

## **Somerset Waste Board**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Somerset Waste Board held in Luttrell Room, County Hall on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September at 10am

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

### **Other Members Present:**

#### **95 Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received by Cllr A Sully and Cllr Darch is substituting

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

Cllr A Gilling declared an interest in Axe brew internal drainage board

None further declared.

#### **97 Minutes from the Previous Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 –Agenda Item 3**

The Panel agreed and the chair signed the minutes as an accurate record.

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

There were no public questions.

### **Feedback from Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Waste Board**

The Chair informed the Board that the Panel had a very robust meeting, and the following was highlighted.

- There was a long and constructive discussion on the finance update and the development of the annual budget, and the panel look forward to the draft budget in December's meeting.
- In the performance report members asked for extra information about the tonnages and about the materials that are shipped overseas, members were informed that it is reused for packaging for industries such as Amazon.
- Members were supported the recommendations in relation to the fees and charges.
- A discussion in regard to increasing reuse and repair in Somerset took place and it was highlighted the need to link to other facilities currently in operation around the County. Members were very supportive of the options put forward and looked forward to hearing about the outcome of the funding bid for these.
- The Panel supported the draft business plan, and it was highlighted the sensible approach to consolidate the work already underway.

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- The Panel would like to personally thank the hard work of officers at SWP year on year especially after the previous year of tackling the problems due to COVID and the introduction of Recycle More. It was noted that employees in public sector continued the work during this time with a much-increased workload.

The Chair invited Strategic Finance Manager Christian Evans to provide a verbal update on the financial performance. The report set out 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.

The following was highlighted:

- Somerset Waste Partnership budget is forecast to be overspent by £627,000. Estimated figures for the collection indicate a potential combined £351,000 overspend across the 4 District partners.
- Somerset County Council forecast is for an overspend of £277,000. This relates to increased waste volumes at the Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- The indicative budget requirements for 2022/2023. The inflation and growth assumptions are as listed in the table in point 3 of the report
- An adjustment is included to amend the inflation applied to the base prices at the start of the contract; this has a knock-on impact for both 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- Inflation for the collection contract has been calculated on 7% at this stage, this is a basket of indices which includes labour, fuel and CPI. It is difficult to forecast future inflation given the current climate with Covid-19. The actual contract inflation will be known before the final budget is set.
- Household growth is an indicative 0.79% across all District Partners, which is the average annual growth over the last 4 years.
- Garden waste is current shown with an indicative growth of 1% across all District Partners as with household growth this will be updated for actual customer numbers for each District before the budget is finalised.
- Breakeven point is anticipated to be in Quarter 3 of 2022/23. Savings included in the report are reflected in the breakeven point. Once breakeven point is reached, contract savings will be shared on the basis currently stated in the Inter Authority Agreement.

The Panel asked a few questions including on the table, noting that some of the budget lines have been underspend has this been factored into the overspend to balance them out.

Mickey Green provided an update about Somerset Waste Partnership currently trialling a refurbished electric refuse vehicle – a Dennis Eagle e-Collect built on a refurbished chassis. This vehicle will be present for members to view after the the

board meeting on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September. A full business case has been developed for the installation of Photovoltaic (PV) panels at the two depots SWP have sorting and baling facilities at a cost of £110k (inc 5% contingency). SWP have been discussing with partner s151s the possible funding routes for this vehicle and PV – noting that any partner that borrows capital will be entitled to a 1% return above the borrowing rate, and that all District partners would then share in the revenue cost of financing the borrowing in line with weighted household numbers.

### **That Somerset Waste Board:**

- 1. Note the summary financial performance for 2021/2022 to the end of month 4 (April – July) and the potential outturn position for each partner authority.**
- 2. Consider the draft budget for 2022/2023 and the key factors that will influence the budget setting process.**
- 3. Note the positive business case for an electric RCV and Photovoltaics at our two sorting and baling facilities, and the urgent need to clarify whether funding is available to progress these key business plan actions.**

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Contracts Manager, Colin Mercer to provide a verbal update on the performance report key performance indicators for the period from April 2021 to June 2021 compared to the same period last year.

The following was highlighted:

- Roll-out of Phase 3 of Recycle More is due to start in the late Autumn in Somerset West and Taunton (old Taunton Deane area), with planning already underway for this phase.
- Overall household arisings were up by just over 13,600 tonnes, or 23.33% compared to Q1 in 2020-21. However, the comparator was quite low compared to normal, due to the suspension of some collection services and the closure of recycling sites in Q1 of last year.
- Recycling rates had improved compared to Q1 last year (up 8.07% to 56.47% from 48.40%), as well as showing an increase over Q1 2019-20 (up 1.50% from 54.97%), used as a comparator unaffected by the pandemic.
- 97.0% of materials stayed in the UK, with the amount that was reprocessed in Somerset also remaining high at over 53.0%
- There was an increase in missed collections in Q1, compared to Q4 (1.548 per 1,000 collections against 0.902 in Q4).
- The high levels of missed collections continue to be the main area of focus with SUEZ at present.

Further information was provided a presentation which highlighted the following:

- Collection service disruption was caused by a number of factors including the national driver shortage, lockdown easing, and staff exhaustion and low morale were also among the regional pressures. Progress in improving the service since the end of Q1 was noted.
- Upskilling staff was currently happening- including training c.23 loaders as drivers and a further 15 applications taken. An employee referral scheme also formed part of the ongoing service recovery.

The Board asked a few questions including the driver requirement increasing; the energy from waste plant diagram does not include the carbon dioxide, whilst this is not a required test for EfW plants, SWP will discuss future reporting possibilities with Viridor. It was noted that the employees have worked extremely hard through the pandemic. The level of complaints is on page 21 of the report and has shown an increase reflecting the service pressures.

### **That Somerset Waste Board:**

#### **1. Notes the performance results in the First Quarter 2021-22 Performance Report.**

#### **101 Recycle More update- Agenda Item 7**

The Chair invited Colin Mercer to provide a verbal update on Recycle More. As highlighted to the Board in June the ongoing Covid19 pandemic adds to the risks of the roll-out programme, as does the driver shortage and associated pressures on service stability, and this did impact on the smoothness of the South Somerset roll-out.

The following was highlighted:

- The levels of missed collections dropped rounds and incomplete rounds (which has been too high but gradually falling as services stabilised) led to severe pressure on SSDC customer services.
- Mendip customer survey response totalling 1829 online responses.
- 84% of residents agreed that the new service is an improvement.
- Leaflets for residents in the Somerset West and Taunton area have been slightly to reflect learning from the survey response.
- Areas to develop and to include more information about were plastics, controlling litter and reminders about the 3-week collection days.
- The recycle more impact and the tonnages over 44 weeks in Mendip area and additional amount of recycling is being collected at the kerbside.
- Phase 3 will cover the former Taunton Deane area and phase 4 will cover Sedgemoor and former West Somerset.

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The Panel asked a few questions including any plans to have a survey after rolling out Recycle More in South Somerset; is soft plastic being considered in the future.

Mickey informed the board there will be a survey after the Recycle More roll-out has been completed in all areas, and that aspirations on soft plastics are reflected in the Business Plan.

### **That Somerset Waste Board:**

#### **1. Notes the progress made in implementing Recycle More and the risks to the programme.**

### 102 **Fees and Charges 2022/2023-** Agenda Item 8

The Chair invited Colin Mercer to provide a verbal update on Fees and Charges.

The following was highlighted:

- The contractual agreement with Viridor regarding charges at recycling centres allows Viridor to uplift charges for items such as rubble, tyres, gas bottles and commercial waste annually by the (Viridor) contracted inflation rate RPI this year is 1.37%. As these transactions are between Viridor and the customer, these services are cost neutral to the Council.
- The agreement with Suez regarding contract charges for the following financial year is applied from a basket of indices published in October in the year prior to the uplift.
- Primarily because of the level of service disruption suffered by garden waste customers in the last year, and partly because estimated inflationary pressures last year did not fully impact as much as predicted, it is recommended all charges relating to collection services are frozen at last year's levels.

The Panel asked a few questions including has there been any audit of fly tipping in relation to what is being charged at the recycle centre; Concerns about the cost of bulky waste collection and for potential customers could cause an issue; more information about how close the charges are to the cost of the service to partnerships.

Colin informed the board that there was an agreement that Somerset County Council when they made changes to the recycling centre, they would pay a contribution to the district council towards fly tipping. It appeared from the data changes to charges and changes to opening times at the Recycling Centres were not a significant factor in fly tipping incidents and this arrangement has been ceased. Fly tipping this year has gone up which is still being analysed. A number of factors such as closure of Recycling Sites, disruption to collection services and the withdrawal of commercial services during the pandemic would make it very difficult to attribute any one factor to this increase. Mickey informed the board

that a national report had recently been published by the Government which showed there was no correlation between charges at HWRCs and fly-tipping.

**That Somerset Waste Board:**

- 1. Agrees to recommend the proposed Charges for introduction from April 2022**

103 **Increasing reuse and repair in Somerset-** Agenda Item 9

The Chair invited Mickey Green to provide an update which included the results of a report commissioned to look into how reuse and repair can be increased across Somerset.

The following was highlighted:

- Three models were proposed by Resource Futures and further work would be needed to determine precise costs. Whilst the initial set up costs may be significant, the hope was that models will be self-sustaining in the future, allowing for minimal ongoing costs. SWP's focus is on working with and supporting community groups, not taking over from them.
- The funding bid has been submitted and SWP will be notified as to whether it has been successful at the end of the year. If successful, the project will take place in 2022. If it is not successful, option 3 will not proceed, unless identified as a preferred model by partners.
- SWP are positive about each option and would like to progress all three. Officers are looking for a steer from the Panel and Board as to the preferred approach, and this will be incorporated into the budget setting process and the business plan.

The Panel asked a few questions including to be provided with more information on reuse shops; Clarification on when someone takes something to the recycling centre who then owns that, the contractors or themselves. Colin informed to the board that the contractors then own the waste however Somerset Waste Partnership approve what they will do with it.

Mickey informed the board if SWP are not successful they would look at alternatives options there is a lot of reuse happening without SWP being involved and may this continue.

**That Somerset Waste Board:**

- 1. Comments on and approves the broad approach and proposed models for increasing reuse and repair.**
- 2. Discuss and provide a steer as to preferred options taking into account the indicative costs and budget setting process.**

**104 Somerset Waste Partnership Outline Business Plan 2022-2027-**Agenda Item 10

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green to provide an update on the Somerset Waste Partnership Draft Business Plan for the period 2022 to 2027. This will be 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 2021, partner consultation in January and February with approval from the Board to the final business plan sought in February 2022.

The following was highlighted:

- There will be a particular customer focus for SWP, both the recovery of customer confidence following the driver and loader shortages and the impact/opportunity of moving to a single customer service function for Somerset and how SWP prepares.
- Areas of the business plan will be fleshed out (particularly the approach to reuse, the subject of a separate paper to the Board), and an amendment to the timetable with the focus on customer service and a stable transition to a unitary authority
- Further national consultations were undertaken in Spring 2021 on Deposit Return Schemes, Extended Producer Responsibility and collection consistency (including free garden waste and possible minimum service standards).

**That Somerset Waste Board:**

- 1. Comments on and approves the broad approach and proposed priority areas for inclusion in the Business Plan 2022-27 as set out in section 2 of the report.**
- 2. Discuss and provide 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**

**105 Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan–** Agenda Item 11

The Panel agreed the current Somerset Waste Board Forward Work Plan

**106 Information Sheets Issued since the last meeting-** Agenda Item 12

There were none.

107 **Any Other Urgent Items of Business** - Agenda Item 13

There was none.

(The meeting ended at 12.00pm)

**CHAIR**