

JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL OF SOMERSET WASTE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Waste Board held in the Monmouth House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2PX, on Monday 23 July 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr Aldridge, Cllr P Bradshaw, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr L Leyshon and Cllr J Parbrook

Apologies for absence: Cllr N Cottle, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr Gunner, Cllr D Loveridge, Cllr L Perry, Cllr A Sully and Cllr M Wale

18 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

There were no declarations of interest.

19 **Minutes from the previous meeting held on 08 March 2018** - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting on 08 March 2018 were accepted as being accurate by the Panel.

20 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

There were no public questions.

21 **SWP Board Governance** - Agenda Item 5

The Panel considered a report which set out the planned 2018/19 meeting dates for the Somerset Waste Board and outlined key governance and constitutional matters.

The Panel noted changes to the Board's membership, highlighted in sections 1.4 and 1.6. They were also informed of planned constitutional changes in relation to the future amalgamation of Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council. Following this amalgamation, the Board membership will reduce from 12 members to 10 members with the new authority entitled to two representatives.

Panel members questioned whether Panel meetings could be held before Board meetings to enable scrutiny to take place before decision making. The Managing Director, SWP responded to say that this would be arranged where possible for the remaining meetings in 2018. The aim will be to have scrutiny meetings before or as close to Board meetings in 2018 but this is not always possible. This will be particularly relevant for the Oct and March Board meetings which will consider key procurement decisions. Panel Members were reassured that 2019 meetings will be arranged to ensure that scrutiny is able to take place before decisions.

The Committee noted the report.

22 **Finance** - Agenda Item 6

The Panel considered a report which detailed the 2018/19 financial outturn of the Somerset Waste Board and proposed use of balances.

The report highlighted that the Partnership underspend was £1.1m, 2.6% of the original budget. This was mostly attributed to collection variations and disposal variations. The Panel heard the new permit system at recycling centres has had a significant impact resulting in a downward in disposal tonnages. A member questioned where this waste is going instead. If the waste is commercial, people should be paying to dispose of it or they may be choosing to re-use it. Fly-tipping has been monitored carefully and the Partnership is confident that it is not causing an increase in fly-tipping. Where county borders are concerned, waste should be disposed of in the correct county.

It was clarified that new vehicles cannot be ordered until the procurement decision has been made as different contractors may prefer different vehicles. It was confirmed that a long lead-in time has been built in to support this process and build slots will not be booked until the Partnership is confident. It is essential that we get this correct.

It was clarified that there will be a ten-year contract for new vehicles to coincide with the ten-year collection contract. A member questioned whether there is a risk if the contractor doesn't own the vehicle and was reassured that the contractor must be satisfied with the vehicle if they are to take ownership of it. This will be done in partnership between SWP and the contractor. The Panel heard that the vehicles are likely to be built in the UK or ROI but the parts may come from elsewhere. It was observed that Brexit may have an impact on import costs.

23 **Performance** - Agenda Item 7

The panel considered this report which summarised the key performance indicators for the period April 2017 – March 2018 and compared these to the same period in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The report highlighted that waste figures have reduced, predominantly due to the permit scheme at recycling centres. Recycling figures have largely plateaued and it is hoped that Recycle More will improve rates. Fly-tipping rates have also reduced by 5%.

The report provided an update on the current kerbside collection service performance issues and the actions being taken to address these. The Panel heard that there has been some service degradation since it was agreed to end the contract with Kier and this has resulted in the implementation of contractual penalties. A service stabilisation plan has been agreed at a recent meeting with directors and the contractor and SWP have worked together to increase security at depots. The contractor is working in a challenging market and is beginning to make improvements.

Members questioned how residents are informed when their missed collection will be collected, and it was clarified that this is not possible on an individual basis. Where a missed collection can be predicted, the Partnership tried to be proactive and will contact residents via Facebook. It was agreed that some missed collections won't be reported. Members queried whether a variance in drivers contributed to missed collections. An inconsistent workforce does make missed collections more likely but also there is currently no in-cab technology. This will be used in the new contract and should drive improvements.

The Panel were informed that Performance and Health & Safety reports will be amalgamated for future meetings.

The Panel noted the report.

24 **Recycle More** - Agenda Item 8

The Panel considered this report which provided an update on progress to procure a new collection contractor to deliver Recycle More.

The Panel heard that a key project milestone was achieved on 20 April 2018 when a contract notice was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. Potential suppliers had until 25 May 2018 to submit a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) and five submissions were received. The PQQ's will be evaluated and moderated by the project team and the Board has granted the Managing Director delegated authority to select the longlist of potential suppliers that would be invited to engage in dialogue and submit detailed solutions at its meeting on 03 November 2017.

The report set out the process for the competitive dialogue and submission of detailed solutions stages. These must be submitted by 24 September and will be evaluated between 24 September and 12 October. It was highlighted that suppliers proposed methods of working, resource levels, vehicle selection and depot plans will not be known until these submissions are received. A timeline of the remaining stages of the procurement was shared with the contract being awarded at the February 2019 Board meeting.

The Panel were informed that the Partnership is still looking for a new depot site to future-proof the service and is looking to see if any communal collections can be moved to kerbside collection.

During the discussion it was clarified that plastic pots and trays can be recycled at recycling centres but not at the kerbside yet. Members raised that the change in opening hours at recycling centres can be problematic and has caused queues. The Partnership has tried to retain as broad a network as possible but within the resources available. Queue cameras have been installed but are not well-used. It was also highlighted that residents are concerned that recycling will go to landfill because China is no longer accepting it. It was clarified that historically Somerset has been less exposed to this risk than other areas because 94% is recycled in the UK and 50% of that is recycled in Somerset. Only around 3% is sent to China. There is a plan to re-communicate this to the general public once this year's data has been analysed.

The Panel noted the report.

25 **SWP Risk Update** - Agenda Item 9

The Panel considered this report which provided an update on changes to the SWP risk profile. The Partnership maintains a risk register of known risks and opportunities. This is maintained quarterly in-line with Board meetings and provides an opportunity to alert Board members to newly identified or escalating risks that may have a significant impact on service delivery.

The report highlighted Opportunity 5 as significant progress has been made with the promotion of plastic reduction initiatives including the launch of the SWP Pledge Against Preventable Plastic. Leaflets about this will be distributed through schools and the Partnership is happy to provide leaflets to any interested parties.

Several risks were also identified including: changes to the Board membership following the amalgamation of West Somerset and Taunton Deane Councils; planned redundancies for SWP staff; risks around the introduction of in-cab technology; a known issue regarding settlement of outstanding pensions; Kier reporting increased difficulties in recruiting staff; break-ins at two depots and three recent incidents where crew members were endangered and/or injured by other road users whilst working.

It was clarified that any money raised through contractual penalties is being re-invested in mitigations to improve service, for example, investing in CCTV to combat depot break-ins.

The Chair took this opportunity to thank the Business and Governance Manager for his contribution to the Partnership and wished him well for the future.

The Panel noted the report.

26 **SWP Vision and Strategy** - Agenda Item 10

The Panel considered this report which set out Somerset Waste Partnership's (SWP) revised vision and plans to develop a long-term waste management strategy.

SWP has not reviewed its vision since 2013 and has no current over-arching long-term strategy. A new vision and strategy is needed to reflect the significant service changes planned by SWP along with changes to national policy and Somerset's demography.

The new SWP vision was agreed by the Board at its June meeting and centres around the core values of: collaboration; quality; insight and innovation.

The SWP Waste Management Strategy will set out a framework for resource efficiency and waste management for domestic waste in Somerset for the next 25 years (until 2042). This length of time aligns with National Government's 25 year Environment Plan (published in Spring 2018) and the expected focus of the national Resources and Waste Strategy (expected in Autumn 2018). The proposed objectives for the strategy are:

1. Sets ambition for the future and key milestones
2. Provides clarity as to whether we're on track to achieve our goals
3. Shapes what we and our partners do (and don't do)
4. Is understood by staff and stakeholders
5. Reflects how we expect Somerset and our sector to change

It is proposed that the Strategic Management Group of senior officers from each partner authority will act as the project board. Members will be consulted through the Somerset Waste Board and the Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel. To support the development of the strategy an expert advisory panel will also be established to shape the development of the strategy. This will include representatives from industry, local green groups, local communities, SWB representative, and potentially local MPs.

Members asked how the importance of public relations will be taken into account as part of the strategy. A suggestion was made that a kitemark scheme could be used to encourage businesses to reduce packing and contribute to waste prevention. It is hoped that the national strategy will include enhanced producer responsibility in new policies so that manufacturers do need to be more mindful of their packaging.

Members questioned how successful the plastic bag charging scheme has been at reducing plastic. This will depend on what you measure as carbon reduction, waste reduction and energy reduction will all produce different data.

The Panel noted the report.

27 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 11

It was agreed to circulate a date for the next meeting to be held before the October Board meeting. It was agreed that Cllr Mike Lewis would Chair the next meeting.

(The meeting ended at 12.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN