

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

Friday, 13 March 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Linda Green (Gateshead) Chair
Gateshead Council Councillor Angela Douglas, Councillor John McElroy
South Tyneside Council Councillor Jim Foreman, Councillor Joan Atkinson (Observer)
Sunderland City Council Councillor Amy Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor Deborah Waller (Sunderland City Council)

79 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2020 were agreed as a true record.

80 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

81 'FUTURE PROOFING' YOUR WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES: WRAP SUPPORT TO STWWMP

The Joint Executive Committee received a presentation on 'Future Proofing' Your Waste Collection Services: WRAP Support to STWWMP, from Mike Gardner of WRAP.

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

CONTRACTS UPDATE

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

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.

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.

Appendix A which was appended to the main report highlighted the latest 2019/20 contract year performance. During recent months, service availability has continued to be strong with plant availability 99.31% and turbine availability 99.04%.

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 still progressing and hopes to be finalised within this financial year.

The Joint Committee were advised that the joint insurance cost reports are provided by STWER every two years which set out the mechanism for the insurance review procedure and sharing insurance cost differentials. The report illustrate the state of the insurance market during the term and any resulting increase of benefit from relevant insurance costs are shared between STWER and STWWMP.

The Joint Committee were advised that the third JICR has now been submitted by Willis Towers Watson and reviewed by STWWMP, with some issues raised for action. Initial indicators are that due to movements in the insurance market in relation to our technology the position is not as good as it has been previously.

The Joint Committee were also advised that all three of the WTS have continued to remain available and are accepting STWWMP contract waste without significant issues. Recycling activities are ongoing at each site, which includes the segregation of materials, such as street sweepings, wood and scrap metals.

Routine maintenance of buildings, plant and control systems continue to be delivered as planned and no issues have been identified.

The Environment Agency visited the Jack Crawford House WTS on 12 December 2019. No issues were raised during the visit.

The Joint Committee were advised that the RWTC affords provision for Suez to help to improve local prosperity across the partnership area by promoting vacant posts

within their facilities. Local vacancies are circulated to partner authorities economic development services for circulation to their client bases. Vacancies are also highlighted at the Jack Crawford House and Campground Community Liaison Groups to enable opportunities to be circulated across community contacts.

The Joint Committee were advised that currently, Suez are in the process of recruiting some posts at the EfW facility.

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 2019 and January 2020, 5,982 local residents, children & young people and community group members took part in waste awareness events, activities and site visits.

The Joint Committee were advised the MRF contracts continue to be monitored closely by the joint partnership team This includes processing payments, holding regular contract meetings and performance reviews, and Health & Safety site inspections at the various contractor facilities to ensure that recycling performance is maximised.

Appendix B appended to the main report highlighted the latest 2019/20 performance (April 2019 – January 2020) for the materials collected by each partner authority in the kerbside 'blue bin' recycling service. The results are also broken down to demonstrate the paper collected separately in the inner box and the commingled materials collected in the main section of the blue bin.

The commingled recycling tonnages in each partner authority continue to fluctuate due to several different reasons, including the development of light weight recyclable materials across the sector, householder participation, and seasonal variations. However, paper tonnages collected separately in the inner caddy continue to fall year on year.

Appendix B appended to the main report, also highlighted MRF recycling and recovery rates (for commingled material only) since Quarter 1 2018/19. Recycling performance has generally remained at similar levels in each partner authority. Sunderland City Council continue to identify actions to help increase their recycling rates and reduce contamination rates (shown as recover in the table), including direct engagement with the public.

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. Details of tonnage of paper and cardboard that has been collected since the start of the trial were also highlighted at Appendix B.

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 trial will continue to be delivered in the existing collection rounds until the end of the current MRF contract in March 2021. However, following further discussions with the contractor, the trial will not be extended into additional collection rounds in other parts of Gateshead and South Tyneside. This is due to the time remaining within the delivery of the current contract for the mobilisation and distribution of a significant number of additional bins, plus the necessary pre and post-trial communications and workshops that will be required to be delivered. Furthermore, the ownership of the additional bins may have a potential impact on the forthcoming MRF procurement exercise that is scheduled to commence later this year.

The Joint Committee were advised on 30 January 2020, STWWMP were advised of a serious Health & Safety incident that occurred at the Wards mixed fibre Facility at Hartlepool. As Wards are a sub-contractor to Palm Recycling Ltd, this facility receives some material from Gateshead and South Tyneside mixed fibre trial highlighted above. Unfortunately, a Wards member of staff suffered serious injuries during the incident and died at the scene. Enquiries are ongoing into the circumstances of the incident and a joint investigation is taking place with the Health & Safety Executive.

The current MRF contracts for each partner authority will end on 31 March 2021. Previously, STWWMP secured free-of-charge consultancy support from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to support the next MRF contract procurement. This included a collections options appraisal analysis and the final report will be used to evaluate the best option for the kerbside collection model that the partner authorities will have in place and its impact on the next MRF contract specification and procurement.

Table A, Appendix C appended to the main report highlighted the latest HWRC recycling performance for 2019/20 (April 2019-January 2020), excluding inert materials, such as rubble.

STWWMP has recently completed a joint procurement exercise for the management and operation of the HWRCs from 1 April 2020. Gateshead and South Tyneside awarded a new joint contract to SUEZ (subject to Cabinet approval in South Tyneside). The contract is for a period of 36 months with an option to extend for a further 3 x 12 month periods.

However, under this procurements exercise, Sunderland were unable to award a new contract as the bids received did not meet the affordability criteria. Alternative arrangements have now been identified to ensure service continuity from 1 April 2020.

The Joint Executive were advised that the regional contract procured through the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO) for the collection and management of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and batteries was awarded to Valpak Limited. The 36-month contract commenced on 1 January 2020, with an option to extend for a further 2 x 12 month periods.

STWWMP appointed a project officer and part-time electrician to deliver the externally funded small WEEE Repair and Reuse Project. Their employment with GNEC commenced in January 2020 and the project's first repair event was held at Gateshead Civic Centre on 14 February 2020.

A formal launch for the project has been arranged for 18 March 2020 at the Visitor and Education Centre, with a formal invite circulated to relevant officers and councillors.

A second project, focusing on kerbside WEEE recycling, will commence once the grant has been formally received from the funding body. The receipt of funding has been delayed due to a rebranding of the funders from the WEEE Fund to Material Change and the launch of their new campaign 'Recycle Your Electricals'

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

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COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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

National Waste News

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that in February, as part of the Prime Minister's cabinet reshuffle, George Eustace MP was named as the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Mr Eustace was previously a member of the Environment, food and Rural Affairs select committee.

Rebecca Pow was reappointed as Parliamentary Under Secretary, and Victoria Prentis was also appointed as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Defra.

Committee will recall that Defra introduced the Environment Bill in October 2019, which aims to ensure that the UK maintains and improves its environmental protections as the UK leaves the EU. The progress was stopped when the general election was called.

The Bill was subsequently re-introduced on 30 January this year – and has now had two readings in the House of Commons.

The Bill sets out four priority areas, namely: air quality; water; biodiversity; and resource efficiency and waste reduction. The main areas of interest to local authority waste services relate to the establishment of the Office for Environmental Protection, which will advise Government on environmental issues and scrutinise their progress against environmental plans and targets and some clarification on the Extended Producer Responsibility obligations.

The Bill provides the powers and legal framework for the implementation of a deposit return scheme, should the Government decide that they wish to proceed, which seems likely.

It also covers the collection consistency requirements that state food waste will be collected separately and at least weekly.

The Bill has now passed on to the Committee Stage where each clause or part thereof can be debated further to any amendments and proposals for change submitted. The Joint Committee noted that, as it stands, the Bill is still short on any detail for many proposals raised within the resources & waste strategy.

The Joint Executive Committee were advised that waste management firm Veolia have had their say in how the public are disposing household batteries. Veolia say that the incorrect disposal of batteries mean that fires can occur in the back of the collection vehicles and at waste facilities.

Fires in waste vehicles are up by 37.5% since 2017, and recycling and waste plants are also suffering more than 300 fires a year. Futhermore, if batteries are disposed properly, there would also be environmental benefits by returning valuable resources back into use.

Within STWWMP, the safe disposal of batteries is an important part of how waste electrical and electronic equipment disposal is managed, and the Joint Executive Committee noted that all residents are encouraged to remove batteries from small WEEE disposed at out HWRCs.

The Joint Executive Committee were informed that there has been a surge in bin sleeping nationally and it was reported that more than a third of waste companies have discovered people sleeping in their bins in the last 12 months. A campaign by waste management company Biffa working with the Open University and the Chartered Institute of Waste Management has been launched and is calling for a nationally-agreed approach to address 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 of the Joint Executive Committee will be held on Friday 12 June 2020 at 1.30 pm