

## SOMERSET WASTE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Somerset Waste Board held in a Virtual Meeting on Friday 25 September 2020 at 10:00 am

**Present:** Cllr S Dyke (Chair), Cllr C Paul (Vice Chair), Cllr T Ronan, Cllr J Keen, Cllr D Hall, Cllr T Kerley, Cllr D Mansell Cllr S Wakefield.

**Other Members present:** Cllr T Munt.

1 **Apologies for Absence** - Agenda Item 1

An apology was received from Councillor A Gilling.

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

There were no new declarations.

3 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 July 2020** – Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed by a vote of the Board as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

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

There were no public questions received by the deadline of 21 September 2020, and no members of the public were present.

5 **Performance Report Q1 2020/2021** – Agenda Item 5

The Chair invited Mickey Green to provide an update on the Performance Report Quarter 1 2020/2021. The report summarised the key performance indicators for the period from April 2020 to June 2020 and compared these to the same period last year.

Mickey highlighted the following:

- The new timetable for the Recycle More scheme
- Continuing Waste Services had been challenging during Covid-19, but key issues had been resolved.
- The key indicators set out big variations due to Covid-19 (for example, household waste was reportedly down 14%), but many areas reported improved numbers, such as 99.6% of recycling staying in the UK, which was by far the best quarter achievement.

- There had been challenges with missed collections, but this figure was improved with Suez compared to the previous contractor, there were weekly meetings with Suez to help ameliorate this.
- The main risks were Covid-19, the delayed rollout of Recycle More, and health and safety (there was a death at a Highbridge site due to a medical condition); there would now be defibrillators installed at every site though this would not have prevented this very unfortunate incident.
- The key focus would be on Recycle More and My Waste Services; national consultations were expected next spring; with much work to be done with Suez regarding missed collections and complaints.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised:-

- The Board thanked Mickey for his report and shared sadness for the death of a member of public at the Highbridge site. It was acknowledged that the fatality was not as a result in any way of the operation of the site.
- The Board commended the continued running of services taking into account the change of contract and covid-19 impact.
- Members were aware of an increase in fly tipping, which had spiked in some areas, this was recognised as an inevitable consequence of the impact of the pandemic.
- The instances of missed collections had been below what was experienced with the previous provider – more details were requested in the performance around missed collections. Garden waste had received the most significant numbers of complaints due to the temporary postponement of this service.
- Recycling and waste collections had continued throughout.
- Work in handling complaints was smooth where possible and was included in weekly performance meetings to improve services.
- Further supplies of recycling and refuse container deliveries were expected, supplies of these had been impacted due to Covid-19, combined with very high demand.

**The Board resolved to note the performance results in the First Quarter 2020/21 Performance Management Report.**

**6 Finance Update Q1 2020/2021 and Initial Budget for 2021/2022- Agenda Item 6**

The Chair invited Sarah Rose to provide an update on the Financial Performance Update 2020-2021. The report set out the financial performance

against the approved Annual Budget for the first 4 months of the current financial year (April to the end of July), and a forecast outturn position and the formal commencement of the budget setting process that would ultimately lead to the Annual Budget for 2021/2022.

The following was highlighted:

- The Annual Budget for 2020/2021 was originally set at the Board meeting of 14 February 2020 at £47,894,210.
- Overall, the end of July position set out the Somerset Waste Partnership budget was forecast to be overspent by £2,205,000 (4.6% of the original budget), albeit on relatively limited actual costs in the year to date. This did not include the Recycle More roll out costs, which was accounted for separately.
- The position included the financial impacts of Covid-19. All partners were aware of these financial pressures and included them on their individual MHCLG returns. All costs totalling £953,700 were funded through Somerset County Councils MHCLG Covid19 funding.
- For District Partners there was a total of £2,376,000 of Covid-19 related additional expenditure. This was due to the delay of the roll out of Recycle More (£1,826,000) and additional collection costs which included some support vehicles and validation of Suez's costs by Eunomia (£550,000).
- Waste Collection estimated figures for the collection partners indicated a potential combined £2,253,000 overspend across the 4 partners at this stage. There were still some unknowns which could impact the outturn position such as the demand for replacement containers and the use of the bulky waste collection service.
- The Recycle More project was kept separate from the continuation budget. At the end of 2019/20 the project balance was a deficit of £140,000. It was anticipated that during 2020/21 £2,233,000 will be spent on the roll out of the Recycle More project which would leave an anticipated deficit of £2,373,000 at outturn. Updates would be considered at the Board through the year as roll out commenced.
- Waste disposal costs were forecast to underspend by £48,000, this was down to waste volumes being less than budgeted. The most significant areas seeing a reduction is recycling centres and green waste at both kerbside and recycling centres. This reduction was in part offset by an overspend on head office costs (£105,000).
- The indicative Annual Budget for 2021-2022 set out the inflation and growth assumptions. During 2021/22 there would be roll out costs for Recycle More which will be managed outside of the 'core' Somerset Waste Partnership budget.

- The budget excluded the costs of the roll out of Recycle More during 2021/22.

Members were provided with an update of the Audit plan shown in Appendix A detailing the delay and impact of Covid-19. The following was also highlighted: previous decisions, 2020-2021 audit plan and the follow up to audit, data quality part one, data quality part two and the GDPR audit.

There was also an update to the Board in relation to Appendix B, and the truck cartel. Members were reminded that the European Commission had discovered the existence of a truck cartel, which was detrimental to some; therefore, it became possible to attempt to recover the costs arising.

