

GLoucestershire JOINT WASTE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee held on Tuesday 4 October 2016 at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT:

Cllr Sue Coakley (Chairman)	Cllr Brian Robinson (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Chris Coleman	Cllr Marilyn Smart OBE
Cllr Richard Cook	Cllr Tina Stevenson
Cllr Kate Haigh	Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Cllr Jim Mason	Cllr Stan Waddington
Cllr Helena McCloskey	Cllr Mark Williams

Apologies: Nigel Riglar

Officers in attendance:

Rachel Capon – Joint Waste Team
Tony Childs – Joint Waste Team
Andy Barge – Forest of Dean District Council
Clare Locke – Joint Waste Team
Martin Stacy - Cheltenham Borough Council
Andy Pritchard – Joint Waste Team
Steve Read – Joint Waste Team
Scott Williams – Joint Waste Team
Roger Smith – Joint Waste Team
Jonathan Lund – Gloucester City Council

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

22. TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR JIM PORTER

22.1 Jonathan Lund, Corporate Director Gloucester City Council, spoke to the committee about Jim's thorough understanding and passion for his portfolio which had not been dimmed by his illness, and that despite his diagnosis had continued his work for the people of Gloucester. As well as his work as a Councillor, Jim was also a Director at Gloucestershire Airport, and had been very active in the Rotary Club. He fought his illness with spirit and energy, and died peacefully at home. A service of remembrance had been held at Gloucester Cathedral and the large number of people in attendance was testament to the respect in which he had been held.

22.2 Committee members stood for a minute silence as a mark of respect.

23. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 21 JUNE 2016

23.1 The minutes of the meeting on 21 June 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23.2 The Chair informed the meeting that the actions from the last meeting were complete, other than the Routemap discussions between the Chair, the Vice Chair and Head of Waste and district partners. The meeting with Cheltenham Borough Council was due to take place later that day; and the meeting with Stroud District Council was still to be arranged.

24. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

25. MEMBER QUESTIONS

No member questions had been received.

26. OUTLINE BUSINESS PLAN 2017-2020

- 26.1 Steve Read, Head of Service for the Joint Waste Team, gave a detailed presentation of this report. He highlighted that there was a high degree of uncertainty particularly around the circular economy package following the referendum decision on 23 June 2016 to leave the EU. However the industry would need to continue to abide by EU rules until the impact of this decision was clearer.
- 26.2 He explained that the main area of Defra policy development was around promoting consistency in recycling collections; this encouraged all collection authorities to collect a wide range of materials. Defra's biggest area of interest was encouraging food waste collections, but Gloucestershire was already a leader on this. Guidance recently published by WRAP recognised that both kerbside sort and co-mingled collections systems existed but did not push for standardisation to one or the other.
- 26.3 Members discussed whether there was any merit in the push to become more homogenous nationally with regard to bin colours. It was suggested that if no benefits in terms of improvements in the recycling rates could be identified that the committee should 'push back' on this proposal which would be very expensive to implement retrospectively. It was agreed that this proposal was not a priority; and the committee was informed that at present there was no indication that any aspect of the push for consistency would be compulsory.
- 26.4 Concern was expressed at the recent announcement that nationally the amount of rejected recyclates had increased, and it was questioned whether this was happening in Gloucestershire. Mr Read's own view was that the statistics reflected that there had been a lot of underreporting for some time but there was certainly a problem with quality of recyclate from some local authority areas using a co-mingled system. A new voluntary code of practice meant that Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) were having to look more closely at the rejected items; in effect they have started to properly report on this matter. In Gloucestershire materials were collected separately (except by Tewkesbury Borough and Stroud District Councils) so the rejection rate has always been minimal. The two districts where recycling materials were co-mingled did report rejection rates, and it was known that the rejection rates from the Tewkesbury Borough Council area were low.
- 26.5 Committee members discussed the challenges of responding to public demand around recycling. It was known that the public wanted to be able to recycle food and drink cartons but due to the material content of these cartons this was not straightforward and would be at a significant cost to partners. The economics of the present structure meant that the majority of costs of collecting products for recycling fell to local authorities not the producers or suppliers; it was agreed that this should be the other way round.
- 26.6 It was agreed that more needed to be done to encourage members of the public to recycle more materials. It was noted that previous exercises involving opening black bags taken to household recycling centres (HRCs) had proved successful in demonstrating to the householder the range of products that could be recycled. However this was resource intensive and could not be sustained at the larger HRCs in the longer term. Members

debated the merits of different approaches, and it was agreed that this issue would benefit from a wider discussion and should be added to the committee's work plan going forward.

26.7 The committee agreed: -

- to approve the broad approach and proposed priority areas for inclusion in the Business Plan 2017-20 as set out in the report,
- to convene an informal non-decision workshop in November to consider feedback on the "Routemap" document and progress on key action areas, along with the formulation of the plan and associated resource implications.

27. FEEDBACK FROM ROUTEMAP CONSULTATIONS

27.1 The Head of Service for the Joint Waste Team informed the committee that this process was almost complete. Following the meeting with Cheltenham Borough Council today, it only remained to arrange a meeting with Stroud District Council.

27.2 The committee was further informed that feedback had been a generally positive view of the GJWC and its work; and that there was a strong view that the co opted districts should formally join the committee.

27.3 Further feedback would be shared with members after the process was complete.

28. OVERVIEW OF MARKET CONDITIONS FOR RECYCLABLE MATERIALS

28.1 Scott Williams, Joint Waste Team, presented this report. He explained that the weakened pound had had a positive impact on commodity prices in the short term but it was not possible to predict this position in the longer term. It was also important to be aware that clean material attracted better prices.

28.2 Some committee members found the data relating to costs of recycling to be of concern. It was explained that the data referred to average costs, and that each of the waste collection authorities in the county had separate agreements. Members felt that it should be the supplier picking up the costs of recycling not local authorities. It was also noted that the implementation of a charge of 5p for plastic bags had shown that the general public would adapt their behaviour. It was felt that this approach could be used in relation to other recycling materials.

28.3 The Head of Service for the Joint Waste Team reminded the committee as to the role of recycling credits in this process. The committee was informed that there was currently no expectation that these would be withdrawn. It was agreed that that it was important to maintain a focus on diverting waste from landfill as this was a win-win for all partners.

28.4 The committee noted the report.

29. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

29.1 Roger Smith, Joint Waste Team, gave a full presentation of this report. Members were concerned to note the incidences of impatient car and van drivers driving on pavements and verges to pass collection vehicles without regard to safety of pedestrians and crews. It was explained that Ubico were trialling 360° cameras on their vehicles, and that the Forest of Dean team have a good relationship with the Police. It was also explained that the Joint Waste Team were hoping to share examples of dangerous driving on social media.

29.2 In response to concerns Rob Bell, Chief Executive Ubico, assured the committee that Ubico take health and safety matters seriously and were working to achieve ISOH accreditation; and were constantly reviewing to see how the service could improve. There

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have been no high level issues. It was noted that Ubico had taken over the Household Recycling Centre contract for the county council from Kier Environmental Services with effect from 7 August 2016.

- 29.3 It was, however, agreed that low level incidents also required attention and it was felt that this was a culture issue in the workforce. Mr Bell assured the committee that culture change was a priority and that Ubico has recently appointed a compliance officer to focus on health and safety issues.
- 29.4 Cllr Coleman, Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment Cheltenham Borough Council, informed the committee that he felt a lot more satisfied with the resilience of the figures since Ubico had taken on this work and they were to be applauded for their approach.
- 29.5 Members asked for data on how Gloucestershire compared to other areas of the country. It was noted that officers would be able to access comparable data from Somerset councils but that it was not known whether other local authorities published this data in the public domain.
- 29.6 It was noted that toward the end of the Kier contract the number of incidents had apparently reduced. The committee was assured that these were the reported numbers. In response to a question Ubico representatives informed the committee that they had not identified any issues with the HRC sites since taking over the contract and that the workforce had responded positively to the change of employer. Ubico would be working closely with the workforce to deliver local solutions to any health and safety related matters.
- 29.7 The committee noted the report.

30. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT FINAL OUTTURN

- 30.1 Rachel Capon, Waste Management Team, presented this report highlighting the financial position across all seven councils.
- 30.2 The committee agreed to note the summary financial performance as contained within the report.

31. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS MONITORING REPORT

The committee agreed to note the summary financial performance as contained within the report.

32. SERVICE/ACTION PLAN UPDATE

- 32.1 As well as the reports the committee received a presentation to update members on activity against the action plan. (For information the presentation slides were uploaded to the council website and included in the minute book.) It was recognised that a large amount of work had been undertaken by the Joint Waste Team, and the committee thanked officers and partners for their hard work to achieve these outcomes.
- 32.2 In response to an invitation from the Chair the representatives from Ubico took the opportunity to inform the committee on their business plan (which had been drawn up with reference to the Joint Waste Committee's own Business Plan) and how this was being taken forward; how the waste collection routes were designed and mapped out; and how the business had responded to capacity issues.

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- 32.3 Ubico were in the process of reviewing pay and conditions across the company. The committee was informed that as the company had grown so quickly staff at similar levels of expertise were in place at different rates of pay and conditions and that this needed to be standardised. Ubico was also looking to review its management and administrative structure, and that there would also be a specific focus on the wider governance and organisation structure.
- 32.4 Committee members were aware that Rob Bell was stepping down as Managing Director of Ubico and members thanked him and wished him well for the future. Cllr Coleman thanked Mr Bell on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council, and stated that Mr Bell would be missed.
- 32.5 In response to a question relating to the recruitment process the committee was informed that the process was still being discussed, but would involve stakeholders.

33. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN UPDATE

- 33.1 Andy Pritchard, Joint Waste Team, gave a detailed presentation of this report.
- 33.2 Cllr Marilyn Smart commented that the Forest of Dean District Council now collected textiles and had received criticism from local charity shops. She asked that in all publicity it was made clear that good quality clothes and other textiles could still be donated to charity shops for reuse. Cllr Smart was assured that this was and would continue to be the case.
- 33.3 Cllr Smart informed the committee that the Forest of Dean Council was very proud of the new waste collection service, and wanted to place on record her thanks to Rachel Capon and the Waste Team for a brilliant job.
- 33.4 It was agreed that attention should be given to communicating positive messages to the public about what happens to materials recycled at the kerbside to encourage people to recycle more. In response it was explained that discussions were already happening and officers had started to draw together a story board for this message.

CHAIRMAN

Meeting concluded at 12.35 pm