

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at online via zoom on 31 January 2024**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.30 am

#### **24 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2023 were agreed as a true record.

#### **25 Declarations of interest**

Declarations of interest.

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

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Paula Fernley, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Ward member for Broadclyst which includes the green waste recycling facility, Hill Barton.

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Eleanor Rylance (non-committee member), Affects Non-registerable Interest, Ward member for Broadclyst which includes the green waste recycling facility, Hill Barton.

#### **26 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **27 Joint Contract and Operations report**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager gave the Board a joint contract and operational update for the third quarter of 2023/24. It was reported that as a result of careful preparations and seasonal communications the Christmas collection period went very smoothly with performance levels maintained at a high level. This was despite a shortage of two recycling vehicles due to parts issues over the Christmas period. All crews, supervisors and workshop staff were praised for their excellent performance. As usual, the green waste and bulky item collections were suspended to allow these resources to support recycling and waste collections to ensure peak material flows could be managed.

Material levels were down slightly on this period compared to previous years and it was believed that was down to less consumerism from the cost of living crisis.

Two milestones were passed in quarter three as the service continued to grow:

- 74,000 households serviced.
- 20,000 green bins subscribed.

The growth in green waste collections was creating collection capacity pressures which would be tackled in the first quarter of 2024/25 by the introduction of a fifth vehicle and

crew. This was part of the business plan. There were now 20,124 green bins subscribed over 18,707 households.

Also during the third quarter App developments were launched to further improve the App functionality:

- A-Z recycling information.
- Auto-notification of non-access.

The SUEZ Contract Manager reported that missed collections and complaints remained at the lowest level since the start of the contract. Residual waste tonnages remaining lower than recycling tonnages all year was testimony to the work that East Devon had put into targets, collection schedules and methods adopted by all concerned. It was noted that material sales had remained static since the last meeting.

Confirmation dates were awaited for two electric recycling vehicles and two electric forklifts. EDDC had also acquired a new loading shovel that had lower carbon outfit with modern safety features.

SUEZ had a dedicated supervisor handling all recruitment and training. This helped keep standards higher and reduced turnover compared to previous years. There had been no high-level injuries during the quarter and the rise in personal injuries was attributed to slips, trips and falls and the icy weather. Crews were encouraged to report all incidents/injuries as it helped to identify poor practice/trends.

The growth zone collection plan had proved its success with half the amount of missed bins and complaints during the same period in 2022, despite an increase in property numbers of over 140 within that time frame.

The SUEZ and East Devon teams were thanked for all their hard work, especially during the recent stormy weather.

## 28 **Performance Framework**

The Board noted the performance framework which showed performance across the contract. It allowed officers to look for areas of improvement and put plans in place to correct actions if necessary.

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager explained the performance framework and the history behind it. The contract had a performance framework criteria of service standards, each of which had a threshold and that performance was measured against these in both points and pounds. Although changes had been made to the contract there had been no changes to the performance framework. A partnership approach had been taken and the performance framework had not been invoked at all. The framework was used as a way of measuring performance rather than penalising. Performance was reflective of the framework, with good performance levels in all areas.

In response to a question regarding material costs the Board noted that the materials market was dropping up and down and that the SUEZ team had reported fluctuations which were thought to be reflective of events happening in the world. Material values were connected to an international market, even if SUEZ were only selling in the UK.

## 29 **Risk Register**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager presented the risk register to the Board. He highlighted a number of risk areas:

- B6 – the risk of recruitment of additional front line staff for bridging solution phases one and two was reducing, but would not go away due to the UK employment situation as a whole.
- C3 – the contract extension was in place. Changes to the payment mechanism were still bedding in, but there was a tracking system in place to closely monitor this.
- E3 – GEO political influences on fuel supply. There was still a lot of vulnerability in that area.
- E4 & E5 – Growth of operation resulting in outgrowing the depot facility & Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) capacity not sufficient to process increasing volumes of materials. The current depot was very constrained in space and the MRF over capacity. A depot review had been started to look at new premises for the future.
- I5, I6 & I7 – budget risks. These were all related to the change to the cost plus mechanism as previously SUEZ had carried a lot of that risk, but now it had transferred to EDDC.
- I7 – Local Authority Payment Scheme (LAPS) for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) payments. There was not a lot of information available about EPR at present, it was an unknown quantity.
- Q – legislation and regulation. There was a raft of legislation around Q3 - EPR, Q4 - Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and Q5 - Simpler Recycling, all of which had the potential to change the composition of waste streams and change how authorities were paid for this. DEFRA detail was still awaited, but it was expected that the risks would reduce once more information was learnt. The current risk levels were reflective of unknowns.
- Q8 & V3 – free garden waste collections. This risk had dropped away as the latest version of Simpler Recycling indicated that chargeable green waste collections would remain.

