

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at Online via Teams on 22 April 2026

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.55 am

60 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2026 were agreed as a true record.

61 Declarations of interest

There were no declaration of interest.

62 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

The Chair welcomed James Carpenter, Managing Director of East Devon Environmental Services to the meeting and James introduced himself to the Board.

63 Joint operations and contract report

The Recycling and Waste Service Manager and the SUEZ Regional Manager gave the Board a joint contract and operational update for the final quarter of 2025 – 26. Quarter 4 began with the usual focus on the Christmas catch-up period, with January dedicated to managing the increased volumes generated over the festive season. This was delivered effectively, with crews maintaining strong performance and ensuring collections were completed as scheduled. In addition there were incidents involving an unexploded bomb in Exmouth and localised flooding. These were a real live test of business continuity and service coped well.

Overall performance had been excellent, with the service remaining stable and well-managed, balancing day to day delivery with on-going project work and future planning. Quarter 4 recycling rates were yet to be validated. Household numbers steadily increased and were now around 75,800, demonstrating a low percentage of missed collections. It was noted that the performance threshold figures needed to adjust due to the increase in households and that these would be changed for the new contract. There had been a slight increase in complaints but these were indicative of the time of year.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had published the 2024/25 annual results for local authority collected waste management in England. These statistics provided an insight into national and local performance against key waste and recycling indicators. East Devon's recycling and composting rate was 60.1%. Although this represented no change from 2023/24 East Devon had moved from 6th to 4th position nationally. Achieving and maintaining a recycling rate of 60% was a significant achievement accomplished only by a small number of authorities. This reflected the both the success of the service delivery and the continued engagement of local residents. In terms of residual household waste East Devon continued to retain 1st position nationally for the lowest kilogram of residual waste per household. It was noted that a number of

local authorities regularly asked for advice from EDDC and that Mid Devon District Council had replicated the service.

The Board agreed that East Devon's performance in 2024/25 reflected another year of strong partnership between the Council, SUEZ and local residents. Continued investment in public engagement, service delivery, and innovation in waste collection would be key to sustaining and improving this performance.

A significant amount of focus had been directed towards the LATCo transition. The operational team continued to progress key service developments, including preparatory work for the rollout of the green waste narrow access collection service.

Recruitment across the contract remained steady, with overall staffing numbers maintained. Support from agency staff continued where required, with ongoing progress in converting suitable individuals into permanent SUEZ employees. Within the EDDC Recycling Team the vacant Operations and Projects Officer role had been recruited to, and EDDC had appointed the new Environmental Services Contract Manager, with a start date of 13 July 2026.

The SUEZ Regional Manager reported that sickness management continued to be positive, with 1% sickness over the last 4 months. This was a testament to the processes in place and the positive engagement of Edenserv and EDDC in the TUPE process. It demonstrated that the workforce were engaged and did not feel unsettled by the change of contract.

Vigiminutes were now embedded into the SUEZ safety culture and were being carried out on a more frequent basis. 'Safety in Mind' conversations were focussed on quality rather than quantity. Monthly mobile plant evaluations and manager safety visits continued, with the last one focussed on Zone Access Control, which resulted in all the safe working procedures being reviewed and updated in the materials recycling facility (MRF).

Maintenance continued to play a key role in keeping the materials recycling facility MRF fully operational and managing the overall waste flows into the site.

More near miss reporting was encouraged. It was noted that road traffic accidents were high in January but had reduced month on month since. Contributing factors were dark morning and evenings and weather conditions such as ice and flooding.

Material prices remained in line with expectations. It was noted that cardboard, plastics, aluminium and steel was sold through the SUEZ trading team. Glass, paper and textiles were sold through Devon County Council contracts. Concern was expressed that some material prices had reduced and the potential impact this would have on the overall budget. The Assistant Director – Streetscene replied that the reduction in material prices provided a budget pressure compared to the forecasted budget and that ELT and the accountants were aware of this, as well as the middle east conflict and rising fuel costs. Reporting would come forward on this.

Leases on Unit 45 had been signed and completed and work was underway to make it fully operational. This would provide significant improvement in available depot space, supporting more efficient site operations and future planning.

The Chair requested that two years of comparison recycling rate figures and other operational performance figures be provided at the next Board meeting to enable members to analyse trends.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked officers for their report and thanked the partnership for all its reactive work during the Exmouth bomb incident and the flooding.

RESOLVED: that two years of comparison recycling rate figures and other operational performance figures be provided at the next Board meeting to enable members to analyse trends.

64 **Performance framework**

The Board noted the performance report which showed performance across the contract. It highlighted eight parts of the contract that officers focused on and allowed officers to look for areas of improvement and put plans in place if necessary. The Recycling and Waste Service Manager highlighted the overall good performance and reported that the contract had never invoked a penalty.

Although it was hoped that residents would not notice a change in contract it was acknowledged that bumps along the way were to be expected. The performance framework had previously been suspended during the SUEZ mobilisation period and the covid pandemic and it was suggested that this could be considered during the Edenserv mobilisation.

The report was noted.

65 **Green waste accounts**

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

It was noted that the service was doing well and that the draft year end figures indicated that income recognised in 2025/26 was £1,219,332. This was £90,000 above the projected figure. Expenses were £638,036 and the profit for the year was £581,269.

The Board noted that the price of the green waste subscription had increased by 16% from 1 April 2026. Customers were informed of the price increase in their renewal notification. Officers were monitoring the trend of renewals, but at present there did not appear to be a reduction in subscribers. There were currently 21,000 green waste service customers with 23,000 bins. In response for a request for information the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager agreed to email out the rate of green waste service subscriptions.

The green waste accounts were noted.

66 **Green waste narrow access collection update**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager updated the Board on green waste narrow access collections. Simpler Recycling changes had introduced the requirement for local authorities to offer narrow access green waste collections from 1 April 2026. The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager advised that a vehicle had been procured and liveried with the green waste 'clipping brilliant' marketing and that 4000 households

would be eligible for the service. The team had an expression of interest list and had begun to move some customers on existing rounds to provide a better service/easier access for crews. New customers could currently sign up to the service through the Customer Service Centre. Strata were working on updating the website to allow customers to subscribe to the service themselves. Once this website change had been made marketing of the green waste narrow access service would commence to increase customers.

The update was noted.

67 **SUEZ demobilisation updates**

The Assistant Director - Streetscene gave the Board an update on the SUEZ demobilisation. There was a full project management framework operating for the LATCo project which included weekly and monthly meetings, with update reports going to ELT and the LATCo Shareholder Committee. The Shareholder Committee was working in the oversight capacity of the LATCo project.

The Recycling and Waste Partnership Board were reminded that its role remained in the governance structure and would continue to provide cross party review of service delivery, operational performance & key performance indicator (KPI) monitoring of the service provider and working on improvement projects such as the Nappicycle trial.

The Assistant Director – Streetscene thanked Suez for the superb service they had provided and welcomed the Managing Director of Edenserv. Suez had continued to be good partners, working in an open, supportive and collegiate manner. They had advised on demobilisation actions and shared mobilisation plans from other contracts to assist with Edenserv's mobilisation planning.

The demobilisation side was well understood & Suez had provided all information that had been requested, across a range of areas such as systems, assets and suppliers. They were assisting with Environment Agency licence compliance data and other operational matters that would need to come across to Edenserv. Work was also being undertaken on legal arrangements for the end date of the contract with SUEZ.

The Edenserv Managing Director had taken over the lead on the TUPE process for Edenserv, which was progressing well. He reported that he was pleased to be working with SUEZ and that staff were the key to the success of the service. It was noted that there was still much to do and risks remained but were being mitigated. The expectation was that the service was safe and legal at day one and that residents would not notice any change in service.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked all involved with the demobilisation process and gave particular thanks to SUEZ. Through excellent partnership working SUEZ had played an extraordinary part in East Devon's success. On behalf of SUEZ the Regional Manager thanked the Partnership Board and East Devon District Council and reiterated the importance of working in partnership.

The update was noted.

Attendance List

Board Members:

Councillors present:

G Jung (Chair)
M Rixson
M Goodman

Officers present:

A Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
L Hodges, Recycling & Waste - Service Manager

Suez present:

M Canning

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Faithfull
E Rylance

Officers in attendance:

James Carpenter, Managing Director, EdenServ
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Suez representatives in attendance:

Board Member apologies:

John Wrigley
Vincent Masseri
Councillor Paula Fernley
Councillor Todd Olive
Councillor Richard Jefferies

Chair

Date: