

JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL OF THE SOMERSET WASTE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of the Somerset Waste Board held via Microsoft Teams on 09th February 2022 at 2.00pm

Present: Cllr A Trollope-Bellow (Chair), Cllr B Hamilton, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr J Hassall, Cllr A Boyden

Other Members Present: None

Apologies for Absence: Cllr R Bastable

105 **Declarations of Interest** – Agenda Item 2

There were no Declarations of Interest.

106 **Minutes from the Previous Meeting**–Agenda Item3

The Panel agreed the minutes from 9th December 2021 as an accurate record.

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

There were no public questions.

108 **Financial Performance Update 2021/2022 and Final Budget 2022/2023** The Chair invited Strategic Finance Manager, Christian Evans, to provide a presentation and update.

The following was highlighted:

- The Annual Budget for 2021/2022 was originally set at the Board meeting of 12 February 2021 at £47,045,658, a carry forward for £112,900 was granted by Somerset County Council in year for delayed work with schools resulting in a revised budget of £47,158,558.
- Inflation for the collection contract had been calculated at 6.11%, using a 'basket of indices' which included labour, fuel, and CPI and reflected the % figure published by the Government in October 2021.
- Household growth figures were provided by each individual District partner. The average of those figures showed a growth of 0.99% which had been applied to the final budget.
- Household growth was based on the Household numbers provided by the district partners. Members were reminded that each collection partner would be charged according to their individual district housing growth.
- Garden waste was based on current subscriber numbers with an additional growth of 0.99% across all District Partners, reflecting household growth.

- Tonnes for recycling credits reflect housing growth applied for 2022/23 however that did not include the increased growth from Recycle More, which showed breakeven.
- Funding costs had been included for Photovoltaic Panels (PV) at the two main depots and the new electric refuse vehicle (e-RCV); this included a contract saving on diesel fuel costs against the lower cost of electric charging.
- Recycle More capital, ERCV, PV-practicalities and timing of installation, partial fleet, Recycle More break even.
- Members were reminded that the waste budget and actual costs, particularly disposal volumes and recycling credits, remained highly volatile, partly due to the impact of the pandemic.
- Members were reminded that SWP and SUEZ interpreted Force Majeure and Qualifying Change in Law clauses differently, in terms of how they applied to the impacts of Covid and the national driver shortage. SWP and SUEZ were currently in an informal dialogue to seek a commercial resolution to avoid a formal dispute.

The panel members asked the following questions: Materials suitable to go into the energy from waste plant; the EV vehicles and where they will be operating. Had there been any problems with the lease arrangement for the PV panels on the roof of buildings.

The managing director of Somerset Waste Partnership informed the panel that an information sheet would be circulated for what materials can go into energy from waste. Progress was still being made in regard to the electrical vehicle using its full potential, based on the current technology. The PV panel is still ongoing and would update further.

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

That the Somerset Waste Board: -

- **Notes the summary financial performance for 2021/2022 to date as contained in this report, and how this will impact on the budgetary requirements for 2022/2023.**
- **Approves a final budget of £48,902,332 for 2022/2023 as set out in Appendix 1 taking into account the savings included in the budget for both the Districts and the County Council as set out in section 3.**

109 **Performance Report Quarter 3 – October 2021 to December 2021**-The Chair invited Mickey Green to provide an update on the performance report for quarter 3.

The following was highlighted:

- Waste Minimisation: Overall household arisings were up by over 7,909 tonnes, or 4.46% compared to 2019-20, which may indicate reduced service disruption from the Pandemic and the growing effects of the continued roll-out of Recycle More.
- Recycling: Our recycling rate continues to improve compared to last year (up 4.34% to 56.98% from 52.64%), as well as showing a smaller increase over Q3 2019-20 (up 2.41% from 54.57%), used as a comparator unaffected by the pandemic.
- End use: Q3 2021-22 almost 100.0% of materials stayed in the UK, with the amount that was reprocessed in Somerset also remaining high at over 56.0%. This meant that just over 20 tonnes of recyclate were reprocessed outside of the EU, with all this material being plastics sent to Portugal and the Netherlands from Recycling Centres and Schools.
- Missed collections: We saw a decrease in missed collections in Q3, compared to Q2 (1.396 per 1,000 collections against 2.431 in Q2), with Q3 being the lowest of the three quarters reported so far in 2021-22.
- Risk: In addition to our corporate risk register we maintain detailed risk registers for Recycle More and Covid-19. Risks have also been updated to reflect those largely relating to the impacts of the national driver shortage. Additionally, the risk of recyclate being dumped inappropriately has decreased as we are now exporting very little.
- Viridor's sale to Biffa does not involve the sale of any SWP assets, nor does it change the service levels required under the contract or have any cost implications.
- Suez/Veolia: Veolia and Suez have announced that they signed a combination agreement on 14 May 2021, following approval by their respective Boards of Directors of the latest terms for their merger. Progress on the global/international transaction has concluded but this does not include the UK. The UK Competition and Markets Authority recently announced a second more detailed review of the proposed merger and its effects on competition in the UK waste industry. CMA approval is unlikely to be granted until mid-2022.

Mickey shared a presentation and highlighted the impact of omicron and the proactive communications ahead of Christmas and the set-up business continuity structure straight after Christmas. Daily members messages post-Christmas and also the 5% covid absence that impacted the recycle round and a very wide range of services distributed. The graphs show that the complaints reduction continues and highlighted the key focus of activity.

The panel members asked the following questions: the recycle rates and how they are compared nationally. An observation on plastic within Recycle More if it was measured on volume, it would be higher in the rates. The customer interaction has been mentioned raising issues within the central of Yeovil and recently red labels

have appear and cross contamination has happened. Does SWP collect plastic from the supermarket.

