

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

**Friday, 13 September 2019**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Linda Green (Gateshead Council) (Chair)  
Councillor Angela Douglas  
Gateshead Council  
Councillor Jim Foreman  
South Tyneside Council  
Councillor Amy Wilson  
Sunderland Council

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Gateshead Council Colin Huntington, Marc Morley, Helen Conway  
South Tyneside Council Andrew Whittaker  
Sunderland Council Colin Curtis  
South Tyne and Wear  
Waste Management  
Partnership Chris Wilson, Gary Smith, Fiona Swinburne

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Deborah Waller and Councillor Mark Walsh

**64 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee agreed that the Chair for 2019/20 would be Councillor Linda Green (Gateshead)

**65 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRS**

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee agreed that the Vice Chairs for 2019/20 would be Councillor Mark Walsh (South Tyneside) and Councillor Amy Wilson (Sunderland).

**66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Waller (Sunderland) and Councillor M Walsh (South Tyneside).

## **67 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 March 2019 and 14 June 2019 respectively were agreed as a correct record.

## **68 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were received.

## **69 RESOURCES & WASTE STRATEGY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES - DEFRA RESPONSES**

The Committee received a presentation on the DEFRA responses to the Resources & Waste Strategy Consultation.

Committee noted that in December last year, Government published the new national Resources and Waste Strategy, which aims to make the UK a world leader in resource efficiency and productivity and move away from a linear economy and towards a circular economy.

DEFRA then launched three inter-linked consultation exercises in February with a 12-week timeline for responses to be submitted. Committee agreed a joint partnership response to be submitted to each exercise on behalf of the partner authorities.

In late July this year, DEFRA published the overall results from the consultation exercises, and Committee were informed:

- That the responses do not include further details of how the proposals will be implemented or funded,
- And that further details and the regulatory framework will be released in further consultation exercises in 2020.

RESOLVED -    i)    That the information be noted  
                  ii)    That further updates be provided to Committee as more information is released

## **70 CONTRACTS UPDATE**

The Joint Executive Committee received a report on the current position regarding the Residual Waste Treatment Contract and other contracts and activities managed by the Partnership.

The joint 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.

The Joint Committee were advised that the 2018/19 residual waste treatment contract reconciliation exercise is now complete. During the year, energy prices increased over and above the agreed ceiling price, which resulted in a £232,862.68 income sharing payment to partner authorities. This is the first payment that STWWMP has received since service commencement.

Appendix A which was appended to the main report highlights the latest 2019/20 contract year performance. During recent months, service availability has been strong with plant availability rising to 99.98% and turbine availability 97.61%.

The Joint Committee were also advised that the exercise to replace the Debt Service Reserve Account (DSRA) with a contingent Debt Service Reserve Facility (DSRF), is progressing. As a result of this change the shareholders of STWER will benefit from receiving cash significantly earlier than anticipated. This also means that STWWMP receives a share of this benefit, as the transaction falls within the scope of the re-financing provisions within the contract.

It has been agreed that STWWMP will support STWER to revise the funding arrangements in order to release the DSRA balance and that the STWWMP share of the gain is extracted through an ongoing reduction to the Unitary Charge. This reduction will be allocated to each authority using the cost sharing principles agreed in the Inter Authority Agreement.

The reduction to the Unitary Charge will generate revenue savings for each partner authority and is projected that the joint benefit will be £0.24m per annum and £4.8m over the remainder of the contract.

STWWMP continues to work closely with financial and legal advisors (Local Partnerships and Pinsent Mason) to implement the transaction. The costs of this support are funded prior to calculating and sharing the gain, meaning that STWWMP will be reimbursed for any professional fees that are incurred. The exercise is scheduled to be completed in September 2019.

Discussions with representatives from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), STWER, and Willis Towers Watson insurers involving the joint insurance cost reports associated with the RWTC are ongoing.

During the contract year 2019/20, no Environment Agency visits to the Waste Transfer Stations have taken place, no environmental breaches were reported, and no CCS scores were applied. All sites remain in Compliance Band A.

The Joint Committee were advised that the RWTC affords provision for SUEZ to help to improved local prosperity across the partnership area by promoting vacant posts within their facilities. The Economic Development Service at Gateshead Council continues to receive information on local vacancies, which are then cascaded to partner authorities for circulation to their client base. Local Vacancies are also highlighted at the Jack Crawford House and Campground Community Liaison Groups to enable opportunities to be circulated across community contacts.

SUEZ are currently in the process of recruiting a weighbridge operator for the

Campground site. Plans are also in place to review the Apprenticeship provision at Lines 4&5.

STWWMP remains committed to an ongoing programme of community education and engagement, managed by Groundwork North East & Cumbria (GNEC) at the visitor and education centre, the energy-from-waste facility, and through outreach activities held in local schools and community settings.

Between April and July 2019, 2983 local residents, children and young people, and community group members took part in waste awareness events, activities and site visits.

The MRF contracts continue to be monitored closely by the joint partnership team. In July, the Sunderland City Council MRF contractor, J&B Recycling Ltd, acquired a new material delivery site at Monument Park, Washington. The new site is adjacent to the previous site, therefore there has been no disruption to the blue bin collection service or the delivery of materials by the council to the contractor.

Appendix B appended to the main report highlighted the latest 2019/20 performance (April – July 2019) for materials collected by each partner authority in the kerbside 'blue-bin' recycling service. The results are broken down to demonstrate the paper collected separately in the inner box and the comingled materials collected in the main section of the blue bin.

The Joint Committee were advised that the comingled recycling tonnages in each partner authority continue to fluctuate, but paper tonnages collected separately in the inner caddy continue to fall when compared to the same period last year. The amount of paper collected separately by the three partner authorities is currently 11.1% of the overall tonnage. This compares to an average of 20.3% in 2014.

Appendix B appended to the main report, also highlighted MRF recycling and recovery rates (for comingled materials only) since Quarter 1 2018/19. Recycling performance has generally remained at similar levels in Gateshead and South Tyneside. Sunderland City Council's recycling rate has improved over recent quarters and the council continues to identify actions to help increase their recycling rates and reduce contamination rates.

The recycling trial that commenced in February 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. Details of the tonnage of paper and cardboard (known as mixed fibre) that has been collected since the start of the trial was presented to the Joint Committee for information. The data, which has been provided by the contractor (Palm Recycling Ltd) shows that the overall tonnage collected during the trial is comparable to the same period pre-trial. However, the quality of the recycling has improved dramatically, which has resulted in more materials being sent for recycling, and therefore, less contamination/rejected materials that would require alternative disposal methods.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) are supporting STWWMP to

evaluate the trial and their analysis is anticipated by the end of September. As part of this process, residents participating in the trial have been asked for their views on the trial's collection model.

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

The latest HWRC recycling performance for 2019/20, excluding inert materials, such as rubble were tabled for information. The Joint Executive were advised all HWRC contractors continue to explore whether additional materials disposed at sites can be recycled and further improve recycling performance.

The partner authority HWRC contracts with SUEZ and Remondis are set to expire at the end of March 2020. The joint partnership team has arranged for a joint procurement exercise to take place, which includes options for further joint working on HWRC contracts. Contract documentation is currently being finalised and the new tender is due to be issued in October 2019.

The Joint Executive Committee were informed that the garden waste kerbside collection service resumed in all three partner authorities in April 2019. Contract management meetings continue to be held with service providers at the various facilities which also include Health & Safety site inspections.

The regional contract procured through the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO) for the member authorities for the collection and management of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and batteries is currently out to tender.

The current framework ends on 31 December 2019 and the next contract is scheduled to commence from 1 January 2020. The term of the new contract is 36 months, with an option to extend for a further 2 x 12 months. This is to allow time for current consultations to be carried out by central government and enable consideration of any new policies or statutory obligations which may result.

The contract covers the following categories of WEEE:

- Large Domestic Appliance (LDA);
- Fridges and Freezers (to include commercial type and ammonia units);
- Small Domestic Appliances (SDA);
- Visual Display Equipment;
- Fluorescent Lighting Tubes; and
- Post-Consumer Batteries

Further updates will be provided as the procurement process progresses.

The Joint Executive Committee were also advised on a new section now included in the report; the Annual Recycling Performance. The recent audit undertaken by the Lead Partner Internal Audit Service considered STWWMP ancillary contract management. The final report found that the control systems in place were found to be operating well.

However, the report highlighted two ‘best practice’ recommendations, which included that STWWMP report overall recycling performance in each partner authority to the Joint Executive to inform members and assist in identifying areas where the partner authorities may be able to improve performance.

In response, STWWMP agreed to report overall recycling performance to the Joint Executive Committee 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 NII92 to calculate the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that the partner authority NII92 results for 2018/19 are:

- Gateshead 31.6%
- South Tyneside 30.7%
- Sunderland 27.1%

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

## 71 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A presentation was given to the Joint Executive Committee on National and Local Authority waste-related stories that have been in the media.

The Joint Executive was advised that, following his appointment as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson announced a cabinet reshuffle and that the former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Theresa Villiers has been appointed as Environment Secretary, replacing Michael Gove who has become Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

The Environmental Services Association said that the Prime Minister must be bold in implementing and where possible accelerating the proposals set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy, whilst the head of policy and communications at the Chartered Institute of Waste Management said that the CIWM welcomes Theresa Villiers and that the sector has actively engaged with recent government policy developments and is keen for the momentum to be maintained by the new Secretary of State.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that research commissioned by waste management firm Veolia highlighted that the proposed tax on all plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content could cost households 7p per week. The study found that one of the main reasons for not using recycled plastic is that virgin plastic costs less, with the price difference currently estimated to be around £500 per tonne. Therefore, the proposed tax would have to compensate for the price difference to make recycled plastic more competitive and calculated that the minimum tax level needed to make costs to industry similar would be £150 per tonne.

Veolia commented that using recycled content will enable an additional two million tonnes of packaging to be recycled in the UK, but there is not currently enough material recycled to feed this desire, and that the tax will support what the market demands, enable investment, and accelerate provision.

The Joint Executive Committee heard that previous government consultation had found that over 80% of people backed a ban on the distribution and sale of plastic straws, 90% a ban on drink stirrers and 89% ban on cotton buds.

However, a Channel 4 FactCheck investigation had found that in order to back up its plans to ban these materials, the government used statistics based on a lack of data and research on the issue – which means that their justification for the ban relies on unverified assumptions. The investigation found that whilst there is no denying that a ban on plastic straws is likely to reduce the number entering the sea, there are no firm ideas about how much the reduction will be and when compared to global levels of plastic in the sea, the amount of straws entering from the UK barely registers on the scale.

The Joint Committee were also advised that fast food giant McDonald's is disposing of its new paper straws in the general waste, after it emerged that they were not recyclable with its current waste services provider. McDonald's say they are working towards a solution and that sending the straws to energy recovery is a temporary measure.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that an expert at De Montford University Leicester has successfully manufactured the first-of-its-kind prosthetic limb socket made from recycled plastic bottles, which could save healthcare providers millions and help tackle pollution at the same time. It was found that the plastic bottles could be ground down and the granulated material spun into polyester yarns, which are then heated up to form a solid, yet lightweight material that can be moulded into prosthetic limbs. The cost of producing a prosthetic socket in this way is just £10 compared to the current industry average of around £5,000 each.

The socket was trialled with two different patients in India, who were both really impressed, saying that it was lightweight and easy to walk with and allowed air to flow to the rest of the leg, which was essential for the hot Indian climate.

The Joint Executive Committee were also informed that paper recyclers have warned of a critical market situation with lower prices and volatilities in the waste paper market putting local authority collections and the whole paper recycling sector under strain.

Such concerns have led to North Warwickshire Council's decision to move to a fully comingles recycling serve. The Council currently uses a 55-litre inner caddy which ensure paper and card are collected separately to the remaining dry mixed recycling. But from 1 November 2019, the caddy will be removed, and all recyclable materials will be collected as a mixed load using the existing 240-litre wheeled bins. This could save the council around £75,000 per annum by reducing the time it takes for crews to complete collection rounds, and future savings in vehicle procurement and

replacement caddy costs.

A council report highlights that the value of recovered mixed paper when the twin stream system was first introduced in 2013 was around £55 per tonne, which increased to around £75 per tonnes in 2016 but this had now dropped to approximately £18 per tonne.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that research by the North London Waste Authority has found that there is 'widespread confusion', about correct nappy disposal and that 1 in 10 parents admit throwing soiled nappies in the recycling bin.

Of those parents who placed discarded nappies within the recycling, more than a third said that it was because the packaging shows the recycling logo. NLWA are now calling on manufacturers to make it clearer on pack and through their marketing communications that nappies must go in the general waste bin. It is hoped that this publicity will encourage everyone to dispose of every nappy in the general waste.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that a cabinet member from Milton Keynes Council has suggested that an independent enquiry into how recycling sacks were found in the Malaysian jungle had looked deep into the council's supply chain and how the Environment Agency enforced its rules and revealed that they could not have come from the council's system.

Previously, the council had said that most likely cause of the recycling sacks ending up in Malaysia was down to 'misuse', because millions of recycling sacks were issued each year, but far fewer were actually used for household recycling and that the Council had now introduced an online ordering system to combat the issue.

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

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

The next meeting will take place on Friday 13 December 2019 at 1.30 pm in the Whickham Room.