

JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL OF SOMERSET WASTE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of the Somerset Waste Board held at Broughton House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton on Wednesday 27 March 2019 at 2.00pm

Present: Cllr P Bradshaw, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr D Loveridge, Cllr Mansell, Cllr Leyshon.

SWP Officers Present: Micky Green, Sarah Rose, Brue Carpenter.

Member of the Press: Daniel Mumby

Apologies for Absence: Cllr J Parbrook, Cllr L Perry, Nick Cottle.

Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

Details of councillors' appointments to local authorities were displayed in the meeting room and therefore there was no need to verbally declare these as personal interests. There were no other declarations of interest. Cllr Loveridge declared a pecuniary interest as a Director of Homes in Sedgemoor.

Minutes from the Previous Meeting held on 13 February 2019 - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2019 were accepted as being accurate by the Panel and signed by the Chair.

Agenda was rearranged to move item 6 to item 8 so the confidential paper could be taken at the end of the meeting.

Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were no public questions.

The Board received a report on the key performance indicators for the period October 2018 to December 2018 and these were compared to the same period last year. The report was presented in a new format with the aim of giving a more rounded view of the performance.

The performance report shows that the key headlines are: Tonnages: Residual waste is down 3.1% on the previous year, mainly driven by the lower garden waste in the hot, dry summer. Lower levels of garden waste also affected recycling rate (down 0.6% to 53.1%) and the number of visits to recycling centres (down 2.5%).

- Missed collections: Q3 saw a continued improvement in the level of missed collections after the issues experienced in the Summer. SWP continue to work closely with Kier on issues of service quality.
- End use: SWP continues to see strong demand from UK based reprocesses for the high-quality materials we collect. In Q3 over 94% of all the recycling we collected stayed in the UK. The plastic pots, tubs and trays (and plastic bottle) banks at recycling centres are proving particularly effective – over 50 tonnes was sent to be reprocessed in Kent in this quarter. Business Plan: All key projects in our Business Plan continue to progress well, with over 100 schools visited, our collection contract procurement on track, as is our move away from landfill.

The discussion of this report covered the following areas:

- Clarification of the Customer Response Management System. Members were keen to understand how this was used and be assured that it did comply with the requirements of GDPR. It was explained that the new system being introduced gave 'real time' information on calls from customers and could be sent to the contractor so missed collections can be dealt with while the truck was still in the area, or ensure that assisted collections weren't missed by requiring crews to confirm that each individual assisted collection had been undertaken. It operated two way so evidence of why a collection was not made; for example contamination waste would be recorded so that a resident could understand why their recycling was not all collected. It is based on the 'My Council Service' software and adapted to 'My Waste Service'.
- Questions about the increase in complaints. The Board were informed that this was because there were missed collections last summer, And that the performance report showed how the level of complaints had reduced substantially since then, as the service issues had been addressed.
- Glass recycling. The panel discussed the benefits of SWP's separate collection of materials – for example SWP's glass is of high quality and therefore in demand for UK reproducers who want to make it back into glass bottles (an example of a closed loop process). It was noted that where poor quality and heavily contaminated materials were collected (e.g. in other parts of the country that collect glass co-mingled) glass could be used to create aggregate. Whilst this still counted as the same weight of recycling, clearly closed loop recycling has a much greater environmental benefit than turning glass into aggregate. This was an example of SWP's commitment to quality and why weight alone is not a good measure of SWP's environmental impact. The panel noted that because of the high quality of SWP's recycling, over 90% of what we collected stayed in the UK, and SWP were independently ranked in the top 10% in the Country for our carbon performance.

Financial update 2018/19 - Agenda item 7

The Board received a report on the financial position for the first 10 months of the reporting period. The Annual Budget is entirely linked to the Annual Business Plan and sets out the financial resources required to deliver the Plan and the waste collection and disposal services that have been delegated to the Somerset Waste Board. Financial monitoring shows how the Partnership is managing its resources as it delivers the Annual Business Plan. The Board heard that following decision taken throughout the year and through careful management of the budget there was a forecast underspend of £942,000. The details of how this has arisen were contained in the report. The Board were interested to know why the Districts had such differing variances. This was explained by some of the costs and income being demand driven for example the purchase of containers, income from Garden waste charges and the number of containers that are replaced.

