

WARWICKSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2018 at Shire Hall in Warwick

Present:

Warwickshire County Council

Councillors: Jenny Fradgley
Dave Reilly (Chair)
Alan Webb

Officers: Ruth Dixon – Waste Strategy & Commissioning Manager
Tamalyn Goodwin – Project Manager
Tom McColgan – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Pau – Waste Management & Partnerships Group Manager

Observers: Councillor Keith Kondakor

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Richard Dobbs – Assistant Director (Streetscape)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Councillor Jill Sheppard
Richard Shields

Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Lisa Parker
Dan Green

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Councillor Mike Brain
Tony Perks
Craig Bourne
Angela Lloyd

Warwick District Council

Gary Charlton

1. Apologies

Councillors Bell, Chattaway, Horner, Grainger and Smith sent their apologies for the meeting.

Councillor Webb was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Chattaway.

2. Disclosures of interests

None

3. Minutes of the previous meeting, including matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Officers confirmed that they had noted the feedback from Members about the types of reports they wished to see at partnership meetings and that this would inform future agendas.

4. Waste Management Overview for Q1 + Q2 2018-19 – Household Waste Performance for 2017-18 and Projections for 2018-19

Andrew Pau presented the report which was a regular item on the agenda. He stated that the report had been slimmed down from previous iterations in an effort to present the information in a clearer and more meaningful way (appendix 1).

The Chair invited Members to comment on their Authority's performance as reported.

Councillor Parker stated that she felt the Rugby performance figures showed that charging residents for green waste collection had not led to a collapse in green waste collection as some had feared. Instead she felt that figures reflected that the charge had prompted residents to consider alternatives to disposing of green waste such as home composting thus reducing waste. Councillor Parker emphasised that the decision taken by Rugby to charge for green waste collection had been forced by economic realities of the Borough's budget and the charge had stayed at £40pa since it was implemented and there were no plans to increase it. Rugby had also achieved efficiencies through the implementation of new software and was looking at introducing a waste collection app for residents. Rugby Borough Council was trying to reduce contamination of recycling and would look to not collect residual bins heavily contaminated with garden waste.

Richard Dobbs stated that North Warwickshire had a persistent issue with high levels of residual household waste being collected which was reflected in the performance figures and he felt that waste reduction needed to be the Borough's focus. Richard Dobbs stated that causes of the problem should be investigated to build an evidence base and ensure that any waste reduction strategies were effective.

Councillor Sheppard stated that Nuneaton and Bedworth were working with Rugby to ensure a smooth transition to charge for green waste collection and were closely watching the levels of residual waste to ensure that the charge did not lead to green waste moving to the residual waste bin.

Councillor Brain stated that Stratford-on-Avon were pleased with their performance but felt that there was always room to improve and was keen to share best practice and experience across partners.

Gary Charlton stated that Warwick Members had expressed concern at the decline in recycling rates. The District was looking at how this could best be addressed and emphasised that this would be a long process and there were not likely to be any easy wins.

Andrew Pau stated that the Warwickshire wide recycling rate had fallen over the last three years however this was in the context of a challenging market environment and Warwickshire was still performing above average nationally albeit some way off the top performing councils.

The Chair invited general comments on the performance data.

On behalf of Councillor Grainger, Gary Charlton asked if the County Council had any ambition to improve the relatively low re-use, recycling and composting rates at Princes Drive Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) & Transfer Station.

Andrew Pau responded that while Princes Drive was operating at similar levels to other sites in the County, the County Council did recognise that it could be improved. He stated that there had been some issues that had caused site closures over the previous summer and when the site was full there had been contamination issues. The County Council was looking to invest in the site and hoped improvements to the infrastructure would take place over the coming months.

In response to the Chair, Ruth Dixon stated that the 65% reuse, recycling and composting rate had been set following a waste partnership conference in 2013. 65% was in line with figures reported by the best performing authorities and reflected composition analysis of residual waste in Warwickshire which had showed that a significant amount of residual waste could potentially have been reused, recycled or composted. Andrew Pau added that the target was due to be reviewed and it was right that this was done to take into account the Government's new waste strategy. Andrew Pau stated that he felt that 65% was achievable if the market conditions in 2013 had persisted. Market conditions had however become less favourable which had made recycling more costly to authorities.

