

South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 17 September 2019 at 6.30 pm in F10, Town Hall, Katharine Street,
Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

- Present:**
- London Borough of Croydon**
Councillor Stuart Collins – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
for Clean Green Croydon (Chair)
Councillor Stuart King – Cabinet Member for Environment,
Transport and Regeneration (Job Share)
 - Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames**
Councillor Tim Cobbett – Portfolio Holder for Engagement and Continuous
Learning
 - London Borough of Merton**
Councillor Mark Allison – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
for Finance
Councillor Tobin Byers – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and
the Environment
 - London Borough of Sutton**
Councillor Manuel Abellan – Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood
Committee
- Apologies:**
- Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames**
Councillor Hilary Gander – Portfolio Holder for Environment and
Sustainable Transport
 - London Borough of Sutton**
Councillor Ben Andrew – Vice-Chair of the Environment and
Neighbourhood Committee

PART A

1/19 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed all those present.

2/19 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Ben Andrews and Councillor Hillary Gander.

3/19 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4/19 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019 were signed and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

5/19 Any Urgent Business

The Chair stated that following the fire near the Energy Recovery Facility in Beddington, it was important that the South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee received the independent report from the Fire Service ahead of making any statements.

It was suggested that the Committee receive a report at a future meeting and members of the public would be invited to ask questions. Questions would be required to be submitted in writing by 12 noon the day before the meeting and supplementary questions would be permitted.

The Chair confirmed there would be a full discussion on the fire once the independent reports were available and the committee report would be a public report where possible. The Committee were further informed that the Environment Agency were involved at the site as they were responsible for issuing the permit for the site and would be invited to the committee meeting along with Viridor. It was, however, noted that it was not possible to ensure their attendance as the Committee could only request their attendance.

6/19 Phase A & B Contract Management Report

The Contract Manager introduced the report which provided a summary of the contracts awarded by the South London Waste Partnership. A briefing note from Viridor in relation to the fire near the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) was also appended to the report.

It was noted that the 9% of visitors to the Household Reuse and Recycling Centres (HRRC) were reporting wait times of more than ten minutes which had been largely due to seasonal influences, such as Bank Holidays, and maintenance being undertaken at sites. Officers confirmed that managing performance at HRRCs remained challenging and continued to be monitored on a monthly basis. It was suggested that reviews of site layouts and improved ID checks at the gates may improve waiting times.

Members noted that there had been a 10% reduction in residual waste which provided a combined saving of £500k for the Partnership, which was welcomed.

Members queried whether the Partnership had received a large volume of contact from residents in relation to the fire near the ERF site in Beddington, and were informed that the Partnership had not received a large number of questions. The Chair stated that he had received a number of questions through social media to which he had responded that it was important to wait for the official report, but that it would be important for Viridor to be held to account and ensure lessons were learnt.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Matthey, Beddington North ward councillor, to speak to the Committee. Councillor Matthey stated that he had been contacted by a number of residents who were concerned about the impact of the fire which had been easily seen by those in the area. Councillor Matthey stated that residents had raised concerns regarding acrid smelling fumes and dry throats.

Members were informed that a former fire officer had spoken at a Council meeting at Sutton Council who had stated that mattresses release a poison (sodium cyanide) when burnt, which had caused concern to residents. Councillor Matthey stated that a press release had been issued by Viridor a few hours after the fire had started and which described it as being a small fire. This press release had been shared by Sutton Council, however residents reported large plumes of smoke and the press release was not considered sufficient to alleviate concerns. It was stated that it was important to not trivialise issues, and it was further suggested that the Partnership should develop a protocol to respond appropriately to such incidents, such as an emergency number for residents to call.

Councillor Matthey suggested that questions should be asked on what had caused the fire and how it could be avoided in future. It was important to ensure lessons were learnt and that there are no further fires at the site.

The Chair agreed that an incident like the fire should be an opportunity to learn, and that it was important that information shared with residents was correct and timely. As such, it was suggested that consideration should be given to whether the Partnership should lead on communications on instances like this, and not individual councils, to ensure there was a consistent and accurate message.

The Strategic Partnership Manager stated that was important to ensure the Fire Service, Environment Agency and Viridor completed their reports before the Partnership commented as it was imperative that all information was available. It was confirmed, however, that the fire was located in the waste transfer station which is permitted separately from the ERF. Members were also informed that there was an existing hotline for residents to call if they had any queries.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the report.

The Finance Lead for the South London Waste Partnership presented the updated financial position, and informed the Committee that there were two variances to note which was the forecasted overspend of £35k for advisors which included assessment of the options available for the renegotiation or re-procurement of the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre (HRRC) contract. The second variance was that there was a forecasted underspend of £35k as the post of Waste Strategy Officer was vacant and would likely not be filled until December 2019.

RESOLVED: To note contents of the report.

8/19 **Draft Budget for 2020/21**

The Finance Lead for the South London Waste Partnership informed Members that it was required that a draft budget be formed and agreed by the Committee. Members were informed that the draft budget was then considered by each council and finally agreed by the South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee.

The proposed 2020/21 budget, outlined at paragraph 2.1 of the report, took into account increments, pay, and prices inflation of 2%. It was further noted that the budget to undertake a triennial resident's survey had been removed and would be reintroduced in 2022/23 for approval. Members also noted that £50k had been budgeted to re-procure or re-negotiate the current Household Reuse and Recycle Centre (HRRC) contract which expires on 30 September 2022.

RESOLVED: To

1. Agree the proposed draft budget for the core activities of the Partnership as set out in 2.1 of the report and request individual boroughs to consider and agree the resources required in consultation with borough Finance Directors; and
2. Note that the final budget will be brought back to the Joint Committee in December 2019 for sign off.

9/19 **Risk Report**

The Strategic Partnership Manager introduced the report stating it summarised the key risks in relation to the waste contracts managed by the Committee. The risks related to changes in the recycling materials market were highlighted and included the decreased value in material to be recycled and the need to ensure low levels of contamination. The Partnership continued to monitor this risk and noted the need to factor this risk into future contracts.

Members noted that the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs had undertaken a consultation on reforming the packaging producer responsibility regulations in the UK, introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and measures to accelerate consistency in recycling for both households and businesses in England. Additionally, the Treasury had undertaken a consultation on a plastic packaging tax. Members were informed the Partnership had responded to both consultations.

The impact of Brexit continued to be monitored, and potential impacts included those relating to the workforce, recycling markets and supply of consumables, have been considered. It was anticipated that there would not be an impact on the safe disposal of residual waste as the waste disposal arrangements were based in the locality of the Partnership; however it was noted that recycling markets and exports could be impacted.

In terms of the Energy Recovery Facility, the Partnership continued to work with Viridor to ensure it was fit for purpose and Members were informed that contingency plans were in place, if necessary.

In response to Member questions the Strategic Partnership Manager confirmed that discussions had been held with contractors regarding the percentage of the workforce which were EU nationals and support was being provided to these employees. Specific figures of those affected would be provided.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the report.

10/19 **Communications and Engagement - Phase A and Phase B contracts**

The Communications Advisor informed Members that the report focused on communication activities which had taken place between July and September 2019. The following week was Recycling Week, and in advance of this five videos had been created which showed what happens recycling and rubbish after its been collected. The intention was to build trust with residents and show that the Partnership was taking responsibility. Four of the videos covered specific forms of waste and were a minute long each, and the fifth video was a combination of the four other films. The longer video was shown to the Committee.

The Chair and Members thanked the Communications Advisor for the video and noted that the Committee had felt it was important to ensure there was a good communications programme which outlined what happened to resident's recycling and waste. Members further welcomed the additional information which went alongside the videos to further increase people's understanding of recycling.

As part of Recycle Week, the Communications Advisor, stated that a social media advertising campaign would be undertaken which would include the

new videos. Additionally, following a successful bid for £10k to the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB) an outdoor advertising campaign would be run, which would include advertising on the tram network, to increase recycling awareness. Furthermore, school visits would be undertaken to engage with young people across the boroughs.

Members were informed that the Partnership had been successful in a bid for £26,000 of funding from Resource London and a food waste engagement exercise would be run in autumn. This campaign would focus on increasing the amount of food waste being disposed of correctly, but would also focus on reducing the amount of food being wasted with pumpkins being a seasonal focus of the campaign.

Members noted that the increased levels of recycling were due to resident's participation and thanked them for engaging and increasing the levels of recycling. It was further noted that it was important to encourage residents to not buy things they did not need and to increase the use of reusable plastic containers. In response, the Chair requested that the workshop ahead of the next Committee meeting should focus on encouraging increased use reusables and refilling, such as refillable washing up bottles, etc.

Members were informed that the footpath along the western boundary of the Beddington Farmlands site had been reopened. New bird hides are accessible from the footpath and these had been particularly welcomed.

It was noted that Viridor had published reports on emissions from the ERF on the website on an on-going basis, which was considered to be one of the most transparent approaches to emissions in the country. These reports had shown that there have been a number of short-lived exceedances in Carbon Monoxide in recent months. The SLWP had approached the Environment Agency (EA) (who are responsible for regulating activities at the site) for reassurance. The EA had provided the following response::

The permit ELVs (Emission Limit Values) are set primarily on the basis of the standard limits specified in Annex VI of the Industrial Emissions Directive, and exceedances of those limits will not necessarily result in an adverse impact on the environment. In the case of CO (Carbon Monoxide), an extremely high level of emissions over a prolonged period of time would be needed in order to have a significant impact on the environment, whereas slightly elevated emissions over a short-duration are not likely to result in any measurable environmental impact.

It should also be noted that the variable nature of the residual municipal waste burned by plants can make it extremely difficult for operators to control their CO emissions to permitted limits all of the time, and occasional exceedances can therefore be expected to occur, even when operators apply all available measures to avoid them.

Louise McGoochan

The Chair noted that there had been public concern in relation to the emissions from the ERF and the above statement would be published on the Partnership's website.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the report.

11/19 **Date of the next Meeting**

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 17 December 2019 at 6.30pm at Croydon Council.

The meeting ended at 7.24 pm

Signed:

Date:

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