

Joint Scrutiny Panel of the Somerset Waste Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of the Somerset Waste Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Cllr M Dunk (Vice-Chair), Cllr B Hamilton, Cllr Liz Leyshon, Cllr T Munt

Other Members Present: Cllr D Hall, Cllr S Dyke (South Somerset District Council)

Apologies for Absence: Cllr A Trollope-Bellew (Chair), Cllr G Kennedy,

Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were none declared.

Minutes from the Previous Meeting on 23rd September 2020 –Agenda Item 3

The Panel agreed the minutes as an accurate record.

Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were no public questions.

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green to provide a verbal update on the Performance Report Quarter 2 July 2020 to September 2020. The report summarises the key performance indicators for the period from July 2020 to September 2020 and compares these to the same period last year.

The following was highlighted:

- The delays on some of our main projects (including Recycle More) due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The main risks are for the transition of Recycle More, Covid-19, also the approach of Brexit in the new year. Health and safety (there was a death at a Highbridge site due to a seizure); there is now defibrillators installed at every site and staff have been trained to use these.
- Tonnage waste ministration, kerbside increased on recycling due to the suspension of garden waste and closure of recycle sites in the spring. Household waste down by 2%, kerbside total household arisings for Q2 2020-21 decreased by 3,000 tonnes to a total of 131,470 tonnes. Materials stayed in the UK, with the amount that was reprocessed in Somerset also staying in excess of 55.7%.
- A significant decrease in missed collections in, compared to Q1 (0.588 per 1,000 collections against 1.430 in Q1), which shows the successful outcome of the work put into reducing this number by both SWP and SUEZ staff.

- Fly tipping continues to be a blight on the Somerset landscape, and there is monitoring any of the service changes made and how this impacts the level of this criminal activity.

The Panel asked a number of questions; figures on fly-tipping in the Mendip area; of the 1,013 tonnes of recyclate reprocessed outside of the EU, is this a small part of the 2% that went overseas; confirmation the contract should say Suez not Kier; has household waste increased compared to the figures from last year; whether the decrease in garden waste is due to residents using compost bins or from non-collections; to understand what the acronym MRF stood for; to understand more about this in Q1 report, sending kerbside refuse to Energy Recovery. As a result, only 29% of residual waste was sent to landfill, with the rest being sent for energy recovery. All of the kerbside residual waste and all suitable residual waste from Recycling Centres has gone to Avonmouth RRC; the proportions of 29% of waste unsuitable for energy recovery going to landfill seems high, is this by weight or expected to reduce.

It was explained that Mendip has highlighted hotspots on fly-tipping due to isolation and the ease of access, and Mendip is managing those areas and improvements have been made and are still ongoing. Regarding the tonnage of recyclate the vast majority of the 2% is that which when overseas and is shown in the graph in the report. Suez is the new contractor. The waste that goes to Avonmouth is through recycling centres and kerbside, there is little waste in commercial waste. Due to the suspended services on garden waste and recycling centres having to close, the household waste overall has decreased and the kerbside has increased. From surveying residents previously, regular visits to the recycling centres was to dispose of garden waste, when they were closed the avenue was not there. Although there is not the data, it is assumed residents have found alternatives to disposing their garden waste. Materials Reprocessing Facilities is for materials that are mixed together and goes to the facilities to be sorted. The waste comes from two places the recycling centre and kerbside, In Q1 SWP were working with Viridor to move away from landfill and they have built the Avonmouth Resource Recovery Centre and all waste from the kerbside goes to Avonmouth with few items that do not for example gas canisters or PVC windows. The Recycling Centres are equipped with two skips used for energy to waste and items that cannot go to energy for example big sofas that's beyond reuse. The Avonmouth site did not open till June and everything would have gone to landfill naturally and moving forward everything in the kerbside should go to Avonmouth and 12-15% will still go to landfill

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the following recommendations in this report and recommended that the Somerset Waste Board note the performance results in the Second Quarter 2020/21 Performance Management Report.

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Head of Communications and Engagement, Mark Ford to provide a presentation on the first phase of Recycle More which was rolled out to around 52,000 homes in Mendip as planned. The report updates on the successful first few weeks of that roll-out, noting that risks remain (especially due to Covid-19).

The following was highlighted:

- Recycle More recap on weekly collections, the introduction to the bright blue bag and the three weekly rubbish collections.
- Key changes for the residents, changes to the items going in different bins and the weekly collections including change of days.
- The engagement with parishes & members the distributing of the briefing pack, posters and the test drive of 29 elected members trailing the blue bag before the launch.
- Engagement with public with direct mailing, web information and display material also including the digital engagement on Facebook Q&A, talking café and the social media engagement has worked well and will be something to build on for future phases, particularly if COVID restrictions persist.
- School engagement 'virtual' assemblies and workshops with the Carymoor Environmental Trust successfully transferred its activity online. 52 Mendip primary schools, and despite the obvious competing priorities and disruption facing schools, at Mid-November 20 had signed up for sessions and initial feedback has been very positive.
- Support for the residents through the roll-out, 18 extra members of staff were provided supporting crews with assisted collections, responding to customer feedback around areas that had not received Information Packs, surveying old rounds and replacing bins and boxes presented for collection on the old collection day and following the crews on the new rounds and presenting bins/boxes on behalf of the customer where they have failed to present their waste (around 400 customers).
- Somerset Waste Partnership recognised the importance of maintaining and improving service standards to all of its customers and has remained focussed on improving the quality of service delivery throughout the contract.
- Five-week summary - 20% increase of plastics, with a higher impact in the first week (possibly as an impact of stockpiling). The sampling of the blue bags collected on a range of rounds shows that 94% of what was captured was target material (23% being plastic pots, tubs and trays) with the most common contaminants being cardboard, food residue, particulates and Tetra Paks. The 34% more food waste (which reflects the extremely high demand for food waste caddies ahead of the roll-out and of course the impact of Halloween pumpkins). Capturing more of the food that is currently thrown away was a key aim of Recycle More.

- The Recycle More roll out timetable in the areas for phase 1 Completed, 2 South Somerset and School in the East, 3 Schools in the West and the old Taunton Deane and 4 Sedgemoor and old West Somerset Area.

The Panel asked a number of questions; clarification in regard to the heavy week when recycling goes out on the rubbish week; in the next district roll out for Recycle More will feedback be used from Mendip; the five week summary - is there a comparison to last year; the bags and boxes are there slight changes to what goes in a non-recycle more area and the challenge of people still maintaining to the old method; common contaminants being cardboard, food residue, particulates - can the term particulates be elaborated on.

The Panel formally thank Somerset Waste Partnership Officers for the hard work which has resulted in the successful roll-out of Recycle More.

It was explained that some household don't have enough recycling to put out every week and as residents remember rubbish week, they usually present the recycling to go with it and generally that is the same across the country. Case studies will be captured, and lessons learnt will be gathered throughout the implementation, to inform future phases of the roll-out. The need for a greater length of time for accurate figures to show comparisons. With the shorter period of time for example covering Halloween and an excess of pumpkins would impact on the food waste increases at this time. covid-19 has also impacted on the summary. The boxes and containers have changed on the roll out for Recycle More and each box has a sticker on it with what items it should contain. Particulates are weathered rubbish that have been left behind in the containers such as contaminated pizza boxes.

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the following recommendations in this report and recommended that the Somerset Waste Board noted the successful progress made in implementing Recycle More.

84 **Finance Performance Report Update-** Agenda item 7

The Chair invited Finance Officer Sarah Rose to provide a verbal update on the financial performance against the approved Annual Budget for the first 7 months of the current financial year from April to the end of October. The report is also an update to the Draft Budget from September's meeting that will ultimately lead to the Annual Budget for 2021/2022.

The following was highlighted:

- Somerset Waste Partnership budget is forecast to be underspent by £441,000 (0.9% of the current budget). An improvement on the previous position reported to the September Board, which were July figures and showed an overspend of £2,205,000. This does not include the Recycle More project work, which is funded from a separate project fund.
- Covid-19 costs are being charged to District partners therefore the previously reported overspend has been updated to reflect the £2,306,400 now being funded by District partners. Somerset County Council as reported previously had already approved the transfer of MHCLG Covid-19 funding to their elements of these additional costs.
- All partners include these Covid-19 costs on their individual MHCLG returns. The total Covid-19 additional spend is £3,221,200 (£914,800 SCC, £2,306,400 District Partners). This is for the delayed roll out of Recycle More, re-opening of HWRC sites and associated costs, changes to tonnages, additional collection costs and head office costs such as PPE and the undeliverable element of the Slim my Waste, Feed my Face campaign.
- Waste collection is £109,000 underspent. Any variations as a result of Recycle More are attributable to the Recycle More Fund and therefore do not make up part of this outturn position.
- At the end of 2019/20 the project balance was a deficit of £140,000. It is anticipated that during 2020/21 £2,440,000 will be spent on the roll out of the Recycle More project (including the direct costs of roll-out and the cost differential between Recycle More and the continuation budget) which will leave an anticipated deficit of £2,580,000 at outturn. As agreed, no savings as a result of the new contract will be taken from the Somerset Waste Partnership until all roll out costs have been fully funded and breakeven point is reached.
- Waste disposal costs are forecast to underspend by £332,000 this is down to waste volumes changes and the mix of the different waste streams being different to the budgeted assumptions. We have seen significant increases in dry recycling, food and residual waste at the kerbside and the forecast anticipates this trend will continue.
- The following SCC savings are built in to the 2020/21 budget totalling £361,100; 200,000 – Year 2 of the core services contract extension (previously agreed by the board in November 2018). £20,000 - Fly-tipping, £36,000 - Minimisation Cap, £105,100 – Slim my Waste, Feed my Face food campaign. This shortfall, as a result of Covid-19, has been funded through MHCLG Covid-19 funding.
- The current estimates are Mendip 0.64%, Sedgemoor 0.91%, South Somerset 0.72% and Somerset West and Taunton 0.50%. Inflation for the collection contract is 0.33% based on the basket of indices in the contract.
- There is a one-off cost included for additional fleet maintenance/refurbishment on the small number of refuse trucks which

transferred from Kier to Suez, the value of which is still subject to final negotiations with Suez.

- the County Council is requesting savings from the Somerset Waste Board of £30,000 for 2021/22 and £324,000 for 2022/23 AD contract review £30,000 in 2021/21 (no customer impact). The standstill cost for the disposal budget is therefore £1,455,500, an increase of 4.9% on the original 2020/2021 budget.
- The above budget excludes the costs of the roll out of Recycle More during 2021/22. This will be funded from the Recycle More Project Fund and where appropriate capital monies. No savings as a result of the new contract will be taken from the Somerset Waste Partnership until all roll out costs have been fully funded.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green provided a verbal update on the GDPR Internal Audit Report. Lucy Wilkins is the Data Protection Officer for Somerset County Council and Somerset Waste Partnership. Audit reports come to the board and as part of the commitment to transparency a report on GDPR was requested in light of the new complex piece of legislation that has been implemented. Somerset Waste Partnership has undergone a transformation in implementing a CRM system connecting with the contractors new system and to meet partners requirements for data to flow through partner organisations and into the SWP system onto SUEZ and Vidor

The Panel asked a number of questions; the use of the NSL Staff at the household Waste Recycling Centres whether NSL through the County Council charge that to the Somerset Waste Partnership or as a support in kind; is there a cash flow implication on Recycle More or not; clarification around the government Covid funding and what it covers; is there any cash flow implication on Recycle More; confirmation on the word deficit being used; is the communication based on 4G or the internet and are their 'dead spots'; regarding the GDPR Report -is it up to date and the disclaimer on the District websites.

It was explained NSL enforcement parking staff were in kind deployed and paid for in the County budget at no cost to Somerset Waste partnership. The main cost in terms of the recycling site closures and management of the reopening was for the officers that were stationed on the highway and as they had to be highway trained. Recycle More has additional costs of the roll out which are being funded though the project funds which will go into deficit and will be paid back over until we reach that breakeven point. Partners can then take their savings after the breakeven point. Somerset County Council will hold that deficit and will then in effect take the savings to cover that until it reaches that zero breakeven point and then at that point the savings can be taken by the partners. . The communication is based on 4G and there are some 'dead spots. The devices are uploaded before they leave the depot and the device will update when it has access to 4G. For the GDPR report

SWP are on track with the action points and working with partners in regards to the disclaimer for the public to know where the information is going.

