

DEVON AUTHORITIES STRATEGIC WASTE COMMITTEE

17 October 2019

Present:-

Councillor D Harvey, Chair (Exeter City Council)
Councillor A Davis (Devon County Council)
Councillor G Jung (East Devon District Council)
Councillor L Taylor (Mid Devon District Council)
Councillor N Pearson (North Devon District Council)
Councillor D Brown (South Hams District Council)
Councillor A Dewhirst (Teignbridge District Council)
Councillor C Leather (Torrige District Council)
Councillor V Ellery (Torbay Council)
Councillor S Hipsey (West Devon Borough Council)

Apologies:-

Councillors C Mott, M Morey and K Baldry

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Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019 be signed as a correct copy.

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Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

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Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

- (a) Devon County Council's Refuse Project Officer Catherine Causley had been awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Recycling Award 2019 at the recent annual Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee conference in Birmingham.
- (b) The next Recycle Devon Thank You Awards Ceremony would take place on 6 March 2020 and people from across Devon were being invited to nominate their recycling heroes. Further details could be found at <https://www.recycledevon.org/>.

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Representations received from Devon MPs (Minute *43/19 June 2019)

The Chair had written to Devon MPs concerning the long-distance travel involved to the nearest reprocessing plants across the UK due to lack of reprocessing facilities in the South West and the impact this was having on climate change. Responses had been received from MPs Gary Streeter, Ann-Marie Morris and Ben Bradshaw suggesting contact be made with the Local Enterprise Partnership to explore investment opportunities. Devon County Council had offered to take this forward to determine its feasibility.

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Waste and Recycling Advisors Contract

The Committee received a presentation from the Senior Waste Manager on the Waste and Recycling Advisor Contract which gave an overview of the project, including details on its objectives; the Waste and Recycling Advisors; the results so far; and looking forward.

Highlights included:

- A marked drop in contamination of recycling bins in Exeter and a 5% increase in recycling.
- An increase in uptake of food waste recycling in Torbay.
- A participation rate of 63% in the food waste service in Torridge, in the first month after roll-out.
- Contribution to nearly 1,000 more tonnes of waste collected from householders for recycling or composting in Teignbridge, saving up to £60,000.

It was noted that at least 12,343 'Sorry we missed you' cards had been handed out to households across Devon by Waste and Recycling Advisors encouraging the use of recycling.

[N.B. A copy of the presentation is attached]

* **51** **Review of the Reuse Credit Scheme**

The Committee firstly heard from Mr D Banks, CEO Refurnish, who spoke against the proposal to discontinue funding for the Reuse Credit Scheme, which he stated worked on many levels and needed continued support from Devon Authorities.

The Committee then received the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/19/76) on a review of the Reuse Credit Scheme (RCS), The Report summarised consultation feedback and presented a proposal which encouraged existing RCS groups to develop sustainably, without the need for ongoing financial support from the Committee's dedicated joint waste fund. It also included a summary of the consultation responses at Appendix I and the impact assessment at Appendix II.

The RCS review recognised that the scheme was now one element of a range of reuse activities delivered by the partner authorities, and that in recent years the growth in the charity reuse sector resulted in inequitable support for RCS groups based on legacy arrangements.

The Report proposed that dedicated funding provided through the RCS was discontinued and that RCS groups were offered a voluntary programme of 'business support' to optimise their operations following the reduction (from April 2021) and withdrawal of the RCS from April 2022.

It was proposed that the potential savings made by the discontinuance of RCS could be allocated to the new WRA contract from 2021/22.

Members' discussion points with Officers included:

- a user breakdown had indicated that less than 2% of online consultation respondents had actually accessed the impact assessment, which had explained the background analysis;
- that RCS was a good scheme and Refurnish had paid employees, many of whom were long term unemployed; and
- that people should be encouraged to reuse first and discontinuing RCS should be a last resort.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Davis, **SECONDED** by Councillor Ellery and

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contribution that the Reuse Credit Scheme has made to encouraging furniture reuse in Devon and the commitment of staff, volunteers and customers in supporting RCS be recognised;

- (b) that *Option 1 (Proposal) - 'Discontinue the RCS through a phased reduction in allocation'* as set out in paragraph 3 of the Report be approved; and
- (c) that consideration be given to allocating the proposed savings made in 2021/22 towards a new Waste and Recycling Advisors (WRA) contract to enable additional resources to have a wider impact.

* **52** **Budget Proposal for 2020/21**

The Committee noted the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/19/77) which summarised the options for the proposed funding allocations for 2020/21 which totalled £190,804 covering: Reuse Credits (£49,000), Don't let Devon go to Waste (£41,000), Waste and Recycling Advisors Contract £93,804) and Litter and fly tipping campaign (£7,000).

The last two years' budget had been allocated to three major areas of spend, namely the Waste and Recycling Advisors contract, continued funding of Reuse Credits and the Don't Let Devon go to Waste campaign work. Additionally, £12,800 had been allocated for use in relation to the Clean Devon Partnership for reducing litter and fly tipping.

Members considered the work of the WRAs to be invaluable and welcomed the proposal to extend the WRA Contract for a further year.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Ellery, **SECONDED** by Councillor Davis and

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed budget for 2020/21 be agreed and that an extension of the Waste and Recycling Advisors Contract for a further year be confirmed; and
- (b) that the current 2019/20 budget position be noted.

* **53** **Waste Performance Statistics 2018/19**

The Committee received the Report of the Waste Performance Statistics for 2018/19 which provided Members with an overview of waste statistics for Devon and Torbay, with individual authority waste statistics tabled at Appendix 1.

Members were pleased to note that Devon had achieved its highest ever recycling rate at 56%, representing an increase of 2% on the previous year and 0.3% higher than the authority's previous highest rate of 55.7% in 2016/17. This success was welcomed in maintaining Devon's position as one of England's highest performing waste disposal authorities.

Torbay had achieved a recycling rate of 41.3% during 2018/19, a reduction of 1.3% on the previous year. East Devon had achieved the highest WCA recycling rate in 2018/19 at 59.1%, an increase of almost 5% on the previous year. The most significant reduction for WCA residue was noted for Torridge who had reduced its residue by 3875 tonnes. Torridge had also achieved the greatest increase in a WCA recycling rate at 10%.

Members noted that Exeter would be introducing food waste and glass collections in the future; that Torridge had launched a weekly recycling and food waste service with chargeable garden waste; that South Hams were changing their kerbside collection to include weekly food and kerbside glass from 2020; and West Devon were introducing mixed plastics collections from December 2019.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Ellery, **SECONDED** by Councillor Davis and

RESOLVED

- (a) that the success of Devon authorities within the current financial climate be noted; and
- (b) that Members continue to support Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee authorities to develop and maintain effective services for residents to deliver greater participation and satisfaction.

* **54** **Hot Topic - Observations on the systems thinking process in North Devon**

Councillor N Pearson reported on a Systems Thinking Workshop she had attended recently organised by Vanguard Consultancy. The Vanguard Method provided the means to study service organisations as systems and the knowledge generated would lead to informed choices for redesigning services as systems. This systems thinking approach would be taken forward by North Devon Council's recycling service.

* **55** **Future Meetings**

The next meeting would be on 19 February 2020.

Future dates for the Committee could be found here:
<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=294&Year=0>

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 3.48 pm