

Somerset Waste Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Somerset Waste Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Friday 4th December 2020 at 10.00 am.

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 M Martin, Cllr S Wakefield, Cllr G Kennedy (sub)

Other Members Present: Cllr Tessa Munt,

Apologies for Absence: Cllr T Ronan (Cllr G Kennedy substituting)

Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were none.

Minutes from the Previous Meeting on 25th September 2020 –Agenda Item 3

A request was made to add Cllr M Martin in attendance for the September meeting and to also circulate the confidential annex to the minutes Board members to approve at the next Board meeting in February 2021. It was also agreed to amend the wording regarding the reference to agency staff on page 13 of the minutes.

With these amendments being made the minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a correct 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 2 July 2020 to September 2020. The report summarises the key performance indicators for the period from July 2020 to September 2020 and compares these to the same period last year.

The following was highlighted:

- The delays on some of the main projects (including Recycle More) due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The main risks are for the transition of Recycle More, Covid-19, also the approach of Brexit in the new year.
- Health and safety (there was a death at a Highbridge site due to a seizure); there are now defibrillators installed at every site and staff have been trained to use these.

- Tonnage waste ministration, kerbside increased on recycling due to the suspension of garden waste and closure of recycle sites in the spring. Household waste down by 2%, kerbside total household arisings for Q2 2020-21 decreased by 3,000 tonnes to a total of 131,470 tonnes. Materials stayed in the UK, with the amount that was reprocessed in Somerset also staying in excess of 55.7%.
- A significant decrease in missed collections, compared to Q1 (0.588 per 1,000 collections against 1.430 in Q1), which shows the successful outcome of the work put into reducing this number by both SWP and SUEZ staff.
- Fly tipping continues to be a blight on the Somerset landscape, and there is monitoring any of the service changes made and how this impacts the level of this criminal activity.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised:

- Reference to potential takeover for both the main contractors and to provide more detail or expected outcomes. Suez are subject to hostile takeover bid by Veolia through the courts in Paris. There will be an update on Viridor at the next Board meeting.
- Recycling at 97% and how that compares to other authorities, an update will be provided at the next Board meeting.
- The recycling of plastic trays in the blue bag were welcomed. The thin plastic film is being collected at some supermarkets, are there plans to introduce and handle the thin film in recycling centres. Somerset Waste Partnership are working on this ensuring viable robust systems in place to reprocess it correctly.
- The no deal Brexit risk register has also been developed by SWP and shared with all partners no relation to this further in the report or Performance paper. In the report it is summarising high level risk on page 29 setting out the focus on the high-level risk.
- At the Recycling Centre in Street a lot of waste like mattresses goes into landfill and could go into energy to waste. Are people aware of what goes into either skip? Currently trailing a twin bin approach at the recycling centre, the impact of Covid has not helped due to the workers not being able to touch the items going in. With regard to mattress recycling, Somerset Waste Partnership are working on a scheme to try and recycle mattresses in the future. Had there been further impact of the site following the tragedy at Avonmouth and the implication. There were no operation impacts
- Fly-tipping increases. The District Council are aware of of fly-tipping and monitoring this. It is much more than normal due to Covid, the report shows the figures over the different quarters.

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

The Chair invited Somerset Waste Partnership Head of Communications and Engagement, Mark Ford to provide a presentation on the first phase of Recycle More which was rolled out to around 52,000 homes in Mendip as planned. The report updated on the successful first few weeks of that roll-out, noting that risks remain (especially due to Covid-19).

The following was highlighted:

- Recycle More recap on weekly collections, the introduction to the bright blue bag and the three weekly rubbish collections.
- Key changes for the residents, changes to the items going in different bins and the weekly collections including change of days.
- The engagement with parishes & members the distributing of the briefing pack, posters and the test drive of 29 elected members trailing the blue bag before the launch.
- Engagement with public with direct mailing, web information and display material also including the digital engagement on Facebook Q&A, talking café and the social media engagement has worked well and will be something to build on for future phases, particularly if COVID restrictions persist.
- School engagement 'virtual' assemblies and workshops with the Carymoor Environmental Trust successfully transferred its activity online. 52 Mendip primary schools, and despite the obvious competing priorities and disruption facing schools, at mid-November 20 had signed up for sessions and initial feedback has been very positive.
- Support for the residents through the roll-out, 18 extra members of staff were provided, supporting crews with assisted collections, responding to customer feedback around areas that had not received information packs, surveying old rounds and replacing bins and boxes presented for collection on the old collection day as well as following crews on the new rounds and putting out bins/boxes on behalf of the customer where they have failed to present their waste (around 400 customers).
- Somerset Waste Partnership recognised the importance of maintaining and improving service standards to all of its customers and has remained focussed on improving the quality of service delivery throughout the contract.
- Five-week summary - 20% increase of plastics, with a higher impact in the first week (possibly as an impact of stockpiling). The sampling of the blue bags collected on a range of rounds shows that 94% of what was captured was target material (23% being plastic pots, tubs and trays) with the most common contaminants being cardboard, food residue, particulates and

Tetra Paks. The 34% more food waste (which reflects the extremely high demand for food waste caddies ahead of the roll-out and of course the impact of left-over Halloween pumpkins). Capturing more of the food that is currently thrown away was a key aim of Recycle More.

- The Recycle More roll out timetable in the areas for phase 1 were completed, in phase 2 was South Somerset and schools in the East, phase 3 schools in the West and the old Taunton Deane district and phase 4 Sedgemoor and the old West Somerset Area.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised:

- The concern about the length of period the bins are being left out on the pavement causing problems for those people with accessibility issues, the relevant colleagues will be spoken to and it was hoped there would be an improvement on the situation.
- Encouraging more residents to use the brown caddy bin more frequently along with the recycling boxes. Were broken boxes being replaced as the new boxes were more robust? There was 141 tonnes of extra food waste at the kerbside. In the early stages, information was put out about having the right boxes and replacing the old broken boxes ahead of the arrival of the blue bag.
- There had been a high volume of requests for new recycling boxes, showing the good engagement of the Recycle More roll-out.

The Board formally thanked Somerset Waste Partnership officers for the hard work with the communications and operations which has resulted in the successful roll-out of Recycle More. The Somerset Waste Partnership Head of Communications and Engagement informed members he would pass this on to the relevant staff.

The Board resolved to note the successful progress made in implementing Recycle More.

84 **Finance Performance Report Update-** Agenda item 7

The Chair invited Finance Officer Sarah Rose to provide a verbal update on the financial performance against the approved Annual Budget for the first 7 months of the current financial year from April to the end of October. The report is also an update to the Draft Budget from September's meeting that will ultimately lead to the Annual Budget for 2021/2022.

The following was highlighted:

- Somerset Waste Partnership budget is forecast to be underspent by £441,000 (0.9% of the current budget). An improvement on the previous position reported to the September Board, which were July figures and

showed an overspend of £2,205,000. This does not include the Recycle More project work, which is funded from a separate project fund.

- Covid-19 costs are being charged to District partners therefore the previously reported overspend has been updated to reflect the £2,306,400 now being funded by District partners. Somerset County Council as reported previously had already approved the transfer of MHCLG Covid-19 funding to their elements of these additional costs.
- All partners include these Covid-19 costs on their individual MHCLG returns. The total Covid-19 additional spend is £3,221,200 (£914,800 SCC, £2,306,400 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.
- Waste collection is £109,000 underspent. Any variations as a result of Recycle More are attributable to the Recycle More Fund and therefore do not make up part of this outturn position.
- At the end of 2019/20 the project balance was a deficit of £140,000. It is anticipated that during 2020/21 £2,440,000 will be spent on the roll out of the Recycle More project (including the direct costs of roll-out and the cost differential between Recycle More and the continuation budget) which will leave an anticipated deficit of £2,580,000 at outturn. As agreed, no savings as a result of the new contract will be taken from Somerset Waste Partnership until all roll out costs have been fully funded and breakeven point is reached.