The Panel requested the key milestones reached on the audit report on GDPR to be brought to the panel within the regular Performance report update.

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the following recommendations in this report. That the Somerset Waste Board:

1) noted the summary financial performance for 2020/2021 as contained in this report, and how this will impact on the budgetary requirements for 2021/2022.

2) approved a Draft Budget of £47,015,858 for 2021/2022 for partner authority consultation, as set out in section 3.0 below, taking into account the potential savings requests from the County Council as set out in paragraph 3.2.

3) Noted the findings of the Internal Audit report on GDPR and the actions being undertaken to address the findings.

85 Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan 2021-2026– Agenda Item 8

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green to provide a verbal update on the Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan 2021-2026. The Somerset Waste Board is required to annually approve a rolling five-year business plan. The report seeks approval to the draft business plan for consultation. It also reminded the board about changes to how garden waste payments would be taken in future and informed the board about delegations that SWP sought from partner authorities to underpin SWP enforcement capabilities.

The following was highlighted:

- The constitution requires an annual Business Plan to be formally adopted by the Board to provide a framework within which the Board can make decisions and steer the delivery of Waste Partnership services. The process of review is continuous, but it contains a snapshot of where SWP is now, the things that have a major impact on the organisation, resources/budget, and SWP priorities.
- SMG were consulted over the Summer and the Board and the Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel were consulted on the approach at their meetings in December. Formal consultation with partners is planned as follows:
7 January 2021 South Somerset District Council Executive, 11 January 2021 Mendip District Council Cabinet, 20 January 2021 Somerset County

Council Cabinet, 20 January 2021 Somerset West and Taunton Executive and 27 January 2021 Sedgemoor District Council Executive.

- Whilst it is an iteration of the previous Business Plan, there is much change beyond the roll-out of Recycle More, having transitioned away from landfill, and having set wider objectives through the work on the Climate Emergency strategy.
- Outcomes under which the plan is structured:
 - Delivering Excellent Services:
 - Changing behaviours:
 - Tackling climate change:
 - Building our capability:
- Key areas of the activity in the draft business plan -Waste reduction, promoting reuse, recycling, decarbonising residual waste, decarbonising operations, tackling non-household waste, working with others, improving the customers experience, supporting wider goals in Somerset and enabling activities.
- Garden Waste - in the current (2020-25) Business Plan it sets out that Somerset Waste Partnership will centralise garden waste payments to improve the customer experience and enable residents to sign up for a year at any time, and remove the need for garden waste stickers. The change in how payments are handled will not result in any reduction in income to District Council partners, simply in who processes the income and the timing of income receipts with District partners. Somerset Waste Partnership have managed garden waste income successfully for Mendip District Council in 2020, and this pilot has provided confidence in implementing this for other partners.
- Refreshing the policy on advice, support and enforcement. The existing Enforcement Policy was adopted by the Somerset Waste Board in December 2015, a technical issue regarding the legal delegations has meant that SWP do not currently have the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. The aim is to give SWP the ability to take enforcement action as a last resort for the very small minority who persistently refuse to engage or cooperate. This policy will be brought to the Board for approval in Spring 2021 once we have the necessary delegated powers. Through the normal reporting processes, the Board will be updated on the use of these powers and the effectiveness of the advice, support and enforcement.

The Panel asked about the contract with the current Recycle More system that expires in September 2022; are Somerset Waste Partnership staying with the same system or is that an opportunity to look for something that might be more effective for the future?

It was explained is yet is to be reviewed and there were different options to look at. Somerset Waste Partnership would need to carry out further procurements and review the forecast and find the best solution.

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the following recommendations in this report. It was agreed to recommend that the Somerset Waste Board:

1. Approved the draft Business Plan 2021-2021 for consultation

2. Noted the changes to how garden waste payments will be made in 2021, as previously agreed by the board

3. Noted that SWP will be asking District Council partners to renew their delegation of powers to underpin SWP's Advice, Support & Enforcement Policy.

86 **Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan**– Agenda Item 9

The Panel agreed the current Somerset Waste Board Forward Work Plan

87 **Any Other Urgent Items of Business** - Agenda Item 10

There was none.

(The meeting ended at 3.54pm)

CHAIR