

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

**Friday, 23 June 2017**

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

South Tyneside Council Councillor Allan West

Sunderland Council Councillor Graeme Miller

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Gateshead Council Anthony Alder, Colin Curtis, Chris Wilson, Gary Smith and Rosalyn Patterson

South Tyneside Council Chris Fairhurst

Sunderland Council Mark Speed

**1 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED - That Joint Executive Committee agreed that the Chair for 2017/18 would be Councillor Linda Green.

**2 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRS**

RESOLVED - That Joint Executive Committee agreed that the Vice Chairs for 2017/18 would be Councillor West and Councillor Mordey.

**3 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J McElroy, Councillor Mordey, Councillor Foreman, Councillor Donovan and Martin Harrison.

**4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

## **5 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were submitted.

## **6 SUEZ HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

Anna Bell, Regional Manager, gave a presentation on Suez SHEQ Management (Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Management System) within the South Tyne and Wear Management Partnership waste contracts.

The SHEQ management systems consist of procedures that show how SUEZ will operate. This complies with ISO Standards (International Organisation for Standardisation) and all sites are certified by external bodies. It was reported that SHEQ Management is the responsibility of Regional Managers, Site Managers and Supervisors. Under this system there is a requirement to complete risk assessments and safe working procedures, provide information, training and supervision of staff and site users and to report and investigate. All incidents and accidents are reported to the STW Waste Management Partnership.

The SUEZ Safety in Mind Charter sets out the organisation's commitment to developing a strong safety culture within the whole organisation, this was written by employees. The Charter contains ten life saving rules which are reinforced through the way SUEZ staff work and behave. Breaches of these rules are reported separately across the business.

Committee was advised that SUEZ was recently prosecuted for a health and safety breach at the Line 3 energy-from-waste facility (Northumberland's PFI) and was fined £220,000. The breach occurred in 2014 due to a blockage within the drop-off chute which resulted in major burns to a SUEZ employee. Following the incident a Safe Working Procedure has been developed, a bespoke training package introduced and improved Personal Protective Equipment. SUEZ has fully cooperated with the Health and Safety Executive during its investigation of the incident and this has been positively acknowledged.

All incidents are reported through SUEZ IRIS (Incident Reporting and Information System), this includes near misses. The categories of reportable accidents within IRIS include; personal injuries, road traffic accidents, property damage, hazards and near misses and work related diseases. All incidents are investigated and actions identified, in addition reporting data is analysed for trends, all of which is reported to the Partnership and discussed at contract and operations meetings.

The type of personal injury was identified as follows;

- 58% - hit by moving object
- 17% - exposure to harmful substances
- 17% - slip, trips and falls
- 8% - handling and lifting

People affected by these injuries were SUEZ operatives, contractors and site operators.

In terms of property damage the majority were not linked to operations but rather were damage to haulage trailers, barriers on site and vehicle collisions. It was noted that near misses and hazards are reported to ensure potential harm or damage can be avoided by making changes before incidents occur.

RESOLVED - That Joint Executive Committee noted the information presented.

## 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.

2016/17 year end performance and the 2017 latest performance figures were reported. Landfill diversion rate continues to be 100% and recycling performance is above the target of 2.1%. Health and safety performance was also reported.

It was noted that, due to maintenance issues in 2016, the turbine was returned to Austria for repair and returned fully operational on 10 March 2017. However, this impacted on availability, with 44.7% availability at year end. The annual shutdown of Lines 4 and 5 took place in February and March 2017, the shutdown was staggered and third party waste was redirected which resulted on no impact on the partnership's waste.

It was reported that time was lost on Line 4 due to a jamming issue on the bottom ash extractor chain conveyor. Work is ongoing to mitigate this in the future by ensuring council collection crews identify large items at the waste transfer stations so that they can be dealt with before transportation to the EfW.

Engagement work is continuing with school children and local community groups through the Visitor and Education Centre events or through school outreach activities. The outdoor classroom at the Centre was officially opened on 11 May 2017. The education programme was recently awarded four star status in the Investors in Zero Waste scheme.

In relation to the waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) project a separate submission to the Investors in Zero Waste scheme was also awarded four star status. The Partnership was also invited to address the national WEEE Conference earlier in the month.

In terms of Material Recovery Facility (MRF) contracts, blue bin tonnage has reduced however recycling rates remain steady. The currently MRF contracts for all partner authorities will end on 31 March 2018, future options are being discussed at the Officer Project Board.

It was reported that South Tyneside Council has negotiated a short term Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) contract extension until 30 September 2017.

This means all three authorities will be in a position to consider a joint approach for a new contract commencing April 2020.

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

## **8 STWWMP JOINT PARTNERSHIP TEAM**

Joint Executive Committee received an update report following the establishment of the joint partnership team to deliver strategic waste activities on behalf of STWWMP partner authorities.

It was noted that a joint team was established in 2008 to initially support the procurement of a residual waste treatment solution, and then to provide a dedicated team of specialist officers to oversee the construction of the EfW and preparations for service commencement of the residual waste treatment contract..

Further changes to the team were delivered in 2014 to enable the further development of waste management joint working and enabling the Partnership to take on Waste Disposal Authority functions on behalf of the partner authorities.

The team is now responsible for leading joint procurement exercises for ancillary waste treatment contracts, day-to-day contract management of a range of waste contracts, developing and implementing strategy, supporting joint communication activities, and has pooled expertise in partner authorities to harmonise back office functions and data reporting to Government.

Initially the team was made up of nine staff, however following the restructures the staff levels have reduced to six posts at present, 33% less than at the completion of the EfW construction. It was confirmed that the team's structure remains under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The costs for the joint partnership team, since its inception until present, have reduced by £163,168 per annum.

RESOLVED - That Joint Executive Committee noted the contents of the report and in particular the role of the joint partnership team and the reduction in staffing levels since 2014.

## **9 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 four men have been jailed for their involvement in a people trafficking ring which saw Polish migrants forced to work in recycling centres in the region. Migrant workers had been encouraged to come to the UK and were given

national insurance numbers and bank accounts. The men were employed in legitimate recycling centres as agency staff, however the criminal gang were controlling their bank accounts. Also, the victims were deprived of money and food and made to live in cramped, unfit accommodation lacking basic facilities. Four men were convicted of conspiring to transport people for exploitation and forcing people into labour, as well as conspiring to conceal criminal property after laundering £1m through the victims' bank accounts. It was reported that the details of the recycling firms involved and the number of victims have been withheld due to further legal action being undertaken.

It was noted that changes to Cabinet has resulted in Michael Gove replacing Andrea Leadsom as Environment Secretary. It is as yet unclear whether Therese Coffey has retained her position as Resources Minister.

Committee was reminded that the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA) agreed to terminate its PFI contract with Viridor Laing, eight years after it was signed in 2009. Total investment in the contract was over £631m. The 25 year £3.2bn contract provided waste management for nine councils across the Greater Manchester area. It was noted negotiations between Viridor Laing and GMWDA are ongoing to begin to ascertain the financial implications of the termination.

In April the Government published its first ever Litter Strategy for England as part of its 25 year environment plan. The strategy identifies its aims to become one of the most resource efficient countries in the world by reducing waste and litter to create an anti-litter culture and therefore reduce the £800m burden to the taxpayer of clean-up costs. The strategy focuses on three broad themes; education and awareness, improving enforcement and better cleaning and litter infrastructure. Some of the proposals contained in the strategy include; £150 fines for the most serious litterers, penalty notices for vehicle owners when litter is thrown from their vehicle, new guidance for councils to update the nations 'binrastructure' through creative bin designs and better distribution of public litter bins. The strategy also calls for councils to stop charging householders for the disposal of DIY waste at HWRCs. Keep Britain Tidy welcomed the strategy but stated that there needed to be effective monitoring to ensure that the strategy can make a measurable difference. The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management also welcomed the actions proposed, however the Environmental Services Association claimed that it was uncertain how many of the proposals would be funded.

It was noted that the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) has warned against the introduction of a deposit return style incentive scheme for plastic bottles as it could make council recycling services less efficient as it would remove plastic bottles from council kerbside collection schemes. However, support for a scheme has gained momentum and in the Litter Strategy the Government pledged to establish a working group to look at the advantages and disadvantages of different types of deposit and rewards and return schemes for drinks containers. In addition, the London Assembly has urged the Mayor of London to explore the potential of a plastic bottle return scheme.

It was reported the Resource Minister Therese Coffey indicated that, following Brexit, the UK could have a 'new direction' in terms of waste and recycling policy, in

particular around changes to the use of weight-based targets.

Committee was advised that waste crime in England is costing the waste industry and taxpayer more than £600m per year, according to the Environmental Services Association Educational Trust. The majority of waste crime is associated with waste from businesses and includes; illegal waste sites, illegal export of waste, burning of waste, fly-tipping and breaches of permit conditions. It was also reported that there are weak regulations in terms of anyone can obtain a licence to carry waste by paying a small online fee with minimal checks. Recommendations were made to modernise the system and tighten up regulation, increase enforcement and ban repeat offenders.

Tesco plc has partnered with the Hilton Food Group and packaging manufacturer LINPAC to maximise the recyclability potential of its plastic fresh food packaging. The new packaging is manufactured from over 95% food safe recycled content recovered from plastic water bottles disposed with household waste. The design makes the product 5% lighter in weight and, due to the reduced number of materials in its manufacture, its carbon footprint has significantly reduced. The plastic recycling charity RECOUP has recognised this as important work in achieving a circular economy. It was also reported that Tesco has extended its 'Perfectly Imperfect' food range to include additional fruits which would previously have been wasted.

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

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#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Friday 22 September 2017 at 1.30pm.