

Staffordshire Local Government Association

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON MONDAY 18 JULY 2016 AT CIVIC OFFICES, NEWCASTLE

Present:

Cannock Chase District Council Mrs. N. Samrai	Stafford Borough Council Mr. M. Street Mr. H. Thomas
East Staffordshire Borough Council Mr. P. Costiff Mr. P. Farrer	Staffordshire County Council Cllr. Mrs. C.G. Heath Mr. C. Jones Mr. C. Thomson
Lichfield District Council Cllr. I. Eadie Mrs. D. Tilley	Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Ms. N. Kemp
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Mr. D. Adams Cllr. Mrs. A. Beech Mr. A. Bird Mr. T. Nicoll	Stoke-on-Trent City Council Mr. B. Brockbank Cllr. T. Follows
South Staffordshire District Council Cllr. Mrs. M. Bond Mr. S. Winterflood	Tamworth Borough Council Mr. A. Barratt

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

Apologies: Cllr. Mrs. P. Ackroyd (East Staffordshire Borough Council), Cllr. F. Findlay (Stafford Borough Council), Cllr. A. Forrester (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council) Cllr. Mrs. J. Goodall (Tamworth Borough Council), Mr. A. O'Brien (East Staffordshire Borough Council), Mr. K. Parker (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council), Cllr. J. Preece (Cannock Chase District Council), Mrs. J. Smith (South Staffordshire District Council).

PART ONE

Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

1. The Board expressed their appreciation for the work of Mrs. Ann Beech (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council) during her term as Chairman.

2. **RESOLVED** – (a) That Mrs. M. Bond (South Staffordshire District Council) be appointed Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year up to their Annual Meeting in June 2017.

(b) That Mr. I. Eadie (Lichfield District Council) be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year up to their Annual Meeting in June 2017.

Minutes

3. **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Strategic Waste Management Action Plan (schedule 1)

4. The Board considered an oral report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group regarding progress made towards delivery of the Strategic Waste Management Action Plan and received performance data at the meeting.

Lichfield District Council, Cannock Chase District Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council had all seen reductions in "N191: Residual Household Waste Collected per Household" during Quarter 4 when compared to the previous quarter in 2015/16. With regard to % household waste sent for recycling alone (formerly BVPI 82a), performance by most Partners had improved when compared to the previous quarter. However, % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting (N192) gave rise to concern as all Authorities had seen significant reductions. With regard to "NI193: % of municipal waste landfilled" Members noted that performance by the City Council had remained approximately static whilst the County Council had decreased from 3.16% to 2.29%.

In the discussion which ensued the officer representative of Stafford Borough Council suggested the inclusion of data indicating Partners' progress towards achieving their 2020 recycling target, in future reports. In response Members agreed that this would be helpful and requested the Waste Partnership Officer and Chairman of the Officers' Group make the necessary arrangements.

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

(b) That data relating to Partners' progress towards meeting their 2020 recycling target be included in the Chairman of the Waste Officer's Group reports to future meetings of the Board.

Joint Waste Management Board Sub-Group (Schedule 2)

6. The Board received progress reports in respect of the following projects from the Staffordshire Waste Partnership Manager:-

- Veolia Four Ashes Joint Campaign for 2015/16 (closed projects);

- Certificate of Professional Competence Training Collaborations (closed project);
- Calendars (closed project);
- Holistic Savings for Staffordshire (on-going project);
- Bulky Waste (on-going project);
- Food Partnership (on-going project);
- Stafford Borough Council Contract Procurement (on-going project);
- Material Recycling Facility Contract Issues (on-going project);
- Veolia Fours Ashes Joint Campaign for 2016/17 (new project);
- Bartec User Group (new project);
- Garden Waste Working Group (new project);
- Residual Waste Collection Frequency Working Group (new project);
- Waste and Resources Action Programme Collaboration (new project);
- Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs Reviews;
- Wheeled Bin Framework (potential future project);
- External Advice (potential future project).

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

Working Groups

8. The Board considered a report by the Waste Partnership Manager regarding the work of the (i) Chargeable Garden Waste Collections Working Group and; (ii) Residual Waste Collection Frequency Working Group, both of which had been established by the Board at their previous meeting.

Chargeable Garden Waste Collections

The Working Group were investigating the potential for the introducing charges for the collection of garden waste. Membership of the Group was on an opt-in basis according to Partners' respective priorities. Consequently, representatives of Lichfield District Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, together with the County Council had attended the initial meeting held on 10 June 2016.

Various options had been discussed including (i) continuing with a free service; (ii) ending the current free service and selling the customer base to a third party; (iii) outsourcing this non-statutory service; (iv) introducing a chargeable collection as a trade waste service; (v) introducing a chargeable collection service to cover costs and for the County Council to retain the recycling credits currently paid to Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) to cover the costs of disposal and; (vi) introducing a chargeable collection service to cover the costs of collection and processing and for the County Council to retain the recycling credits currently paid to WCA's.

Members noted that approximately 44% of Local Authorities nationwide charged residents for green waste collections. This provided an opportunity for the Partnership to undertake benchmarking and apply the findings to services in Staffordshire, as appropriate. The Working Group agreed that there should be a consistent approach across Partner Authorities towards pricing and communications and undertook to investigate the possibility of establishing a central administration team.

Furthermore, it was decided that a standard methodology should be prepared based on the benchmarking findings and having regard to the following key principles:- (i) the collection of garden waste to be decoupled from residual waste collection; (ii) residents to choose whether they wish to buy-into the new service; (iii) all existing green waste bins to remain with residents irrespective of whether or not they opted into the new service; (iv) a consistent price to be implemented across Staffordshire, as appropriate; (v) the new chargeable service to be introduced after the end of summer 2016 season ie when the volume of green waste collected was reduced and; (vi) a common bin size for green waste to be introduced with residents having the option of a smaller capacity bin at a reduced cost, if required.

In addition, the Group agreed that (i) relevant benchmarking previously undertaken be updated in order to provide a picture of current market conditions; (ii) case studies of neighbouring authorities be collated to establish an in-depth knowledge of chargeable green waste services and the key lessons learned; (iii) best practice information on chargeable green waste services be sought from professional organisations such as Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee, Association of Public Service Excellence, National Association of Waste Disposal Officers and Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP); (iv) meetings be held with Biffa Waste Services Limited to discuss the potential of outsourcing garden waste collection services as another option for the Partnership; (v) a database should be collated of all recent garden waste collection service information (financial and operational) and; (vi) the information contained in the database be used to assess the potential impact of tonnage variations on disposal contracts/ model scenarios to model service alteration viability/ develop a standard collection service methodology and; (v) the work currently being undertaken for the Partnership by WRAP and the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs to form an integral part of any modelling to assess the implications of a change in current policy.

During her presentation, the Waste Partnership Manager drew Members' attention to the Case Study set out in the report regarding Local Authorities in Durham who had achieved significant financial savings in their waste operations. She informed Members that Durham County Council had offered assistance to the Partnership in the form of example correspondence/information which they had sent to their residents regarding the changes which they had implemented.

Residual Waste Collection Frequency

The Working Group were investigating the potential for reducing the frequency of waste collections as a means of increasing efficiencies in waste collection and disposal. This followed discussion at the previous meeting of the Board during which some Partners had expressed an interest in pursuing this option further. Subsequently the Group met on 15 June 2016 at which representatives of the County Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, South Staffordshire District Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council were in attendance.

Owing to the relatively large amount of recyclable material currently disposed of by residents in their residual waste bins, it was considered that a reduction in the frequency of residual bin collections would reduce capacity and make the use of recycling bins more attractive. It had been estimated that if residents in South Staffordshire District placed all their waste in the correct bin, the District Council's recycling rate would increase to approximately 70%.

Case studies from other authorities who had undertaken a reduction in service frequency suggested that:-

- There was a need for weekly separate food waste collection service to ensure all bio-degradable waste was collected within a suitable timeframe.
- Collection of recycling bins every three weeks could lead to confusion amongst residents whereas weekly or fortnightly collections dates were easier to remember.
- Disposal of babies' nappies was a concern owing to the lack of information available on how best to deal with biological waste. It was considered likely that residents would dispose of nappies in an incorrect bin if residual waste collections were reduced.
- Additional staffing support may be required for communication, door to door enforcement/bin checking duties etc in order to ensure a smooth transition between services and to minimise public concern.
- Most Authorities had moved to weekly collections of recycling bins in order to provide a greater incentive to residents. Therefore, any savings in transport costs which might have arisen from a reduction in residual collections could be lost in these circumstances.
- Cost savings were achievable. However, waste disposal costs in Staffordshire were already relatively low when compared to other Authorities nationwide. Therefore, the potential for the Partnership to produce large-scale savings in disposal might not be that great.

It was noted that some Partners had issued small (140 litre) waste bins to residents in order to reduce capacity. However, in the event that the frequency of residual collections was reduced, it was unlikely that these would be large enough to meet residents' requirements. In addition, the group noted various other potential 'knock-on' effects including (i) overfilling of residual waste bins; (ii) an increase in the volume of waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres giving rise to a breach in agreed limits; (iii) an increase in fly tipping; (iv) an increase in the contamination of waste streams; (v) changes in recycling rates and payments of recycling credits; (vi) reduced residual waste with implications for current contracts and prices and; (vii) existing 'round routes' for collection vehicles becoming inefficient.

The Group agreed that the results of WRAPS's project work into separate food waste collections and work by DEFRA to assess the disposal contract with Veolia relating to the Energy Recovery Facility, Four Ashes were required before a full scoping of changes in the frequency of residual collections could be completed. However, in the meantime, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council had agreed to investigate the potential for incorporating a reduction in tonnages within their current disposal contracts.

In the discussion which ensued, the Waste Partnership Manager informed them that WRAP had formally agreed to publish the results of the work being undertaken for the Partnership on 4 November 2016. The officer representative of Tamworth Borough Council commented that residents' acceptance of a reduction in the frequency of residual waste collections would probably be dependent on the weekly collection of food waste. He also referred to the likelihood a reduction in the frequency of collections would have on the incidence of fly tipping in the County. The Member representative of Lichfield District Council added that the prevailing financial climate required Local Authorities to make difficult decisions in order to produce urgent financial savings of the required magnitude.

The Waste Partnership Manager informed Members of similar work WRAP had undertaken for other Authorities nationwide - in particular Falkirk Council who had participated in WRAP separate food waste collection trials. In response to a request from the Board she undertook to obtain a copy of the evaluation report from this trial and investigate the possibility of them receiving a presentation/talk from Falkirk Council on the operation of their waste services, to the next meeting of the Board.

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

(b) That the Waste Partnership Manager obtains a copy of WRAP's evaluation report from the WRAP Separate Food Waste Collection Trials undertaken by Falkirk Council with a view to noting any relevant lessons learned.

(c) That the Waste Partnership Manager investigates the possibility of the Board receiving a presentation on the operation of Falkirk Council's waste management operations, if required.

WRAP Project

11. The Board received an oral report from the Waste Partnership Manager on the progress made in respect of the Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) project aimed at improving recycling rates and the quality of recyclate collected by Staffordshire Waste Partners. This work had been initiated following the decision of the Board at their previous meeting.

An initial meeting had recently been held between the Waste Partnership Manager, Andrew Bird (Chairman of the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) and WRAP in order to scope the project. A Project Manager had been appointed by WRAP who would attend the Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group meeting on 19 July 2016 to learn more about Partners' requirements and their current operations. In addition, WRAP had hired an external consultant to provide support for the project to the value of £60,000.

12. **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and that further updates be brought to the Board, as necessary.

Staffordshire County Council Financial Update

13. The Board received an oral report from the County Council's Team Manager – Waste Policy and Climate Change updating them on his Authority's progress in achieving the savings targets set out in their Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-2019 (MTFS) having regard to the implications for District/Borough Council Partners' waste collection operations.

The Team Manager reminded them that the MTFS had identified a savings target of £1.5m in waste services during the four year term of the Strategy. However, at the meeting of the Board on 28 October 2015, the County Council had agreed that this target be deferred until 2019/20 pending the identification of holistic savings in waste services across Staffordshire and taking into consideration the reduction in payment of Green Waste Recycling Credits during 2016/17 and 2017/18 which had also been agreed at this meeting.

Continuing, he informed Members that on-going budget monitoring had highlighted major unexpected financial pressures for the Authority during 2017/18, owing to issues surrounding the Better Care Fund, a Joint NHS/Local Authority initiative which sought to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in society. Therefore, it might be necessary to bring forward an element of the MTFS waste savings in advance of the previously agreed 2017/18 date. However, the issue would be clarified after the meeting of the County Council's Political Cabinet had been held in August 2016 (Staffordshire Waste Officers' Group (SWOG) would receive an update at their meeting on 28 September 2016).

During the discussion which ensued Chris Jones undertook to keep the Board informed of the County Council's budgetary intentions as they related to waste and following a request from the officer representative of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, it was agreed that the minutes of the above-mentioned meeting of SWOG be circulated to Members for information.

14. **RESOLVED** - (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That all Partners be kept informed of the County Council's budgetary intentions relating to waste services in the period before the next meeting of the Board, as necessary.

Date of Next Meeting

15. **RESOLVED** - That a further meeting of the Board be held on at Council Offices, Codsall on a date and at a time to be arranged.

Exclusion of the Public

16. **RESOLVED** - That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972, indicated below.

PART TWO

Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs Contract Management Review (exemption paragraph 3)

17. The Board noted an exempt oral report of the County Director for Economy Infrastructure and Skills regarding the draft findings and recommendations of the Contract Management Review of the Waste Private Finance Initiative Contract managed by the County Council which had been undertaken by the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme on 27 and 28 June 2016.

CHAIRMAN