

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 10th February at 2.00 pm.

Present: Cllr A Trollope-Bellow (Chair), 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 C Hull

Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were none declared.

Minutes from the Previous Meeting on 2nd December 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 3 October 2020 to December 2020. This report summarises the key performance indicators for the period from October 2020 to December 2020 and compares these to the same period last year.

The following was highlighted:

- Business Plan: Recycle More had been successfully implemented in Mendip following completion of the remodelled Evercreech Depot which opened in mid-October 2020.
- Waste Minimisation: Overall household arisings were down by almost 950 tonnes, or 0.54% compared to the same period in 2019-20. This was made up of an increase in kerbside arisings of just over 6,600 tonnes and a reduction at recycling centres of slightly over 7,550 tonnes
- It is worth noting that the response of people in Somerset to how they look after their waste during lockdown has been favourable compared to the national average (data from NAWDO spell out), with kerbside refuse going up by less than average and recycling (particularly food) going up by more:

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- Recycling: Recycling rate remained below that of Q3 last year at 52.76% (1.62% lower than 2019-20), a result of the ongoing effects of Covid-19.
- End use: SWP continues to see strong demand from UK based reprocessors for the high-quality materials we collect. In Q3 just over 97.0% of materials stayed in the UK, with the amount that was reprocessed in Somerset also being more than 54.0%.
- Missed collections: There was a decrease in missed collections in Q3, compared to Q2 (0.419 per 1,000 collections against 0.588 in Q2), which shows the successful outcome of the work put into reducing this number by both SWP and SUEZ staff
- Risk: In addition to the corporate risk register there are detailed risk registers for Recycle More and Covid-19.
- GDPR: As agreed at the December Board there will be a report to the Board at each meeting on progress in implementing the agreed actions that resulted from the internal audit

A Panel member asked a question regarding the quarter 4 position and collections complaints

It was explained the number of cases of missed collections in Mendip area is decreasing. There were various different reasons for staff sickness for example at the beginning of the week staff had been contacted via the Covid track and trace and had to self-isolate but it was uncertain if this information was correct or there was a time lag in the system. SWP has seen particular pressure and depending on the type of work it was much harder to cover in some roles for example a significant number of drivers affected has had an impact on collections.

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

The Chair invited Strategic Finance Manager Christian Evans to provide a verbal update on the financial performance against the approved Annual Budget for the first 9 months of the current financial year from April to the end of December.

The following was highlighted:

- Overall, the end of December position shows that the Somerset Waste Partnership budget is forecast to be overspent by £18,000 (0.04% of the current budget).
- Covid-19 costs are being charged to all partners as appropriate so are not included in the reported forecast outturn position. All partners include

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these Covid-19 costs on their individual MHCLG returns. The total Covid-19 additional spend for Somerset Waste Partnership committed as at the end of December is £2,984,300 (£698,000 SCC, £2,286,300 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.

- The collection position is £134,000 underspent, which is an improvement of £54,000 from the £80,000 underspend reported at the December Board, this does however still include some elements that through ongoing analysis of recycle more spend will be attributable to the recycle more reserve as agreed previously by the board.
- The waste disposal figure as at the end of December showed an overspend of £151,000 which is an adverse movement on the figures reported to the December Board of an underspend of £332,000.
- The Annual Budget reflects the latest information regarding garden waste customers, bulky collections, containers and other contract cost changes.
- The SCC savings built in to the 2020/21 budget total £361,100. All these savings have either been made or are on target to be achieved by the end of the financial year except for 20% of the Slim my Waste, Feed my Face saving.
- . 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.
- The prices which recycle is achieving have dropped significantly since the = original forecasts and so despite more recycling and keeping 98% of it in the UK, it is likely that this means that anticipated breakeven point forecast for quarter 2 of 2022/23 will slip later in the 2022/23 financial year

The Panel asked a few questions including

Further explanation on the County and district recycling credits.

