

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at Online via the Zoom app on 24 July 2024

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.37 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2024 were agreed as a true record.

2 Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest.

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

3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Joint operations and contract report

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager gave the Board a joint contract and operational update for the first quarter of 2024/25. During this quarter operations had been consistent and service levels had remained high. An area highlighted for improvement was missed assisted recycling collections and this was being addressed with the relevant crews.

During the quarter, two growth milestones were passed:

- 74,500 households receiving core recycling and waste services.
- 20,800 green waste bins subscribed.

A key operational development in quarter one was the rebalancing of the green waste collection rounds to manage the continued growth of the green waste collection service. The round structure and collection capacity was now in place to manage further growth for green waste collections for forthcoming years.

Other areas of focus for quarter one were:

- Preparations to run an (AHP) absorbent hygiene product/nappy recycling trial.
- Improvements to the way dog bin assets were managed. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.
- Improvements to digital communication channels.

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager reported that with the continued growth and development of the recycling and waste collection service the on-going pressures of space on the main depot at Greendale were becoming steadily more problematic. It was hoped that the depot review would be progressed as rapidly as possible in order for the partnership team to plan for the future.

The SUEZ Contract Manager advised that there was currently good levels of frontline staffing, but contract staffing levels remained slightly down, with those vacancies being

filled by agency staff. The agency staff were on a temporary to permanent basis and it was hoped that these would become SUEZ staff within the next few months.

The EDDC team had also been increased with the recruitment of an additional Operations and Projects Officer, Angela Baquerizo Thorsen, taking the team from three to four. This provided the capacity required to manage current levels of growth, continue with the programme of improvements and also help plan for future changes.

Responses to questions included the following points:

- Regarding the total waste flow, it was noted that the recycling and composting rates were increasing due to the increase in the composting of green waste. The rate of food waste and dry recycling had plateaued. The weight of waste was dropping, due in part to changes in products as a result of future legislation and lower consumerism.
- It was noted that the EDDC property team was leading on the depot review and that it was planned for a report to go to the Cabinet meeting in September. Members were asked to bear in mind that the depot review was a very complex piece of work.
- Regarding safety statistics, the Board noted that there was no pattern to the reported incidents and that injuries were mostly due to slips, trips and falls. Staff were advised to report all incidents.
- The quarterly breakdown of waste in percentage terms would be reported to future meetings.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager for their report which was noted.

5 **Performance framework**

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

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager stated that performance continued to be very good.

Regarding the target of delivering requested receptacles within 5 working days, it was noted that it was sometimes more cost effective to batch up deliveries in the same area, but that this also meant that deliveries might be later than the target time.

It was noted that there are approximately 2,500 assisted collections across the district, which is broadly typical of the southwest. The additional crew would help to improve the rate of missed assisted collections.

The Board noted the report.

6 **Green waste accounts**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager presented the green waste accounts to the Board and thanked the accountant for producing them.

It was noted that the total income for the green waste service for 2023/24 was just over £1 million, although the accruals reduced this in terms of income recognised for the financial year. The resulting profit for the service was £458,261, with £45,826 (40%) of the profit share (April to June) for Suez and £412,435 to be retained by EDDC.

The Board noted the report.

7 **SWAP internal audit final report and action plan**

The Recycling and Waste Partnership Board considered the SWAP internal audit report which had reviewed the processes adopted by the Council and carried out an in-depth assessment of the capped costs, for the recently extended waste contract.

There was one finding in the report concerning overtime costs incurred by a supervisor from East Devon supporting the mobilisation of another SUEZ contract that had been charged to the Council. The resulting action was that the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager would identify all costs that needed to be reimbursed and would review future invoices with the SUEZ Contract Manager to ensure that these costs were repaid to the Council, or deducted from future submitted invoice claims.

The SWAP report summarised that there was a sound system of governance, risk management and control existed, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area. It acknowledged that the Council had an excellent working relationship with its contractor. This extended to the audit review, where SUEZ's time and support was readily given, and any queries were responded to promptly. SWAP thanked the Contract Manager (Suez) and EDDC's Recycling and Contract Manager.

The internal audit final report and action plan was noted.

8 **Digital communications developments and web site demonstration**

The Board received a website demonstration and an update on digital communications developments from the Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer. Rather than set up a new dedicated website, the current website pages had been adapted as follows:

- New icons on the web pages; this was a work in progress with videos and pictures to be added.
- The addition of a recycling news page with updated messaging every couple of weeks.
- Embedded videos would be added to increase visibility.
- An improved A-Z list of recyclable materials.

The Board thanked officers for the very good improvements which were engaging.

Discussion and suggestions included the following points:

- The number and colours available for the icons was limited and black had been chosen as it was considered smarter.
- Officers would look at using the recognised symbol for recycling as a different symbol had been used.
- Residents would be made aware of the improved website pages when further work had been completed.
- Dog bins are in the process of being renumbered with QR codes included for residents to report problems. It was planned to make more use of QR codes generally to link hard copy information to digital information.

9 **Absorbent hygiene products (AHP) trial**

The Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer updated the Board on the absorbent hygiene products (AHP)/nappy collection trial. The Environment Agency had now given permission for the trial to start in September.

The trial would be held with 200 addresses in Cranbrook and Tithebarn identified on the basis that residents had requested extra bin space. There would be an equal balance across the collection week and 14 properties would be trialled with fortnightly collections. One childcare premises would also be included in the trial.

It had been agreed that Nappicycle would collect approximately 10 – 12 crates of 600 litres on a fortnightly basis, approximating to 2 tonnes of nappies. The trial ends in December when the information and costs would be collated.

Should the trial prove successful and be rolled out across the district, there would be a large campaign to raise awareness of the service and it would be easy to offer to residents who contacted the Council to request more bin space. The Board was advised that 13% of the remaining waste flow was made up of nappies which makes this a large target for the Council. There was the potential to add 3 – 4% to the recycling rate if the service was introduced.

It was noted that the Council should also promote the use of real nappies as an alternative and officers would consider the signposting to local support to increase awareness.

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

Prior to the close of the meeting, the Board agreed to meet in person at Blackdown House on an alternate basis. The next meeting would therefore be held in person.

Attendance List

Board Members:

Councillors present:

P Fernley
G Jung (Chair)
M Rixson
T Olive
M Goodman

Officers present:

G Bourton, Recycling and Waste Contract Manager
A Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene

Suez present:

J Gatter, Contract Manager

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow

Officers in attendance:

Lou Hodges, Recycling & Waste - Operations and Projects Officer
Jessica Prosser, Recycling Officer

Angela Baquerizo Thorsen, Recycling and Waste Operations and Projects Officer
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Steve Maclure, Recycling & Waste - Operations and Projects Officer
Angela Baquerizo Thorsen, Recycling & Waste – Operations and Projects Officer

Suez representatives in attendance:

Jess Prosser, Recycling Officer

Board Member apologies:

Mike Wildman
Andrew Wood

Chair

Date: