

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

Friday, 10 March 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Ernest Gibson (standing in as Chair)

Gateshead Council Councillor Angela Douglas

South Tyneside Council Councillor Jim Foreman

Sunderland Council Councillor Kevin Johnson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council Colin Huntington, Colin Swinney, Helen Wade

South Tyneside Council John Tindale

Sunderland Council Marc Morley, Anthony Alder

STWWMP Anna Harrison, Fiona Prentis, Gary Smith

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Linda Green (Gateshead)
Councillor Claire Rowntree (Sunderland)

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17 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).

Section 2 gave the JEC the background position on all contracts and procurements. Committee should note that both HWRC contracts are due to expire at the end of March 2023, but all partner authorities have agreed with SUEZ to make use of the full extensions periods available meaning both contracts are now due to expire in March 2026.

Section 3 gave the JEC details on the Residual Waste Treatment Contract. Committee should note paragraphs 3.1 & 3.2 gave details on the proposed acquisition of SUEZ by VEOLIA. SUEZ have now bought back the business which was completed in December 2022.

Appendix A highlighted the contract performance for the period April to December 2022. Both contractual recycling and recovery performance continue to operate above target.

Paragraphs 3.5 to 3.10 gave details of the plant and turbine availability and information on lines 4 and 5 as well as compliance issues.

The JEC noted paragraphs 3.11 to 3.16 refer to the Waste Transfer Stations and that Middlefields was closed for 6 weeks so the floor in Shed B could be replaced. During this period vehicles were diverted to contingency sites in the partnership area as well as North Tyneside Waste Transfer station. Discussions are ongoing with SUEZ in terms of tipping away fees for this site. A report of an odour from Jack Crawford House was received in November from a member of staff from Sunderland City Council. SUEZ investigated and responded promptly confirming the odour suppression system and the automatic fast action doors were all functioning without any issues.

Paragraphs 3.17 to 3.19 discuss the Joint Insurance cost reviews however no progress has been made as we are waiting for South Tyne and Wear Energy Recovery Ltd to respond to us.

The JEC should note that paragraph 3.20 gave confirmation that the 2021/22 reconciliation review exercise has now been completed. As expected the Authorities have all received an income which offset any gate fee charges due to the rise in energy prices and our income sharing agreement on the electricity generated by the EfW for this period.

Under targeted recruitment and training, SUEZ have recruited Stephen Atkinson as Contract Manager to lead on our contracts. The recruitment process is ongoing for the replacement of Site Manager at Jack Crawford House WTS and Campground WTS as James Nesbitt is replacing Stephen Atkinson at their Byker facility.

Paragraphs 3.23 to 3.26 gave details of Community Education and Engagement recent events and activities which will be included in the newsletter circulated to

many organisations including local community groups, schools, third sector organisations and this committee.

Section 4 gave details of the Materials Recovery Facility or MRF contracts.

Table A at Appendix B provide the latest performance for blue bin recycling from April to December 2022.

The JEC will note that paragraph 4.1 states that comingled recycling tonnages have fallen when compared to the same period last year but are still higher than pre pandemic levels. Furthermore, separately collected paper tonnages continue to drop significantly and now at their lowest level since 2014.

Table B highlights the MRF recycling and recovery rates since Quarter 1 of 2020/21. Contamination levels have generally remained at consistent levels in each partner authority since quarter 1 of this financial year.

In terms of communication, paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9 give information on communications to residents generally and specifically in Sunderland.

Paragraphs 4.9 and 4.10 gave the JEC detail on the payment mechanisms in place and that commodity prices can impact on monthly payment amounts. These commodity prices have dropped recently and therefore this has impacted on the costs for each Council although annual costs remain within budget levels.

Section 5 gives details of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre contracts including recycling performance at the sites shown in Appendix C and that performance is currently exceeding annual targets.

Paragraph 5.3 states that all booking systems continue to work well and positive feedback is still being received on these systems.

Section 6 gave the detail on the Green Waste Composting Contracts and that a reminder that kerbside collections of garden waste will resume this Spring.

Paragraphs 7.1 & 7.2 gave details on the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Contract and applications for external funding through Hubbub and Material focus.

RESOLVED – That the JEC noted the contents of the report

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WASTE POLICY UPDATE

The JEC received a report advising them of the latest Waste Policy developments, since the passing of the new Environment Act 2021 and in particular following the publication of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation findings and the publication of the Environmental Impact Plan 2023.

Section 2 gives background:

- The 25 Year Environmental Plan the Government published in January 2018,

setting out a number of goals for improving the environment, one being 'Minimising Waste'

- Later that year, December 2018, Government published the Resource and Waste Strategy (RaWS) outlining in more detail their plans to help achieve the goal of waste minimisation, increase levels of recycling across England and prevent waste from being disposed of by landfill. Specifically, within this Strategy were three key legislative changes which Government sought views on through two round of consultation (2019 and 2021). These being:
 - Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR)
 - A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) on single use drinks containers and
- Consistency in household and business recycling collections
- These are now often referred to as the Collection and Packaging Reforms
- The Partnership submitted a joint response to each of the consultation exercises

Paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 highlight the Environment Bill which was passed in Parliament in November 2021, creating the Environment Act 2021 and giving the Secretary of State the powers to enable these legislative changes set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the subsequent Resource and Waste Strategy.

A new Office for Environment Protection has been set up which will hold government and public bodies to account on their environmental obligations.

Paragraph 2.7 explains that one aspect of the Environmental Act 2021 is the power to set long-term, legally binding environmental targets and that in this regard, Government published in January 2023, the Environmental Improvement Plan. This is the first review of the 25 Year Environmental Plan.

Section 3 detailed progress on Government's plans with Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging – one of the Collection and Packaging Reforms. DEFRA consider this to be a crucial tool in moving waste up the hierarchy by incentivising producers to reduce their packaging overall and to design products that are easier to recycle. Currently, local authorities pick up the cost of managing and disposing of this material so by applying the 'Producer pays Principle' the costs are shifted from taxpayers to the packaging producers.

Paragraph 3.2 highlighted that Government published their findings from the second consultation exercise in March 2022, 9 months after the consultation period finished. The consultation findings confirmed local authorities would start receiving payments for managing the costs of household packaging waste and packaging in street bins from April 2024.

The JEC noted paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 explained that local authorities will be judged on delivering an efficient and effective service with deductions made to these payments where deemed appropriate. A Scheme Administrator will be appointed to govern this process, no deductions will be made to payments in the first year of pEPR. Income received will also be net of any income received through the sale of material.

DEFRA are currently working on a model by which local authorities will be measured

against in terms of delivering an efficient and effective service and have suggested a draft model will be available to local authorities in the Spring/Summer of 2023.

The JEC noted paragraph 3.5 highlighted other aspect to pEPR, including

- that payments to local authorities will also include costs to cover communications on littering of packaging material
- that payment to cover commercially collected packaging waste will not be included initially, as work needs to be done to develop evidence
- a mandatory takeback scheme for disposable coffee cups will be introduced by 2024 for larger businesses and by 2026 for smaller businesses

Section 4 outlined Government's progress on plans to roll out a Deposit Return Scheme on single use drinks containers – this being another of the Collection and Packaging Reforms.

Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4 outline:

- that a Deposit Return Scheme is a system where consumers are charged a deposit up front when they buy a drink in a container that is "in scope" of the scheme. The deposit can be redeemed when the empty container is returned to a designated return point.
- that Government expects by introducing a DRS for single use drinks containers littering of in-scope containers will substantially decrease which will in turn boost recycling levels, with increased quality of recycling and promote a circular economy.
- that having consulted on the development of such scheme, DEFRA published their findings from the latest consultation exercise in January 2023.
- and that the overall findings from this were in support of an 'all-in' DRS and therefore DEFRA have now committed to work with industry, Welsh Government, and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, to now set up the scheme

The JEC noted paragraph 4.5 to 4.9 which highlighted to key elements of the Deposit Return Scheme that DEFRA are working on implementing, these being:

- that DEFRA are working towards an implementation date of 1 October 2025 (at the earliest – this is a stretching target)
- that the materials in-scope will be:
 - single use drinks containers from 50ml to 3 litres
 - plastic (PET) bottles, steel cans and aluminium cans in England and NI (Glass bottles will be included in Wales, as is the case on Scotland, but will not be included in England or Northern Ireland)
- that retailers selling in scope containers will be obliged to host a return point for consumers to take their drinks containers back to and redeem their deposit. This could be through a reverse vending machine or through a manual takeback service.
- a Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be appointed to run the DRS
- that labelling of the drinks container has been recognised as important to ensure the DRS operates effectively and improve consumer engagement
- that DEFRA expects to achieve a collection target of 90% of all in-scope materials sold by the end of the third year, with collection targets of 70% for

year one and 80% for year 2.

The JEC noted that paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 highlighted the Government's acknowledgement in the consultation response that a digital DRS could enable the use of existing kerbside recycling schemes through the use of smartphone technology which would also realise carbon saving benefits when compared to solely relying on consumers returning their products directly to the retailer. However, DEFRA have concerns on how a digital scheme could be introduced and run cost effectively at this current time – due to the changes which would be required in terms of labelling on the products and also the increased risk of fraud. With this in mind, the Welsh Government is currently funding further research on this including piloting a Digital DRS in a Welsh town this Spring.

The JEC were advised that the Partnership will monitor progress in relation to this.

Section 5 of the report gave an update on the progress with the last of the Collection and Packaging reforms, outlined in the Background section of the report. This being Consistency in household and business recycling collections which was the subject of the third and final consultation exercises carried out in 2019 and 2021 to which the Partnership submitted a joint response to each.

The latest of these closed in July 2021 and as yet, Government have not published their findings to this so this section of the report is a summary of the consultation and key developments that have followed.

In terms of consistent collections, Government acknowledge local authorities currently collect different materials for recycling, which leads to incorrect messaging about what can or cannot be recycled.

Paragraphs 5.2 to 5.3 identify the six 'core set' of recyclables households and businesses will be required to collect, these being:

- Glass
- Metal
- Plastic
- Paper and card
- Food waste and
- Garden waste (households only)

Dry recyclables may not be collected together with 'wet recycling' as in, food or garden waste.

Paragraphs 5.4 highlighted that none of the partner authorities currently offer a weekly, separate food waste collection service and the introduction of such a service would require significant capital outlay and revenue expenditure to deliver. Specifically, the purchase of internal food waste caddies and external food waste bins, specialist collection vehicles, additional staff to crew the service, and the procurement of a new food waste treatment contract with associated gate fees. There may also be an impact on the current Residual Waste Treatment Contract (where food waste is currently captured).

The JEC were advised that, as highlighted in paragraph 5.5, Government

announced in October 2021, £295 million of capital funding would be made available to local authorities to cover any new net burdens arising from implementing the new service. However, there hasn't as yet been any further detail provided on how this funding will be allocated. The Partnership team are therefore eagerly awaiting further detail on this, and the publication of the consultation response before being able to make informed decisions on how to best proceed in this area.

Section 6 of the report gave further information on the Environmental Improvement Plan, published in January 2023.

Paragraph 6.2 detailed some of the specific targets within the plan, relating to waste and resources, these include a long-term target that by the end of 2042, total mass of residual waste excluding major mineral waste in a calendar year does not exceed 287kg per capita. This is a reduction of 50% from the 2019 levels.

Committee noted, as stated in paragraph 6.4, while the targets set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan are challenging targets, these are national targets for the purpose of measuring the government's progress against its ambitions within the Environment Act 2021 to which the Office for Environmental Protection is responsible for holding it to account.

Paragraph 6.5 concludes that the Partnership are eagerly awaiting further detail, including that of any funding available in terms of implementing the Collection and Packaging reforms in order that we can then give full consideration to and make any changes to services the partner authorities currently provide to their residents.

RESOLVED – That the JEC noted the contents of the report

19 WASTE SECTOR NEWS UPDATE

The JEC received a presentation providing waste sector news update.

RESOLVED – That the JEC noted the update

20 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 9 June 2023 at 1.30 pm venue to be advised in due course.