The Strategic Finance Manager explained the recycling credits showed that £471,000 was what the County Council had to pay to the districts for all of the recycling. Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director confirmed a large proportion of the garden waste income received was prior to 1st April which was returned to Mendip District Council as part of their surplus at outturn for 2019/20. There will be a change to this in future because the garden waste payment will be managed centrally. Work is still ongoing and reviewing the model understanding the approach for recycling credits.

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the report and recommended that the Somerset Waste Board:

- **Note the summary financial performance for 2020/2021 to date as contained in this report, and how this will impact on the budgetary requirements for 2021/2022.**

- **Approve a final budget of £47,045,658 for 2021/2022 as set out in Appendix 1 taking into account the savings requests from the County Council as set out in paragraph 3.2.**

90 **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 draft Business Plan for partner consultation was approved by the Somerset Waste Board (SWB) on 4th December 2020. This report updates the board on the partner consultation and seeks approval to the final Business Plan 2021-26.

The following was highlighted:

- The consultation undertaken in the table is shown in 3.1.
- Somerset Waste Partnerships business plan explains how SWP will work towards their Vision over the next five years, with a particular focus on next year. It contains three outcomes, beneath which sit a range of inter-linked activities which contribute to these outcomes:
- SWP/Suez leased supervisor vans initially so that advantage could be taken of maturing technology to procure electric vans suitable for operation across Somerset.
- Suez asked for nomination to national charity and agreed to donate to the chosen charity Raft charity £500 and £1500 to Waste Aid and there was also a suggestion from staff in Somerset that some funding is given to a local children's hospice.

The Panel asked a number of questions including;

There has been debate about the energy from waste reduction and carbonising and whether the carbon capture and storage technology would be beneficial; when will there be a reduction in; what is the recycling rate target for the Somerset waste partnership in 2030;; The environmental challenges SWP ability to implement and whether this is financially related or not; Suez are the subject of a hostile takeover bid by Veolia and Viridor's owners (KKR) are restructuring their business. How will this effect SWP; Will SWP benefit from battery operated vehicles:

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director explained SWP priority to reduce waste and decarbonize however there will be an increase in plastic over time. The plan is to make the Avonmouth plant as efficient as possible to capture the carbon. The science behind this is and the practicalities involved as well as sharing data on emissions will be in place for an update at June's meeting. In terms of a target for recycling rate in 2030, primarily because of the delays in national consultation this is currently delayed , there will be a focus on carbon

intensive materials rather than just heavy materials. SWP report quarterly updates on end use to the board

SWP are a small team 20 to 25 with limits on what can be done. SWP have agreed with Suez we will use funds to support with the development of an EU strategy to have no further delays. At the moment SWP are working on a business case for an electrical fleet with considerations about money, carbon power and creative thinking to overcome barriers. There is uncertainty of the outcome with Vidor and Suez, SWP standards will still be maintained whether there are different owners and the contract is sufficiently robust to cover a wide range of different scenarios.

Trials for electric battery powered refuse vehicles are taken place. A Suez representative would be coming to a future meeting to talk more about this. The developments in this area were being followed closely so that a decision to move into this area would happen when it would be best for Somerset.

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the report and recommended that the Somerset Waste Board:

- **Notes and considers feedback from the partner consultation process as set out in paragraph 3.1**
- **Approves the Business Plan 2021-2026, noting the significant ongoing risk of Covid-19 to implementation of the Business Plan**

91 Somerset Waste Partnership Advice and Support and Enforcement Policy

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green to provide a verbal update on the Advice and Support and Enforcement. The report set out the proposed steps to approve and implement it.

The following was highlighted:

- With the start of the new collection contract there were more options to identify issues and provide advice and support to residents, helping to resolve problems before they become serious issues:
- Use of in-cab technology - Crews can identify, photograph and record all resident non-conformances with the service rules, such as contaminated recycling, excess waste and additional unauthorised bins.
- The systems can record how many times a customer has been tagged (where the customer needs to take action) and if the customer is tagged multiple times for the same issue within a period of time then a letter can be sent and an officer visit arranged to help the customer overcome their difficulties.
- Once the Policies are approved by SWB, then the final sign off for the delegations can happen at the Districts and the Advice, Support and Enforcement policies will start being used. This does not mean that officers will immediately start issuing fixed penalty notices, as before this can

happen, there needs to be a strong, clear evidence trail of persistent problems, and efforts that have been made to resolve them.

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the the report and recommended Somerset Waste Board note the progress made and agreed the proposed approach for sign off.

92 **Recycle More Update**

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green to provide a verbal update on Recycle More. The first phase of Recycle More was rolled out to around 52,000 homes in Mendip on 26 October as planned. This report set out the successful roll-out, lessons learnt, and updated on the approach to future roll-out phases, noting that risks remain (especially due to Covid-19).

The following was highlighted:

- Updated tonnage figures for the first 8 weeks of Recycle More were set out. This eight-week period runs to Sunday 20th December, to avoid data which include the post-Christmas period, as it wouldn't provide an accurate picture on the impact of Recycle More alone.
- Every time SWP has rolled out a major service change it has phased the changes as it is not practical or desirable to make a change to 250,000 households recycling and waste collection services at one time.
- As agreed by the Board in July 2020, communal properties in Mendip were not included within phase 1, but the plan to extend the range of materials that can be recycled on 8 March 2021 (adding plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays and ensuring all can recycle cardboard, on top of paper, glass and metal existing recycling). For phases 2-4 there will be a roll-out of communal services at the same time as kerbside changes. This may need to be reviewed dependent upon the Covid-19 pressures on waste services nearer the time.
- Recycle More will ensure that all communal properties where there is space will be able to recycle glass, paper, metal cans, cardboard and plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays. Where properties use the existing kerbside food waste service this will be retained. The plans are for a roll out of the communal food waste service during 2022.
- There are a total of 3,270 households which are communal properties across 210 properties/sites – mostly flats, HoMOs and retirement developments.
- Most have communal collections from a shared space. Picked up when 80% full, usually every 2 weeks (some more often).
- SWP's website has had a dedicated page on Recycle More for many months, and content has been regularly updated and added to. It has been used to host information and guidance, video and animation content and an FAQ.

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The Panel discussed about the successful roll out in Mendip with Recycle more and the communication that had gone out ahead. It was asked about the confidence at Somerset Waste Partnership for the next phase and how prepared they are and also the challenges that SWP have had with the impact from COVID-19 in areas in relation to the track and track app. The problems that have occurred in the Frome area and to highlight to the local councillors so they can help with communicating information to residents ; How much the pandemic has affected the figures in the recycling rates.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director said lessons had been learnt with the Recycle more roll out and SWP are confident with the next phase. Officers were gathering together information for the briefing pack that will go to the members of South Somerset which will include some of those testimonials from councillors. In the Frome area it was particularly hard with significant numbers of absent staff or drivers and the difficulty of covering due the current situation with COVID-19.

SWP will send out a press release about COVID-19 and missed collections due to staff sickness or absence and how the community can help.

SWP Head of Communications and Engagement, Mark Ford explained the recycling figures shown in the presentation that had been taken during the pandemic made it difficult to isolate the difference Recycle More had made. . It would take 12 months to have more of an accurate idea of the effect on the recycling rates.

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considered and commented on the report and recommended that the Somerset Waste Board:

- **note the successful progress made in implementing Recycle More,**
- **note the update on planning for future roll-out phases (and the ongoing risk due to Covid-19)**
- **agree to defer the roll-out to Somerset's schools given the impact of Covid-19**

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

The Panel agreed the current Somerset Waste Board Forward Work Plan

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

There was none.

(The meeting ended at 3.17pm)

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CHAIR