

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at online via zoom on 24 April 2024**

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.14 am

#### **32 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2024 were agreed as a true record.

#### **33 Declarations of interest**

Declarations of interest.

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

#### **34 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **35 SUEZ management changes and introduction to Mike Wildman**

The Chair welcomed Mike Wildman, Regional Manager, SUEZ to the Partnership Board. Mike introduced himself and explained his background and role with SUEZ. The Chair thanked Mike and looked forward to working with him.

#### **36 Joint contract and operations report**

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer and the SUEZ Contract Manager gave the Board a joint contract and operational update for the fourth quarter of 2023/24, which had run smoothly. The green waste service was growing, creating capacity pressures on the four existing crews. Within the quarter the customer base increased by 500 properties and an additional crew had been implemented with use of a hire vehicle. A new RCV had been ordered and was due to arrive in September. The existing rounds would be re-balanced across the five crews, which would involve some changes for residents in terms of collection week (with residents getting an extra collection) during June.

Carol Arthur, Resource Futures recycling advisor had been working with the partnership, undertaking door knocking to promote various messages, which this year focussed mainly on food waste collections and the use of the EDDC app.

Performance continued to remain good, with Easter bank holiday collection changes unhindered. Complaints and missed collections remained below the thresholds of the performance framework. Data was presented to the Board in rolling year format, as requested at the previous meeting. A breakdown of types of injury was also provided and it was noted that there had been a serious injury this year, resulting in a broken leg, due to negligence of the driver. Most incidents were slips, trips or falls. There had been no RIDDORS to report in 2023/24.

Current levels of staffing were good, but were slightly down on contract staffing levels, with the spaces being filled by agency staff. The agency staff were on a temporary to permanent basis and it was intended to transfer them to SUEZ staff in the next few months. There had been a turnover of staff, mainly due to the team handling misconduct issues well and removing non performing staff out of the business. This included a focus on drug and alcohol testing and a heavy focus on sickness absence, particularly one-day absences, which had a big impact. It was noted that sickness levels had reduced dramatically due to the removal of some long-term sickness and were currently at around 5%. In relation to a question about the use of agency staff, the SUEZ Contract Manager agreed to include these statistics on the next Recycling and Waste Partnership Board agenda. The figure was currently around 8% of staff were agency, which was much less than some other contracts.

East Devon's recycling and waste team were continuing to share contamination issues within the collection service with residents. There was a particular focus on gas/NOx canisters in the green sacks, which posed a risk to the plant and site operatives. Site staff picked these items out by hand and stored them separately for safe disposal, which was costly both in terms of time and disposal. Gas/NOx canisters should be taken to the local recycling centre for safe collection in a caged area, rather than being placed in the green kerbside recycling sacks. It was suggested that this message should be pushed on the East Devon app, via social media, the residents weekly update and the councillors weekly newsletter, and possibly bin hangers/stickers. The Board agreed that EDDC should issue a press release on gas/NOx canister contamination.

The Board noted the price per tonne for recycled materials, which showed a rise in price for aluminium and plastic. Sales revenue remained steady, with peaks when the waste flow increased. Total waste flow had fallen slightly, but not the percentage of materials recycled.

## 37 **AHP project**

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer updated the Board on the absorbent hygiene products (AHP)/nappy collection trial that was proposed to start in September/October 2024.

EDDC officers and councillors visited Nappicycle on 22 February, along with a principal waste manager from DCC. It was a positive visit with discussions on ways to collaborate going forward with support from Nappicycle.

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer advised the Board that the current site permit did not allow for nappies on site, but work was underway to renew the permit. It was hoped that the Environment Agency would be flexible with a local agreement for conducting a short term trial, provided SUEZ and EDDC could satisfy them that mitigating factors would be put in place.

The trial would involve collecting nappies from around 200 properties, including a childcare setting and a residential home (to include adult AHP) around Cranbrook/Exeter as this area had a high percentage of young families. Different types of collection containers would also be trialled. It was reported that the trial itself had generated a lot of interest from outside bodies such as WRAP. The local partnerships consultancy that had been heavily involved in nappy recycling in Wales had been very helpful. A further update on the trial would be given to the Board at its next meeting in July. It was

suggested that local members and town/parish councils in the trial area should be informed to involve as many people as possible.