Waste disposal costs are forecast to underspend by £332,000 this is down to waste volumes changes and the mix of the different waste streams being different to the budgeted assumptions. We have seen significant increases in dry recycling, food and residual waste at the kerbside and the forecast anticipates this trend will continue.

- The following SCC savings are built in to the 2020/21 budget totalling £361,100; 200,000 – Year 2 of the core services contract extension (previously agreed by the board in November 2018). £20,000 - Fly-tipping, £36,000 - Minimisation Cap, £105,100 – Slim my Waste, Feed my Face food campaign. This shortfall, as a result of Covid-19, has been funded through MHCLG Covid-19 funding.
- The current estimates are Mendip 0.64%, Sedgemoor 0.91%, South Somerset 0.72% and Somerset West and Taunton 0.50%. Inflation for the collection contract is 0.33% based on the basket of indices in the contract.
- There is a one-off cost included for additional fleet maintenance/refurbishment on the small number of refuse trucks which transferred from Kier to Suez, the value of which is still subject to final negotiations with Suez.
- The County Council is requesting savings from the Somerset Waste Board of £30,000 for 2021/22 and £324,000 for 2022/23 The standstill cost for

the disposal budget is therefore £1,455,500, an increase of 4.9% on the original 2020/2021 budget.

- The above budget excludes the costs of the roll out of Recycle More during 2021/22. This will be funded from the Recycle More Project Fund and where appropriate capital monies. 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.

Somerset Waste Partnership Managing Director Mickey Green provided a verbal update on the GDPR Internal Audit Report. Lucy Wilkins is the Data Protection Officer for Somerset County Council and Somerset Waste Partnership. Audit reports come to the board and as part of the commitment to transparency, a report on GDPR was requested in light of the new complex piece of legislation that has been implemented. Somerset Waste Partnership has undergone a transformation in implementing a CRM system connecting with the contractor's new system and to meet partners requirements for data to flow through partner organisations and into the SWP system onto SUEZ and Viridor

Somerset Waste Partnership has implemented a new CRM system connecting with their contractors new system and meeting partners requirements for data to flow through partners into the systems onto SUEZ, and Viridor.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised:

- The County Council's request for savings from the Somerset Waste Partnership and more information on the anaerobic digestion contract review .It was highlighted that no savings as a result of the new contract, would be taken from the Partnership until all roll out costs have been fully funded. Breakeven point is anticipated to be in Quarter 2 of 2022/23. The figure that was referred to is the County Council saving their share of the overall £2 million expected as a collective. Each of the authorities has the figure for their share for that financial year. The Contract for anaerobic digestion is benchmarked every five years. There were no savings however Viridor offered a contract weigh reduction over 18,000 tonnes
- The Government public sector pay will have an effect on salary increases. In the draft budget in section 3.1 of the report, at the time the information was provided, it was estimated there would be a 2% growth in salaries This would apply just the head office staff at Somerset Waste Partnership and not for the contracted staff. However, the Somerset West and Taunton pay freeze means that probably that is not going to be 2% and this will be a lower.
- Somerset County Council is the administration authority and is responsible for disposal. There are monthly meetings with the Strategic Management group and section 151 officers. Challenges for district councils is the implementation of the roll out of Recycle More.

- Can further savings be made with people working from home. The greatest savings should be achieved through Recycle More.

The Board noted the Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel's request for the key milestones reached on the audit report on GDPR to be included within the regular Finance Performance report updates going forward

The Board RESOLVED to:

1) note the summary financial performance for 2020/2021 as contained in this report, and how this will impact on the budgetary requirements for 2021/2022.