In 2018 it was decided to go with the LGA scheme, but that turned out not to be as advertised, so other options were examined, the short list was set out in the table. After consideration, it was recommended to go with the Edwin Coe scheme.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised: -

- The Board questioned how the deficit would be funded, the deficit was held by SCC and as the rollout progressed this would pay back the deficit.
- Any underspends at outturn would be brought to the SWB in July, this was accounted for separately to SCC budgets.
- Quantum defences could mean that the recovery is reduced. There was the option to pull out and cut losses if determined recovery unachievable which was a valuable option

The Board then considered the confidential Appendix C regarding Kier and passed a resolution under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The minutes for this section are in a confidential Annex to the main minutes.

**The Board RESOLVED to:**

- i) Note the summary financial performance for 2020/2021 to the end of month 4 (April – July) and the potential outturn position for each partner authority.**
- ii) Consider the draft budget for 2021/2022 and the key factors that will influence the budget setting process.**

- iii) Approve the proposed approach to using our internal audit support as set out in Appendix A.**
- iv) Note the way forward regarding the Truck Cartel claim.**
- v) Note the confidential appendix regarding Kier.**

## 7 **Recycle More roll-out Timetable-** Agenda Item 7

SWP Communications Manager Mark Ford gave a presentation on recent communications and engagement and highlighted the following:

- Two leaflets were being sent to all households in Mendip, the first being sent out this week and the second from the 5<sup>th</sup> October as the pre-launch which would have more details and a collection day calendar.
- The blue bag would be delivered to residents in Mendip in October.
- If households went too long without a rubbish collection they would have an interim collection – this would be on the individual calendar each household was sent.
- The website had been updated and a dedicated page created where leaflets could be download and there are FAQs.
- Promotional material including displays, leaflets and posters had been produced.
- Online engagement included Facebook Q and A sessions, parish meetings talking café's, and Schools Against Waste virtual assemblies and workshops.
- Support that was available included the website information, customer services and online engagement.
- Requests for more container space due to collections moving to only three times a week could be handled by calling the district councils or using the website.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised: -

- Suez were less reliant on agency staff than the last contract provider, 18 agency staff had been transferred to employees of the service since the new operator took over the contract, it wasn't understood that any agency staff were on zero hours contracts
- Communal residences would be upgraded later than the initial phase of Recycle More, where possible users were encouraged to use the kerbside service with the aim to get this embedded in local plans where possible.
- The new recycling bag folded down and could be used on day of collection or stored to hold recycling during the week.

**The Board RESOLVED to note the progress made in implementing Recycle More.**

**8 Proposed Fees and Charges for 2021/2022 - Agenda Item 8**

The Chair invited Contracts Manager, Colin Mercer to provide an update on the Proposed Fees and Charges 2021/2022, the report sought members approval for fees and charges applied to waste services for which a charge may be made, for the financial year 2021/2022.

Colin highlighted there were slight differences this year for Viridor (2.6%) and Suez (3.0%) because of differences in the indices for the two contracts. There were large changes in the garden waste service because of the impact of Covid-19, with the service suspended and a rebate provided to users, which produced a claim on the relief fund.

There will be a change in approach to the Garden Waste service to enable people to sign-up for 12 months (rather than only accepting subscriptions for the financial year from 1<sup>st</sup> April. This should improve the customer experience and hopefully encourage more people to sign up. With respect to bulky collections, the service had been improved under the new contract and it was noted how our charges compared favourably to national commercial bulky waste collection schemes.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised: -

- Rolling year subscriptions introduced were considered a positive improvement.
- There was reflection on whether a 3% rise was too high
- Charges remaining consistent was the aim and this would be easier to administer due to the areas covered by the partnership.

**The Somerset Waste Board RESOLVED to agree to recommend the proposed charges for introduction from April 2021.**

**9 Outline of Business Plan 2021-2026 - Agenda Item 9**

The Chair invited Mickey Green to provide an update of the Outline of Business Plan 2021-2026. Mickey gave a presentation on the Somerset Waste Partnership Draft Business Plan for the period 2021 to 2026 that iterated through a number of meetings, starting in September with a discussion on priority areas and approach, a draft business plan which will be presented to the Board in December 2020, partner consultation in January and February with approval from the Board to the final business plan considered in February 2021. The vision and values

remained the same, with the key areas of focus being the delivery of excellent services, effecting a change in behaviour, and the building of capacity.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised: -

- Changing the commercial market was an ambition to have consistency between schools, households and commercial sector and to engage in collaborative procurement.
- Recycle More was a top priority, maximum environmental benefits would be a vision in the business plan
- There were additional benefits from Suez contracts and the local engagement programme, more information was requested on this. The programme was built on similar work in Oxfordshire and social value through the procurement process was a priority for the service.

**The Somerset Waste Board RESOLVED to:**

**(i) Approve the broad approach and proposed priority areas for inclusion in the Business Plan 2021-26 as set out in section 2 of the report.**

**(ii) Discuss and provided further ideas for any particular service changes, projects or programmes for potential inclusion in the Draft Plan to be approved for consultation at the December meeting.**

10 **Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan** - Agenda Item 10

The Somerset Waste Board noted the Forward Plan.

11 **Information Sheets Issued Since the Last Meeting** - Agenda Item 11

There were none.

12 **Any other urgent items of business** – Agenda Item 12

There were no other items of business. The Chair thanked all Members and Officers.

**(The meeting ended at 12:03 am)**

**CHAIR**