

Staffordshire Local Government Association

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 8 MARCH 2018 AT COUNTY BUILDINGS STAFFORD

Present:

Cannock Chase District Council

Mr. M. Edmonds
Cllr. J. Preece
Mr. J. Presland

Stafford Borough Council

Cllr. F. Finlay
Mr. P. Gammon
Mr. H. Thomas

East Staffordshire Borough Council

Mr. P. Farrer
Mr. S. Khan
Cllr. D. Leese

Staffordshire County Council

Cllr. Mrs. G. Heath
Mr. C. Jones
Mr. C. Thomson

Lichfield District Council

Cllr. I. Eadie
Mr. N. Harris
Mr. R. King

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Mr. K. Parker

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Cllr. T. Johnson
Mr. A. Bird

Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Cllr. A. Dutton
Ms. C. Gibbs

South Staffordshire District Council

Cllr. Mrs. M. Bond (Chairman)
Mr. M. Jenkinson
Mrs. J. Smith

Tamworth Borough Council

Cllr. D. Cook
Mr. A. Barratt

Also in attendance: Ms. K Cocks (Waste Partnership Manager); Mr. J. Lindop (Staffordshire County Council)

Apologies: Cllr. A. Forrester (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council); Cllr. Mrs. J. Goodall (Tamworth Borough Council); Mr. D. Heywood (South Staffordshire District Council); Mr. S. Khan (East Staffordshire Borough Council); Cllr. A. Munday (Stoke-on-Trent City Council)

PART ONE

Minutes

40. **RESOLVED** – That, subject to the deletion of:-

“from their manifesto and therefore the issue might receive further consideration in due course”,

from minute No. 35, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Strategic Waste Management Action Plan – Performance Report
(schedule 1)

41. The Board considered a report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group regarding progress made towards delivery of the Strategic Waste Management Action Plan during Quarter 2 2017/18.

In presenting the report, the Waste Partnership Manager informed them that since their previous meeting, the provisional figures for Quarter 2 had been finalised. However, the data for Quarter 3 2017/18 was not yet available and would therefore be reported to their next meeting.

From the information which had been received, performance under (i) N191: Residual Household Waste Collected per Household had been mixed. Four Partner Authorities had increased the quantity (by kg) of waste collected whilst six Authorities (including the two Waste Collection Authorities) had collected less when compared to the previous quarter. With regard to N192: % Household Waste Sent for Reuse Recycling or composting, the position was less encouraging when compared to the previous quarter, with a majority Councils having re-directed less waste as a percentage of the total collected.

However Members noted that that according to the figures for “% Household Waste Sent for Recycling”, most Authorities had improved their performance when compared to the previous quarter and corresponding quarter in during 2016/17.

During her presentation, the Waste Partnership Manager referred to data on Fly-Tipping which had been obtained from Waste Data Flow and included in the report. Whilst the incidence of fly-tipping indicated a generally downward trend in most local authority areas, the data relating to Tamworth Borough had shown a greater fluctuation between April 2015 to December 2017.

42. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

Joint Waste Projects - Update
(schedule 2)

43. The Board received an oral report from the Waste Partnership Manager setting out the progress made in respect of the following Partnership projects:-

- (i) Strategy Post 2020;
- (ii) Fly-Tipping.

With regard to (i) above, the Waste Partnership Manager informed them that a meeting of the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group had been arranged for 4th April 2018 in order to have preliminary discussions regarding the new Strategy. In addition, arrangements had been made for a Waste Composition Analysis of Staffordshire's residual waste stream to be undertaken by students from Keele

University during 2018/19. The analysis would (i) provide information on the extent of recyclable material included in the stream; (ii) update the information received from the previous analysis undertaken in 2007 and (iii) supplement the data provided by the operators of the Four Ashes Waste to Energy and Hanford Incinerator plants.

With regard to (ii) above, the Waste Partnership Manager informed them that she was currently investigating the possibility of a joint communications initiative with Derbyshire Waste Partnership. She had arranged to meet with John Enright from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs on Monday 12 March 2018 regarding the possibility of grant aid to fund the campaign and she undertook to keep Members updated on developments.

In addition, the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) had arranged a free Communications Workshop to be held on 10 May 2018, specifically tailored to Staffordshire's needs/circumstances. However, the event was also open to waste officers from District and Borough Council's to attend as it was envisaged there would be learning opportunities for all.

44. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

Household Waste Recycling Centres – Charging for Non-Household Waste

45. The Chairman introduced this item, informing them that an invitation to attend their next meeting had been extended to the Chairman of the County Council's Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee who were currently scrutinising the policy of charging for non-household waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) following a referral by the Authority's Corporate Review Committee who had called the matter in. However, whilst this invitation had not been taken up, the Chairman informed them that she was to attend the Select Committee's meeting on 4 April 2018. She then invited Partners to let her have comments on the impact of the operation of the policy in their areas so that she could report back to the Scrutiny Committee, as necessary.

The Member representative of Lichfield District Council informed them that from the data supplied by Waste Data Flow and on-going monitoring by waste officers, it was difficult to draw firm conclusions as to the impact of the policy on the incidence of fly-tipping in his District. Whilst certain areas had seen a rise in the frequency of illegally tipped waste, others had experienced a noticeable reduction. He went on to explain that the District's proximity to the West Midlands conurbation was probably a contributory factor although further analysis was required to fully understand the position.

The officer representative of Tamworth Borough Council said that it was not possible to determine the impact of the policy on his area owing to the absence of a HWRC within its boundaries. The majority of local residents travelled to nearby amenities in Warwickshire where they remained free of charge to use.

The officer representative of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council informed them that the incidence of fly tipping in the Borough was decreasing although the HWRC facilities at Lycette Lane were generally poor when compared to other sites in the County. However, complaints about the charges were regularly received from residents and there appeared to be a general lack of understanding as to how they were applied. He therefore said there was a need for a further publicity campaign.

The Member representative of the County Council commented that clear signage on the charging policy was included at all HRWCs. In addition a mailshot of printed leaflets had been distributed to local residents and adverts had been placed in the local press. Analysis of fly tipped material indicated that a majority was household waste and would have been received at any HWRC in the County, free of charge.

Officer representatives of South Staffordshire and Cannock Chase District Councils concurred with the views expressed earlier in respect of the need for a sustained publicity campaign.

The Member representative of Stoke-on-Trent City Council spoke of his Authority's experiences with regard to fly tipping in their area. He said that most of the material had been found to originate from commercial rather than domestic sources and there was a particular problem with partially processed refrigerators.

The Member representative of Stafford Borough Council commented on the level of income generated by the introduction of the charging policy which was unlikely to make its operation worthwhile. However, the Member representative of the County Council replied that the business case was sound and that the income generated was making an important contribution to meeting the Authority's overall savings targets. Continuing she said that a report was currently being prepared on the operation of the policy including financial details, which would be shared with the Board in due course.

An officer representative of Lichfield District Council asked whether there had been any noticeable increase in the quantity of chargeable waste in the residual waste stream since introduction of the policy. In reply an officer representative of the County Council said that there had not.

46. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That arrangements be made for the Staffordshire Web to be updated to include details of the Household Waste Recycling Centre, Atherstone which was available for use by residents of the County (primarily Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough).

(c) That the County Council's report on the operation of the Charging for Non Household Waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres scheme currently being prepared, be shared with the Board in due course.

Importation of Dry Recyclable Material by China (schedule 3)

47. The Board considered a report of the Waste Partnership Manager regarding the recent implementation of a ban by the Chinese Government on the importation of 24 grades of solid waste including mixed paper and plastics from January 2018 and its impact on the United Kingdom's (UK) domestic recycling industry.

Previously China had imported millions of tonnes of the world's waste every year to supply their own recycling industry. The aim of the ban was to encourage their own local processors to purchase more domestic waste. However, the new arrangements would take time to fully develop leaving a shortage of material in the interim.

The implications for former customers in the UK were unclear at this stage, despite initial industry panic. Currently, waste processors (Mixed Recycling Facilities (MRF)) were continuing to accept material and alternative markets were being found. In addition, a number MRFs had increased the level of sorting in order to produce higher grades of material which could be reprocessed within the UK. However, in the longer term, there was concern about oversupply of recyclates in the market resulting in stockpiles of material at processing plants.

With regard to direct sellers (source separated producers) it was expected that the effects of the ban would be felt sooner owing to their more limited market influence.

Whilst plastic processors remained cautiously optimistic, the effect on the mixed paper market was expected to be much greater with index prices already falling from £75 to £25 in one month alone. However, 'News' and 'PAMS' were exempt from the above-mentioned ban and prices so far remained stable.

To date, the UK Government had not issued official guidance/support to local authorities regarding the new arrangements. Although there was an opportunity for new markets and better technologies to emerge, it was anticipated that such developments would take time. However, the lack of a phased approach had taken the industry by surprise and many were of the view that the ban might be revoked owing to the negative impact on the Chinese recycling industry.

In response to a question from the Member representative of Lichfield District Council, the Waste Partnership Manager referred to current arrangements in the south of the county for mixed paper recycling by Biffa. Owing to market conditions the company had recently requested changes to their contract agreement in order to take account of further processing work required to produce a saleable end product. However, following a request for clarification, they had stated their legal entitlement to request an increase in the contract price. Although the Authorities concerned were meeting on 20 March 2018 to discuss the matter, a request for a further meeting had been received from the company with a view to providing an update on the situation and discussing possible alternatives. Efforts by the Waste Partnership Manager to learn of other Authority's experiences in negotiating similar changes in their mixed paper recycling contracts with Biffa had provide unsuccessful.

The Officer representative of Stafford Borough Council commented on the need for a Partnership approach towards communication and to deal with the changes outlined in the report and potential impact on existing contracts brought about by the import ban by China.

The Officer representative of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council spoke of the stockpiles of material (plastic and paper) which were already accumulating both locally and in Europe, as reflected in comparatively low gate prices. He emphasised the need for an effective communications strategy in order to improve the quality of collected material and reduce contamination and referred to current difficulties experienced by Councils in negotiating a Mixed Recycling Facility Contract.

The Chairman referred a question which had been asked by a Member of South Staffordshire District Council at a recent meeting regarding the effect an increase in plastic in the residual waste stream had on emissions from the Four Ashes Energy to Waste plant. In reply an officer representative of Staffordshire County Council said that whilst plastic had always been present in the material incinerated at the plant, emissions levels were monitored closely by the Environment Agency. Appropriate plans were in place to deal with any breaches in permitted levels which occurred. He then undertook to provide the Chairman with a written statement on the position with regard incineration of plastics at the plant.

Note by Clerk: What can be emitted into the atmosphere from Staffordshire ERF is tightly controlled under the Waste Incineration Directive as regulated by the Environment Agency. The composition of the waste does have an impact on some emissions, for example, processing plastics can create acid gasses such as Hydrogen Chloride and Sulphur Dioxide, both of which have stringent limits set. These gasses are monitored continuously when the plant is online and the results are reported to the Environment Agency.

Plastics have always been a component of the waste burnt at W2R, in the event of the plastic quantity changing within the waste the emissions treatment plant will adjust automatically to ensure that all emissions are controlled within the limits. Since 2014 composition analysis of the waste shows plastic content has grown from 10.98% in 2014 to 16.55% in 2016 but remains well within legal limits..Veolia are extremely proud of the compliance record reported at Staffordshire ERF and remain committed to minimising any impact on the Environment.

Emission results are available on the Veolia website:
<https://www.veolia.co.uk/staffordshire/emissions-air-data>

48. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the County Director for Economy Infrastructure and Skills provide the Chairman with a written statement on plastics in the residual waste stream and the effect on emissions from the Four Ashes Waste to Resources plant.

Staffordshire Waste Partnership Budget

49. The Board considered an oral report from East Staffordshire Borough Council's Environment Manager regarding the Partnership Budget for 2018/19.

The Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group (SWOG) had given preliminary consideration to the Partnership budget at their meeting on 5 March 2018. Currently the budget amounted to £40,000 made up of contributions of £3,500 from each District and Borough Council and £6,000 from the County and City Councils.

With regard to 2018/19, whilst the intention was to recommend a budget to £45,000 by increasing each Partner's contributions by £500, Stoke-on-Trent City Council had indicated that they did not wish to contribute more than individual Waste Collection Authorities owing to the majority of joint projects having little or no relevance to the work of the Council.

Therefore, having regard to the City Council's wishes, SWOG had recommended a budget for 2018/19, and provisional budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as follows:-

	2018/19 £	2019/20 £ (Provisional)	2020/21 £ (Provisional)
Partner Authority			
Staffordshire County Council	6750	7000	7250
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	4250	4500	4750
Cannock Chase District Council	4250	4500	4750
East Staffordshire Borough Council	4250	4500	4750
Lichfield District Council	4250	4500	4750
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	4250	4500	4750
Stafford Borough Council	4250	4500	4750
South Staffordshire District Council	4250	4500	4750
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	4250	4500	4750
Tamworth Borough Council	4250	4500	4750
Total Budget	45,000	47500	50,000

50. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the oral report be received and noted.

(b) That the Staffordshire Waste Partnership budget for 2018/19 and provisional budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21 be agreed, as set out above.

Garden Waste Recycling Credits (schedule 4)

51. The Board considered a written statement by the County Director for Economy Infrastructure and Skills regarding the outcomes of discussions at meetings of the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group and between Partner Directors on the level of Green Waste Recycling Credits (GWRC) to be paid by the County Waste Disposal Authority (WDAs) to District and Borough Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) having regard to the need for the County Council to make £2m per annum savings from their budget.

Whilst these savings were required from the 2019/20 budget, the Authority had indicated that they were willing for them to be achieved over a two year period ie 2019/20 and 2020/21, provided there was general agreement by all Partners.

However, WCA Directors' position was for the savings to be achieved over a four year period ie 2019/20 to 2022/23 through (i) no inflation/contractual uplift being applied to GWRC, and; (ii) a phased reduction of GWRC (at a level yet to be determined) where politically appropriate. Their expectation was that an inflationary uplift would then be re-introduced from 2023/24.

In addition, there had been agreement by officers from all Partner Authorities that work was needed to understand their individual Communications Budgets with a view to producing a Joint Plan for 2018/19 aimed at driving up recycling rates and minimising waste generation in the County.

The Director paid tribute to all Partners for their efforts in reaching their respective positions as set out in the written statement. However, he highlighted that the views expressed remained subject to formal approval by each Authority and the question of the timescale was still to be resolved.

The Member representative of the County Council summarised the work which had been undertaken to date by Partners in attempting to identify significant savings in waste including (i) a proposed reduction in the payment of Green Waste Recycling Credits previously considered by the Board; (ii) the independent assessment undertaken into the contract arrangements for operation of the Waste to Resources plant at Four Ashes and Household Waste Recycling Centres in the County and; (iii) the commissioning of three independent reports on holistic savings for Staffordshire by Local Partnerships and Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). She went onto say that whilst (i) above had confirmed that the County Council's contracts were operating efficiently, the majority of WCA had decided not to implement the recommendations of the final WRAP report ie the introduction of a chargeable garden waste collection service. Therefore, the only remaining option in order to achieve the required savings was to reduce the payment of Green Waste Recycling Credits by the County WDA to WCAs.

With regard to the timescale for achieving the required savings, the Member representative of the County Council stressed that her Authority could not afford to agree to the WCA's request (as referred to in the written statement) having regard to other significant pressures and the need to close a £35m funding gap in their 2018/19 budget.

In the discussion which ensued the Member representative of Cannock Chase District Council expressed his view that by reducing the payment of GWRC, the County Council were cost shunting onto WCAs. In reply the Member representative of the County Council spoke in favour of a chargeable garden waste collection service stating that the collection of garden waste from households was a non-statutory, discretionary function which many other local authorities, nationwide had decided to introduce owing to similar budgetary constraints. Furthermore, those Staffordshire Authorities who had implemented a chargeable service were continuing to receive GWRC from the County Council at a level which exceeded the cost of disposal.

The Member representative of East Staffordshire District Council expressed his strong view against the proposals by the County Council to reduce GWRC over either a one or two year period and his Council's support for implementation of a chargeable garden waste service.

The officer representative of South Staffordshire District Council commented that the Board had originally agreed to work in partnership in order to identify significant holistic savings in waste and that the introduction of a chargeable garden waste service had not been raised at that time. Furthermore although the Board had been working on the identification of savings for approximately five years, District and Borough Council's had already accepted a two year reduction in the uplift of GWRC during 2016/17 and 2017/18 in the spirit of joint working and co-operation. The four year timeframe now being requested by WCA for implementation of further reductions in GWRC was to enable them to negotiate revised terms with their existing contractors.

The Officer representative of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council added that a reduction in GWRC in line with the County Council's wishes would not be financially viable for his Authority.

The meeting then adjourned for approximately 45 minutes to enable elected representatives of Partner Authorities to agree a collective way forward so that the Board could make recommendations on the future payment of GWRC having regard to the County Council's savings targets and the provisional agreement by Directors, as set out in the Written Statement.

Following the reconvening of the Board, the Chairman proposed a motion which was carried by a majority vote.

52. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the statement by the County Director for Economy Infrastructure and Skills be received and noted;

(b) That the County Council's requirement to achieve a £2m p/a savings target from the Waste Disposal Budget from 2019/20 onwards be acknowledged.

(c) That whilst Partnership Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) pledge to assist the County Council in achieving their savings target, they respectfully request that the proposed changes in the payment of Green Waste Recycling Credits (ie no inflation/contractual uplift and phased reductions at a level yet to be determined) from the Waste Disposal Authority to WCAs be implemented over the four year period 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 to enable them to make appropriate adjustments in their own Medium Term Financial Strategies.

Date of Next Meeting

53. **RESOLVED** – That a further meeting of the Board be held on 21 June 2018 at 10.30 am, District Council House, Lichfield.

Mr. C. Jones

54. The Board paid tribute to Chris Jones, the County Council's Group Manager: Sustainability and Waste Management, who was shortly to leave the employment of the Authority, for his efforts in supporting their work over the previous two years.

CHAIRMAN