2) approve a Draft Budget of £47,015,858 for 2021/2022 for partner authority consultation, as set out in section 3.0 below, taking into account the potential savings requests from the County Council as set out in paragraph 3.2.

3) Note the findings of the Internal Audit report on GDPR and the actions being undertaken to address the findings.

85 Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan 2021-2026– Agenda Item 8

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 Somerset Waste Board is required to annually approve a rolling five-year business plan. The report seeks approval to the draft business plan for consultation. It also reminded the board about changes to how garden waste payments would be taken in future and informed the board about delegations that SWP sought from partner authorities to underpin SWP enforcement capabilities.

The following was highlighted:

- The constitution requires an annual Business Plan to be formally adopted by the Board to provide a framework within which the Board can make decisions and steer the delivery of Waste Partnership services. The process of review is continuous, but it contains a snapshot of where SWP is now, the things that have a major impact on the organisation, resources/budget, and SWP priorities.

- SMG were consulted over the Summer and the Board and the Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel were consulted on the approach at their meetings in December. Formal consultation with partners is planned as follows:
7 January 2021 South Somerset District Council Executive, 11 January 2021 Mendip District Council Cabinet, 20 January 2021 Somerset County Council Cabinet, 20 January 2021 Somerset West and Taunton Executive and 27 January 2021 Sedgemoor District Council Executive.
- Whilst it is an iteration of the previous Business Plan, there is much change beyond the roll-out of Recycle More, having transitioned away from landfill, and having set wider objectives through the work on the Climate Emergency strategy.
- Outcomes under which the plan is structured:
Delivering Excellent Services:
Changing behaviours:
Tackling climate change:
Building our capability:
- Key areas of the activity in the draft business plan -Waste reduction, promoting reuse, recycling, decarbonising residual waste, decarbonising operations, tackling non-household waste, working with others, improving the customers experience, supporting wider goals in Somerset and enabling activities.
- Garden Waste - in the current (2020-25) Business Plan it sets out that Somerset Waste Partnership will centralise garden waste payments to improve the customer experience and enable residents to sign up for a year at any time, and remove the need for garden waste stickers. The change in how payments are handled will not result in any reduction in income to District Council partners, simply in who processes the income and the timing of income receipts with District partners. Somerset Waste Partnership have managed garden waste income successfully for Mendip District Council in 2020, and this pilot has provided confidence in implementing this for other partners.
- Refreshing the policy on advice, support and enforcement. The existing Enforcement Policy was adopted by the Somerset Waste Board in December 2015, a technical issue regarding the legal delegations has meant that SWP do not currently have the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. The aim is to give SWP the ability to take enforcement action as a last resort for the very small minority who persistently refuse to engage or cooperate. This policy will be brought to the Board for approval in Spring 2021 once we have the necessary delegated powers. Through the normal reporting processes, the Board will be updated on the use of these powers and the effectiveness of the advice, support and enforcement.

During the debate the following points and comments were raised:

- Clarification around garden waste and how the confirmed payment for subscription from residents will work. In cab technology has the

information about who has the subscription to the Garden waste. The crews do not enter properties to remove the bin.

- There was a request for future updates on the decarbonising of operations and on the day to day fleet operations. It was noted development in the area was still gradual and there would be a further update when there was something significant to report.

The Board RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the draft Business Plan 2021-2021 for consultation

2. Note the changes to how garden waste payments will be made in 2021, as previously agreed by the board

3. Note that SWP will be asking District Council partners to renew their delegation of powers to underpin SWP's Advice, Support & Enforcement Policy.

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

The Board agreed the Somerset Waste Board Forward Work Plan

88 **Information Sheets issued since the last meeting**- Agenda item 10

The Board noted the Recycle More update and Recycling sites remain open information sheets that had been sent out since the last meeting. There were no no questions about these.

89 **Any Other Urgent Items of Business** - Agenda Item 11

There was none.

(The meeting ended at 11.56pm)

CHAIR