

WARWICKSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 at Shire Hall in Warwick

Present:

Warwickshire County Council

Councillors: Richard Chattaway
Jenny Fradgley
Dave Reilly (Chair)
Andy Wright

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

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Councillor Les Smith
Richard Dobbs – Assistant Director (Streetscape)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Councillor Jill Sheppard
Glen McGrandle

Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Lisa Parker
Shaun Barnes

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Craig Bourne
Angela Lloyd

Warwick District Council

Councillor Moira-Ann Grainger
Becky Davies

1. Apologies

Councillors Bell, Brain and Kondakor sent their apologies.

2. Disclosures of interests

There were none.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting, including matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

The Chair noted the action listed on item 5 “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” and stated that this action needed to be carried forward with a report brought to a future meeting.

Andrew Pau stated that he was leading on the action for the Waste Partnership and was working with David Ayton-Hill, Economy & Skills Group Manager at Warwickshire County Council.

4. Waste Management Performance Data

Andrew Pau presented the report which included the performance figures for the first three quarters of 2018/19 and estimated figures for the final quarter. Andrew Pau highlighted that the recycling figures across the county were fairly static; systems were imbedded and did not seem to be generating any significant increases in participation.

In response to Councillor Grainger, Andrew Pau confirmed that household rates of residual waste and recycling were drawn from the national wastedataflow website which calculates the number of households annually using the council tax base.

Councillor Grainger asked for the household figures to be verified to ensure that the performance reported was correct.

In response to the Chair, Andrew Pau stated that the reuse, recycling and composting target of 65% and Residual Waste per Household of 311kg by 2020 for the county had been set by the Waste Partnership against best practice at the time. Ruth Dixon stated that the national target for reuse, recycling and composting was 50% by 2020, 55% by 2025 and 60% by 2030. The target review needs to take place as part of the Warwickshire Waste Strategy review.

In response to the Chair, Andrew Pau stated that the County Council’s performance put it just outside the top quartile for equivalent disposal authorities and the collection authorities were all in the top half of the performance table. Andrew Pau stated that there was no direct monetary incentive to being a top performing authority just the national recognition. Practises associated with better performance such as composting and waste reduction were also less costly to the disposal authority and so better performing authorities likely benefited from reduced costs.

The Chair asked officers to consider whether the current targets were realistic and if they should be revised. Councillor Grainger added that targets should take into account what the best performing authorities were able to achieve.

Richard Dobbs stated that he remained concerned about the residual waste per household in North Warwickshire which was the highest in the County and it was unclear why. While there was less composting in North Warwickshire than the better performing collection authorities the recycling schemes had similar rates. Richard Dobbs stated that it was not that residents were failing to recycle but for some reason households in North Warwickshire generated more residual waste.

The Chair stated that supporting North Warwickshire in understanding the reasons behind the levels of household waste was a good example of the work the Partnership should be undertaking and asked officers to include it as an item on a future agenda.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership:

- 1) Note the provisional data for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2018-19 – April-December 2018; and
- 2) Note the data for the financial year 2017-18 and estimated projections for 2018-19, based on the first three quarters of the year's performance.

Actions

- 1) Officers to check whether the number of households used when examining performance data was as up to date as possible.
- 2) Officers to bring a map showing expected development to the next meeting to help identify where future demand would be coming from and potential areas for collaboration.
- 3) Officers to circulate the slide showing how the collection authorities were performing nationally.
- 4) Officers to bring an update to a future meeting on investigating the reasons for high levels of residual waste per household in North Warwickshire.

5. HWRC Waste Composition – Residual Waste

Andrew Pau introduced the report and highlighted that the results of the previous kerbside composition analysis reported at the December partnership meeting which had shown that on average half of the contents of a residual waste kerbside bin could be disposed of differently either through recycling or composting and that food waste made up on average a third of residual waste.

The analysis of residual waste containers at household waste recycling centres had shown that waste in black bags was more much likely to include recyclable material compared to the loose waste. Andrew Pau stated that other areas had also noted the difference between loose and bagged waste and had banned black bags at household recycling centres.

In response to Richard Dobbs, Andrew Pau stated that where there were differences between results from the analysis across the County they would be examined but the limited sampling should be noted.

Councillors Grainger and Chattaway urged caution in proceeding with a ban on black bags. It was more difficult for people to carry loose items and requiring bags be open would allow for recyclables to be sorted while still making allowances for convenience. Councillor Chattaway stated that he feared that banning black bags may lead to an increase in fly tipping. Councillor Fradgely stated that the Partners needed to foster a change in culture and a policy that came across as draconian would create opposition rather than encouraging residents to buy in.

Councillor Parker stated that the issue was the concealment that went along with containerising waste. Residents were in the habit of throwing waste into an opaque container and whatever container was used would result in the same issue.

Councillor Smith stated that even if bags were opened there was no penalty for wrongly disposing of recyclables at a household recycling centre. Local Authorities were obligated to trust that residents would improve their approach towards waste.

Councillor Granger suggested that two policies could be trialled; a ban on black sacks and a ban on closed containers. The composition of the residual waste bins at the household waste recycling centres could then be compared at the end of the period to see whether there had been any impact.

Craig Bourne stated that Stratford-on-Avon would be interested in using one of the household recycling centres in its area to test the effect of banning all bagged waste.

The Chair stated that when he had visited the household recycling centres he had been surprised at the volume of waste individuals were bringing to the sites and the amount of what appeared to be commercial waste being disposed of improperly and the conflict between staff and residents that this had caused.

