

## WARWICKSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

### Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2019 at Shire Hall in Warwick

#### **Present:**

#### Warwickshire County Council

Councillors: Jenny Fradgley  
John Horner  
Heather Timms (Chair)  
Andy Wright

Officers: Helen Barnsley - Democratic Services Officer  
John Cole – Trainee Democratic Services Officer  
Ruth Dixon – Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager  
Tamalyn Goodwin – Project Manager  
Andrew Pau – Waste Management and Partnerships Group Manager

Observers: Councillor Keith Kondakor

#### North Warwickshire Borough Council

Richard Dobbs – Assistant Director (Streetscape)

#### Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Councillor Jill Sheppard  
Glen McGrandle – Head of Waste and Transport

#### Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Howard Roberts  
Dan Green – Head of Environment and Public Realm  
Jim Perkins – Interim Waste and Transport Manager

#### Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Councillor Ian Shenton  
Craig Bourne – Contracts Manager (Streetscene)  
Angela Lloyd – Streetscene Lead Contracts Officer

#### Warwick District Council

Councillor David Norris  
Gary Charlton – Contract Services Manager

#### Environment Agency

David Hudson – Environment Agency Manager for Gloucestershire and Warwickshire

#### **1. Apologies**

Councillor Dirveiks and David Ayton-Hill 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 12 June 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **4. Waste Management Performance Data – Quarter 1, 2019**

Andrew Pau (Waste Management and Partnerships Group Manager, Warwickshire County Council) presented the performance data report which is a standing item.

Andrew Pau referred to the pronounced reduction in composting rates visible in the provisional performance data. He advised that this had been anticipated and that the introduction of charges for green bin collection by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council was a contributing factor. He added that the 2019/20 data cited in the report was estimated, based upon information collected within the first quarter and data from 2018/19 for quarters 2-4, which could provide a misleading impression.

Councillor Kondakor observed that the first quarter included bank holidays and Easter which could have influenced performance.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Andrew Pau stated that it was not possible to account for all uncollected green waste. He advised that a small proportion had been deposited at recycling centres and that it was acknowledged that green bin collection charges led to a reduction in the amounts of material collected.

In response to Councillor Shenton, Andrew Pau advised that no increase in instances of fly-tipping in the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth had been reported following the introduction of the charges. This was confirmed by Glen McGrandle (Head of Waste and Transport, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council).

It was observed that Rugby Borough Council operated a green waste collection charge. Dan Green (Head of Environment and Public Realm, Rugby Borough Council) commented that the amount of green waste in residual waste was only marginally higher than average levels.

It was observed that the promotion of home composting was a positive initiative. Councillor Kondakor remarked that home composting was a sensible option as it negated the necessity of collection and the associated transport costs.

Councillor Kondakor suggested that collection authorities could consider offering a subscription to green waste collection on an occasional basis as a solution to disenfranchisement for households that did not require the service throughout the entire year.

Andrew Pau stated that green waste constituted approximately 30% of countywide waste collectively. As Warwickshire was a large authority, he speculated that the

impact of the reduction in composting rates indicated by the first quarter provisional data was likely to constitute a 1 to 1.5 percentage point impact on recycling rates overall.

## **Resolved**

That the Waste Partnership note the provisional data for the year 2019-20.

### **5. Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) Update**

Richard Dobbs (Assistant Director (Streetscape), North Warwickshire Borough Council) presented a verbal report on the construction and commissioning of a new MRF in collaboration with local authorities across the region, including Coventry City Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Walsall Council.

Richard Dobbs advised that approximately 100,000 tonnes of recyclables were collected each year which required processing. He added that authorities had a legal obligation to collect this material and that identifying appropriate outlets for processing was a widespread challenge. He commented that the challenges faced by local authorities included uncertainty of contracts with existing MRF providers, escalating costs, and increased gate fees resulting from uncertainties in the international recycling market. As an outcome, it was determined that a collective response by local authorities would provide certainty and cost-effectiveness.

Richard Dobbs relayed that the Business Case for the MRF had been completed and that agreement from the member authorities would be sought. He advised that Stratford-on-Avon District Council had also expressed an interest in joining the partnership.

Richard Dobbs reported that the outlook for the project was positive. The proposed MRF would have a capacity of 125,000 tonnes with scope to increase depending upon future demand. He advised that the construction cost was estimated to be £35 million and that the facility was expected to provide an effective service for a period of 20 to 25 years. He stated that the current timescale projected an operational date of 2022 – 2023 for the facility.

Richard Dobbs reported that consideration had been given to the potential to accommodate additional authorities into the agreement, and to expand the operation to receive commercial waste, increasing revenue for the partnership. He advised that a Joint Working Agreement (JWA) was expected to be signed by participating authorities by mid-October 2019. Upon completion of the agreement, final planning and procurement work would be undertaken.

Richard Dobbs reported that an asset company would be formed which would be wholly owned by the local authority partners. The shareholdings of individual authorities would be determined by their respective levels of investment. He advised that the company board would be comprised of officers from each participating authority.

Signing of the JWA represented a commitment on the part of each authority to contribute funds towards the project and enter into a collaborative working arrangement for the duration of the facility's operation. However, Richard Dobbs stated there would be an opportunity to suspend the scheme and reassess should projected gate fees be significantly exceeded.

Richard Dobbs summarised the potential benefits of the scheme:

- A lower gate fee;
- Increased certainty;
- Increased income opportunities;
- A return on capital investment and dividend to partner authorities;
- Improved quality of waste products;
- Improved collaboration across the sub-region;
- Consistency of advice to residents across the sub-region in respect of materials suitable for collection and recycling.

In response to Councillor Norris, Richard Dobbs advised that the proposed MRF was expected to benefit from having the neighbouring Energy from Waste facility, specifically in disposal of contamination. He explained that the MRF would be a 'clean' facility, orientated to process and separate dry mixed recycling into quality separate materials.

Richard Dobbs advised that scope remained for Warwick District Council to join the partnership agreement, even though waste was separated at the point of collection within the District. He reiterated that the MRF was expected to add value to the materials processed due to the technologically advanced nature of the facility and reduction of the likelihood of contamination.

In response to Councillor Norris, Richard Dobbs advised that Brexit scenarios had been considered during planning for the MRF. He commented that most recycling occurred within the UK and that a trend towards internal markets was discernible. He added that the anticipated reduction in single use plastics was likely to alter the waste profile. He advised that some engineering apparatus for the facility would be imported from the EU, however the potential risk had been addressed during the tendering process. He added that tariffs under World Trade Organisation rules were known and would be considered during procurement decision-making if necessary; the cost of steel had been factored in.

Councillor Kondakor emphasised the importance of aspiring to reduce overall levels of waste. Richard Dobbs advised that the viability of the initiative did not depend upon an increase in the amount of waste collected. He added that the additional capacity of the proposed MRF could be utilised to accept commercial waste and thus improve the profitability of the enterprise.

Councillor Shenton praised the initiative and highlighted the prevalence of existing MRFs coming towards the end of their anticipated life-spans. Richard Dobbs voiced his concern that, should the availability of an MRF be problematic in the future, authorities could be obliged to incinerate recyclable waste without this project.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Richard Dobbs advised that a thriving market existed for waste resources. He reiterated that the proposed MRF would produce high-quality resource and ensure a good price in the marketplace.

Richard Dobbs indicated that a formal letter would be sent to the Waste Management and Partnerships Group Manager at Warwickshire County Council following signing of the JWA to register the combined authorities' intention to work collectively for the prescribed period.

### **Resolved**

That the Waste Partnership is supportive of the initiative.

## **6. National Waste Strategy Report**

Ruth Dixon (Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager, Warwickshire County Council) introduced the report which provided an overview of three consultations undertaken by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in respect of:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging waste;
- Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for beverage containers;
- A consistent set of materials to be collected for recycling by local authorities.

Ruth Dixon commented that the 'all in' DRS scheme (where containers of any size are included) looked to be favoured by the Government over the 'on the go' model (where only smaller containers are included). However, she highlighted that the appointment of a new Secretary of State could affect the outcome. She added that it was anticipated that the 'all in' scheme would be adopted in Scotland and it was considered that this would provide useful evidence in respect of the effectiveness of the initiative.

The Chair agreed that this would provide a valuable insight and highlighted the projected implementation date of 2023 for the scheme in England. She requested that the Waste Management Team provide an update in due course.

Councillor Fradgley enquired as to whether the DRS scheme would have an impact on the effectiveness of the proposed MRF. Richard Dobbs (Assistant Director (Streetscape), North Warwickshire Borough Council) advised that the deposited material would still be in the waste stream and that the combined authorities would be well positioned to divert it to the MRF.

Councillor Norris observed that the project would require a significant investment in infrastructure. He referred to the Scandinavian deposit scheme which was widely considered to be successful. Ruth Dixon responded that she believed the Scandinavian model was one of the models that the government had looked at prior to publishing the strategy. National investment in new infrastructure will be determined when government decides on the design of the scheme.

The Chair speculated whether successful implementation of a DRS would result in fewer instances of littering, or instances of litter collection by individuals incentivised by the deposit.

In respect of the EPR consultation, Andrew Pau (Waste Management and Partnerships Group Manager, Warwickshire County Council) commented that conversation amongst industry bodies was on-going to consider the likely cost of the scheme. He added that the introduction of powers to extend current producer responsibility systems did not constitute a 'blank cheque' for local authorities and that any measures would be closely scrutinised by industry bodies.

Councillor Kondakor referred to the transformational effect of the 5p plastic bag charge. He identified a shift in attitudes towards single-use plastics and observed that 'back haulage' presented opportunities (whereby a delivery vehicle could utilise its unused capacity when returning from a supermarket delivery). He praised the crisp packet recycling scheme in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough and recognised the potential of deposit schemes to change behaviours.

### **Resolved**

That the Waste Partnership notes the contents of the report and considers the impact for the partnership.

## **7. WCC Strategic Review of Waste**

Andrew Pau (Waste Management and Partnerships Group Manager, Warwickshire County Council) presented a verbal report in respect of the Authority's Strategic Review of Waste. He advised that the process had been delayed due to the serious illness of an advisor.

Andrew Pau stated that the first part of the Review examined the provision of recycling centres in the County and looked at consolidation of facilities into fewer and larger sites. He advised that the benefits of shared use of existing and future recycling facilities had been considered and had already been successfully realised at Lower House Farm in Atherstone which was a multi-purpose, mixed-use site and depot.

Andrew Pau also reported that planning for growth in the County had been undertaken, specifically in respect of transport and plant facilities and vehicle maintenance costs. He advised that methodologies to encourage recycling had been reviewed while acknowledging that it was difficult to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives in place. He advised that the Review called for wider consideration of strategic issues, such as provision of recycling centres, and that a more extensive evaluation could offer benefits.

Councillor Kondakor recommended that consideration be given to substances that are difficult to recycle, such as paint or pesticides.

Craig Bourne (Contracts Manager (Streetscene), Stratford-on-Avon District Council) indicated his support for on-going strategic improvements and suggested the Household Waste Recycling Centre in Stratford as a potential trial site.

### **Resolved**

That the Waste Partnership notes the report.

## **8. Reducing Residual Waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres Report**

Ruth Dixon (Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager, Warwickshire County Council) introduced the report which gave an overview of a proposed trial across Warwickshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) to enable sorting of recyclable from non-recyclable materials in order to improve recycling rates and prevent loss of recyclable materials.

Councillor Roberts indicated his support for the initiative but queried how the system would operate in practice. The Chair questioned whether space would be available to accommodate a sorting area at Rugby Recycling Centre.

Councillor Norris cautioned that fly-tipping was a potential repercussion of the initiative and that care should be taken when introducing the new policy.

Councillor Shenton indicated his support for the trial and noted that the initiative chimed with an increased awareness of climate change related matters.

The Chair recommended that the trial be undertaken during a quiet period to improve the likelihood of a positive outcome.

Andrew Pau (Waste Management and Partnerships Group Manager, Warwickshire County Council) commented that the initiative was a Warwickshire County Council scheme but that support from the partnership was sought to improve its viability.

In response to the Chair, the Waste Partnership indicated support for the recommendation of the report.

### **Resolved**

That the Waste Partnership supports the introduction of the trial in 2020.

## **9. Waste Partners Updates (including WCC Behaviour Change)**

In response to the Chair, the members of the committee indicated that they did not wish to add any comments.

### **Resolved**

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

## **10. Action on Climate Change Report**

Ruth Dixon (Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager, Warwickshire County Council) presented the report which concerned the recent declarations of a climate emergency in Warwickshire and the national commitment to address climate change.

The Chair reported that Warwickshire County Council had established a climate change emergency task and finish group and that terms of reference had been agreed.

Dan Green (Head of Environment and Public Realm, Rugby Borough Council) notified that Rugby Borough Council had declared a climate emergency and that an initial meeting had been scheduled to determine the scope and terms of reference of a working group.

Councillor Norris stated that Warwick District Council had set a target of carbon neutrality by 2025. This represented a significant commitment and he reported that the Authority was working hard to achieve its objective. In response to the Chair, he advised that this was a cross-party endeavour and that financial implications were likely to be significant.

Councillor Shenton advised that Stratford District Council had established a cross-party working group and that consideration would be given to its terms of reference. He commented that financial implications were anticipated to be substantial and advocated collaborative working across authorities to secure a co-ordinated response.

Councillor Norris supported this suggestion and encouraged the authorities to share information on a regular basis. He added that caution should be exercised to limit the publication of information outside of the formal process.

Councillor Shenton suggested that the recommendations resulting from the working groups were likely to be radical in scope and could herald significant changes to habits and behaviours.

Gary Charlton (Contract Services Manager, Warwick District Council) recommended that a common definition of 'carbon neutrality' and a shared standard of measuring carbon be established across the six authorities to ensure congruity.

Councillor Sheppard reported that a response to the issue of climate change was under consideration at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.

Richard Dobbs (Assistant Director (Streetscape), North Warwickshire Borough Council) advised that North Warwickshire Borough Council was also considering a response and agreed that shared standards across organisations was an important consideration.

Councillor Fradgley highlighted the importance of 'managing the message' to ensure that findings and recommendations be communicated to the wider public responsibly to limit the potential for unrest or distress. She added that six months was a challenging timescale for the task and finish group to reach a conclusion.

The Chair indicated her support for collaborative working and requested that information sharing be enabled across the six authorities by the addition of a standard agenda item for upcoming meetings of the partnership.

Councillor Kondakor commented that the response to the climate emergency was likely to bring about significant changes. He stressed the importance of responsible



procurement to ensure that long-term planning is embedded in organisational decision making.

Councillor Fradgley suggested that tree planting could present an area for collaboration amongst authorities. The Chair indicated that resources for tree planting and flood management initiatives were likely to be made available.

### **Resolved**

That the Waste Partnership notes the report and that a standard agenda item be added to forthcoming meetings to enable action on climate change information sharing.

### **11. Any Urgent Items**

There were none.

### **12. Agenda Item Suggestions for Next Meeting**

Instruction was given for the addition of the agenda item: Action on Climate Change – Information Sharing.

David Hudson (Environment Agency Manager for Gloucestershire and Warwickshire) requested a short period of closed session time at the meeting of 11 December 2019 to enable consideration of waste crime prevention.

### **13. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Waste Partnership noted the dates of future meetings:

- 11 December 2019, 2.00pm, Shire Hall, Warwick
- 18 March 2020, 2.00pm, Shire Hall, Warwick

The meeting closed at 4pm

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Chair