

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at Online via zoom on 1 February 2023

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.30 am

22 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous consultative meeting held on 19 October 2022 were agreed as a true record.

23 Declarations of interest

5. Joint contract and operational report.

Councillor Denise Bickley, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Chair of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors.

5. Joint contract and operational report.

Councillor Geoff Jung, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Ward member for Woodbury and Lympstone which includes Greendale Business Park.

24 Matters arising

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager updated the Board on the disposal of vapes. DEFRA were reviewing the current WEEE and battery regulations which may affect how vapes were dealt with as they were electrical items and contained batteries. It was expected that they would be classed as both in the future. Until more was known SUEZ would continue to collect vapes as small electricals in the immediate term but the partnership would consider if they were better collected as batteries. The lithium batteries were contained away from the Greendale building due to fire risk. It was noted that some communications would be done to promote awareness of the correct way to dispose of vapes.

25 Joint contract and operational report

The Recycling and Waste Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager gave the Board a joint report on a contract and operational update for the period October to December 2022. The two main events of the quarter were:

- Implementation of phase 1 of the bridging solution by setting up the growth zone.
- Preparation for handling the anticipated peak Christmas/New Year tonnages.

The growth zone rounds were mobilised in October with timing planned to allow them to bed in before the Christmas/New Year pressures came into place. This went smoothly and was achieved successfully with crews and residents adapting to the new collection schedules rapidly. Both the mobilisation and the festive period operations were reviewed, with no significant issues arising.

Complaints remained low and were under the accepted level. The re-route of the growth zone had reduced the overtime of staff and created a more balanced collection service. This allowed the teams to concentrate on the quality of the service, which was reflected

in the statistics. Eight months of the year had seen waste tonnages below 1500 tonnes and the Board noted that the Partnership were doing well to keep waste at that level.

The Board discussed litter being left behind after collections, which attributed to complaints received about the service. The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager reported that the Communications Manager arranged a weekly meeting with the recycling and waste team, the CSC and the complaints team and that there was a very low level of complaints about the service, with no real theme. However, the single biggest source of complaint was spillage from vehicles. The Assistant Director – StreetScene informed the Board that there had been an update in corporate complaints relating to roadside litter. Roadside litter picking was generally an EDDC responsibility. He suggested asking the React team to do a sample collection to try and establish if it was general roadside rubbish or spillage from the recycling vehicles. It was noted that rubbish on the roadside was a Devon wide problem and that EDDC should campaign with DCC. Biodiversity and looking after the environment should be advertised and promoted, with littering being publicised to lessen the problem.

Vehicle access issues remained a problem for SUEZ. There was a reporting system in place providing information on poor parking blocking roads and it was hoped that naming roads would create localised pressure. Where possible SUEZ would send a smaller vehicle to complete the collections when access was an issue.

Recruitment of drivers remained an ongoing issue, with agency staff continuing to be used. Recruitment of loaders had been more successful and the training of loaders to drivers had increased, with six staff now being trained as drivers. It was felt that a 'grow your own' policy was the best approach to having a successful workforce. Since the last Board meeting four members of staff had passed their LGV license and were now on the road. The EDDC team continued to build on its knowledge and skills team, with one employee completing a HNC in Waste Management, one currently undertaking some project management training and another completing an inhouse Management Academy course. Two EDDC employees were also going to undertake Transport CPC training in 2023 using SUEZ membership of the FTA.

The Board noted that material sales had dropped since the last meeting due to a huge fall in market prices, which was likely to be driven by inflation (fuel prices). However, the partnership had made £400,000 more than the previous year on material sales.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager for their report. He also congratulated the officers who had recently achieved new qualifications. The Board noted the joint contract and operations report.

26 **Performance framework**

The Board noted the performance framework which showed performance across the contract, for the Board's review and information. It was noted that material prices had sharply decreased and the Chair asked whether this would increase again. It was reported that this decline in prices had been expected. The contract had enjoyed exceptionally high prices during 2022 and that although they had dropped the prices were still relatively high compared to the more long term market.

27 **Risk register**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager presented the risk register to the Board. He highlighted emerging risks and high risk areas, which included:

- A3 – Lack of Strata design capacity to meet deadlines for communication materials. This risk had not changed and the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager tried to mitigate it with as much planning as possible.
- B6 – Recruitment of additional frontline staff for bridging solution phases one (completed) and two.
- E3 – GEO political influences on fuel supply. This was an oil price issue rather than a fuel supply risk.
- E4 & E5 – This was related to growing the operation at Greendale in terms of depot space and MRF capacity. The volume of materials was high and there was a danger of space constraints reducing operational efficiency and/or material quality. It was noted that some containers had been moved to a satellite depot to free up space at Greendale and the MRF team met monthly to discuss any adjustments required to meet capacity.
- I5 – Budget risk due to oil prices and rapidly increasing container prices.
- Legislation and regulation – there was a raft of legislation coming in over the next few years. There was insufficient detail at present to be able to score the associated risks. As more was learnt through 2023 officers would make a more detailed assessment of the risks this presented.

Concern was expressed over lack of Strata design capacity and also the EDDC webpages not being updated. Members were asked to feedback any comments on the website to the communications team. It was noted that there was now a feedback form on every EDDC webpage.

28 **Green waste quarterly accounts**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager gave the Board an update on the green waste quarterly accounts. Members noted the accruals position and the profit split between the two authorities. It was noted that a charge had never been implemented for the green bins, container costs were recovered as part of the subscription cost.

Following concern expressed over the quality of the composted material from Coastal Recycling, the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager reported that Coastal Recycling had always fed back that the quality of the green waste collected kerbside in East Devon was very good. Coastal Recycling had multiple streams and the Board were reminded that DCC was the waste disposal authority.

29 **Waste stream composition analysis**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager explained that MEL Waste Insights had conducted a Devon wide kerbside residual waste composition analysis on behalf of DCC. The information contained in the Board agenda papers related to East Devon and included a comparison between the October 2022 results and the last analysis from October 2017. The sample was limited to 200 properties but cut across all the demographics. The results showed that food waste was the largest material in the waste stream and was therefore the main target. The Recycling and Waste Team were already starting the campaign process and designing a bin hanger, and would also use social media and residents' update, along with a press release in the next few weeks. It was noted that the amount of green waste in the waste stream had increased despite the introduction of the green waste scheme. Officers were unsure of the reasons behind this.

AHP (sanitary products) also formed a large part of the residual waste stream. The Recycling and Waste Officer had started to research a project on a designated collection for AHP and was looking to the Welsh authorities for information on this. AHP collections were possible but may not prove to be cost effective. A business case would be produced following the research.

The Board discussed reasons why residents did not recycle their food waste and ways to educate people in relation to recycling food waste. They noted that school visits were carried out by the Resource Futures team. The Board were reminded that food waste was a county wide issue and that East Devon's figures were the lowest of the collection authorities in Devon. A countywide communications campaign would be discussed at the next Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee meeting. The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager informed the Board that he was part of a food waste group convened by county colleagues.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that a research project be conducted to investigate the potential for a separate kerbside AHP collection and the results brought back to a future meeting of the Board.
2. that a publicity campaign be approved to increase the capture of the high percentage of unrecycled materials in the residual waste stream, with visuals of a bin hanger (and consideration of a sticker) coming to the next Board meeting.

30 **SUEZ ownership outcome**

The SUEZ Principal Commercial Manager gave the Board an update on the SUEZ sale. The sale process had been completed in November 2022, with SUEZ being in the SUEZ group ownership. After a couple of years on internal wrangling there was now a long term plan and more stability for the company. Although SUEZ had been taken over by Veolia in most of the rest of the world, the CMA had decided that it would be detrimental to the market if Veolia were to create a monopoly in the UK. There had been several expressions of interest, with the company eventually being bought by the SUEZ group.

The Board noted and thanked the Principal Commercial Manager for his verbal report.

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, Director of Housing, Health and Environment

A Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene

Suez present:

N Tandy, Principal Commercial Manager

J Gatter, Contract Manager

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

B De Saram

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant

Lou Hodges, Recycling and Waste Officer

John Hudson, Accountant

Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Suez representatives in attendance:

Jess Prosser, Recycling Officer

Board Member apologies:

James Pike, SUEZ Regional Director

Chair

Date: