

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held Online via the Zoom app on 8 December 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.30 am

23 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous consultative meeting held on 13 October 2021 were received and noted.

24 Declarations of interest

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Councillor Geoff Jung, Personal, Ward member for Woodbury and Lypstone, which included Greendale Business Park..

6. Flexibles/film trial.

Councillor Denise Bickley, Personal, Chair of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors.

25 Matters arising

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment requested an operational update regarding a covid outbreak at SUEZ and recruitment difficulties. In response the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager reported that the service was going well. There were currently two loaders self-isolating at present and crews had worked on Saturdays to catch up. The total missed collections were on a downward trend and were below the contract threshold. The figures were the lowest they had been since January 2020. The new assistant manager was in place and there was a good strong team which was working well. It was noted that less complaints had been received by EDDC which reinforced the improved service that was being provided.

Councillor Tom Wright wished for this thanks to be recorded for the excellent service and high standard of collections in Budleigh Salterton.

26 Bridging solution

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager reminded the Board that the reasons behind a bridging solution were the contractual tipping point for property growth and the real world effect due to the covid 19 pandemic which had resulted in an increase in material tonnages collected. The level and nature of property growth across the district was imbalanced and rounds required significant reorganisation.

An issue with supply chains, in particular the procurement of vehicles had prompted a re-evaluation of the bridging solution. The lead in time for the required vehicles was eight months from order to delivery. Therefore if the Council approved the bridging solution at its February 2022 meeting the vehicles would be ordered and not received until October 2022. In order to future proof round reviews were required and pay rates would need to be discussed in 2022.

It was noted that the bridging solution had implications for the flexibles/film trial. Concern was expressed over the lack of information provided by SUEZ on the bridging solution and that due to the current service delivery resource issues with heavy reliance on agency staff and a driver shortage, that taking part in the trial could overload the already stretched system.

EDDC officers reported that although proposals for a bridging solution had been received from SUEZ, a greater degree of detail and information was still required from SUEZ in order for the Council to do due diligence. The current proposal was out of budget and required greater clarification and due diligence before any proposals and informed decisions could go forward to be made by Cabinet and Council. SUEZ responded that the reason for the bridging solution was that issues were being experienced now due to the number of properties and composition of materials. The issue for SUEZ related to timing and vehicle availability, which would be eight months from any Council agreed bridging solution. The Strategic Lead - Finance re-emphasised the significance of the decision for members and suggested that a provisional sum be included in the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees budget setting papers.

Following discussions the Board agreed that that officers be invited to finalise the bridging solution and due diligence considerations and present a proposal back to the January meeting of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board, to then go forward to Cabinet and full Council in February 2022.

27 **Flexibles/film trial**

SUEZ were working with Flexible Plastic Fund (FPF), RECOUP, WRAP and Hubbub to trial the collection of flexible plastic packaging from households by working with a cross section of authorities across the country. The trials would seek to understand the volumes arising from households, costs and challenges associated with collections, success of communications approaches and the processes and cost of handling materials once sorted. Four 'pioneer' authorities would join the first stage of the trial, starting in early 2022, for three years. The second 'industrialisation' stage would use learnings from the first pioneer stage and apply them to a cohort of five more local authorities starting in July 2022 and a further second cohort of five starting in June 2023 (subject to funding). The full cost of the trial would be financed by DEFRA, UK Research and Innovation and the FPF (as an open book contract), so there would be no cost to any participating authority.

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager explained that the big question was whether it was the right thing for EDDC to engage in at the moment due to the current resource issues. The trial was a desirable thing to be involved in but the priority was keeping existing operations on track. The Chair expressed his disappointment at not entering the trial but agreed that the key issue to consider was whether the service could cope with the bridging solution and existing resource issues. He felt that there were too many unknowns at present to make a decision.

The SUEZ Principal Commercial Manager explained that there were several options and opportunities for joining the trial. There was a lot for the current service to deal with at present and he was concerned about taking on a trial that could jeopardise the existing service. He felt that the definition of flexible plastic needed more work and that an extensive level of communications would be required. It was also unclear how long SUEZ would have to store the material before it was transported.

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager explained that one reason for the trial was that it was unclear at the moment what flexibles were in the recycling stream. There was a need to find out what the quantities and compositions were. There would be no financial loss to EDDC. An advantage of taking part in the trial was that it would give the partnership an insight into how the End Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme would work and it might provide an opportunity to steer and influence.

The Board agreed due to its concerns and the need for further details on the bridging solution and information on the trial and EPR, to decline to participate in the flexibles/film trial at present. However it remained open to joining the trial after the first phase once more information was available and it requested further information and a presentation at the next meeting of the Partnership Board.

Attendance List

Board Members:

Councillors present:

G Jung (Chair)
D Bickley
E Rylance (Vice-Chair)
T Wright
M Rixson

Officers present:

G Bourton, Recycling and Waste Contract Manager
J Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
A Hancock, Service Lead StreetScene

Suez present:

N Tandy, Principal Commercial Manager
J Gatter, Contract Manager

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
P Millar

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant
Lou Hodges, Recycling and Waste Officer
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Steve Maclure, Waste Management Officer
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Suez representatives in attendance:

Oliver Morrall, Project Delivery Manager
Lily Morton, Recycling Officer
Jess Prosser, Recycling Officer

Board Member apologies:

James Pike, Regional Director SUEZ
Councillor Geoff Pook

Chair

Date: