

DEVON AUTHORITIES STRATEGIC WASTE COMMITTEE

17 October 2023

Present:-

Councillors G Jung (Chair), R Croad (Vice-Chair), J Wright, C Leather, J Brazil, L Daniel, R Williams and A Tyerman

Apologies:-

Councillor C Nuttall

* **35** **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Jung and Councillor Croad be elected Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for the ensuing year.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Mayes to the meeting who was attending in her capacity as a Co-opted Member of the Council's Standards Committee to observe and monitor compliance with the Council's ethical governance framework.

* **36** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* **37** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

The Chair congratulated Torbay Council and SWISCo on winning the Best Partnership Award at the LARAC Conference Celebration Awards for 2023.

* **38** **Waste Performance Statistics 2022/23**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/71) which provided members with an overview of waste performance statistics for Devon and Torbay for 2022/23. Individual performance tables were included in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report outlined challenges on local authorities with regards to inflationary pressures impacting on operating costs, in the wider context of budgetary pressures. It also outlined the impact of monetary pressures on consumers, with the cost-of-living crisis reducing discretionary spending, corresponding with a reduced amount of waste being produced.

Overall, Devon's household waste had been reduced by 7.6%, and Torbay's by 5.8%, which the report highlighted as a positive outcome. However, Devon's recycling rate had reduced by 1.1%; Torbay's had increased by the same amount.

The report outlined the good performance of those Waste Collection Authorities who were part of the Devon Shared Savings Scheme; members of the scheme had a recycling rate averaging at 53.4% compared to 41.1% for those who were not part of the scheme. In relation to this, during member discussion it was expressed that there were joining requirements for the Devon Shared Savings Scheme, which made it more difficult for those Waste Collection Authorities that were in the process of rolling out food waste to benefit from the Scheme immediately. It was suggested that allowing them to join the scheme and then providing support to achieve these changes should be explored and that Cabinet should be asked to review the joining requirements for the Scheme.

Other member discussion points included:

- That the waste hierarchy prioritises 'reuse' and particularly 'reduce' before 'recycle,' with over-emphasis on recycling possibly detracting from the message of reducing waste per head. Officers highlighted Devon and Torbay's good performance in this area with all individual Waste Collection Authorities across the area coming in at under 400kg per head, per year (which was the target), with Devon overall only sitting at 417kg per head, per year due to the inclusion of Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in this figure;
- Potential improvements to plastic recycling, in particular soft plastics;
- Ways to improve consumer involvement and knowledge such as the development of online tools (and use of existing ones) providing information to residents about what they can recycle and how, such as the correct bin to use for a particular material; and
- Recognition generally of the progress made towards achieving the Devon aligned collection service across the Authorities.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Leather and **SECONDED** by Councillor Croad that

(a) the performance statistics for 2022/23 be noted;

(b) the committee continues to support policies and actions which encourage householders to use waste and recycling services effectively and efficiently to improve recycling performance and reduce costs.

It was then **MOVED** by Councillor Williams and **SECONDED** by Councillor Brazil that the motion be **AMENDED** by the addition of the following:

(c) Cabinet be asked to review the joining criteria of the Devon Shared Savings Scheme.

The amendment was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

The substantive motion was then voted upon. It was **RESOLVED** that

(a) the performance statistics for 2022/23 be noted;

(b) the committee continues to support policies and actions which encourage householders to use waste and recycling services effectively and efficiently to improve recycling performance and reduce costs; and

(c) Cabinet be asked to review the joining criteria of the Devon Shared Savings Scheme.

* 39

Clean Devon - 2023 Update

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/72) which provided an update on the Clean Devon Partnership which was supported by the Committee.

Members received an outline of work of the Clean Devon Partnership, including its launch in March 2020. The report outlined the role of Clean Devon as a partnership of a number of different organisations with a focus on reducing litter and fly tipping through a number of mechanisms such as working with businesses, developing intelligence, and influencing public behaviour through campaigns and social media. Clean Devon had achieved this by splitting into five task groups each focusing on a key area – these were Compliance, Operations, Business, Landowners and Communications.

The limitations of the available data were highlighted to members, with the degree to which each area of Devon reports incidents of fly tipping varying greatly. For instance, 47.5% of all fly tipping incidents in 2022/23 were reported to have taken place in Plymouth. Officers were aware that the reality was likely very different and that there was work to be done to increase the consistency and reliability of reporting and the data that was available.

The importance of Central Government policies was also highlighted as these contributed to local authorities' ability to address the problems of litter and fly tipping. On policy, members heard that further powers to levy fines had been implemented by Government under the Antisocial Behaviour Act. Officers stressed that fines do not necessarily act as a deterrent, but this did indicate that Government were aware of the issues surrounding litter and fly tipping. A

ban on single-use vapes was also being considered under proposed anti-smoking legislation.

The update also included the employment of a part-time Clean Devon Liaison Officer to support the partnership. The budget for this had been approved in February 2023 by this committee. The liaison officer was appointed in September 2023 for a 12-month contract to contribute to three key priority areas as outlined in the report, amongst other supporting actions.

Member discussion focused on the problems around the data, in particular reporting issues, as well as barriers to collecting data of fly tipping incidents that occur on private land.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Jung, **SECONDED** by Councillor Brazil and

RESOLVED that

(a) the background, national policy summary, and current activities for the Clean Devon Partnership be noted; and

(b) the Committee continue to support this voluntary initiative to tackle the ongoing scourge of litter and fly tipping within Devon's communities and environment.

* 40

Budget Proposal for 2024/25

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/73) which detailed the current budget for 2023/24 and proposed the budget for 2024/25.

For context to the report, Members received a presentation from officers at Resource Futures, the organisation with whom the Council had signed the Waste and Recycling Advisors (WRA) contract which was referenced in the report. The project aimed to increase awareness of and participation in recycling and composting and the reduction of food and residual waste from households, in particular those areas that performed worse generally in these metrics. The project involved three experienced advisors working in a number of local authority areas each and doorstepping to speak to residents about their waste habits, including providing containers where needed. Other tasks, such as on-street audits of recycling banks, had also been undertaken by the advisors.

In relation to the current budget, it was highlighted in the report that the agreed proposed sum of £106,769 for the WRA contract was not sufficient due to inflationary pressures. However, it was still possible to meet the contract cost by slightly reducing spend on the other projects.

For 2024/25, it was proposed that the Waste and Recycling Advisors contract is supported, with £123,092 proposed. 'Don't let Devon go to waste' and Clean Devon were also proposed to receive significant sums, with the remainder going to food waste work.

Member discussion with officers focused on the WRA contract and metrics for its success. Officers outlined that much of the work the advisors were doing would result in benefits that were not necessarily easily measurable. Notwithstanding that, members expressed interest in developing more objective data around the contract and its benefits dependent on what could be done within the scope of the contract terms; such as participation monitoring to measure the impact of the advisors' activities.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Jung, **SECONDED** by Councillor Daniel and

RESOLVED that

(a) the proposed projects for 2024/25 be approved;

(b) a 1 year extension of the Waste and Recycling Advisors (WRA) contract be approved; and

(c) the approval given by the Chair & Vice Chair with regard to the funding of the employment of the Clean Devon Liaison Officer be noted.

* **41** **Hot Topics**

Officers were planning to update the Committee on Government plans around consistency in waste and recycling collections by local authorities. However, these had been delayed, so an update was not available.

* **42** **Future Meetings**

Dates of future meetings were noted as:

21 February 2024
18 June 2024
15 October 2024
11 February 2025

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*

2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.09 pm