

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

Friday, 11 September 2020

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

Gateshead Council Councillor Angela Douglas

South Tyneside Council Councillor Mark Walsh and Councillor Jim Forman

Sunderland Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council

South Tyneside Council

Sunderland Council

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Michael Mordey

93 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2020 were agreed as a true record.

94 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

95 CONTRACTS UPDATE

The Committee received a report on the latest position regarding the Residual Waste Treatment Contract and other ancillary waste joint contracts and activities managed by South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP).

The partnership team continues to undertake several waste management functions on behalf of the partner authorities, including reviewing and verifying monthly contract reports, which detail materials processed and service issues. Once approved, invoices are processed and, where appropriate, apportioned between partner authorities within contractual timescales.

This is enabling, amongst other things, a proactive and timely approach to

management of the RWTC which is operated under strict timescales. Similar benefits are also afforded to the procurement and management of other ancillary contracts, such as MRF, HWRC and green waste composting.

The JEC were advised that during the national lockdown to contain the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, residual waste levels rose significantly as the majority of residents across the partnership area remained at home due to restrictions on movement and the introduction of home working etc.

In comparison to the weeks immediately prior to the lockdown, additional Gateshead residual waste tonnages subsequently peaked at +15%, South Tyneside at +31%, and in Sunderland, the peak collection week showed a 27% rise.

However, all partner authorities have been able to continue to collect residual waste from households across the partnership area without interruption, the three waste transfer stations have continued to manage the waste levels that were received, and the EfW facility has continued to operate as planned and process the waste for energy recovery.

The JEC were advised that Appendix A which was attached to the main report highlighted the 2020/21 contract performance for the period April – July 2020. Plant availability has remained strong at 98.49% and turbine availability 97.51%.

Both contractual recycling and recovery performance continues for the period above target and the unprocessed landfill diversion rate remains at 100%.

The JEC were advised that the exercise to replace the Debt Service Reserve Account (DSRA) with a contingent Debt Service Reserve Facility (DSRF) is still progressing.

The third Joint Insurance Cost Review (JICR) was previously submitted by Willis Towers Watson and reviewed by STWWMP. A response from STWER is currently still awaited.

The JEC were informed that all three of the Waste Transfer Stations were fully operational between April and July. Recycling outputs from the sites include segregated street sweepings, wood and scrap metal. Routine maintenance of buildings, plant and control systems was undertaken as scheduled at all three transfer stations during the year.

The JEC were informed at the current time there were no targeted recruitment and training updates and all planned and proposed community education and engagement activities, and community liaison groups have been cancelled as a result of the on going COVID-19 pandemic. However, the suspension of activities is enabling a review of the programme to be undertaken, and a further update will be provided to the JEC in due course.

Table A which was appended to the main report advised the JEC on the latest 2020/21 performance for blue bin recycling (April -July 2020). As previously reported to the JEC, all partner authorities have maintained the statutory blue bin recycling

collection service to households throughout the COVID-19 pandemic without interruption to the service.

However, as with residual waste levels, the impact of the national lockdown resulted in significant increases in recyclable materials presented by households across the partnership area. All partner authorities' comingled recycling increased by over 30% when compared to April – July 2019, yet the continuing decline in paper-based materials was further accelerated during the lockdown, which resulted in significant reductions in separately presented paper materials when compared to the same period last year.

The JEC were advised that the MRF contracts continue to be monitored closely by the joint partnership team. As highlighted above, recycling tonnages of comingled materials remain at above average levels, therefore, regular contract meetings/calls are being held with contractors to discuss any mitigation measures that may need to be taken to ensure that the storage of materials at the MRF's does not become an issue and that the sites are still able to process the additional tonnage that is being received. The contractors' updated business continuity plans have also been requested.

Appendix B which was attached to the main report also contains Table B, which highlighted MRF recycling and recovery rates (for comingled materials only) since Quarter 1 2019/20. Recycling performance has generally remained at similar levels on each partner authority.

The JEC were advised that Sunderland City Council continue to identify actions to help increase their recycling rates and reduce contamination rates, including direct engagement with the public. The rate shows a significant drop in the recovery rate to an estimated 17.05%. However, it should be noted that the method for calculating this data is now based on inputs into the MRF rather than outputs.

