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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SOUTH TYNE AND WEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, 21 September 2018

THIS MEETING WAS NOT QUORATE

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

Gateshead Council Councillor Angela Dougals

South Tyneside Council

Sunderland Council Councillor Amy Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council Anthony Alder, Marc Morley, Robert Bowmaker, Helen Conway

South Tyneside Council Andrew Whittaker

Sunderland Council Mark Speed

South Tyne and Wear
Waste Management
Partnership Chris Wilson, Gary Smith, Karen Wynn

27 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor D Waller (Sunderland City Council), Councillor J Foreman (South Tyneside Council) Councillor C Donovan (Gateshead Council)

28 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2018 could not be agreed as committee was not quorate.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

CHALLENGES AFFECTING RECYCLING IN THE UK - A PALM RECYCLING PERSPECTIVE

Ross Johnstone of Palm Recycling provided the Joint Executive Committee with a presentation on challenges affecting recycling in the UK from Palm's perspective.

The presentation focused on the market challenges of recycling in the UK, discussing issues such as export restrictions and quality standards, the Chinese market, fibre and plastic market impacts, the development of the Deposit Return Scheme and the possible implications of Brexit.

Ross agreed to provide the presentation slides to the members of the Joint Executive following on from the meeting.

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

CONTRACTS UPDATE

The 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 joint partnership team continues to review and verify monthly reports received from SUEZ, which details materials processed and service issues. Once approved, invoices are processed and apportioned to the partner authorities within contractual timescales.

The Committee were advised that the recent Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) sampling results identified a number of occasions where limits (predominantly copper and lead) had been exceeded. Although a number of the reported exceedances were subsequently discounted, a stronger emphasis has been placed on accurate IBA sampling in future.

The Committee noted that volatile organic compound and carbon monoxide breaches resulted in the Environment Agency (EA) issuing compliance classification scheme (CCS) scores, which are recorded against the operator's compliance record. It was noted that the EA were satisfied with the action taken, which was reflected in the low CCS scores.

Other service issues highlighted including a lightning strike which resulted in a power blackout affecting the entire plant. Also, further details were provided to committee on procedures introduced to help prevent bulky items that may have been collected during service operations from being transported to the EfW which could result in bottom ash chutes blockages and plant downtime.

Appendix A provides the latest performance on the residual waste treatment contract for April – July 2018 with the Committee noting that contractual targets continue to be exceeded.

The Committee were informed that discussions on the joint insurance cost review are ongoing.

An update was provided on the community education and engagement programme noting specific detail of recent events. These have included a tour of the EfW facility by year 5 pupils, whole school waste awareness assemblies and the ongoing projects with Cedars and Portland Academies and Fell Dyke Primary School.

Plans are also progressing with into Metrocentre for the partnership to deliver a recycling event as part of the national Recycle Week which takes place 24 – 30 September. Since the report was written its now been confirmed that groundwork will be present on Wednesday 26 September 2018 3 pm – 9 pm.

The Committee also received service updates on the MRF contracts with the latest performance results appended to the main report, highlighting the blue bin tonnage data and recycling and recovery performance between April – July 2018. Committee noted that 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. The paper tonnages continue to reduce year on year as previously highlighted. Sunderland City Council continue to identify actions to help increase their recycling rates at the materials recovery facility.

The Committee also noted that a recycling trial will take place in early 2019 in Gateshead and South Tyneside which will involve the collection of paper and card together in an additional wheeled bin, which will replace the inner caddy at those households on the trial. The partnership team and council officers are working closely with the contractor (Palm Recycling) to finalise the details of the trial, and although it will take place in Gateshead and South Tyneside, the results will benefit all three partner authorities and will be used when evaluating future service delivery models.

Committee also received details of the household waste and recycling centre contracts with the latest performance for 2018/19 appended to the main report at Appendix C.

The Committee also received further details on the green waste composting contracts. The partnership are also currently considering options available for contract extension periods.

- RESOLVED -
- i) That the information be noted
 - ii) Councillors requested that they be included in the communication plan for the roll out of the recycling trial in early 2019 in Gateshead and South Tyneside involving the collection of paper and card together.

A presentation was given to the Committee on International, National and Local Authority waste news.

International Waste News

The Committee were advised that a recent translation of an official Chinese government announcement reveals an intention to reduce solid waste imports to zero by 2020.

The Committee were aware that China set and then increased a number of restrictions on recyclable materials that the country imports, which have had a major impact on global recycling markets. However, it was noted that in July, China and the European Union signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding on Circular Economy cooperation; which is expected to set the scene for greater sharing of best practice, potentially creating a system shift towards a low carbon, regenerative economy.

The Committee were advised that a total of 15 Commonwealth countries have now pledged to join together to take action to tackle ocean plastic pollution by eliminating avoidable plastic waste – such as bans on microbeads, or a commitment to cutting down on single-use plastic bags

European Waste News

The Committee were informed that a recent report by the Environmental Services Association looked into the weight-based recycling targets proposed through the EU Circular Economy Package. The report suggests that a dashboard approach utilising other, new, metrics that map behaviours across the value chain, targeting different stakeholders; such as targets to measure resource productivity, environmental performance, producer responsibility indicators and public satisfaction or perception surveys.

The report also highlighted that increasing the UK based recycling reprocessing capacity should be a Government priority, along with requirements for extended producer responsibility and recycled content across UK manufacturing.

National Waste News

New research released by the North London Waste Authority has found that the 'Blue Planet effect' has revealed that 69% of people surveyed are trying to change their plastic habits to help the environment. Half of the 2,000+ UK adults surveyed stated that they thought recycling as much as possible was the best way to reduce the impact of single use plastics on the environment, rather than stop buying or using these items. North London Waste Authority (NLWA) has issued a reminder to residents to highlight waste prevention, targeting a switch to reusable bottles as an example and calling on more shops, bars and cafes to make it easier for people to refill water bottles on the go.

The Committee were advised that the Waste and Resources Action Programme has also undertaken some work to help the public understand plastics by publishing a factsheet on plastic packaging for anyone who may be interested in the complexities around different types of plastic packaging.

Separate analysis from the Local Government Association suggests that only a third of plastics used by households is recyclable, and has called on manufacturers to stop using materials that 'hamper recycling efforts'

The LGA claim that 525,000 tonnes of plastic pots, tubs and trays are used by households every year - but that just 169,145 tonnes are able to be recycled. 99% of councils collect plastic for recycling and 77% plastic pots, tubs and trays. The LGA also point out that black plastic used in some food packaging is notoriously difficult to recycle and is a particular problem.

In a unconnected move, it was noted that supermarket chain Aldi have recently announced that they plan to phase out the use of black plastic trays on a range of fresh produce, replacing them with recyclable, reusable or compostable materials by 2025.

Committee were also advised that there has been an 86% drop in English supermarket plastic bag sales from the big 7 supermarkets, with 9 billion fewer bags issued since 2015. In 2017/18 the plastic bag levy resulted in the donation of £60m to good causes.

The Prime Minister also announced that the government plans to consult on extending the levy to all retailers, with over three billion bags still estimated to be supplied by small and medium sized enterprises each year.

The Committee were advised that the Treasury has announced that there had been overwhelming support from the public on a range of measures, in the recent consultation on using tax measures to reduce single use plastics, which, included encouraging recycling as opposed to incineration; A record of 162,000 responses were received.

The Committee noted that the Partnership's waste strategy prioritises recycling ahead of incineration as a waste disposal option – both on environmental and financial grounds.

Local Authority Waste News

The Committee were advised that London Mayor Sadiq Khan has expressed deep concern at Barnet council's proposal to stop its separate household food waste collections, suggesting that, if needed, he would use his powers of direction to block the move. However, the Leader of Barnet Council, said that the Mayor will not be able to use executive powers to force the authority to continue to deliver separate food waste collections, because they can only be used when compliance by the authority did not lead to excessive additional cost.

The Committee were advised that Council services in West Dunbartonshire,

Inverclyde and Argyll & Bute will be affected as external waste contractor Greenlight Environmental have called in the administrators. West Dunbartonshire has warned its residents of the closure of two household waste and recycling centres and the cessation of some other collection services, such as separate glass collections.

The failure of the business has drawn concerns from local politicians and MSP's.

Local Waste News

The Committee were informed that North Tyneside Council has introduced alternate weekly collections, which sees recycling and residual waste collected fortnightly.

North Tyneside has the worst recycling rate in Tyne and Wear and were the only regional local authority still to operate a weekly collection for household residual waste.

The Committee were also advised that SUEZ have started the process to construct a new £100 million EfW at Billingham on Teesside; on land adjacent to the partnerships facility. Planning permission for a sixth energy from waste line at Haverton Hill was actually granted in 2014, and SUEZ estimate that the new facility will be operational by 2022, with the capacity to potentially treat 240,000 tonnes of residual waste a year. Enabling works have been completed, and Suez are now in the process of procuring a construction contractor to build the facility.

It is also anticipated that the construction and operation of Line 6 will not impact on operations across Lines 1 to 5 or the delivery of the partnership's residual waste treatment contract.

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

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EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with paragraph 7 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP AUDIT REPORT

The Committee were informed of Audits undertaken to date and also previous reviews that have been undertaken during the partnerships development stages and after the first year of operation.

These focused on governance arrangements including:

- Contract documents
- Performance framework
- Terms of reference and delegations

All were found to be satisfactory.

The most recent audit was completed in May 2018 and the testing focused on:

- Budget monitoring processes
- Financial reconciliations and transactional checks, and
- Performance monitoring

The audit concluded processes were **Operating Well** with no significant findings being raised. Two minor best practice recommendations were identified and raised with managers.

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

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Joint Executive Committee will take place on Friday 7 December 2018 at 1.30 pm.

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