

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

Friday, 9 December 2022

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

Gateshead Council Councillor Angela Douglas

South Tyneside Council Councillor Ernest Gibson

Sunderland Council Councillor Iain Scott

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council Colin Huntington, Phil Hindmarch

South Tyneside Council Stuart Wright, John Tindle

Sunderland Council Anthony Alder, Marc Morley

STWWMP Fiona Prentis, Anna Harrison

8 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Foreman (South Tyneside)
Councillors Rowntree and Johnston (Sunderland)

9 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11 CONTRACTS UPDATE

The JEC received a report advising them of the latest position regarding the Residual Waste Treatment Contract, all other ancillary waste joint contracts and activities managed by the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP).

It was noted that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has now released its final decision regarding Veolia's acquisition of the SUEZ recycling and recovery UK

business. As it did in its initial findings, CMA's position remains that the two companies coming together in the UK would result in a lessening of competition in the UK waste and recycling market and that therefore, the SUEZ UK business should be sold in its entirety.

It was also reported that Veolia progressed the sale process of SUEZ recycling and recovery UK and agreed a deal in principle with Macquarie Group Ltd (Macquarie). However, New SUEZ was offered a Right of First Refusal (ROFR) to buy it back. The JEC also noted that New SUEZ confirmed their intention to purchase SUEZ in September 2022 and the sale is ongoing. The CMA are completing their investigation and New SUEZ are awaiting final approval and confirmation that the sale can be progressed.

The JEC also received an update on the 2022/23 EfW Service which highlighted that the plant continues to operate well. It was also stated that a VoC (Volatile Organic Compound) breach was experienced in August 2022 due to a gas bottle explosion in the furnace. Officers advised that this has been reported to the Environment Agency but a response has not yet been received.

A summary of the planned annual maintenance shutdowns was provided; it was explained that the business continuity plan during the shutdown period was submitted in October prior to the shutdown and SUEZ noted landfill may be possible but the plan is always fluid depending upon waste flows and plant issues experienced. The JEC were advised that the shutdowns are still ongoing but due to lower waste flows to date no material has been redirected to landfill.

From the report, an update on Reconciliation was provided. It was noted that the 2021/22 reconciliation review exercise is still currently in progress to determine the end of year credit/payment. It was reported that due to rises in energy prices the Authorities are due to receive an income share on the electricity generated by the EfW for this period.

The JEC were also advised that the ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic arrangements have meant that no further Community Liaison Group meetings have been able to be held. It was highlighted that this situation is being reviewed and that the group is promoted throughout the local communities via leaflets. The JEC also received an update on recycling; it was reported that contamination levels have generally remained at consistent levels in each partner authority since quarter one of this financial year.

The JEC congratulated officers on the successes reported; concern was also noted that contamination of recycling waste remains consistent despite increased communication with residents. The JEC also commended Suez for the work done at South Tyneside's waste management site as summarised in the report; it was agreed that pressures at the site had been eased following the introduction of timeslots for residents.

The JEC were advised that whilst recycling performance is currently exceeding annual targets significantly it should be noted that recycling performance is subject to seasonality and reduces during the winter months.

RESOLVED: (i) The JEC noted the report.

12 WASTE SECTOR NEWS UPDATE

The JEC received a presentation providing a waste sector news update.

From the presentation, the JEC noted that Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). It was noted that the law requires that POPs in waste are destroyed to prevent lasting environmental harm and impacts on the food chain. It was stated that this means waste containing POPs must be incinerated and not recycled or landfilled.

A summary of changes in legislation was provided, this included:

- Increase in taxation on red diesel
- Expansion of Emissions Trading Scheme
- BREAF
- Electricity Generator Levy

The JEC were advised that more detail is being sought on the above; it was noted that an update report to the JEC would be provided in due course.

From the presentation, the JEC noted the update on the Resource and Waste Strategy; it was reported that the consultation findings for DRS, consistency and collection and year end expectations are still awaited.

The JEC discussed at length the impact and dangers of the incorrect disposal of 'disposable' vapes. It was noted that there is concern across the industry due to the risk of fire. It was highlighted that containers for vapes have been added at HWRC's in an effort to improve the situation.

The JEC were also provided with an update on current commodity prices which illustrated that prices have been decreasing in all areas.

RESOLVED: (i) The JEC noted the update.

13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 10 March 2023 at 1:30pm.