

DEVON AUTHORITIES STRATEGIC WASTE COMMITTEE

15 October 2024

Present:-

Councillors R Croad (Chair), Williams (Vice-Chair), G Jung, Mann and J Hodgson (Reserve)

Present (virtually):-

Councillor A Billings

Apologies:-

Councillor C Leather

* **51** **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair congratulated SWISCo, the provider of waste and recycling services in Torbay, on their winning of 'Best communications campaign' at the LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) Awards 2024. They won for their "Always Recycle Batteries" Campaign.

* **52** **Declarations of Interest**

Members were reminded that they should declare any interests they may have in any item to be considered, prior to any discussion taking place on that item.

The list of Membership of other Authorities can be found here: [County councillors who are also district, borough, city, parish or town councillors](#)

* **53** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 18 June 2024 be signed as a correct record.

* **54** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating (WUDS)

Discussion was had regarding the impact on local authorities resulting from the Environment Agency's (EA) requirement that authorities segregate Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating (WUDS) for bulky waste collection & disposal. More specifically, the requirement was to separately collect, store and

transport WUDS to its end destination for incineration, at which point they would be mixed back with WUDS/POPs waste in the waste bunker.

Councillor Mann, who had requested that this be discussed, expressed that, in West Devon, they were – as a result of the requirements - unable to collect WUDS in Tavistock. As such, it would need to be transported to Okehampton, at increased financial and environmental cost. Reference was made to similar concerns already publicly raised by the Chair of the Committee on behalf of Devon County Council. The Chair advised that he had received, that day, a response to a letter he had sent to Steve Reed MP; the letter did not adequately address the concerns raised. At the request of the Committee, the letter sent by Councillor Croad was circulated after the meeting.

It was suggested by the Chair that that all districts should write to Government, and their local MPs, to put pressure on Government to reconsider the requirements. The Committee felt that directing local authorities to separate out waste, at increased cost to them, as well as increased carbon cost and environmental impact, only for it to be mixed at its destination, was not sensible, and did not represent a good use of public money.

Further, a list of Devon County Council Household, Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) that would accept waste upholstered domestic seating from 1st December 2024 was circulated after the committee.

* **55** **Waste Performance Statistics 2023/24**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/24/74) which provided members with an overview of waste performance statistics for Devon and Torbay for 2023-24, with individual performance included in Appendix 1 to the Report.

At the meeting, members received a presentation covering national problems regarding waste collection as well as problems more specific to Devon and Torbay. Elements of the presentation included:

- The impact of increased contract costs, and service demands, nationally, as well as 'cost of living' pressures. Inflation had come down since its recent peak, but costs were still high.
- The approach of the new Government, which was largely consistent with the approach pre-General Election, with a focus on the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). A rapid review had been announced in July of that plan, which included a number of targets and commitments around waste. Broadly speaking, maximising resources whilst minimising waste continued to be the focus of the new Government, with an emphasis on a circular economy.

- A comparison of waste collection services available in Devon in 2013, broken down by area, compared with presently. This was to demonstrate progress made towards the 'Aligned Option' goal whereby the aim was to ensure that Torbay, and all districts in Devon, offered consistent waste collection services.
- 2022-23 waste statistics across three areas and a number of districts (as waste collection authorities) achieving 'Top 10' in different categories; with Devon County Council and Torbay Council (as waste disposal authorities) also achieving some Top 10s.
- 2023-24 recycling rates, with the overall picture being one of improvement, which officers felt was largely due to increased collection of organic / garden waste.
- A breakdown of recyclable waste by material in Devon and Torbay, including that which was left in residual waste bins, indicating work to be done on increasing recycling levels.
- Fly-tipping statistics, with an overall decrease in Devon and an increase in Torbay.

Discussion points between officers and members included:

- Fly-tipping, including the low number of prosecutions compared to enforcement actions, surveillance, and difficulties around collecting and reporting data. Members discussed the need to do more to address fly-tipping.
- That HWRCs had recently reached 10,000 tonnes of material being re-sold through their shops.

Members noted the report.

* **56** **Budget Proposal for 2025/26**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/24/75) which detailed the budget position for the financial year and proposals for the 2025/26 budget. Appendices I and II to the report included details on the proposals pertaining to Don't Let Devon Go to Waste (DLDGW) scheme, and the Waste and Recycling Advisors (WRA) contract, respectively. Appendix III set out a top slice allocation used to fund the budget proposals.

Members heard that approximately 1,600 people had requested free food caddies and/or recipe books off the back of a food waste project previously agreed to be funded by the committee, supplemented by some other funds.

Attention was drawn to work undertaken to educate the public on correctly recycling electricals and batteries, and a Recycle Devon community group map.

Members also heard that there was consideration being had on providing all authorities with CCTV, paid for by Clean Devon funds, with reference to fly-tipping, although the challenges around ensuring there is agreement by elected members within each local authority, and adequate planning in relation to IT and data protection, were referred to.

For 2025/26, an allocation of £41,000 was proposed for Don't Let Devon Go to Waste. £123,000 was proposed for a multi-faceted programme to educate and inform the public on food waste to try and change behaviour. A draft breakdown of this allocation was included in the report, with the intent being to develop said proposals further to be presented on at the February 2025 meeting of the Committee. Finally, £27,000 was proposed for Clean Devon.

Key discussion points included:

- That Appendix III did not include details of how the figures were worked out, which would be useful for members;
- That the next waste analysis would take place in 2027, and to do so earlier – or more regularly – would not represent an efficient use of funding;
- Some member support for camera surveillance regarding fly-tipping. However, the requirement to warn the public of the camera presence was discussed, and whether that would discourage fly-tippers or simply encourage them to fly-tip in a different location. There was discussion on whether there was therefore a justification for alternative means of trying to identify fly-tippers, such as by inspecting waste that has been dumped for clues such as letters addressed to that person;
- The rationale behind the £123,000 allocation for a focus on food waste, with it being suggested that there was not sufficient evidence of individual outreach such as that done under the WRA contract being a successful and effective way of promoting behavioural change. The 5p plastic bag tax was referred to as an incredibly successful programme of promoting individual change. Officers noted both that the success of individual outreach of this sort could be hard to measure, and that authorities do not have legislative control to implement something like a 5p plastic bag tax.

The report was noted.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Croad, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hodgson and

RESOLVED that

(a) the carry forward of £8,013 for Clean Devon be agreed;

(b) the proposal to not extend the Waste and Recycling Advisors (WRA) for a further year be approved; and

(c) the proposed projects for 2025/26 be approved.

* 57

Future Meetings

Members noted the dates and times of future meetings.

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 2.16 pm and finished at 3.34 pm

