

SOMERSET WASTE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Somerset Waste Board held in the Sedgemoor Room, Sedgemoor District Council, on Friday 29 March 2019 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr Yeomans (Chair), Cllr Woolcombe-Adams (Vice-Chair), Cllr N Taylor, Cllr H Prior-Sankey, Cllr M Dewdney, Cllr G Slocombe, Cllr D Hill, Cllr D Hall, Cllr J Woodman (substitute) and Cllr J Parbrook (substitute)

Other Members present: Cllr Mike Lewis

Apologies for absence: Cllr B Maitland-Walker (who was substituted by Cllr J Parbrook) and Cllr M Pullin (who was substituted by Cllr J Woodman)

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

There were no additional declarations made.

532 **Minutes from the meeting held on 15 February 2019** - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the Board meeting, held on 15 February 2019, were taken as read and following endorsement by those present were signed as a correct record by the Chair.

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

There were no public questions.

The Chair invited Cllr Mike Lewis, Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Waste Board to give an overview of the panel meeting which was held on 27 March 2019. Cllr Lewis said members felt the performance report was good news and that the level of complaints due to missed collections had reduced substantially. The panel also noted the financial update and were pleased with the underspend and gave views on the Government consultation regarding recycling, packaging, a deposit scheme and plastic packaging tax. It also received a report on the progress on procuring a new collection contractor.

534 **SWP Responses to National Resource and Waste Consultations** - Agenda Item 5

The Chair invited Mr Green, Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) Managing Director, to introduce the report regarding the new national Resources and Waste Strategy, and informed members the Government had published 4 consultations; Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections; Reforming the Packaging Producer Responsibility System (EPR); Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Plastic Packaging Tax.

Members were informed the EPR for packaging could be a big game changer with the onus on businesses to use packaging that could be recycled and this

was strongly welcomed. The deposit return scheme for consumers to pay an upfront deposit which is redeemed upon return of the container could have some negative effects on SWP and cost £2.5m over the next 10 years. One aim of the DRS is to reduce litter and it was felt the focus should be on tackling this. SWP is supportive of the proposal to tax plastic packaging as it will be key to driving demand for recycling plastic.

There is also a proposal to offer free garden waste collections during the growing season and this will have a major impact on SWP and partners and could cost up to £6m in reduction in disposal costs. It does not take into account the amount of people who may stop home composting which is the environmental friendly option.

Further discussion included:

- There needs to be consistency around collections and 3 weekly waste collections drives the outcomes that are desired.
- Problems with offering food waste collections to communal properties. The preference is to move to a kerbside type service.
- Companies concern about the look of products and using colour and excess packaging. It was hoped that extra costs would make them think again about branding.
- More people were becoming concerned about black plastic and want to recycle as much as they can.
- Trying to change the public's opinion to be more favourable for 3 weekly collections instead of fortnight collections.
- There was an increasing number of people paying for garden waste collections and composting at home and it was felt this needed to be further encouraged by getting information to town and parish councils.
- A continued emphasis on educating the public on recycling and disposal issues.

The Chair moved the recommendation.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- 1) note the contents of this report and discussed the implications of the consultations**
- 2) delegate responsibility to the Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership to finalise consultation responses.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report and discussed during the meeting.

The Chair invited Sarah Rose, Finance Officer to introduce the report which set out the financial performance against the approved Annual Budget for the first 10 months from April to the end of January. The table in 2.1 of the report showed the variations from budget on all our major expenditure areas.

Overall, the end of January position showed the Somerset Waste Partnership budget was forecast to be underspent by £942,000 (2.12% of the current budget). By way of comparison, the overall underspend forecast was £984,000 (2.21% of the current budget) when previously reported to the December Board.

The waste collection budgets had moved from a £65,000 overspend position to a £134,000 overspend, a movement of £69,000. Head office costs had increased by £24,000 from the figures reported to the February Board. This is a one year additional pressure and partners will benefit from reduced staff costs from 2019/20 onwards.

The waste disposal figure for the Board at the end of January showed an underspend of £1.075m, which is an improvement on the last budget report to the Board (£1.049m). Trends in the waste disposal budget have been downwards for the current financial year, although some of the savings are one-off caused by year end estimating and the severe weather in March 2018.

The figures reported above did not include any drawdown of the earmarked reserve for Recycle More. Available funds at the start of 2018/2019 stood at £616,106, (including the County Council funding, but excluding the increase from the lease budget approved at the February Board). It had been agreed by the Board that this funding was kept separate from the continuation budget, and reported separately.

Up to the end of January, only £182,172 of this earmarked reserve had been spent, although further costs will be incurred with the on-going support for Eonomia (our technical consultants) and specialised external legal support. Post contract award there will be mobilisation and roll out costs for the new service.

The Chair moved the recommendations.

The Board RESOLVED to note the summary financial performance to date as contained in this report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

536 **Performance Update Q3 2018/19** - Agenda Item 7

The report summarised the key performance indicators for the period from October 2018 to December 2018 and compared these to the same period last year where relevant.

Members were informed that residual waste was 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 our recycling rate (down 0.6% to 53.1%) and the number of visits to our recycling centres (down 2.5%). There was a continued improvement in the level of missed collections after the issues experienced in the Summer.

During this period more than 94% of all the recycling collected stayed in the UK. The plastic pots, tubs and trays (and plastic bottle) banks at recycling centres proved particularly effective – over 50 tonnes was sent to be reprocessed in Kent in this quarter.

All key projects in the Business Plan continued to progress well, with over 100 schools visited, the collection contract procurement on track, as the move away from landfill.

There was further discussion about:

- Consideration of operators clothing during the hot weather. It was hoped the new contractor would be mindful of this.
- Members were assured the staff welfare was taken seriously by any future contractor.
- The current situation regarding driver shortages – although this was still a challenge it was not as big as a problem as previously.
- The new contractor would be pushed to perform well.

The Chair moved the recommendation.

The Board RESOLVED to note the performance results in the Third Quarter Performance Management Report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report and as discussed at the meeting.

537 Recycle More Project Update – agenda item 8

Mr Green explained the report summarised progress in procuring a new collection contractor delivery of Recycle More. Members were reminded that Recycle More would enable the public to recycle even more at the kerbside, adding in materials such as plastic pots and tubs including black plastic, cartons, small electrical equipment and batteries to the weekly collection.

A progress report on the procurement of a new waste and recycling collection contractor was presented to the Board in February 2019. This included details about the 50/50 risk sharing mechanism, the establishment of a 'Somerset Waste Enhanced Environmental Performance' fund (SWEEP), the final work undertaken ahead of issuing final tender documents on 30 January and the reasons for scheduling the Board meeting today to decide upon the preferred bidder.

Members were reminded there was also a confidential paper containing commercially sensitive information to assist the Board in making a decision on the preferred bidder for the Collection Contract.

It was expected that the identity of the preferred bidder would be announced on 13 May 2019. The preferred bidder would commence delivering services on 28 March 2020.

The Chair moved the recommendations to move into confidential session so that further information could be given (see confidential minute).

Somerset Waste Board RESOLVED to:

- **Agree the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat the attached 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.**
- **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.**

Following a presentation and further discussion on this issue, the meeting was then brought back into public session.

The Chair then moved the recommendations and Somerset Waste Board **RESOLVED** unanimously to:

- **Note the progress made in procuring a new collection contract.**
- **Consider the recommendations contained within the confidential report.**
- **Authorise 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.**
- **Agree that the Somerset Waste Partnership reserves 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.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

538 **Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan - Agenda Item 9**

The Board considered and discussed its Forward Work Plan of future agenda items and reports for the June meeting in 2019.

539 **Information Sheets Issued Since the Last Meeting - Agenda Item 10**

There were none.

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

Cllr Roundell-Greene explained this would be her last meeting as a Board member as she was not standing for council again. She said it had been a pleasure to serve the Board and thanked officers for their work.

Bruce Carpenter, Head of Operations of the Somerset Waste Partnership, was thanked for his hard work over the years as he was leaving the organisation. He was acknowledged for his expertise and knowledge and for his work on the new contract. Members wished him well for the future.

(The meeting ended at 11.45 am)

CHAIR