Mickey informed the panel that in the comparative data SWP are within the top 20 for recycling weight and top 10 on the carbon savings. Recycle More roll out will increase in terms of the recycling rate.

The recycling containers and engaging with residents and landlords. SWP currently don't have enforcement powers and currently liaise with the districts.

SWP do not use red labels. Biffa use red labels to tag a commercial waste that is not paid for and asked the panel member for more information about the area for SWP to investigate. It was confirmed that SWP currently do not collect from supermarket as the supermarkets work together under the UK plastic packs.

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

- **Notes the performance results in the third Quarter 2021-22 Performance Report**

110 **Recycle More update** - Agenda item 7

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Head of Communications and Engagement Mark Ford to provide an update on Recycle More. Recycle More has been rolled out to three areas: Mendip (October 2020), South Somerset (June 2021) and Taunton Deane (Nov 2021). The fourth and final phase is due to bring the service to households across Sedgemoor and West Somerset at the end of February 2022. The report provides the progress update from Mendip, South Somerset and Taunton Deane and the update on preparation for the final phase of the kerbside roll-out programme and plans to roll-out to schools and the final tranche of communal properties.

The following was highlighted:

- Moving waste from rubbish bins to recycling is a key objective of Recycle More. In the longer-term reducing waste overall is the ultimate aim and future reporting (see 1.3) will include residual (rubbish/refuse) tonnages.
- The impact of Covid on home-working and domestic waste has been dramatic and coincided with the change of collection contract and roll-out of Recycle More. This complicates the picture considerably, making it more difficult to precisely isolate the effects of the new service.
- The initial calculations, using the 30-week period before each service change as the baseline, suggest Recycle More is reducing residual waste by around 20% nearly 80kg per household, or around 1.5kg per week.

- The recycling tonnages figures in the report for the current areas that have had Recycle More roll-out.
- Every primary school in each of the Recycle More phases has now been offered a free visit by the Carymoor team to support the roll-out of the service. From September 2020 to date (19 January 2022), the Schools Against Waste team has visited 30 schools in Mendip, 37 in South Somerset and 18 in Somerset West and Taunton. A further 12 bookings have been confirmed so far – seven in Sedgemoor and five in Somerset West and Taunton.
- The dedicated recycle-more page on the SWP webpage has been updated and at time of writing was seeing steadily increasing traffic which we expect to jump in later January and through February.

The panel members asked the following questions: a comment was made about the communications and how it was dealt with immediately. The engagement with schools and focusing on teaching the understanding of Recycle More is fantastic. At the end of this financial year how many households in total will be served by recycle more and how it has been received nationally across counties and District councils. The mixer of recycling of paper and cardboard at the kerbside in Frome should this be happening.

Somerset Waste Partnership Head of Communications and Engagement Mark Ford informed the panel that at the end of this financial year it should be 260,000 households minus above 5000 communal areas as that roll-out will be June/ July.

Mickey informed the panel that there are others that have also done this, however SWP Recycle More roll-out shows reduction in residual waste and achieving the level of savings. 20% less rubbish at the same time as saving £2 million and or the carbon savings and do it through a pandemic is impressive for SWP. Mickey will be passing on the information about paper and cardboard to Suez about the mixing of waste at the kerbside.

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

- **notes the progress made in implementing Recycle More and the risks to the programme**

111 SWP- Business Plan 2022 - 27– Agenda Item 8

The Chair invited Mickey Green to summarise the report and plan. The draft Business Plan for partner consultation was approved by the Somerset Waste Board (SWB) on

10th December 2021. This report updates the board on the partner consultation and seeks approval to the final Business Plan 2022-27.

The following was highlighted:

- SWP submitted a bid effectively for a reuse and repair truck focused on waste electrical equipment, encouraging and helping SWP link more with the community groups. SWP currently are reaching out and normalize that and spread that across the county and confirm that SWP have been successful.
- Action 3.1 of the Business Plan 2022-27 sets out SWP ambition for further plastic kerbside collection. SWP has accordingly applied to be part of a trial, likely to start in the second half of 2022, to trial the collection of flexible plastics and films at the kerbside. A paper will be brought to the June Board setting out the planned trial approach in more detail prior to SWP agreeing participation and signing a project and funding agreement. If successful SWP will be one of 9 Local Authorities nationwide to be part of the trial. Local authorities will be selected in order to represent a range of different 'DNAs' (profiling of various factors such as social demographics, geographies, GDP and social factors), collection systems (kerbside sort, source segregated, twin stream and co-mingled) and operators (outsourced and in house).

Mark informed the panel that communications will be sent out about the reuse truck and raise awareness within the community and opportunities to submit a name for the truck and SWP have had lots of engagement around this. Also, virtual meetings are currently happening, and the truck will be attending events and able to Pac test electricals and on the road before the summer.

The panel members asked the following questions: what the definitions of are recycle risk. Where will the information about the reuse electrical truck.

Mark informed the panel that the information will be provide on the website in due course and will liaise with a panel member about setting up an event later in the year.

Mickey informed the panel all the material over the year is sold and other trends impact on prices and can be very volatile and Suez is responsible the budget and SWP may not get as much money.

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

That the Somerset Waste Board: -

- 1. Notes and considers feedback from the partner consultation process as set out in paragraph 3.1 and as verbally updated at the meeting.**
- 2. Approves the Business Plan 2022-2027, noting the significant ongoing risks to implementation of the Business Plan.**
- 3. Notes the approach proposed to the trial of collecting soft plastic from the kerbside as set out in section 4.1.**

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

The Panel agreed the current Somerset Waste Board Forward Work Plan

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

(The meeting ended at 3.22pm)

CHAIR