Recommendation:

The Somerset Waste Board noted the summary financial performance to date as contained in this report.

SWP response to national government resources – Agenda item 8

The Board revived a report on the response to the Government consultation exercise. This consultation covered four main areas:

- 1) Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections (consistency)
 - 2) Reforming the Packaging Producer Responsibility System (EPR)
 - 3) Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
 - 4) Plastic Packaging Tax
1. All four consultations will run for 12 weeks with closing dates of 12/13 May. Whilst SWP is still working through the consultations, this board paper summarises the understanding of the implications for Somerset, and a likely position in response. SWP welcomes government's ambition and leadership, and overall is extremely positive about the proposals in the consultation, in particular the drive to make producers responsible for the costs of managing the packaging they produce. The response for SWP for each of the areas was shared with the panel and discussed. The panel agreed with SWP's proposed approach to the consultation responses, in particular noting that SWP is an exemplar in terms of the quality of its recycling and would want to support kerbside collection and encourage high quality recycling. They do have a concern about the proposal to have a minimum of fortnightly collection. All the work done by SWP shows that fewer collections result in greater recycling and will be highlighting this in the response. The proposal that there should be free garden waste collection is also a concern as this might appear to be a 'tonnage chasing exercise'. If you make collection free, then less is composted and for Somerset the cost would be in the order of £6million a year. Food waste is already collected weekly, but whilst we're ambitious to do more the practicalities (and hence the time and resources required) with food waste collection from all communal/shared accommodation (given the constraints with some properties of this type) appears to have been under-estimated.

There was some discussion in relation to these proposals. The Board were interested to know if there had been a noticeable reduction in Single Use Plastics since the Local Authorities introduced a campaign to reduce this. Unfortunately, this has not been evident yet in overall tonnage data – though 50 tonnes of plastic pots, tubs, trays and bottles were recycled at Somerset's recycling centres in Quarter 3. The Local Authorities were keen to have autonomy on frequency of refuse collection as they need to be accountable to

the electorate and the direction of travel for more recycling and less residual waste was very advanced on Somerset.

Recommendation

That the Somerset Waste Board:

- 1) noted the contents of the report and discusses the implications of the consultations,**
- 2) delegated responsibility to the Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership to finalise consultation responses**

This item is confidential and a motion to exclude the public was proposed by Cllr Peter Bradshaw and seconded by Cllr Liz Leyshon. The public withdrew.

The Board received a report that summarised progress in procuring a new collection contractor (and hence delivery of Recycle More). It accompanied a confidential paper where the Waste Board will make a decision on the preferred bidder for the Collection Contract. It is expected that the identity of the preferred bidder will be announced on 13 May 2019. The preferred bidder will commence delivering services on 28 March 2020.

The report set out the comparison between two bids, known only as Bidder 1 and Bidder 2.

The Chairman thanked SWP for a very thorough presentation and for their hard work in getting this bid to such an advanced stage.

Recommendation

The Somerset Waste Board:

- 1. Noted the progress made in procuring a new collection contract.**
- 2. Agreed the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat the confidential report and its appendices in confidence, as they contain commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.**
- 3. Subject to the approval of recommendation (2) above, agrees to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the consideration of the attached confidential report and its appendices where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding exempt or confidential information.**
- 4. Considered the recommendations contained within the confidential report.**
- 5. Subject to approval of the recommendations above, authorised the Managing Director to notify the preferred bidder (and unsuccessful bidders) and take such actions as are necessary to progress through to contract award and service mobilisation.**
- 6. Agreed that the Somerset Waste Partnership reserved the right to not proceed with the award of a contract should new information come to light during the standstill period and/or before entering into a contract. In this instance, it is recommended that the Managing Director and Administering Authority's Director of Corporate Affairs be given joint delegated authority to take any necessary action in relation to the conclusion of the contract to**

protect the Waste Partnership's interests - this could include a decision not to enter into a contract and go back out to market.

Any Other Urgent Items of Business - Agenda item 9

None was raised.

Date of Next Meeting

Noted as Wednesday 27 June 2019 (10.00am).

(The meeting ended at 15.52pm)

CHAIRMAN