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer was thanked for his update.

### 38 **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 Operations and Projects Officer stated that performance continued to be very good. Missed collections were overall below the threshold, although there had been a rise in missed assisted collections due to an experienced loader injury and the use of agency staff. Performance was expected to improve.

Container deliveries were very good and complaints were low. It was noted that the financial deduction summary figures changed significantly from September 2023. Officers explained this was due to the move to the cost-plus arrangement. The new contract allowed for a greater number of bin delivery drivers, with a good team and processes in place.

It was noted that although some customers chose not to renew their green waste subscriptions, the overall numbers were continually increasing.

### 39 **Draft Green waste accounts**

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer presented the draft green waste accounts to the Board and thanked the accountant for producing them. It was noted that the year-end numbers were still being produced but the draft figures gave a good indication of the financial position.

A major milestone had been reached, with total income exceeding £1million, although the accruals position and expenses reduced this. The draft resulting profit for the service was £460,195, with £46,020 of the projected profit share figure (April to June) for SUEZ and £414,176 to be retained by EDDC.

### 40 **Schools and community engagement**

Jess Prosser, SUEZ Recycling Officer gave a presentation to the Board on school visits, community engagement and social value. 631 students had received a recycling workshop in 2023 and 654 students in 2024 and the Recycling Officer listed the East Devon schools visited in 2023 and 2024 (there were two outstanding visits for 2024). St Peter's primary school, which had an Eco Group, had also undertaken a litter pick and audit, meeting, assembly and earth day competition. The number of sessions and children involved in the workshops varied depending on the school. The Recycling Officer outlined the workshops, which included a presentation of the four Rs of recycling (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover), a game and re-use crafting.

The SUEZ Recycling Officer discussed the community engagement which was conducted by EDDC's housing team. This included:

- A Trumps Court focus group – five tenants attended this focus group with residents receiving a recycling bag for their flats and better recycling bags. A display board advertising where the recycling went was produced.
- Sidford community garden event – 48 people attended this event. A display board and information about green waste recycling was provided.
- Newton Poppleford – a display board and information was provided.

Between January and April 2024 SUEZ had contributed to social value through:

- Exeter Chiefs HITZ students – employment day.
- Mentoring year 9s through Empowering Girls.
- Hospiscare charity Christmas tree collection (40 trees collected).
- Moor trees – tree planting (2 members of staff took volunteer days to plant trees across Dartmoor and South Devon).
- Macmillan funding raising - £262 raised so far this year through activities such as cake sales and a sponsored walk.

DASWC (Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee) funding provided EDDC with 18 weeks per year (2 x 9-week blocks) under the resource futures contract for a recycling advisor (Carol Arthur). The Resources Future Recycling Advisor undertook door knocking and community engagement to promote key messages that EDDC set. These were:

- Use of the EDDC app.
- Food waste collections.
- Garden waste service.

1,824 doors had been knocked, with 950 residents spoken. The 52% rate of engagement was high and feedback was positive. Compared to neighbouring authorities the EDDC service received lots of praise.

The SUEZ Recycling Officer was thanked for her presentation and all the hard work being done with schools and towards community engagement.

## **Attendance List**

### **Board Members:**

### **Councillors present:**

G Jung (Chair)

M Rixson

T Olive

### **Officers present:**

Steve Maclure, Recycling & Waste - Operations and Projects Officer

### **Suez present:**

M Wildman, Regional Manager

M Taylor, Regional Director

J Gatter, Contract Manager

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

I Barlow

R Collins

C Fitzgerald

M Goodman

C Nicholas

**Officers in attendance:**

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

**Suez representatives in attendance:**

Jess Prosser, Recycling Officer

**Board Member apologies:**

Councillor Paula Fernley  
Gareth Bourton, Recycling and Waste Contract Manager  
Tracy Hendren, Director of Housing, Health and Environment  
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director - Streetscene  
Councillor Steve Gazzard

Chair .....

Date: .....