The recycling trial that commenced in February 2019 on a single collection round in both Gateshead and South Tyneside is enabling around 2,400 households to recycle paper and cardboard materials together in a separate additional, wheeled bin. Table C attached at Appendix B to the main report provided details to the JEC of the tonnage of paper and cardboard (mixed fibre) that has been collected since the start of the trial.

Although the trial is taking place in Gateshead and South Tyneside, the trial feedback and results will benefit all three partner authorities in the longer term and will be used when evaluating future service delivery models.

The partner authority MRF contracts with Palm and J&B are set to expire at the end of the March 2021. The partner authorities continue to evaluate the most feasible service delivery options for this contract post March 2021 and further detail will be provided at the next meeting.

The JEC were advised that Table at Appendix C highlights the latest HWRC recycling performance for 2020/21 (April – July 2020). The new way of calculating HWRC recycling performances now excludes not only inert materials (such as

rubble), but also electrical waste (WEEE), low grade wood, and dry mixed recyclables/textiles etc. This means that the performance of a site appears to be lower than that of previous years. The results highlight the performance of the first recycling incentivised HWRC contract delivered in South Tyneside but the results for Sunderland are provided for comparison only as the contract is, technically calculated differently.

However, the results shown are still subject to change due to new national guidelines regarding the recycling of all wood materials collected at HWRCs. Furthermore, it should be noted that due to the limited number of materials being accepted at the sites due to the COVID-19 restrictions, this has also impacted on recycling performance.

The JEC was previously advised that following government guidance on essential travel requirements during the COVID-19 national lockdown, all partner authority HWRC's closed temporarily and ceased to operate at the end of March.

Subsequent guidance on local authority prioritisation of waste collection services was issued by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on 7 April, which was followed by further guidance on 17 April regarding the re-opening of HWRC's for the disposal of waste. This was aimed at providing extra support to households where the build up of waste produced during the lockdown restrictions posed 'a risk of injury, health or harm' and strict COVID-19 legislation and protocols would need to be maintained on site.

Consequently, HWRC's across the partnership reopened on early May with an alternative service delivery model in place. This included restrictions to the number of vehicles accepted on sites, reductions to the material streams that could be disposed, and the implementation of strict social distancing measures with zones in place to ensure that residents did not interact with other residents.

The partner authorities subsequently extended the range of wastes that could be disposed at HWRC's to include waste electrical and electronic equipment from 19 May. Vehicle access was still restricted to cars only.

At the start of June, some restrictions on vehicle access to sites were lifted and small car-derived vans, family pick-up trucks, and 4x4 type vehicles with rear panels were allowed to access the HWRC's using the established vehicle permit scheme.

However, the JEC were advised that in order to continue traffic management and restrict the volume of vehicles accessing HWRC's at any one time, both Gateshead and South Tyneside continue to operate the 'odd and even' car number plate system and in Sunderland, the advance booking system. Larger vans, commercial vehicles, or vehicles with trailers are still currently omitted from the accepted vehicles list.

The JEC were also advised that because of the restrictions introduced due to the pandemic and requirement to maintain statutory waste collection services, each partner authority suspended the garden waste kerbside collection service prior to the commencement of the 2020 season in April. Collections recommenced for service subscribers in May.

Contract management meetings and discussions continue to be held with service providers and no significant issues have been identified.

The JEC were advised that the team delivering the DTS WEEE Reduce and Reuse Project returned from furlough on a part-time basis in August, with plans to return to full-time activities from September. Due to the implications of the pandemic, methods of engagement are being reviewed to consider new methods to collect material for servicing and redistribution to vulnerable residents.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the kerbside WEEE Material Change project, considering a potential start date of September 2020, once the funding has been received. The project will also link into the work of the DTS Reduce and Reuse Project.

In conclusion the JEC were advised that in response to an audit undertaken by the Lead Partner Internal Audit Service in 2019, it was agreed that overall partner authority recycling performance should be reported to the JEC in September each year, once Waste Data Flow returns have been validated.

All local authority overall recycling performance is generated by the national Waste Data Flow database, using the definition of the former national performance indicator NI192 to calculate the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting.

The NI192 results have risen in each partner authority, with the 2019/20 results showing:

Gateshead	32.0%
South Tyneside	30.7%
Sunderland	27.3%

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee note the contents of the report

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DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday 11 December 2020 at 1.30 pm venue to be advised