly, a contract extension period to 31 March 2021 has been agreed with the contractor.

As the maximum contract extension periods for both MRF contracts have been agreed, this means that all three partner authorities will require new MRF arrangements from 1 April 2021.

However, in planning for the procurement of the next MRF contract, the ongoing uncertainty within the waste sector must be considered. This includes the impact of the Chinese recycling import restrictions; the outcome of the negotiations for the UK to leave the EU; and the implications arising from the recent publication of the resources and waste strategy, 'Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England'.

It was agreed that to further support the development of the next MRF contract specification, it was important for STWWMP to arrange a market engagement event so direct dialogue with potential service providers could be held. This enabled a number of issues to be discussed, such as:

- The viability of the current kerbside recycling collection system and consider

- potential alternative options.
- The optimum contract length for the STWWMP MRF contract commencing in April 2021.
 - The viability of constructing a dedicated STWWMP MRF or waste transfer station within the partnership area.
 - The management of risk and reward in relation to market prices and contamination levels within the next MRF contract structure

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that STWWMP approached the national Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to enquire if any independent support was available to assist with the development of the next MRF contract specification. WRAP subsequently agreed to fund free-of-charge support, and STWWMP participated in a formal procurement process, which appointed renowned environmental consultants Eunomia Research and Consulting to support STWWMP.

The STWWMP market engagement event was held on 27 February 2019 and 10 companies participated with current MRF contractors also involved.

Representatives from WRAP and Eunomia attended the event as observers and facilitated a short plenary session after the event closed to discuss initial feedback from the face-to-face discussion with service providers.

A full analysis and evaluation exercise following the event will now be undertaken and this will be delivered through a dedicated workshop with the STWWMP Officer Project Board to discuss a full options appraisal exerciser to consider a range of issues that STWWMP must address in developing the next MRF contract specification, including:

- Collection models
- The legislative context and potential impacts on local authority waste management,
- Pricing structure, and
- Current factors affecting the MRF market

This will enable a procurement 'road map' and action plan to be developed, so that STWWMP can develop an appropriate MRF contract specification that provides the best value to the partner authorities and is commercially attractive to service providers within the market.

- RESOLVED -
- i) That the information be noted
 - ii) Agree to receive further updates regarding the development of the next STWWMP MRF contract specification, as appropriate

The Joint Executive Committee received a report on the current position regarding the Residual Waste Treatment Contract and other ancillary waste joint contracts and

activities managed by the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP).

The latest contract performance (April 2018-January 2019) and service updates during recent months were reported.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that STWWMP remains committed to an ongoing programme of community education and engagement, managed by Groundwork North East and Cumbria (GNEC) at the visitor and education centre, the energy-from-waste facility, and through outreach activities held in local schools and community settings.

Between April 2018 and the end of January 2019, over 6,500 local residents, children and young people, and community group members have taken part in waste awareness events, activities, and site visits.

A separate events programme for the dedicated Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) project with local schools and community groups formally closed at the end of January. Final project results are currently being prepared.

The Campground Community Liaison Group met on Tuesday 27 November 2018. The group were informed that the site is operating well and managing contract waste as expected. It was also noted that Sunderland Councillors had undertaken a site visit to both Jack Crawford house and the EfW. A presentation on the delivery of the dedicated Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) project was also provided.

The Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) contracts continue to be monitored closely by the joint partnership team. This includes processing payments, holding regular contract meetings and performance reviews, and Health & Safety site inspections at the various contractor facilities to ensure that recycling performance is maximised.

Table A at Appendix B (attached to the main report) highlights the total amount of materials collected by each authority between April 2018 and January 2019, broken down to demonstrate the paper collected separately in the inner box and the comingled materials collected in the main section of the blue bin. The overall recycling tonnages in each partner authority continue to fluctuate, but paper tonnages collected separately in the inner caddy have fallen again compared to the same period last year.

Table B at Appendix B (attached to the main report) highlights MRF recycling and recovery rates (for comingled materials only) since Quarter 1 2017/18. Recycling performance has generally remained at similar levels in Gateshead and South Tyneside. Sunderland City Council's recycling rate has improved slightly in the latest quarter and they continue to identify actions to help increase their recycling rates and reduce contamination (shown as recovery in the table) rates.

The Joint Executive Committee were also advised that a recycling trial commenced in February on a single collection round in both Gateshead and South Tyneside. This enables around 2,400 households to recycle paper and cardboard materials

together in a separate, additional, wheeled bin. Initial monitoring and sampling of the trial data suggests that residents are actively taking part and the quality of the paper and card picked up on the first collection day was extremely positive. Although the trial is taking place in Gateshead and South Tyneside, the results will benefit all three partner authorities and will be used when evaluating future service delivery models.

Appendix C (attached to the main report) highlights the latest HWRC recycling performance (April – December 2018).

Recycling performance at the sites remains at a similar level to the previous year. However, recycling performance at Cowen Road (Gateshead) and Beach Street (Sunderland) is currently slightly below the annual target, although this may change once the statistics for the full year are received. The performance at Beach Street could still be affected by the introduction of fortnightly collections in 2017.

All HWRC contractors continue to explore whether additional materials disposed at sites can be recycled and further improve recycling performance.

The partner authority HWRC contracts SUEZ and Remondis are set to expire at the end of March 2020. The joint partnership team has begun discussions with partner authorities to consider contract requirements facilitate next joint procurement process which will be delivered later in 2019.

The current contract periods are scheduled to end in March 2019. However, it has been agreed that the contracts for all three partner authorities will be extended for a period of 12 months from 1 April 2019.

Contract management meetings continue to be held with service providers at the various facilities, which also include Health & Safety site inspections. The garden waste kerbside collection service will resume in April 2019 in all three partner authorities.

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

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A presentation was given to the Joint Executive Committee on International, National and Local Authority waste-related stories that have been in the media.

International Waste News

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that the US National Waste and Recycling Association has written to Donald Trump urging him to raise China's ban on imported recyclables during trade talks with the Chinese government.

The NWRA president said that they believe that there are better ways for the Chinese to achieve their goal of improving their environment than to place what he described as 'unrealistic restrictions' on recycling imports.

The letter also states that, for decades, the US has exported one-third of its recyclables to China in a 'mutually beneficial relationship'.

National Waste News

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy and Transport (ADEPT) has called for a fundamental review of how waste services are managed, saying that it supports the drive to make producers pay.

Launching their policy position on the resources and waste strategy, the association has outlined its support for an extended responsibility scheme. The president of the ADEPT noted that:

- Local authorities have to make tough decisions about where the budget is spent,
- But that in order to provide the waste and recycling services that people expect the current systems need to change,
- And responsibility for managing packaging waste must lie with the producer – which will not only reduce the burden on local authorities but will also provide incentives for long term investment and give markets greater certainty

ADEPT also wants to see greater investment in the UK's own waste processing capacity – particularly given the current uncertainty across the market globally.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that in response to the publication of the strategy and consultation on a deposit return scheme, the Association of Convenience Stores has said that a manual scheme 'won't work' in convenience stores.

The consultation exercise proposes a network of reverse vending machines and manual return points, which would be hosted by retailers. The ACS has previously argued that manual returns would cause a number of issues for small retailers and are not a practical solution.

The Joint Executive Committee were also advised that following a hugely successful trial in 2018, Highland Spring has now launched a nationwide retailer roll-out of a 100% recycled and recyclable plastic eco bottle.

During the trial, shoppers expressed a desire for more eco bottles, and following the national launch, Highland Spring said that more 100% recycled and recyclable bottles will follow later in the year, including a kids Eco Bottle which has been designed to help young people understand more about healthy hydration and responsible recycling.

The results of the trial showed that shoppers responded well to the new eco bottle, with no negative reaction to the appearance of the recycled plastic material, and environmental awareness emerged as one of the key factors in people choosing to purchase the bottle.

The Joint Executive Committee were reminded that Walkers recently launched the UK's first nationwide crisp packet recycling scheme and in January 2019, Marks and Spencer went one step further with the news that they are launching a new plastics initiative to enable customers to bring back non-recyclable plastic packaging.

Unlike the Walkers scheme, which only targets crisp packets, this scheme includes a range of plastic packaging in addition to crisp packets, including black plastic food trays and sauce sachets. M&S has pledged to give the plastic collected a 'new life' by recycling it into store fittings, furniture and playground equipment for schools.

The scheme was initially launched in eight M&S stores in the South of England, but the scheme will be rolled out to stores nationally by the end of this year.

M&S has said that as a business, the company is committed to reducing the amount of plastic we use and have already started phasing-out non-recyclable packaging from their products.

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

51 PROGRAMME OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2019-2020

The Joint Executive Committee received the Programme of Future Meetings for 2019-2020.

RESOLVED - that the information be noted

52 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that this would be Tony Alder's last meeting, as he is retiring from the Council and the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Joint Committee with effect from the end of March 2019.

The Joint Executive Committee wished to place upon record their thanks to Tony for his work and wished him every success in the future.

53 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Friday 14 June 2019 at 1.30 pm in the Whickham Room, Civic Centre.