



JOINT WASTE AND RECYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday 26 March 2021 at 10:00am

Remote Meeting

Minutes of the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee meeting held remotely on Friday 26 March 2021 at 10:00 am.

Joint Waste and Recycling Committee Members present: Councillors C. Dowling (ESCC) (Chairman) P. Barnett (HBC) (Vice-Chairman), M. Evans (HBC), K. Field (RDC), R. Galley (WDC), S. Prochak (RDC) and R. Standley (WDC).

Advisory Officers in attendance:

East Sussex County Council:	Assistant Director Operations and Contract Management and Waste Team Manager.
Hastings Borough Council:	Assistant Director Environment and Place.
Rother District Council:	Assistant Director Resources, Neighbourhood Services Team Leader, Environment and Policy Manager and Democratic Services Officer.
Wealden District Council:	Director of Environment and Community Services, Head of Customer and Digital Services and Waste Manager.
Central Client Team:	Joint Waste Partnership Manager and Deputy Contract Manager.
Biffa:	Operations Director, Regional General Manager and Senior Business Manager.

Others present: 16 members of the public via the YouTube live broadcast.

Publication Date: 12 April 2021

The Decisions made under PART II will come into force on the 20 April 2021 unless they have been subject to the call-in procedure.

JWRC20/27. MINUTES

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2021 at a later date as a correct record of the proceedings.

JWRC20/28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cameron Morley – Waste and Cleansing Manager (HBC), Malcolm Johnston – Chief Executive (Secretary) (RDC), Deborah Kenneally – Head of Neighbourhood Services (RDC) and Carl Valentine – Head of Transport and Operational Services (ESCC).

JWRC20/29. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

PART II – EXECUTIVE DECISIONS – subject to call-in procedure under Item 10 of the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee Constitution by no later than 4:00pm on 19 April 2021.

JWRC20/30. BIFFA UPDATE

The Senior Business Manager led Members through Biffa's presentation which provided an update on the Waste Collection, Recycling, Street and Beach Cleaning and Associated Services Contract. During the presentation the following points were noted:

- Health and Safety: This was a primary focus for Biffa. During the period December 2020 to February 2021, 135 near misses and 1,009 hazards (concerns reported by employees), as well as nine personal injuries were reported. Out of 22,770 staff working days, the accident rate equated to 0.04%.
- 486 Control Room Audits had been carried out on crew performance.
- The following safety, health and quality improvements had been applied and/or completed: safer together and HR Toolkit refresher training for supervisors; asbestos training; fleet compliance audits and competency training; graffiti removal training; and four DRoPs (Driving Recklessly on Pavements) incidents reported to Operation Crackdown.
- HR Update: As of February 2021, there were nine full-time vacant positions. Average staff turn-over from November 2020 to February 2021 was 3.5%, an increase since the last meeting.
- Since the last meeting, one supervisor had been transferred from Amberstone to the Bellbrook site which enabled parity across the Wealden locations.
- Overall, collections, repeated missed collections and street cleansing performance had improved across the Partnership. Wealden's collection performance reduced slightly which was attributed to a significant increase in COVID related absence; monitoring would be ongoing.
- Since April 2020, in compliance with the specification, all "scheduled" high speed roads had been completed (200km exceeded). Permits had been requested for 2021 scheduled cleansing.
- Fly tips: Levels remained consistent with three hotspot areas namely Brede Valley in Rother and Pevensey and Westham in Wealden.
- Container Deliveries: In December 2020 and January 2021 99% and February 2021 98% container deliveries had been completed within the Service Level Agreement; despite an increase in demand in February 2021, stock levels were adequate.
- COVID-19: 465 (326% increased, 109 days previous quarter) working days had been lost as a result of absence relating to COVID-19, of which 174 were high risk and 291 were self-isolation which had caused an impact on service performance.

- Culture Change – Continued Investment: Refurbishment of Bellbrook was completed. Introduced employee well-being programme and Biffa Involvement Group. Annual Engagement Survey commenced in February 2021 (participation rate was 92%). Employee enrolment to the downloadable Biffa Group App, known as Biffa Beat was ongoing. Transfer of staff to the new primary location for Wealden Streets and transfer of one supervisor from Amberstone to Bellbrook, plus the recruitment of one supervisor to further enhance the management team based at St. Leonards.
- Contractual Updates: It was confirmed that a number of actions had been completed and were commencing / ongoing within the Annual Service Improvement Plan.

Despite challenging times, Biffa re-iterated their commitment to maintaining and improving service performance across the Partnership.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Members had the opportunity to ask questions and the following was noted:

- Roadside Litter: Concern was aired that since the initial lockdown in March 2020, roadside litter (A, B and C roads) had significantly increased, therefore it was important that service performance and regular cleansing was completed throughout the year. Reassurance was given that all relevant provisions, additional supervision and appropriate training had been and would be implemented to support street cleansing services. Biffa would continue to provide the councils with street cleansing equipment for community litter picking groups.
- Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean: Members were advised that the Great British Spring Clean event would be held from 28 May 2021 to 13 June 2021; an opportunity to join the local community to improve the environment by clearing litter from the streets, parks and beaches. Although the councils were leading on their own individual campaigns, the Committee felt that it was important a consistent message was conveyed across the Partnership on all social media platforms not to drop litter and to take it home.
- Fly-tipping: Clarity was sought as to whether the increased number of fly-tipping incidents reported in the last year across the Partnership area was attributed to COVID-19 restrictions implemented at the Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC). Linkage was difficult to evidence, it was unclear why fly-tipping levels had increased. East Sussex County Council was working closely with Veolia to ensure that the HWRCs were fully operational. Despite a short period of closure at the start of the first lock down last year, all HWRC sites were open, extra staff employed (inside and outside sites) and national guidance followed e.g. social distance measures and traffic management restrictions implemented. Council enforcement teams would continue to monitor, investigate all fly-tipping incidents and prosecute where possible.
- WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Collection: Hastings advised that complaints were still being received regarding the non-collection of WEEE items. Biffa advised that despite some

initial teething issues, these should now be resolved. Any further issues should be reported in the normal way.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked and congratulated Biffa and their workforce on their excellent performance and continued efforts to ensure that the waste and cleansing services were successfully delivered during these unprecedented times.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

JWRC20/31. **SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

Members considered the report of the Lead Director which provided analysis and commentary on the standards of service performance achieved through the Joint Waste Contract for the period December 2020 to February 2021.

An update position of each individual Partner's local service preparations was provided as follows:

Hastings Borough Council: Collection performance was now within target. Work continued with Biffa to address service issues and drive improvement which had in most cases resulted in a high quality and reliable service. Minimal service disruption had been realised during the pandemic as a result of Biffa successfully managing staff absences.

Rother District Council: Overall Biffa had provided a good level of service despite COVID-19 challenges and weather conditions with collection performance on target. Staff absences had averaged at 10% during January and February; close monitoring would continue. Work would continue to improve the quality and materials collected at all recycling centres; it was hoped that once the Household Waste and Recycling Sites operated a normal service, improvements would be realised. CCTV cameras would be installed and officers deployed to monitor problematic sites. 13 bring sites would be closed from March onwards.

Wealden District Council: Collection performance had improved with low levels of missed bins. Biffa had made a concerted effort to recover missed collections at the earliest opportunity to minimise disruption to customers. Attention was required to ensure that missed assisted collections were maintained and bring site collections in the north of the District still required improvement. Staff absence would continue to be monitored as Government restrictions were eased. Progress had improved regarding container deliveries and street cleansing. Insufficient standards were continuously being monitored. Issues regarding roadside litter particularly in rural locations and on high speed roads were being addressed. Fly-tip clearance remained good with the number of incidents reducing to a more normal level. Clinical and bulky waste collection performance remained consistent.

Biffa continued to meet Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets and was performing very well across all services. Two KPIs had been revised as follows:

- Missed collections had reduced to 96 per 100,000 (from 120).
- Missed assisted collections had reduced to 9 per 100,000 (from 10).

Annual Service Improvement Plan actions and activities continued.

The Joint Waste Partnership (JWP) Manager advised that contract variations and reconciliation contract payments would be used to reconcile liability for costs incurred since May 2020. The additional cost for each council would be reported at the next meeting.

The UK Environment Bill was still outstanding and guidance on when food waste should be implemented was still unclear. The new legislation would have significant implications for the councils which would need to be considered together with other ambitions and objectives in due course.

The JWP Risk Register was maintained as a current document by the JWP Manager and was available to Members on request. The Joint Waste and Recycling Committee noted that four “amber” risks were actively being managed, namely COVID-19 related staff absence; COVID-19 related financial risk; UK Environment Bill; and Client Health and Safety compliance. All risks would be monitored.

The Committee requested that the full list of KPIs and the JWP Risk Register be considered at the next meeting scheduled to be held on Friday 2 July 2021.

RESOLVED: That the:

- 1) report be noted; and
- 2) full list of Key Performance Indicators and the Joint Waste Partnership Risk Register be considered at the next meeting scheduled to be held on Friday 2 July 2021.

JWRC20/32. REDUCING THE CARBON IMPACT OF WASTE COLLECTION AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICES: PROGRESS UPDATE (1)

Members considered the report of the Lead Director which provided an update on what measures Biffa would introduce to support each council’s commitment to reduce its carbon footprint. Officers and senior management at each council had engaged with Biffa to consider how this could be achieved.

The councils had an opportunity to further develop a working relationship with Biffa and reduce the CO2 that was currently being produced by waste services. However, the scale of investment that would be required and potential liabilities made it essential for the councils to understand all of the key considerations, constraints and dependencies. It was therefore recommended that the Joint Waste

and Recycling Committee (JWRC) Members together with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder of each council participate in a workshop event being planned to take place late May-early June (subject to progress with the UK Environment Bill).

Desired outcomes from the workshop were recommendations for each council to consider and potentially approve later this year. Those decisions would then inform the scope of a service improvement project that could be managed within the framework of the Joint Waste Contract.

Biffa advised that an Electric Vehicle trial (three vehicles) would be held from 26 April 2021 to 6 May 2021 across the Partnership. Data, costings and performance would be collated and reported to the JWRC at a future meeting.

After discussion, the JWRC was supportive of the workshop and requested that a date be set before the end of May 2021, and that each Council decide which three Members they would like to attend. The Lead Director agreed to forward any pre-reading documentation to Members of the JWRC prior to the workshop being held. Members were encouraged to forward any specific questions to the Lead Director.

RESOLVED: That a facilitated workshop be arranged before the end of May 2021 (date to be agreed) for the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee Members together with three Members of each council, to develop their knowledge and understanding of how carbon neutrality might be pursued through the delivery of waste services.

JWRC20/33. **FOOD WASTE: PROGRESS UPDATE (1)**

Under the direction of the Waste Strategy Resources Group, a Food Waste Working Group (FWWG) had been formed to consider key areas of work required to implement food waste collection services across East Sussex. The Partnership would need to meet new legal requirements regarding food waste once the UK Environment Bill was enacted. However, the deadline for implementing this new service was still unknown, therefore it had not been possible to develop a food waste service plan including all relevant financial and operational considerations. In the meantime, the FWWG had initiated a desktop exercise to understand aspects including tonnages; safe transfer and disposal at Waste Transfer Stations and at In-Vessel Composting Facility; caddy liners; and increased recycling percentages. Once all legal requirements and legislation was understood, a report would be presented to the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee (JWRC) at a future meeting.

The JWRC agreed that delegated authority be granted to the Joint Waste Partnership Manager to prepare a mutual robust response to the Government's consultation and circulate to each Partnership authority for consideration before the end of May 2021, prior to formal submission.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the establishment of a Food Waste Working Group under the direction of the Waste Strategy Resources Group be noted;
- 2) the Waste Strategy Resources Group be requested to continue to develop the food waste service plan and report to the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee when the legal requirements of the UK Environment Bill were known; and
- 3) delegated authority be granted to the Joint Waste Partnership Manager to prepare a mutual robust response to the Government's consultation and circulate to each Partnership authority for consideration before the end of May 2021, prior to formal submission.

JWRC20/34. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Friday 2 July 2021 at 10:00am and held remotely on MS Teams dependent on Government legislation or it not permitted would be held in the Council Chamber, Wealden District Council.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 11:40am.