

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

Friday, 24 June 2016

PRESENT: Councillor M Mordey in the Chair (Vice Chair Sunderland Council)

Gateshead Council Councillor J McElroy and Councillor C Donovan

South Tyneside Council Councillor A West and Councillor J Foreman

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council Tony Alder, Gary Smith, Chris Wilson, Colin Huntington and Rosalyn Patterson

Sunderland Council Mark Speed and Colin Curtis

South Tyneside Council Paul Scrafton

SUEZ Anna Bell

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED - That Joint Executive Committee agreed that the Chair for 2016/17 would be Councillor Linda Green.

2 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRS

RESOLVED - The Joint Executive Committee agreed that the Vice Chairs for 2016/17 would be Councillor Mordey and Councillor and Councillor West.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L Green, Councillor G Miller, Fiona Swinburne, Martin Harrison and Andy Whitaker.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were submitted.

6 ANNA BELL, REGIONAL MANAGER, SUEZ

The Committee received a presentation from Anna Bell, Regional Manager, Suez, following a request at the previous meeting.

It was reported that SUEZ recycling and recovery UK is a recycling and resource management company which serves over 12 million people. SUEZ handles more than nine million tonnes of domestic, commercial and industrial waste through recycling, composting, energy-from-waste and landfill facilities. The organisation employs over 5,000 employees and has an annual turnover in excess of £740M.

The purpose of SUEZ is to protect the environment by putting waste to good use. It was reported that there are currently 68 public sector contracts and 40,000 business customers.

In terms of South Tyne and Wear it was noted that SUEZ has a long history of local authority partnership with well established working relationships with all three authorities. SUEZ has a strong operational base in the region.

In relation to the current contract it was noted that the Residual Waste Treatment Contract is a 25 year PFI contract which commenced in April 2014. It was acknowledged that there are challenging performance targets, in 2015/16 there was a 99.8% landfill diversion rate. In addition, SUEZ is involved in partnership working to achieve extra benefits, such as education and targeted recruitment and training. At the Household Waste Recycling Centres, recycling rates are in excess of 60% and landfill diversion rates are 100%.

It was questioned whether there have been any changes to the relationship between the partnership and SUEZ following a change of dynamics to the partnership. It was confirmed that the partnership is well established and SUEZ is steady in terms of the officers who work there, this has enabled good working relationships to be established as well as good continuity.

It was suggested that further information should be brought back to the next meeting around the effect on the industry of leaving the EU. It was agreed that this would be picked up through the communications update at the next meeting.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

7 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 Partnership is currently awaiting an updated response from

South Tyne and Wear Energy Recovery Ltd on the proposed 2014/15 reconciliation payment.

It was also reported that there has been three reported incidents recently; a hand grenade was found at Middlefields Waste Transfer Station, this was removed and destroyed off-site under a controlled explosion. There was also a small fire at Middlefields WTS, this was dealt with by staff and the fire service, no vehicles needed to be diverted. A small fire broke out at Jack Crawford House WTS in the back of a third party's bulk haulage vehicle, this caused minor damage to the vehicle but no damage to the WTS and no injuries occurred. As a result of these incidents SUEZ is reviewing their fire risk assessments and Fire Prevention Plan.

It was noted that job opportunities advertised within the partnership area have now been extended to include posts arising at other SUEZ facilities within the area. There are also plans to extend these opportunities further, by not restricting vacancies to the waste sector only, i.e. water treatment operations.

Stakeholder and engagement events are continuing to be held at the Visitor and Education Centre. Also the Community Liaison Groups are continuing to meet.

In terms of the Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC), the contracts are all due to expire on 31 March 2017, therefore work is ongoing to compare contracts. A Local Social Enterprise charity is collecting bicycles for recycling/reuse from Campground. They are refurbished and then sold in the local community to raise funds to meet running costs.

In relation to performance it was reported that there was 94% overall availability at the Energy from Waste site, 98.7% average turbine availability and 96.7% recovery performance, which is 1% over target. Unprocessed landfill diversion performance is 100%. In terms of health and safety there were 172 'near misses'. It was reported that the total tonnage of comingled and paper collected at kerbside increased in each authority area during 2015/16 however the paper tonnage by itself did decrease.

It was questioned as to the causes of the fire at the WTS. It was confirmed that at the Sunderland site CCTV showed that this was due to an ignition of some sort, possible an electronic cigarette, in the back of the vehicle. The second incident was due to an ignition caused by being scraped across the floor. It was acknowledged that the incidents were dealt with well and in other facilities there are a lot of fires, for example there has been 15 fires at the Manchester facility. It was confirmed that the insurance premium has been reduced because there is less risk of fire, whereas a lot of other parts of the industry are seeing increased premiums.

It was queried whether there are enough recycling centres across the partnership area, as there has been an increase in fly tipping and queues at some sites therefore should more centres be made available to encourage people to be more responsible for their waste. It was suggested that if centres were too busy this could lead residents to stop using them and lead to increased fly tipping. It was noted that they are not cheap to run, however it was felt Gateshead was well served with two recycling centres, similarly South Tyneside have a centrally located recycling depot.

It was acknowledged that creating another site would be difficult due to cost and location, however if Sunderland wanted to open another centre this would be managed through the partnership. It was noted that work is ongoing to investigate patterns of use for recycling centre and why there are increases at particular times, also more is to be done around communicating how to recycle and when to avoid peak times.

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee noted the progress of the project.

8 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 Suez has completed the works to tackle odour emissions at the Path Head landfill site in Gateshead. This was following enforcement notices issued by the Environment Agency after heavy rainfall led to an accumulation of surface water at the site. Residents complained of odours causing sore throats, nausea, headaches and dizziness. Suez imported 30,000 tonnes of soil to seal the area and installed 12 additional gas wells.

In Newcastle there are ongoing problems with waste collection services. Newcastle City Council is aiming to save 12% from its refuse and street cleansing budget by introducing more efficient working arrangements. It was reported however that this has resulted in disrupted collection services as staff are working-to-rule and doing no more than the minimum contractual requirements. This has led to an estimated cost over £41,000 for additional collections and staff overtime to clear the backlog.

Nationally it was reported that Air Products has announced it has scrapped the second phase of the construction of a gasification plant on Teesside due to technical problems and rising costs. The company will exit the energy from waste market and sell the partially completed plant, this will result in an expected write-off of approximately £770M.

A report by the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) has been published which states that by 2020 the combined spending by local government in the UK will be lower than at any time since 1948. It is also predicted that 'liveability' services, such as parks, refuse and recycling, highways and street lighting, are at risk of being abandoned to long term decline. The report also states that there is a risk of more inequality opening up according to how strongly an authority can grow its business rate income.

It was also reported that WRAP has carried out research that says that 1.9M tonnes of food is wasted in the UK grocery supply chain every year. However 0.7M tonnes that could have been wasted is being distributed to people in need or is used as animal feed. WRAP research found that if businesses took more action to prevent avoidable food waste they would save £300M per year. However, the food manufacturing and retail sectors are reporting less than 5% food produced as being waste or surplus, which is the lowest it has ever been.

Committee was advised that Hull City Council is spending £100,000 on expert advice to tackle recycling contamination through a public awareness campaign. In Hull 20% of the 24,000 tonnes of recycling collection are things that should not be there, which costs the Council £50,000 per month in penalty clauses. Also, Councils in the East of Lancashire are looking to implement four weekly collections due to budget cuts.

The Committee was informed on a number of health and safety incidents within the sector following a number of recent deaths. It was reported that the waste sector's fatal injury rate is ten times greater than across all industries and three times higher than the construction sector, with 33 deaths in the last five years. The Committee watched a short video of some incidents captured on CCTV showing the potential dangers faced by council collection crews.

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

9 ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITY - INCINERATOR BOTTOM ASH

The Committee received an update report on the latest position with regard to the reprocessing of materials produced as Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) at the EfW facility.

The background of the situation was provided, it was noted that IBA is a by product which is classed as material recovery and not material recycling. However, some countries within the EU include IBA in calculating recycling performance.

The Joint Committee wrote to Defra in January 2016 regarding IBA classification. A response has been received from Rory Stewart acknowledging the issues raised and agreed to keep under consideration the way in which recycling rates are estimated. The response also stated that any proposals to change the position of IBA would be through engagement with local authorities and the industry as a whole.

RESOLVED -

- (i) The Joint Executive Committee noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) The Joint Executive Committee agreed to receive further updates regarding the reclassification of IBA, as appropriate.

10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday 23rd September 2016 at 1.30pm.