

SOMERSET WASTE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Somerset Waste Board held In the Luttrell Room at County Hall Taunton on the 23rd of September at 10.00am

Present: Cllr D Mansell, Cllr F Smith-Roberts, Cllr T Kerley, Cllr A Gilling, Cllr J Keen, Cllr P Goater and Cllr T Ronan (Vice-Chair)

Other Members Present: Cllr Sarah Wakefield and Cllr Tom Deakins

1. Apologies for Absence:

No Apologies received. Cllr Sarah Dyke

2. Declarations of Interest- Agenda Item 2

3. Minutes from the previous meeting- Agenda Item 3

The Panel agreed the minutes from 24th June 2022 as an accurate record.

4. Public Question Time- Agenda Item 4

There were no public questions.

5. Energy from Waste: Carbon Capture and Utilisation & Storage- Agenda Item 5

The Chair invited David Oaten Somerset Waste Partnerships Contracts Manager to provide an update on the energy from waste: Carbon capture, utilisation and Storage.

The following was highlighted:

- The report clearly sets out the development works taking place by Viridor, in order to reduce the carbon impact of Energy from Waste operations in the UK, including the part that the Avonmouth EfW plant and Somerset's residual waste plays in that plan.
- The New Waste Treatment Facility Contract (NWTF) for the treatment of Somerset's residual household waste was signed with Viridor Waste Management Ltd in March 2017, commencing in April 2020, for a term of 25 years (extendable by 5 years).

- Somerset's total residual household waste totalled 110,900 tonnes during 2021/22, with the remaining 8,200 tonnes (7.4%) having been diverted to landfill, this being the non-viable EfW material such as mattresses or high carbon items such as UPVC window frames, most of which is subject to our Business Plan aspirations (Item 3.2) for increasing recycling.
- The plan is to remove all viable plastic fractions from the mixed household residual waste, that is delivered to Walpole, and to source recycling routes for that extracted material.
- Viridor has partnered with CCUS specialist Aker Carbon Capture for the delivery of the five modular plants. Aker Carbon Capture's plug-and-play CCUS solutions are based on the company's proprietary and carbon capture technology, which it has developed over the past 20 years.
- Developing the modular CCUS plants on the five EfW sites combined with two planned bespoke CCUS plants, would deliver c.1.5 MT CO₂ savings a year, meeting 15% of the Government's 2030 emissions reduction target (removal of 10m tonnes of CO₂ by 2030 from hard to decarbonize industries).
- The recent announcement is the latest phase of Viridor's decarbonization plan. In May 2020 Viridor outlined a five-step action plan to net zero emissions by 2040, and the ambition to be the first net negative emissions waste and recycling company in the UK by 2045.

The Chair introduced Dr Tim Rotheray to provide a presentation on Decarbonising waste.

The followed was highlighted:

- Decarbonising the UK waste sector graph showing an assessment of Net Zero and a breakdown of the waste sector emissions.
- Viridor's route to net zero and beyond from reduce the direct emissions from all their operation such as landfill, transport, buildings and infrastructure through to supplying more homes and business with clean heat.
- ERF Fossil Carbon Footprint the energy recovery facilities are the majority of Viridor emissions and the vast majority of those being fossil emissions. The combustion of fossil derived waste that are plastics.
- Improving the collection of polymers, encouraged from government under the consistent collections regulations to bring in as well as collection of plastic rigid plastic also to include flexible plastic.
- Industrial Carbon Capture models, the government has committed to carbon capture and climate change and the government with fund the pipe work to take the CO₂ through a regulated model.

- Viridor identified the net zero emissions and commissioned a report to nomia.
- 15 energy recovery facilities, all close to sites which could do shipping. Viridor's shipping of CO2 and calculated that energy recovery facilities have long term contracts. The constant source of CO2 has the opportunity to offer some of the lowest cost of CO2 capture. It's a model price of £66 a ton.
- The timeline for the Runcorn site from government negotiations and construction phase.
- Impact for Avonmouth and Somerset Waste Partnership about operating that first kind technology on energy recovery. There's no other energy for recovery facility in the UK that's got carbon capture and there's only one full scale asset being built in the world.

The Board Members asked the following question:

Energy from Waste report title should it be Waste from Energy. Volume of Solar panel and wind turbines will these still go to landfill or are some parts recyclables. The board to receive a detailed report in the future. The recycling and to reuse materials extracting plastic at recycling centres and the cost of this and the carbon capture. The improvements at Avonmouth in regard to environmental efficiency is there a timescale for the progress. Pots, tubs and tray going through Avonmouth plant is this due to people not recycling correctly. The communication about recycling to residents.

David Oaten reminded board members that the contract with Viridor for recycling centre has expired and Biffa have taken this over with SWP working with Biffa to investigate the possibilities of hard plastic recycling.

Michael French request that the recycling centres and Film Viridor would be willing to invest in the technology. Viridor have some test facilities with breaking down the components and the extracting of plastic the costing will be effective in the long term.

Dr Tim Rotheray informed the board that the government has planned to fund the carbon capture and would enter a contract with us. The longer-term objective of government and to use carbon pricing to increasing get to a point where carbon pricing makes this economic. There are two elements to the heater, one that is the heat off take to the polymers plant and that's currently underway and currently having customer discussion to be able to move forward. Some of the packaging is not recyclable therefore would go to Avonmouth, communications with the government and working with them. Viridor thinks there should be a routine ban on non-recyclable plastic.

The enhanced producer responsibility regulations, which could be really effective at driving the kind of packaging which is much more recyclable.

Designing and making more recyclable packaging and companies will be rewarded by reducing their fees for making more recyclable packaging and will effectively be punitive for making non-recyclable packaging.

Resolved:

That the Somerset Waste Board:

1. Note the report content and presentations from Viridor.

6. Performance Monitoring Report Q1 April 2022- June 2022- Agenda Item 6

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director, Mickey Green, to provide an update on the performance report for quarter 1 for the period of April to June 2022.

The following was highlighted:

- The services currently provided through the Core Services Contract (Recycling Sites, Compost Sites, Walpole Anaerobic Digester & closed landfill management) is still expected to transfer to Biffa.
- SWP recycling rate continues to improve compared to last year (up 2.55% to 59.03% from 56.48%) and continues to show the benefit of Recycle More across Somerset.
- 97.3% of materials stayed in the UK and just over 1,052 tonnes of recycle were reprocessed outside of the UK, with the materials being mixed paper and cardboard sent to Germany, India, Malaysia, Turkey and Vietnam from Recycling Sites and Schools.
- The French utility group Veolia has agreed to sell the UK waste business of Suez to the Australian private equity group Macquarie for €2.4bn (£2bn). This disposal effectively address the main concerns of the UK Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) as previously reported to the board. It remains subject to the CMA's approval and to the right of first refusal granted by Veolia to the new Suez (i.e. the French company left after SUEZ globally has been sold to Veolia).

Michel Cowdell highlighted:

- The strain on missed collections due to Staff sickness and annual leave.
- The developing of the Williton depot and vehicles having to dispose at Bridgwater.

- Agency have increased driver's hourly rate and welcome bonuses to encourage new starters.
- The unscheduled bank holiday due to the queens Funeral, Suez class this as an uncontracted working day and will work some services will be suspended.

The Head of Communications and Engagement Mark Ford highlighted the following about the fixy project.

- The project aims to support existing groups, engage new audiences, and help take repair and reuse from 'niche to norm'
- Educating and raising awareness of repair, reuse, and sustainable consumption.
- Amplifying existing repair activities – help groups reach new audiences and add to the fixing capacity.
- Encouraging volunteering in the repair and reuse sector.
- Engaging schools and businesses in reuse and repair.
- Addressing digital poverty – diverting used/unwanted smart tech back into communities.
- As of the end of August the events attended were 24, more than 1000 people were engaged either spoken to or sign posted. The technology donated was 173/181kgs (mostly laptop/desk top computers) and with the cost-of-living crisis is likely to make repair and reuse more pertinent for many.

The next steps for fixy will be to focus on engagement with schools and businesses. Finalising a clear 'offer' and encouraging schools and businesses to host a visit. SWP will have to consider the future of the service once the current funding expires at the end of 2022 calendar year, with the option of being extended and expanded (beyond just electricals) if funding is available and the project deemed a success. Grant funders have given permission for the current funding to be 'stretched' into early 2023.

The Board Members asked the following question:

Fixy Mcfix face rolling out PAT testing will this be chargeable. With missed collection the report highlights missed collection as a whole do SWP have the data when it is adhoc; How are you able to book Fixy Mcfix Face; engaging the younger generation through youth councils to use as a forum and taking Fixy Mcfix Face along; Waste minimisation of around five thousand tonnes what is behind this. How the Recycling rate has increased are the figures from the waste from the energy plant contributing to the increase. SWP has connections with Youth parliament and will follow up about youth councils. Cllr S Dyke commented about her involvement in the roll-out of the Donate It scheme and

300 laptops and devices to Schools and Family and over 1000 devices have been stopped from going into landfill; what ambition has SWP got to extend the beyond the funding period.

The Head of Communications and Engagement Mark Ford informed the board that the PAT testing is something that SWP will investigate. Fixy Mcfix face has an email address to contact about visits. Mark informed the board that currently SWP have extended the period to January and started to work with resource futures about what Community Action groups might look like in the longer term.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green informed the board that the report primarily is adhoc on missed collections and SWP are working with Suez with the repeat of collections. A number of factors such as Recycle More, Cost of living and post pandemic more information is in the performance report.

Michael informed the board that it's about the stability of the workforce and with staff sickness this causes the problems in the last few months SWP have focused on missed collection and improvements have been happening and in December report more details will be provided.

Resolved:

That the Somerset Waste Board notes the performance results in the First Quarter 2022-23 Performance Report

7. Finance Update Q4 2022/2023- Agenda Item 7

The Chair invited Strategic Finance Manager, Christian Evans to provide a presentation and update the panel on the annual budget for the first 4 months of the current financial year.

The following was highlighted:

- The end of July position shows that the Somerset Waste Partnership budget is forecast to be underspent by £2,265,000.
- Recycle More now fully rolled out and savings forecast of £2,440,000 (SCC £1,246,000 and Districts £1,194,000).
- Savings on Covid-19 costs in Districts of £323,000.
- Offset by additional costs of inflation for the County Council Disposal contract, plus additional costs of timber disposal at HWRC sites.
- Additional funding requirements for budgets are expected to be collated by the 12th of September.

- Savings relating to transformation, fees and charges and additional income are expected to be collated by the 23rd of September.
- Savings need to be presented to achieve 5%/10% and 20% budget savings.
- SWP have currently estimated this at 11%, resulting in an expected inflation cost of £2.1m for collections contracts and £5.1m based on 18% for disposal contract.
- The budget increase for 23/24 is estimated at 1% as in prior years.
- SWP initial estimates of savings for the 2023/24 budgets are as follows Recycle More savings in the region of £3m, Covid savings on collections contract between £0.3-£0.6m, Material equalisation to be approx. £0.5m and other savings are being considered and will be refined over the coming weeks.

Somerset Waste Partnership Contract Manager Colin Mercer informed the Board there have been several delays on SWP PV panels project and as a result this may need to revisit the SWP business case. The remaining works outstanding at Wilton depot are in progress and expected to conclude in advance of vesting day of the new Unitary Council. Some delays have occurred due to finding historic contamination (asbestos) during the groundworks, which will delay the project slightly and result in an increased cost to the Council which is still to be confirmed.

The Board Members asked the following question:

The underspend in the report and the savings in the report is high and can we have a larger contingency; the disposal budget has increased by 18% could SWP explain and as the collection is 11%.

The Strategic Finance Manager Christian Evans informed the board that the Budget was set in February and plan to have a contingency into the budget and have not taken into the current prediction to allow for any unexpected events that may arise. SWP use a baxter index for Viridor's contract that includes wages, fuel and inflation generally and continue to increase. This is over different periods.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green informed the board the cost base for contractors are quite different the disposal one is linked to the baxter index, primarily more of an engineering one, much higher fuel component and the collection contract has still has fuel and more on wages.

Cllr J Keen reference to point two of the recommendation would agree with the majority but with great reluctance at this stage.

Resolved:

That the Somerset Waste Board: -

- **Notes the summary financial performance for 2022/2023 to the end of month 4 (April – July) and the potential outturn position for each partner authority.**
- **Considers the draft budget process for 2023/2024 and the key factors that will influence the budget setting process.**

8. Approach to Partial Refleet- Agenda Item 9

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green to provide an update on Partial Refleet and the proposed approach to the refleet including decarbonising it and the proposed approach to funding it.

The following was highlighted:

- SWP's collection contract fleet is made up of 108 recycling vehicles (mostly Romaquips, but three are top loaders for communals and eighteen are smaller vehicles used to get to those hard-to-reach properties.
- 23 of SWP fleet date from 2016 and were not replaced at the start of the contract and are not due for replacement until April 2024.
- SWP have already replaced one of the 23 vehicles with the refurbished electric-RCV as previously agreed by the Board. The 22 vehicles which remain to be replaced are: 4x 7.5 tonne refuse vehicle, 4x 16 tonne refuse vehicle, 10x 26 tonne refuse vehicle and 4x 26 tonne Pod vehicle.
- In June when we reported to the Board that the desktop analysis had indicated that 10 refuse vehicles could be electrified, the results of the testing mean that we are not yet confident in purchasing 10 e-RCVs. 6 of those vehicles would have been based in Evercreech and Lufton and we have not yet tested the vehicle on those rounds, and as such are not yet confident that those are suitable for e-RCVs.
- SWP are only confident that 2 of those vehicles can be replaced with electric vehicles (i.e. all rounds over their whole three weekly cycle can be completed adequately)
- The existing 4 x chassis were procured in 2020 and their depreciation is aligned to contract end. In this proposal the compaction unit would be fitted

to the chassis and the compaction unit depreciated over 6 years to align to life of the contract.

- SWP and SUEZ have been exploring various options – normal width bodies rather than narrow, Rotopress rather than compaction, slightly different tonnage vehicles. The conclusion from these trials is that Suez have identified 18t vehicles that have a greater payload whilst operating on the same footprint and turning circle as our 16t vehicles.
- Difficulty in obtaining suitable replacement bodies is also a key factor in this decision. Whilst uncertainty remains over the EPR and Consistency legislation, SUEZ are now confident that POD vehicles dedicated to the schools service are the most appropriate vehicle.
- SWP are currently exploring using Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in our frontline vehicles – either across the contract or at one or more depots.
- Our initial review therefore suggests that SWP funding for the total capital expenditure of the re-fleet is currently not in our financial interests, and where SWP can therefore be in a better financial position with lower risk if SUEZ purchase the vehicles and SWP pay the contract rates already agreed.

The Board Members asked the following question:

The electric vehicles and the two being viable and if there were a wider commercial charging infrastructure would this make more viable routes. Companies that are beginning to roll out commercial only charging within Somerset. The Panel vans being used for recycling and how will they work. The 16 and 18 tonne vehicles with roto press. Discussion that took place in June and the conclusions and recommendations were as follows 22 Vehicles that 8 would be replaced with new diesel and 10 Electric Vehicles, four to be rebodied and refurbished compared to the approach now for example two electric vehicles and the rest being diesel and also the concerns about HVO vehicles. The reducing in carbon emissions throughout the fleet and understanding and achieve what SWP can with the relevant timescales. The report is about giving a steer to how many vehicles are being ordered for the fleet. Suez hesitate about the using of electric vehicles.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green informed the board its factors for example if SWP went for four based out in the Bridgwater depot, it may cost SWP more and invest in that substation improvement. The cost implication for putting in that infrastructure, but it's not currently a limiting factor. It's standalone charging, SWP have learnt that some vehicles during their rounds are having to come back in their lunchtime to top the charge up on the vehicles. The way these vehicles work is they're out all day and they charge up overnight. That's their primary way of charging in the future if there was more

intermediate charging their commercial SWP will need the support of the government funding to be able to roll out.