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager was thanked for presenting the risk register. A request was made for a summary to be included at the start explaining what the different colour risks meant, the number of each level risk areas and why certain changes had taken place.

It was noted that a FlexCollect programme was taking place with seven local authorities nationally. It was in its early stages and progress would be carefully monitored. The objective of the FlexCollect project was to assess how flexible plastics could be collected, separated and what the end materials market was. At the instigation of the project EDDC was asked to be a participant in the project. It was decided however, that at that time East Devon should not take part in the project due to the growth zone changes taking place and the footprint at the depot MRF was potentially restrictive. The MRF had been designed to service 69,000 properties, but there were now 74,000 properties in the district.

## 30 **App developments update**

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer gave the Board a summary of new developments with the East Devon App, which had been developed working with Cloud 9 Technologies.

The Recycling and Waste team had heavily promoted the East Devon App for a number of years and there were now 62,000 devices across the district using it, regularly receiving recycling and waste updates/alerts. Officers had been looking at increasing the functionality of the app further.

Cloud 9 had recently been approached with an idea to progress the 'push notification' ability of the App to assist with more automation in relation to access issues affecting residents, thereby notifying people in advance of a situation. The report explained in detail how this operated. It was hoped that this new process would reduce the number of calls coming in relating to non-collection issues. It would also keep residents up to date with any collection problems that may affect them. This feature was now operational and being successfully used by the crews so that residents that had the App were receiving notifications. Emails were also sent to the Recycling and Waste team to inform them of when the notifications were sent.

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer went on to explain that there was an A-Z of recycling materials on the EDDC website and that they had worked with Cloud 9 to provide a more interactive version for the App. The webpage A-Z was widely used and it was predicted that this would be a well-used addition to the App. There was a user portal which allowed the admin to add, remove or update materials and provide information on how to recycle or dispose of that item or material. It was suggested that the type of bags that could be used in the food caddy should be promoted extensively as not all residents were aware of this.

It was hoped that these App additions would:

- Reduce calls/complaints from non-collection due to access difficulties.
- Link crew actions to householder messaging.
- Improve separation of materials between containers.
- Reduce contamination.
- Improved functionality would increase the number of App users further still.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked the Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer for his presentation. Members praised the App and thanked the officers involved. It was noted that it was not possible for customers to reply to a push notification on the App. This was deliberate as a huge volume of replies could overwhelm the App. However, residents could email EDDC or contact the customer service centre. As part of further development the team would explore with Cloud 9 to investigate a way that customers could contact the Council via the App without overwhelming the communication channels.

A request was made for a tour of the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) and the energy from waste plant (EFW). The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager commented that there had recently been a tour of the EFW but that he would find another available date for interested members. A visit to the MRF was more difficult due to space and congestion issues at the depot. Visits would have to be kept to very small numbers and operations would have to be paused during the tour for health and safety reasons. This was not ideal as holding up MRF operations could cause greater difficulties for crews further down the line. There was a video which demonstrated the process from household to haulage which would be shared with those present.

**RESOLVED:** that the Recycling and Waste Contract Officer investigate a visit to the energy from waste plant and arrange for the video of the materials recycling facility to be shared with members.

## 31 **Green waste accounts**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager presented the green waste accounts to the Partnership Board and explained the predicted accruals position to the end of the year.

He explained that the 60/40 profit share was only for the first quarter as the payment mechanism was changed after this (100% profit to be retained by EDDC). It was noted that there would be a small price rise for the service in the next financial year and that a fifth crew would be needed due to the growth of the service, but these had been factored into the business plan.

**Attendance List**

**Board Members:**

**Councillors present:**

P Fernley  
S Gazzard  
G Jung (Chair)  
M Rixson  
T Olive

**Officers present:**

G Bourton, Recycling and Waste Contract Manager

**Suez present:**

M Taylor, Regional Director, South West  
N Tandy, Principal Commercial Manager  
J Gatter, Contract Manager

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

P Arnott  
I Barlow  
C Brown  
J Brown  
P Faithfull  
M Goodman  
E Rylance

**Officers in attendance:**

Lou Hodges, Recycling & Waste - Operations and Projects Officer  
Steve Joyce, Recycling & Waste - Operations and Projects Officer  
Steve Maclure, Recycling & Waste - Operations and Projects Officer  
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

**Board Member apologies:**

Tracy Hendren, Director of Housing, Health and Environment  
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director Streetscene EDDC

Chair .....

Date: