

# Staffordshire Local Government Association

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON MONDAY 23 MARCH 2015 AT KEELE CEMETARY, KEELE

Present:

### **Cannock Chase District Council**

Cllr. C. Bennett  
Mr. I. Tennant

### **Staffordshire County Council**

Mr. I. Benson  
Mr. J. Howard  
Cllr. C.G. Heath  
Mrs. A. Heathcote  
Mrs. S. Talbot

### **East Staffordshire Borough Council**

Mr. P. Farrer  
Cllr. D. Fletcher

### **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

Mrs. N. Kemp  
Mr. K. Parker

### **Lichfield District Council**

Cllr. I Eadie

### **Stoke-on-Trent City Council**

Ms. J. Harper

### **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council**

Cllr. A. Beech  
Mr. T. Nicoll

### **South Staffordshire District Council**

Mr. S. Alexander  
Cllr. M. Bond  
Mrs. J. Smith

### **Stafford Borough Council**

Cllr. F. Finlay  
Mr. H. Thomas

### **Tamworth Borough Council**

Mr. A. Barratt

**Also in attendance:** Mr J. Lindop (Staffordshire County Council), and Ms K. Cocks (Staffordshire Waste Partnership Officer).

**Apologies:** Cllr. A. Forrester (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council); Cllr. A. Platt (Stoke-on-Trent City Council); Mrs. D. Tilley (Lichfield District Council)

## **PART ONE**

### **Minutes**

53. **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

## Matters Arising

54. There were no matters arising which were not dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda.

### Joint Waste Management Board Sub Group - Update (Schedule 1)

55. Members noted that the Joint Waste Management Board Sub-Group had not met since the previous meeting of the Board in January 2015. However, the Waste Partnership Officer had kept the Chairman updated on the progress made in respect of various projects since that time, as follows:-

- Dry Recyclables Processing Contract Procurement (on-going project);
- Food Waste Prevention Project Group (on-going project);
- Fleet Procurement (on-going project);
- Revised Waste Framework Directive – Legal Compliance Template (on-going project);
- Developer Bin Policy (on-going project);
- Contamination Campaign/Veolia Joint Campaign (on-going project);
- WEEE (diverted project);
- Ecostars Fleet Efficiency Review (diverted project);
- Cannock Chase Council Collection Contract (consultancy project).

In the discussion which ensued the officer representative of Stafford Borough Council sought clarification of the timescale for production of the Developer Bin Policy, a second draft of which was currently being prepared. In reply the Waste Partnership Officer said that comments on the document would be sought from relevant Planning Officers at Partner Authorities and production of the final version was dependent on the extent of the responses received. However, she said that she would endeavour to comply with any deadline the Borough Council had in mind.

The officer representative of the Borough Council emphasised the urgency with which his Authority required sight of the Policy and in reply the Waste Partnership Officer confirmed that she would deal with the matter as a priority. In the meantime she could forward a copy of the draft document to him for information if required.

The Chairman of Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group and officer representative of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council commented on the need for a wider circulation of the draft document so as to include comments from waste officers and relevant Members of all Partner Authorities. Continuing he said that the support of elected representatives was key to successful implementation of the policy.

56. **RESOLVED** – That the reports be received and the progress on projects made to date be noted.

## **Strategic Waste Management Action Plan - Performance Report** (Schedule 2)

57. The Board considered a report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group regarding the progress made towards delivery of the Strategic Waste Management Action Plan.

From the data which had been received, all Authorities had collected more residual waste per household (NI191) in this period (quarter 3) when compared to quarter 2 2014/15. However, performance under NI192: "Household Waste Sent for Reuse, Recycling or Composting" had declined for all Partners when compared to quarter 2 2014/15. With regard to NI193: "% of municipal waste landfilled", the County Council's performance had improved from 2.59% in quarter 2 to 1.06% in the current period and the City Council's had improved from 15.36 in quarter 2 to 7.06%.

In presenting the report, Mr. Nicholl said that he hoped contamination rates from the various materials recovery facilities used by Partners would soon become available for consideration by the Board. However, from preliminary data it appeared there was a wide variance in the statistics between individual district/boroughs depending on their contract provider.

Members were pleased to note that Stoke-on-Trent's performance data had now been made available for the current year.

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

## **Update Report on Consultations, Guidance and Reports** (Schedule 3)

59. The Board considered a report of the Waste and Climate Change Manager (Staffordshire County Council) containing information on recent consultations, guidance and research findings that were likely to have an impact on the work of Member Councils and the Board including:-

- Backdoor Charging from Household Waste Recycling Centres – Consultation by the Department of Communities and Local Government;
- 70% Recycling Rate and Landfill Ban – Publication by the European Commission;
- England's 50 % Recycling Target – Publication by the Local Government Association;
- Fertilizer Regulations – Forthcoming changes by the European Union;
- Recycling Rewards Scheme – An announcement by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

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

## Key Waste Issues

61. The Board received a PowerPoint presentation (slides attached at Appendix A to the signed minutes) from the Staffordshire Waste Partnership Officer summarising current issues within the waste industry which could, potentially, have wide-ranging implications on the work of Partners including:-

- A decline in the use of paper which had led to a decrease in recycling rates, fewer mills and a glut of material in the market. The price of paper was expected to fall which could provide a disincentive for people to recycle;
- Changes in the regulations regarding the operation of mixed recycling facilities (MRFs) and the additional costs to operators arising from these;
- A reduction in the price of oil leading to cheaper raw materials and downwards pressures on the value of recyclates.

During her presentation, the Waste Partnership Officer highlighted some of the potential implications for Partners.

With regard to MRFs, it was considered that operators would increasingly be less likely to enter into higher risk contracts with local authorities owing to prevailing market uncertainty/decline in end use markets. In any event, the changes in regulations referred to above would lead to a greater drive for quality in the materials collected and a reduction in contamination rates. The contracts more likely to be completed would be shorter in duration, and be locally based so that the cost of haulage was kept to a minimum. The Waste Partnership Officer then went on to refer to a consortium of Lincolnshire Authorities who had received a nil response to a request for tenders in respect of their MRF contract.

In the discussion which ensued the Member representative of Cannock Chase District Council referred to recent incidents of fly tipping in the District which he said had caused great concern within the local community. Whilst the Police were currently investigating the matter, the waste had not yet been removed which had exacerbating the situation. The Member questioned whether a continued decline in the market for recycled material would lead to an increase in cases of fly tipping.

The officer representative of Stafford Borough Council said that his Authority's existing MRF contract would shortly expire and sought ideas from the meeting as to how they could procure a new contract on favourable terms, given the current adverse market conditions. In reply the Waste Partnership Officer advised that market insight was key and suggested the Authority held a bidders' day in order to learn of their specific requirements. Also, a shorter term contract would offer the flexibility to seek a better deal as and when market conditions permitted.

The Chairman of the Waste Officers' Group and officer representative of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council commented on the need to avoid combining collection and treatment services into one contract having regard to the differing risk profiles of each for potential bidders. A better response would be received from the market by seeking separate contracts.

62. **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted.

### **Green Waste Credits**

63. The County Council's officer representative informed the Board of a request by the Staffordshire Chief Executives' Group for options around Staffordshire Waste Management (Green Waste Recycling Credits) to be discussed by the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group (SWOG) with a report back to their April 2015 meeting. This included (i) an investigation of short term options and; (ii) a possible longer term ambition for a single disposal and collection Authority for Staffordshire or single Authorities for the north and south of the County.

Initial discussions had already been held by the SWOG regarding Green Waste Recycling Credits. During 2014/15 the total cost of the current Green Recycling Credits system to the County Council was £4,950 per annum. However, a 3% inflationary uplift was made annually irrespective of changes in the level of the Retail Price Index or Council Tax precept. By comparison, the total treatment cost of green and food waste to Staffordshire Waste Collection Authorities was £3,375,000 per annum during the same period. Green Credits had therefore subsidised green waste collection costs for some Councils.

Mr. Benson went on to explain that the County Council were under extreme budgetary pressures and his service area were required to make significant reductions in their operating costs in order to help meet the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy targets. Unfortunately, the options available to him for making savings were limited. Furthermore, the Authority had no desire to 'cost shunt' onto District and Borough Councils.

Therefore, the proposals being considered by his Authority for which he was now seeking the agreement of the Board was (i) a reduced level of Green Waste Credit to be paid to District and Borough Councils in instances where they were intending to charge for green waste collections. This would ensure that both collection and disposal Authorities benefited from the additional income received and; (ii) the abolition of the automatic annual 3% inflationary increase in credits paid to Waste Collection Authorities.

Mr. Benson stressed that the principle as to whether charging for green waste collections should be introduced was for District/Borough Councils to decide. However, where charges were made then the green waste credit paid by the County Council should reflect the cost of treatment only.

During the full and wide ranging discussion which ensued Members expressed their serious concerns regarding the introduction of charges for green waste collections owing to (i) the likely negative response from local residents; (ii) the increased cost of administration; (iii) the potential for an increase in fly tipping and; (iv) the potential for increased contamination of residual waste streams. The Member representative of Stafford Borough Council said that he was unable to agree to the proposals at this time without further more detailed information was made available and the officer representative of Tamworth Borough Council concurred with this view.

In response, the Waste Partnership Officer undertook to prepare a full options report for the next meeting of the Board. However, the Chairman of the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group (SWOG) and officer representative of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council expressed his view that an informal session for Members and Officers would be more appropriate, prior to a response being made back to the Chief Officers' Group. The Board then expressed their agreement with this approach as the best way forward.

64. **RESOLVED** – That an informal session involving relevant officers and Members be arranged to follow the next meeting of the Board in order to discuss the above-mentioned request by the Chief Executives' Group and specifically, proposals by the County Council to (i) pay a reduced Green Waste Credit to Waste Collection Authorities where they intended to introduce charging for green waste collection and; (ii) abolition of the automatic annual 3% inflationary increase in credits.

### **Potential Changes for Future Meetings**

65. The Chairman referred to the forthcoming District and Borough Council elections on 7 May 2015 and highlighted the potential for changes in their Membership. She then thanked them for their valuable contribution to the work of the Board and said that she hoped to continue in her role as Chairman until the next Annual Meeting.

### **Dates of Future Meetings**

66. **RESOLVED** – That a further meeting of the Board be held in July 2015 on a date and at a time to be arranged, at Council Offices, Codsall.

**CHAIRMAN**