The panel vans will keep the material separate and the rotapress trail the factors from this that the garden was more successful and with recycling it took longer to tip and feedback from SUEZ that the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. The points raised on HVO t's something that relies on an internal combustion energy. SWP core concern is the traceability and is the vehicle the correct way to go that's why SWP are not making a recommendation and still carrying out work to find the best solution. The disappointment about the electric vehicles that SWP don't feel in a position to go for 10 fleet vehicles with the impact of cost per tonne of carbon saved and whether there are other things across the public sector SWP can do which have a greater impact.

SWP agree with the conclusion towards the end as much as can be sensibly done regarding electric vehicles. The capital funding cycle, SWP would have to capital fund and bid for two vehicles and were not confident in bidding for more.

The Refleet in 2020 that extended the use for life of vehicles up from 8 to 10 years the bidding contractors as the vehicle suppliers related vehicle relies on the reliability has improved the reliability of those 2016 plate vehicles. SWP decision is around the capital funding of it and the capital funding timetable will not wait until December. SWP think that Suez are very focused on the fact that they're the ones that are out in areas and have got to drive the vehicles around and deliver the service and want a level of confidence.

Somerset Waste Partnership Contract Manager Colin Mercer informed the Board submission and accurate summation of where SWP are in the residual waste because of the issues with tipping and some of the other issues. The one is manoeuvrable as the first thought with the lack of overhang. The recommendation is that the additional expense in the savings didn't quite meet the discussions had taken place.

A interim paper on this item will be brought to the Somerset Waste Board at a later stage.

Cllr D Mansell proposed to defer this item to December's board meeting.

Cllr D Mansell voted against.

Resolved:

That the Somerset Waste Board:

- **Notes the proposed approach being taken to the partial fleet.**
- **Notes the proposed capital bid being submitted, including the intention to seek funding for 2 electric refuse vehicles.**
- **Notes the progress in exploring Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil as a short term-option to decarbonise our operations**

9. Fees and Charges - Agenda Item 9

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Contract Manager Colin Mercer to provide an update on and for the panel to comment on the fees and charges.

The following was highlighted:

- This is an annual exercise carried out in the Autumn to enable partners to feed fees and charges into the budgeting process for the following financial year.
- Highlighting the proposed fees and charges in table 1 in the report.
- The other area where we do not currently but can levy charges is for the collection of clinical waste from the household. The specific requirements of this collection service, infrastructure, specialist qualified staff, vehicles etc, make it a costly service to provide.
- Clinical waste from the household including a 11% inflation applied to the current costs would require the customer to pay charges as set out in Table B in the report to remove subsidy from this service.
- SWP Rejected to introduce charges, as SWP allow the collection of residual waste in sacks as not all properties are suitable for a bin, residents could decide not to purchase the bin.

The Board Members asked the following question:

Comments around 11% inflation charges and the not charging for clinical waste and bins. How the LGR workstream can support how cost increase link into increase fly tipping and how it does work and advertising from SWP communications team about bulky waste collections. The work that can be done with Air B & B and how SWP can collect the items or a charge for the collections. SWP offer a charge service for bulky collections. Discussion about having a 2nd Residual bin and is this something SWP have looked into.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green informed the board if the inflation of 11% is lower SWP will align with the percentage. The fly tipper is ensuring all are working with the enforcement powers and communication will promote the bulky waste collection.