Resolved

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

Actions

1) Officers to consider a trialling no black bags or no sealed containers at one or more of the household recycling centres acknowledging that any new policy or procedure will need to be enforceable within current budgets and staffing levels.

6. Behaviour Change Programme Update

Ruth Dixon introduced the report which highlighted the various education campaigns being run across the County.

Councillor Grainger stated that more should be done to encourage staff and councillors to sign up to initiatives like 'slim your bin' to ensure that the local authorities were leading by example. Similarly schemes could be taken on and advertised to staff by local employers.

Councillor Parker stated that work was still needed to educate residents on proper disposal of pumpkins following Halloween as they were heavy items which created a lot of unnecessary tonnage in residual waste bins.

Councillor Fradgley stated that there was a persistent issue of residents flushing baby wipes and disposing of nappies in the wrong bin and work needed to be done to improve awareness that both items needed to go into the residual waste bin.

The Chair suggested that the Partners could look to work with Severn Trent to help in providing information to residents. Severn Trent may even wish to consider helping to provide alternative means of disposal for nappies and wet wipes as they were seeking to expand their wastewater business and removing nappies and wet wipes from sewers would help them deliver a better service.

In response to the Chair, Shaun Barnes stated that Rugby had met with Cloud 9 the proposed developers for a waste app that would allow residents to set reminders for collections as well as including additional information about waste and recycling. Shaun stated that Rugby were at an advanced stage of development and hoped to launch an app in the summer.

Andrew Pau added that officers from across the partnership had met and discussed a collective approach to developing a Warwickshire waste app and the partnership should consider if a better outcome could be achieved with a pooled budget.

The Chair asked Rugby to provide a full update on the app at the next meeting.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership:

- 1) note the valuable waste communications activities going on across the county and the successes to date; and
- 2) promote the campaigns through the communication channels they have available.

Actions

Rugby Borough Council to provide an update on progress towards producing a waste app.

7. **Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England - Consultations**

Andrew Pau introduced the report which gave an overview of the four consultations which the Government had launched with the Our Waste, Our Resources strategy. Andrew Pau proposed that the Partnership provide a collective response to the consultations where there was consensus with individual authorities providing additional representations to supplement the collective response where there was disagreement or to add additional emphasis.

Richard Dobbs stated that while collecting a greater variety of materials and having consistency about what was collected across areas would be beneficial. Consistency of infrastructure however had to first be achieved as the technology required to recycle material such as plastic bags or tetra packs was not available at an affordable price point to every authority.

Andrew Pau stated that the Government had suggested that any increase in the range of materials collected would be 'fully funded' but it remained to be confirmed what form this funding would take.

Councillor Parker and Richard Dobbs both expressed concern that if plastic bags were collected with other house hold recycling it seemed likely that residents would start bagging recycling making it difficult to process.

Councillor Grainger stated that if the full cost of recycling materials used in packaging was passed on to producers the cost would be borne by consumers and become an additional sales tax.

Andrew Pau stated that even if the cost of the additional tax on producers was passed on to consumers it would create pressure to change packaging to reduce costs and become more competitive. Richard Dobbs stated that the current regime essentially amounted to a subsidy for producers who created a large amount of waste.

In response to Councillor Parker, Andrew Pau confirmed that collection authorities had the power to refuse to collect waste if it was not presented correctly. These powers however were only used at the discretion of a collection authority.

Richard Dobbs stated that he supported a deposit return scheme but that an 'all in' system could impact on the sustainability of local authority collections by removing some of the higher valuable recyclables making collections less sustainable may damage recycling in the long run.

Angela Lloyd stated that an 'all in' system would be simpler to explain to residents and may be more successful. An 'on the go' system that only allowed people to return small bottles that were sold individually would have a limited impact on litter which often consisted of multipack cans and bottles.

Ruth Dixon responded that the Partner's response could incorporate a call for multipack bottles to be included in an 'on the go' scheme.

Shaun Barnes stated that a deposit return scheme worked well in other European countries where it had been implemented and the infrastructure was in place; however the infrastructure is different to the UK's. A deposit return scheme would require a large investment in infrastructure and it would have to be considered where this infrastructure was placed to ensure that small businesses were not excluded.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership:

- 1) Agrees to submit consultation responses to the Government on behalf of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership; and
- 2) Agrees to delegate responsibility for finalising the consultation response to the chair of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership.

Actions

- 1) Officers to draft a collective response to the Government consultations.

8. Warwickshire Waste Strategy

The Warwickshire Waste Strategy was deferred to the next meeting of the Warwickshire waste Partnership.

9. Waste Partners Report

Richard Dobbs provided an update on the sub-regional MRF project.

Andrew Pau stated that the Environment Agency had asked to attend the Waste Partnership meetings as a way to reconnect with local authorities and the issues/challenges they face. Partners agreed to invite the Environment Agency to future meetings as observers.

Resolved

That the Waste Partnership acknowledged the updates on the various waste activities taking place in each area since the last partnership meeting in December 2019.

Actions

- 1) AP to provide the environment agency contact to Democratic Services so they can be added to the invite list.

10. Verbal Updates

There were none.

11. Any Urgent Items

There were none.

12. Agenda Item Suggestions for Next Meeting

There were none.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

The Waste Partnership noted the dates of future meetings:

- 12 June 2019, 2.00 pm, Shire Hall, Warwick
- 25 September 2019, 2.00 pm, Shire Hall, Warwick
- 11 December 2019, 2.00 pm, Shire Hall, Warwick
- 18 March 2020, 2.00 pm, Shire Hall, Warwick

The meeting closed at 4:20 pm

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Chair