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South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee

Meeting of held on Thursday, 23 July 2020 at 7.00pm

MINUTES

Present:

London Borough of Croydon

Councillor Stuart Collins - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon

Councillor Stuart King - Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Regeneration

Substitutes: Councillors Muhammad Ali and Nina Degrad:

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Councillor Hillary Gander – Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sustainable Transport

Councillor Tim Cobbett – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities and Engagement.

Substitutes: Councillors Dave Ryder-Mills and Malcolm Self

London Borough of Merton

Councillor Mark Allison – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Substitute: Councillor Martin Whelton

London Borough of Sutton

Councillor Manuel Abellan - Chair of the Environment & Neighbourhood Committee

Substitute: Councillor Hannah Zuchowska

Apologies:

Councillor Stephen Alambritis – Leader of the Council (London Borough of Merton)

Councillor Ben Andrew – Vice-Chair of the Environment & Neighbourhood Committee (London Borough of Sutton)

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SOUTH LONDON WASTE PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 23 JULY 2020

7:00 pm – 9:21 pm

London Borough of Croydon

Councillor Stuart Collins - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon
Councillor Stuart King - Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Regeneration
Substitutes Councillors Muhammad Ali and Nina Degrad:

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London Borough of Sutton

Councillor Manuel Abellan - Chair of the Environment & Neighbourhood Committee

Councillor Ben Andrew – Vice-Chair of the Environment & Neighbourhood Committee

Substitute: Councillor Hannah Zuchowska

* Absent

1. Chair handover

Resolved: Councillor Gander was appointed Chair and Councillor Abellan was appointed Vice-Chair for the 2020/21 municipal year.

Voting: unanimous.

2. Welcome and introductions

The outgoing Chair, Councillor Collins, gave a brief statement praising the progress in improving recycling rates and reducing landfill waste across all four boroughs. Praise was also given to John Haynes, the Communications Advisor for the SLWP, for his work on communicating to residents the journey of their recycled materials. Councillor Collins also called for Viridor Ltd. to provide greater transparency for their emissions data and expressed frustration with the length of time taken for the fire service and Viridor to produce their respective reports on the fire at the Beddington site. After the purchase of Viridor Ltd by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. L.P, Councillor Collins expressed his desire to develop a more open and prosperous relationship with the SLWP Committee and the management of KKR.

3. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Andrew from Sutton Council and Councillor Alambritis from Merton Council sent their apologies. There were no substitute members.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Appendix 1

Resolved: Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 February 2020 were signed as a true and correct record.

Voting: unanimous.

5. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Phase A & B Contract Management Report

Appendix 2

The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager of the SLWP presented the report which updated the Committee on the performance of the Phase A & B contracts procured and managed by the SLWP.

Contract 1 concerns waste transfer and haulage. No issues with the delivery of this service were found to report to the Committee.

Contract 2 concerns the management of Household Reuse and Recycling Centres (HRRC). The report explained that the closure of HRRC sites to the public on March 24th was due to travel to the sites not being allowed under 'essential travel only' and 'reasonable excuse' restrictions set out in government guidance and subsequent health protection regulations. A booking system was created for sites in Kingston, Merton and Sutton and an enhanced traffic management scheme for the three Croydon sites, with all sites reopening on May 12th.

Customer satisfaction surveys conducted across all HRRC sites showed resident satisfaction levels of the service continuously above 80%.

Further analysis of recycling performance across all 6 sites was outlined between sections 2.8 and 2.14 of the report. A key takeaway from the analysis is that there has been a marginal improvement on last year's figures, even with ongoing challenges within recycling markets. Work between the SLWP and Veolia is ongoing in order to improve recycling rate improvement measures and is outlined in section 2.16 of the report.

Contract 3 concerns the green and food waste composting services. There were no issues with the delivery of this service to report to the Committee.

The Phase B contract concerns residual waste treatment with Viridor South London Ltd. There was a 3% drop in residual waste delivered to the Beddington plant which helped give savings of just under £600,000 to the four boroughs. During the reporting period, there was a target to divert 91.34% of waste from landfill. This target was achieved with 95% of waste being diverted from landfill.

Section 4.4 of the report outlines the emissions from the Beddington ERF. Although the report states that the ERF has consistently performed within its emissions limits, there were two notable periods of limit exceedances detailed in sections 4.5 and 4.9. Furthermore, a variation of the monitoring period for CO was made by the Environment Agency in January 2020, increasing from every 30 minutes to every 10

minutes, in order to bring the Beddington ERF in-line with industry standard monitoring periods.

Several questions were received in advance of the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair, from Councillor Tim Foster concerning the draft South London Waste Plan. These ranged from clarification of the actions taken to balance the carbon footprint in Beddington North as well as ensuring that the licenced capacity for waste within this area is not exceeded. Councillor Foster also sought clarification on plans to meet the zero carbon target. In response to the questions, the Interim Strategic Partnership Manager reiterated that most of the issues raised by Councillor Foster fell outside the remit of the Committee and had been previously discussed at Sutton Council's Strategy and Resource Committee meeting on July 6, available to view on Sutton Council's Youtube channel. The South London Waste Plan is an important planning policy document with a key aim to safeguard existing waste sites and set out development management policies to guide waste treatment. Encouragement was given by the Interim Strategic Partnership Manager for local stakeholders and residents to get involved with the upcoming consultation for the South London Waste Plan.

The Committee sought clarification on the reasoning and subsequent impact from adopting the different approaches for HRRC site access as a result of the Coronavirus lockdown. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager explained that the booking system for certain HRRC sites was used to control the increased numbers of residents intending to dispose of their accumulated waste. Alternatively, Croydon's HRRC sites are far more popular and need to be able to process more people's waste than the other SLWP borough's HRRC sites. The key aim therefore was to process the backlog for Croydon sites as quickly as possible in order to keep up with the increased demand, therefore implementing a traffic management approach was judged to be preferable. Currently, it is judged that there was not a significant difference between either approach with regards to the amount of waste brought through the different HRRC sites. Overall, early analysis suggests that for 2020/21 Q1 there was an average 75% reduction in tonnage brought through all HRRC sites.

Further information was sought by the Committee on overall customer satisfaction of the booking system in select HRRC sites and the feasibility of continuing this process. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager reiterated the positive response from members of the public to the booking forms, particularly with the inclusion of social-distancing measures. Due to the positive feedback, there are ongoing discussions toward keeping the booking system in place and improving this service where possible. The Committee did also note the importance of ensuring that residents who may potentially struggle with the technological aspect of the booking process had support available.

The Committee questioned the reasoning behind the variation in the way the ERF monitor and report their CO emissions, (increasing from every 30 minutes to every 10 minutes). The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager explained that the change was to bring the method in line with the industry-standard and to provide more robust monitoring of CO emissions.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report.

Voting: Unanimous

7. SLWP Budget Outturn 2019-20**Appendix 3**

The head of Finance Operations and Resident Support presented the budget outturn report. The final budget outturn position for the SLWP was a £72,000 underspend for the 2019/20 financial year. In response to a query from the Committee on the reasoning for the underspend, the head of Finance Operations and Resident Support explained that there is a vacant position and an ongoing staffing resource review.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report.

Voting: Unanimous

8. Budget Update - Month 3 2020/2021**Appendix 4**

The head of Finance Operations and Resident Support presented the budget update report. The projected outturn for the 2020/21 financial year as of month 3 is a £112,000 underspend. Particular attention was drawn to the fact that a staff review is underway and the forecasts were carried out on the basis that three currently vacant positions remain unfilled. The review is scheduled to conclude in September where the staffing requirements are expected to be clearer.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report.

Voting: Unanimous

9. Viridor Fire Report July 2020**Appendix 5**

The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager presented the report. A summary was provided for the fire on 11 July 2019 at the Waste Transfer Station at Beddington Lane as well as the proceeding timeline of events. Viridor Ltd completed their internal investigation report in December 2019, met with SLWP in January 2020 to discuss their initial draft report and the SLWP Strategic Partnership Manager provided a verbal update at the February 4 SLWP JWC meeting. Concluding reports were submitted in March 2020 by the London Fire Brigade (Fire Investigation Report) and the Environment Agency (Compliance Assessment Report). The Environment Agency's reports used a Compliance Classification Scheme (CCS) to provide a non-compliance score of C3, therefore classifying Viridor's non-compliant residual waste storage as having had a minor environmental impact on the surrounding area and residents.

Two reports were submitted as late material, the first was the Report of Attendance of the LFB. The second report was from the LFB Fire Investigation Team who concluded that they were unable to determine the cause of the fire which is not an uncommon occurrence, as prefaced in a covering letter by the LFB.

Viridor's own fire report acknowledges a higher than normal amount of residual waste being stored at the waste transfer station for a longer than usual time as well as suggestions with regard to possible sources of the fire. Proposals are included in the report to limit the impact of potential future fires, including: occupation of a designated ERF pre-treatment site for the receipt and inspection of bulky waste,

reducing the overall handling of waste at any one time and increasing the frequency of thermal checking systems.

Under the Chair's discretion, a statement and question was received from Councillor Matthey, criticising the site's overall operations and concluded with the call for a more thorough investigation. In response, the Interim Strategic Partnership Manager emphasised that independent investigations from the LFB and the EA were conducted as well as Viridor's own internal incident report. The SLWP are therefore satisfied that the matter can be concluded and reiterated that ongoing work will be undertaken to ensure that the site will operate safely and the risk for future fires is reduced as much as possible.

Questions were received from Councillor Sumner that asked for clarification on the number of visits by the fire service to the Beddington Incinerator plant and the work being carried out to improve fire safety. In response, Interim Strategic Partnership Manager stated that the fire service has only attended the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility for planned site visits and that the facility is state-of-the-art with a good fire safety record. As a point of clarification, the July 2019 fire was at the Beddington Waste Transfer Station and not the Beddington ERF.

A statement was received by a member of the public criticising Viridor's fire report and called for its rejection by the SLWP. Furthermore, the statement claimed that the incident was preventable, called for further information on the likely emitted toxins from the fire and also a public apology needed for the resulting pollution. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager responded to each criticism separately. It was highlighted that Viridor has the UK's largest network of over 300 waste management facilities and that fires at such sites can and do occur under varying circumstances. The report concluded clear actions that have since been put in place to reduce the risk of future fires and this information has been shared amongst other sites to learn from. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager emphasized that the LFB are responsible for visiting premises to assess fire risk assessments as well as fire prevention measures and are entitled to take action if they believe the fire safety measures were not adequate.

A similar question regarding the measuring of emitted toxins was received from another member of the public. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager reiterated that accurately predicting emissions from a fire such as this one is particularly difficult and referred to the EA's own conclusions that, after surveying the scene, the fire was deemed to have had a minor impact on human health, quality of life or the environment.

A question from a member of the public was received which queried the lack of a fire risk assessment in the final report. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager reiterated that the LFB are responsible for visiting premises to assess fire risk assessments as well as fire prevention measures and are entitled to take action if they believe the fire safety measures were not adequate. If there are further public concerns with the overall safety of the ERF site on this matter, it was advised that the LFB be contacted directly. It was also noted that calls have been previously made by the SLWP for Viridor to make the fire risk assessment publicly available.

In response to concerns from some members of the public in their submissions, the Committee did clarify that no kerbside collected plastics were deliberately taken to

the incinerator by Veolia. The only source of these would have been from residents placing such plastic items in their own residual waste containers or black bags. Work has been carried out and is ongoing to communicate to residents to recycle more with the hope of significantly reducing the amount of recyclable materials, including plastics, sent to the incinerator.

The Committee did express frustration with Viridor Ltd. for incorrectly using a site to store residual waste on and not making use of an alternative site, with more appropriate fire safety facilities that has since been identified. Clarity was sought for the level of fines/penalties the SLWP were able to enact on Viridor for any potential breaches to ensure the incident does not occur again as well as strongly requesting representatives of KKR to attend SLWP Committee meetings. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager explained that Committee meeting invitations had been extended to Viridor in the past and the SLWP will ensure that KKR are strongly encouraged to attend upcoming meetings. With regard to penalties, the Environment Agency has given a non-compliance score of C3 which alters Viridor's overall annual subsistence charge to the agency. It was stressed that this was not an outright financial penalty but the score will impact Viridor financially in the longer term as well as an overall reputational impact. The SLWP does have a contractual agreement with Viridor which includes a 'Performance Management Framework', with 60 performance targets. Service correction notices have been applied to Viridor by the SLWP in the past when breaches of these targets have occurred. With regards to the non-compliance on this particular occasion, it was stated that Viridor's pre-treatment building was undergoing works at the time of the fire which explains the storage of material in the chosen area.

The Committee did seek reassurances that conditions in the report are being met and requested a future update by officers to ensure that conditions and proposals are sufficiently implemented. The Interim Strategic Partnership did commit to include an update in the next quarterly phase A & B contract management report. It was stressed that this particular incident is judged to be concluded by the SLWP but work will be ongoing to ensure that the report's proposals are met and the site operates safely. Three additional proposals were suggested as follows:

- A Health and safety section to be included in the quarterly phase A & B contract management report.
- To strongly request for a representative of KKR to be in attendance at future SLWP Committee meetings.
- To consider strengthening the Performance Management Framework targets where feasible.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report.

Voting: Unanimous

10. JWC Communications and Engagement - SLWP Phase A and B Appendix 6 Contracts

The Communications Advisor for the SLWP presented the report on Communications and engagement matters related to the phase A & B contracts as well as seeking approval for the 2020-22 SLWP Communications strategy document.

Strategy document

The strategy document outlines the upcoming challenges in the next three years for the SLWP, with particularly ambitious recycling and waste management targets to meet. The document uses the most recent resident survey to assess the effectiveness of previous communication and engagement activities carried out by the Partnership in achieving key objectives. Appendix A of the report shows that the majority of previous targets were successfully, or at least partly, achieved. The priorities for 2020-22 are set out in the report which follows the same 10 key themes as have been identified in previous strategy documents. A new theme was added in this report which identifies the short, medium and long term impacts that the Coronavirus pandemic may have on resident attitudes/behaviours to waste and recycling. The importance of setting measurable targets was strongly emphasized by the Communications Advisor.

The Communications update

The Communications Advisor was pleased to note that the SLWP's 'Destination Recycling' campaign was shortlisted for a National Recycling Award 2020. Praise was affirmed for the vital work from frontline staff at Viridor and Veolia in ensuring that waste and recycling services could still be run during the height of the pandemic. An overview of the HRRCs and Beddington Landfill operations was also provided in the update. Ongoing work to ensure Beddington ERF Communications and stakeholder engagement has been underway, including the proposed distribution of a Beddington Community Newsletter to households in the vicinity of the site to maintain awareness of various community-oriented centres and programmes.

The Committee did query what methods have been shown to be successful with communicating to blocks of flats with shared facilities for recycling as well as a high turnover of occupancy. The Communications Advisor explained that this is a particularly challenging scenario whereby the current quality of recycling in these types of housing is of poorer quality than a single property and has subsequently necessitated further sorting. In response to this challenge, target 8 of the strategy document outlines in detail the ways in which the partnership are looking to improve the quality of recycling being collected (particularly from communal properties).

Resolved: To agree the strategy document and to note the contents of the report.

Voting: Unanimous

11. JWC Risk Report July 2020

Appendix 7

The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager introduced the report and summarised the key risk areas facing the partnership boroughs in relation to the JWC's waste disposal functions. The new risk that has arisen from the Coronavirus pandemic has been included in this report, this is due to an increase in residents staying at home whereby a noticeable increase has been seen in kerbside residual waste as well as recycling and food waste. As a result of this increase, there has been a consequential increased strain on overall JWC resources. Due to the shift of the UK moving into a 'transition period' until the end of 2020, 'Brexit' has also been included in the risk report. The Interim Strategic Partnership Manager did state that there is a potential risk from 'Brexit' to the JWC's recycling capabilities, although there is

currently no anticipation for any form of 'Brexit' to impact on the ability to safely dispose of residual waste due to the proximity of the ERF.

The Committee did propose that future risk reports are 'RAG' rated to be able to assess the level of any upcoming risks.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report.

Voting: Unanimous

12. Any Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public

This item was not required.

14. Date of the next meeting

The dates for the next meetings are as follows:

- 9 September 2020 (18:30)
- 17 December 2020 (18:30)
- 13 April 2021 (18:30)
- 8 June 2021 (18:30)

Signed.....Date.....
Chair