Somerset Waste Partnership Contract Manager Colin Mercer informed the Board some charges have taken place for example inside cab technology, officers have visited property that were not registered as commercial and further engagements are taken place. Larger companies already have arrangements it's the smaller companies to keep track however SWP do offer a service for this. Residents would need to qualify for a 2nd residual bin and SWP would have knowledge of this depending on each household.

Resolved:

That the Somerset Waste Board:

- **Note the approach proposed for Fees and Charges for April 2023 to March 2024.**

10. Recycle More Update- Agenda Item 8

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Head of Communications and Engagement Mark Ford to provide an update on Recycle More

The following was highlighted:

- SWP won the LGC Awards for Environmental Services and Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee Communications campaign of the Year Award, which is also really pleasing.
- The final residential rollout was communals in Sedgemoor and West Somerset, that's around 5000 properties or focused mostly on Bridgwater.
- Key dates and encouraging community awareness raising and engagement. Regular updates were also provided for staff and member internal newsletters at all partner authorities.
- Communication were the mailed leaflets, in this phase delivered to more than 70,000 mainline households – a warm-up leaflet at five weeks before launch (a week later than originally planned) and the "Coming soon" leaflet, containing individual collection day calendars and a "what goes where?" guide, arrived 3 weeks before launch).
- Reduction in refuse/rubbish across the whole of the county (approx 450 tonnes per week) and the increase in the recycling (approx 50- 75 tonnes per week) over a 26-month period running mid-April 2020 to June 2022.

- In the first 20 months there was an average decrease of refuse/rubbish of just over 20%, or around 1.6kg each week per household.
- As part of Recycle More, SWP will be improving recycling service for the county's 273 schools receiving a service from SWP. It will add plastic pots, tubs and trays to collections, adding capacity and improving 'binrastructure' with the aim of boosting recycling rates which currently lag behind domestic rates.

The Board Members asked the following question:

To be provided with more data about the materials and phases to understand the service. The future plan of Joint Panel of Somerset Waste Board and Somerset Waste Board.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green informed the board of continuing the reporting on the performance report tweaking at the boards request for more information. The board may fall under the Scrutiny Environment Committee to report into.

Resolved:

That the Somerset Waste Board notes the progress made in implementing Recycle More and the risks to the programme.

11. Outline of the Business Plan 2023-2028 - Agenda Item 9

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green to provide an update on the draft business plan the new Council's strategic plan is not yet in place or the guidance on the approach to service/business planning. However, in line with the approach agreed with the Board, this paper still seeks a steer (as it normally would) on the approach to developing a draft business plan.

The following was highlighted:

- The ongoing impacts of a national driver shortage, embedding recycle more, doing more on reuse, the ongoing pandemic (including how it impacts waste tonnages in the medium term), the pressure this has created on SWP, SUEZ and partner staff, and the move to a unitary authority.
- SWP are still actively seeking to be involved in national pilots of rolling out soft/flexible plastic trials and want to roll out food waste to more communal properties.
- Highlighting the key issues that will inform the 2023-28 business plan as set out in the report.

- Activity in this area will be largely as per the previous business plan, noting that a new council will require SWP to update website content, may require a new CRM system, SWP will have new enforcement powers, and we will continue to focus on using our data more effectively.

The Board Members asked the following question:

The bidding for the future budgeting for Fixy Mc Fix Face. Comments made around the reuse shops at recycling centres.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green informed the board SWP have Government funding and unable to put in grant bid and SWP need to find creative ways to fund it.

Resolved:

That the Somerset Waste Board:

- **Comments on and approves the proposed priority areas for inclusion in the Business Plan 2023-28 as set out in section 2 of the report, noting that the Somerset Council Corporate Plan has not yet been set.**
- **Discuss and provide further ideas for any particular service changes, projects or programmes for potential inclusion in the Draft Plan to be reviewed at the December meeting.**

12. Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan

The Panel agreed the current Somerset Waste Board Forward Work Plan

13. Any other urgent items of Business

(The meeting ended at 12.44pm)

CHAIR