Councillor Kondakor stated that he felt the target of 311kg of residual waste per household also needed to be reviewed as the type of waste being produced had changed dramatically over the preceding five years. Richard Dobbs stated that targets needed to encourage authorities to adopt the most environmentally friendly outcomes as targets based on the weight of recyclables may lead to a distortion of incentives away from the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle.

Councillor Webb asked if the Waste Partnership could take more of a leadership role in educating residents about how to reduce contamination and thus reduce the cost of recycling. Dan Green agreed that there was a need to focus on reducing contamination and stated that Rugby had planned a communication exercise to target Houses in Multiple Occupation and households using communal bins as they tended to have higher levels of contamination.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership:

- 1) Note the provisional data for the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2018-19 – April-September 2018; and
- 2) Note the provisional data for the financial year 2017-18 and estimated projections for 2018-19, based on the first half of the year's performance.

Actions

- A) Officers to provide comparator data to place Warwickshire's performance in a national context and to examine areas of best practice.
- B) To develop a plan to review the waste strategy including targets

5. Waste Collection in Warwickshire

Tony Perks gave a presentation to the Waste Partnership (appendix 2). He highlighted:

- All areas have a comprehensive range of waste services, with some slight variations across the County.
- Even the best performing collection authority in the County was still some way off the Waste Partnership's targets.
- As with other areas of local government there had been a reduction in budgets for waste collection while demand had expanded as new houses were built. The pressure on budgets had been compounded by the diminished value of recyclables.
- Brexit had impacted the labour market as a significant proportion of drivers were drawn from EU countries. As the number of applicants had reduced, rates had increased and it had become more difficult to retain qualified drivers.
- There was a question about how effective the Waste Partnership was as it was not a decision making body and there was a feeling that discussions at the Waste Partnership had not been actioned.
- Future targets could be set to better reflect the waste hierarchy and encourage reduce and reuse especially in light of the rising cost of collection and recycling.

The Chair stated that he recognised the considerable time which Members and Officers invested in the Waste Partnership and was keen that it be an effective body which provided value to the partner authorities.

Members suggested areas the partnership could address:

- The Partnership could take more of a role in strategic planning for the future and looking at cross cutting issues i.e. building regional MRF capacity for recyclables and planning for upcoming housing growth. The length of contracts and limits on capital expenditure meant that authorities were limited in how quickly they could react to changing circumstances and so developing medium and long term strategies would be beneficial.
- The Partnership could explore how it could influence the local labour market as there was a county wide issue with a lack of qualified drivers and staff retention in general, as well as a skills gap exacerbated by a fall in drivers moving into the area from EU countries. There was competition in the county for drivers with logistics companies who were often able to offer better working conditions. Use of agency drivers increases costs and in addition drivers are not as familiar with the area, which can lead to increased collection times/missed bins.
- The Memorandum of Understanding that formed the terms of reference for the Partnership was in need of updating to encourage the partner authorities to be more open and collaborative. More transparent discussions about likely direction of travel to allow partners to plan for any change which would affect them and allow for collaborative planning would be key to working together in the future to maximise opportunities and reduce risks. There was a need to have a memorandum of understanding that the all members of the group felt ownership of and was endorsed by individual Cabinets of the partners.
- Reiterated the discussion under the previous item that the Waste Partnership needed to ensure that the metrics used to evaluate performance and the targets that were set encouraged authorities to adopt policies that minimised impact on the environment in line with the waste hierarchy.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership notes the presentation

Actions

- A) That Officers bring a report to a future meeting on building regional MRF capacity
- B) That Officers report to a future meeting on the Warwickshire labour market and any skills gaps that exist relating to waste collection and disposal and how these could be addressed
- C) That partners agree to update the Memorandum of Understanding and review the waste strategy including targets and a plan for updating both is brought to the next meeting for discussion

6. Waste Composition Analysis

Ruth Dixon introduced the report (appendix 1). She stated that the HWRC data had not yet been reported back to the County Council and would be passed on to all members as soon as it was available. Around half of the waste in residual bins could have been recycled or composted; a third of residual waste was food waste.

Members noted that it was notoriously difficult to reduce food waste and that there was both a need for a strategic approach to food waste and an examination of the localised issues which would vary from area to area. As limited budgets would not allow for costly enforcement actions it was necessary to find a low cost method of changing resident's behaviour such reducing residual waste capacity to nudge residents towards utilising their green waste bins. Education campaigns would also aid in changing attitudes including 'no food waste' stickers on residual bins and ensuring that it was clear that specific items such as disposable nappies must be placed in the residual waste bin. Members felt that the upcoming waste conference and national campaigns would provide a good opportunity to generate local interest and media coverage around food waste.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership note the overview of the recent kerbside waste composition analysis and consider how this information can be used to improve waste management across Warwickshire.

Actions

A) That WCC Officers circulate the raw data and interpretation report to the partners

7. Less Plastic, Fantastic!

Ruth Dixon updated the Waste Partnership on the 'Less Plastic, Fantastic!' campaign (appendix 1). The campaign was due to start in early 2019 and the intention was to send a leaflet to every resident promoting reducing, reusing and recycling plastics.

Members suggested that the leaflets could be distributed with the council tax bills which would be issued in around April 2019 and through the parish councils.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership notes the update

8. Waste App

Dan Green updated the Waste Partnership on Rugby District Council's work with a software developer to develop a waste app which would provide information to residents about what goes in each bin as well as collections dates for each container (appendix 1). The app was based on similar apps the developer had produced for other waste collection authorities. Dan Green stated that he would feed back to a future meeting about progress.

The Waste Partnership noted that Nuneaton had previously used a waste collection app but had discontinued the service and that Stratford-on-Avon had introduced a web portal for reporting fly tipping and requesting street cleansing. The Chair asked officers to explore whether there would be value in commissioning an app across the waste partnership rather than as individual authorities.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership noted the update

Actions

- A) That Rugby Borough Council provide an update on progress at a future meeting
- B) That Officers explore whether there would be a benefit to jointly commissioning an app across the partnership.

9. Waste Partners Report

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership acknowledged the updates on the various waste activities taking place in each area since the last partnership meeting in September 2018

10(a). Warwickshire Waste Partnership Conference 2019 (Wed 13th February 2019)

Ruth Dixon stated that invites had been sent out for the event. She invited members to suggest agenda items and any additional attendees.

Councillor Parker stated that she felt that the event should be more widely publicised and used as media event to drive local interest.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership notes the update

10(b). Update on Resources and Waste Strategy

Andrew Pau updated the Waste Partnership on the Government's Resources and waste strategy for England 'Our Waste, Our Resources'. The strategy emphasised the circular economy of waste which implied that all parties needed to work together from manufacturers through retailers to collection and disposal authorities and material processors. The Strategy raised the issues of ensuring that manufacturers and producers were liable for the cost of disposing of the waste they produce, separate food waste collection, charging for green waste collection, consumer guidance and house hold waste recycling centre operation. A number of consultations have been planned to inform the detail of the strategy and Andrew Pau suggested that the Waste Partnership provide a collective response as well as each authority have the opportunity to respond individually.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership notes the update

Actions

- A) That Officers draft responses to the consultations and agree collective responses for the partnership in line with consultation timescales and update the partnership of any submitted or upcoming consultations for discussion at the next meeting of the waste partnership.

11. Any Urgent Items

Councillor Parker stated that a fellow Rugby Borough Councillor had asked her to raise the issue of HWRC staff terms and conditions at the Partnership meeting. Councillor Parker asked that WCC Officers follow up the Councillor's concerns outside of the meeting.

The Chair informed the Waste Partnership of the information about Christmas food waste which the County Council would be publicising over the festive period (appendix 1).

12. Agenda Item Suggestions for Next Meeting

There were none.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

The Waste Partnership noted the dates of future meetings:

- 20 March 2019, 2.00 pm, Shire Hall, Warwick

The meeting closed at 4:13 pm

.....
Chair