

**SOUTH TYNE AND WEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP**

**JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER 2015**

**This meeting was inquorate and those members in attendance discussed the following issues**

**In Attendance:** Councillor L Green in the Chair (Gateshead Council)

**Members:**

Gateshead Council - Councillor G Haley

South Tyneside Council - Councillor J Foreman and Councillor A West

**Officers:**

Gateshead Council - Tony Alder, Fiona Swinburne, Gary Smith, Chris Wilson, Colin Huntington and Rosalyn White

South Tyneside Council - Andrew Whittaker

Sunderland City Council - Mark Speed

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mordey and Martin Harrison.

**2. MINUTES**

*It was recommended that the next meeting of the Joint Executive Committee confirm that the minutes of the meeting held 2 October 2015 are a correct record.*

**3. 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 noted that the reconciliation payment proposal has been received and is currently being considered. In terms of performance, over 97,000 tonnes of waste have been delivered to the EfW facility. The facility achieved 97.3% availability, a landfill diversion rate of 100% and a recycling performance of 3.2%. In addition, the turbine has achieved 99.91% availability and generated 126,000 MW hours of electricity.

It was reported that annual minor shutdown of lines four and five took place in October and did not impact on delivery, major shutdown is scheduled for February and March. This will be for a period of 14 days and the plant will be fully shutdown for five days. Suez is looking at contingency arrangements to ensure waste is diverted to another facility rather than being disposed of at Path Head landfill site.

Stakeholder engagement events have been held at the Visitor and Education Centre, between April and October over 1,280 school children participated in events across the partnership area, including a prize giving assembly from Hetton Primary School. It was reported that since April, 430 local residents have participated in 19 waste related events, including 60 Scouts from South Tyneside who used their learning about recycling toward their environmental conservation activity badge. Work is ongoing around an event to mark the first anniversary of the Centre's official opening.

In terms of the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) contracts, Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils are 20 months into their contract with Palm Recycling. Sunderland City Council has awarded a new contract from April 2015 to J&B Recycling Ltd. Between April and September the tonnage of dry recycling collected has increased, in comparison to the same period last year, by 2.8% in Gateshead and 2.4% in Sunderland and South Tyneside.

The HWRC contract for Gateshead and Sunderland Councils' commenced with Suez in September 2014, South Tyneside entered a different contract with Suez from April 2013. Recycling performance figures for Gateshead and Sunderland contracts are; Campground, 73%, Cowen Road, 65% and Beach Street, 70%.

Work is ongoing with Suez to improve communications around HWRC usage and a joint press release is currently being finalised which will focus on a Christmas recycling message linked to the sites. In addition, a refresh of each authority's website is also ongoing to help improve communications to the public.

It was queried whether the MRF contract would be for partnership or individual Council negotiation once the current contracts ended. It was confirmed that the Partnership leads on the contract for Gateshead and South Tyneside and the next time it is out to tender it is envisaged that this will be a full partnership contract.

It was confirmed that officers attended the quarterly Defra meeting where it was acknowledged that ST&WM Partnership still remains one of the best performing partnerships in the country. The recruitment clause contained in the contract with SITA and the Visitor and Education Centre were recognised as two points of best practice.

It was suggested that there be a mechanism put in place for Cllrs to be advised about who is going to the Visitor and Education Centre. It was agreed that this would be picked up and perhaps coincided with the previously implemented member updates.

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

#### **4. VISITOR AND EDUCATION CENTRE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY EVENT**

A report was presented around the forthcoming event to celebrate the first anniversary of the official opening of the Visitor and Education Centre (VEC).

The VEC has been operational since April 2014 and was officially opened in December 2014. A VEC Coordinator has been appointed by Groundwork to carry out an ongoing programme of community engagement. Since its opening 4250 school children and 1450 local residents have participated in waste related events.

The anniversary event will take place on 16 December, 12.30pm until 2pm. Representatives from three schools, one in each of the partnership areas, will participate at the event and Bob Moncur has agreed to attend following his official opening of the Centre last year.

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

## **5. UNITE AND GMB ISSUES WITH SITA**

The Committee received a report on the further communications with Unite and GMB following recent protestor action at the Wilton site on Teesside. As agreed at the last meeting the Committee wrote to SITA requesting a formal meeting with senior managers to discuss the allegations.

A formal response was received from SITA on 24 October confirming that subcontracts for processing equipment were let to European companies as there are no British companies in the market for the provision of the main elements of an EfW plant. An audit of rates of pay was also undertaken and no systematic under payment was found. In addition SITA was unaware of any criticism surrounding welfare facilities, however a number of changes to Health and Safety procedures have been implemented in response to concerns raised by the trade unions.

It was reported that protestor activity continued at Haverton Hill and disrupted traffic. In response to the disruption SITA amended deliveries so that there was no impact on the partnership's waste. However, there was disruption to other local authorities delivering to Lines 1 &2 and Suez issued an injunction banning protestor action at Haverton Hill. A meeting was held with senior officers from SITA on 26 November where assurances were given around their original response to the trade union action.

It was questioned why there are no British companies able to provide the elements for the EfW plant. It was acknowledged that lack of employment in Teesside is part of what led to the protest, however there is not the skills to deliver the equipment within Britain. It was also noted that assurance has been received from Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority that they are happy with the response from SITA. It was suggested that no further action be taken unless the trade unions come back.

RESOLVED -

- (i) *That the next meeting of the Joint Executive Committee note the contents of the report and the response and actions undertaken by SITA.*
- (ii) *That the next meeting of the Joint Executive Committee agree to receive further updates if alternative action is undertaken by the trade unions.*

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A presentation was given to the Committee on the ongoing communications work and national stories that have been in the media.

It was reported that work on the second of Air Products two renewable energy plants in the Tees Valley has been halted, resulting in the suspension of 700 jobs. Work has been halted as improvements from the first plant have been identified which can be applied to the second plant.

Following investigations by Gateshead Council into fly tipping at Eighton Banks, a County Durham man has admitted a fly tipping offence. A property manager had made arrangements for an empty let to be cleared and consequently the person who was paid to remove the waste, an illegal waste carrier, was prosecuted. This resulted in 12 weeks custody, suspended for 12 months, a rehabilitation activity order for 10 days and the offender was ordered to pay £970 costs, £278.58 in compensation for the clean up and £180 court and victim surcharges. Defra figures show that fly tipping increased in 2014/15 with 900,000 incidents.

It was reported that new legislation came into force in October which aims to crack down on waste crime. It was noted that rogue waste site operators cost the UK economy £568M a year and diverts £1billion each year away from legitimate business operations. The legislative amendments speed up prosecutions on rogue operators, regulators are now able to apply to the High Court for an injunction to enforce suspension notices. Next year fixed penalty notices for small scale fly tipping will be introduced and provides local authorities with an alternative to potentially costly court prosecutions.

WRAP is investigating opportunities and challenges of having greater consistency in the collection of household waste and recycling. Local authorities, contractors and retailers have been asked to explore possible scenarios aimed at improving recycling, minimising costs and making it easier for the public to recycle.

Construction on an advanced EfW facility at Kingston-upon-Hull will start in January 2016, with completion expected for Summer 2017. Norfolk County Council has approved the exportation of 160,000 tonnes of waste to Germany and the Netherlands as refuse derived fuel. The contracts are worth £68M over four years, saving the Council £2M a year on their current waste management costs. The Committee was previously advised that PFI credits had been withdrawn for the EfW in Norfolk and these contracts are an interim solution whilst a sustainable, non-incineration solution can be found.

It was reported that Government support to new anaerobic digestion plants has been cut but the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association have called for more ambitious plans for delivering new plants.

The Committee was advised that Morrisons is to roll out an initiative that aims to end the waste of edible food in its supermarkets. Unsold food that is safe to eat will be donated to local community organisations. This initiative follows research from the British Retail Consortium that revealed the total amount of waste in supermarkets in 2014 was 180,000 tonnes.

Following the introduction of the 5p carrier bag charge in Scotland 12 months ago, there has been an 80% reduction with 650M fewer carrier bags distributed and £6.7M raised for

good causes through the charge. Since the introduction in England a survey suggests that almost 90% of shoppers are not using reusable bags, however the Committee noted this survey was carried out only two weeks after the charge came into effect and only a small sample size was used.

Salford Council has approved plans to pilot three weekly collections of residual waste from July 2016. A separate weekly food collection will be retained.

The last meeting of the Campground Community Liaison Group was held on 24 November. Suez has requested that lorries be able to use the emergency access road at the top of the site when awaiting access to the loading bays. The request has been refused by Sunderland City Council as this represents a significant change and should therefore require public consultation. Residents reported three incidents of vehicles routing through Springwell Village. The next meeting will be held on 15 March 2016.

The last meeting of the Jack Crawford House Community Liaison Group was held on 3 December. The group was provided with the operations update and it was confirmed that site is meeting its recovery target of 95.6%. The group was advised that Suez intend to apply for an amendment to the site's planning permission to allow green waste to potentially be received on site and stored outside. The next meeting will be held on 7 April 2016.

The Committee was advised that a request has been made to Government over the categorisation of incinerator bottom ash which has been recycled. It was put forwards that this material should be classified as recycling within EA returns and National Indicator figures. A letter was written to Rory Stewart MP from the Leader of Hampshire Council claiming that this would help authorities meet the statutory European recycling target of 50%. It was suggested that the JEC write to Rory Stewart to encourage IBA to be counted into recycling figures as Scotland and Wales currently do so. Committee agreed that if European countries count IBA then Councillors should write to their MEP's to support the idea. Further information will be brought back to the Committee once discussions have been held with Sunderland Councillors.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Joint Executive Committee noted the information.
  - (ii) *That the next meeting of the Joint Executive Committee agree to receive further updates around the possibility of making representations to Government about counting IBA in recycling figures.*

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Partnership has been shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle Awards in the category of new service delivery. Three representatives will go to London on 1 February 2016 to make a presentation and the awards night will be held on 16 March 2016.

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

The next meeting will be held on Friday 18 March 2016 at 1.30pm.