

## South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee

Meeting held on Thursday, 7 December 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,  
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Scott Roche (Chair)

Councillors Charles Baker, Robert ward, Noel Hadjimichael, Tom Reeve,  
Natasha Irons, Barry Lewis

**Also Present:** John Haynes (Communications Advisor, SLWP), John Bosley (Assistant  
Director Public Space LB Merton), Simon Bussell (Head of contracts SLWP),  
Francesco Greico (Head of Finance, SLWP), Adrian May (Interim Head of  
Democratic Services Croydon), Farah Gabdon (Trainee Democratic Services  
Officer Croydon).

**Apologies:** Councillors Christopher Woolmer, Andrew Jenner.

### PART A

#### 8/20 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair opened the meeting and all present introduced themselves.

#### 9/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christopher Woolmer  
and Councillor Andrew Jenner.

#### 10/20 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 11/20 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED:** That minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 were agreed  
and to be signed as an accurate record.

#### 12/20 **Contract Performance Report**

The officer presented the contract performance report and provided an update on the performance of the transfer, treatment, recycling, and disposal services procured and managed by the South London Waste Partnership on behalf of the four Partner Boroughs. The services covered in this presentation were as follows:

- I. Food and green waste treatment services
- II. Household Reuse and Recycling Centre (HRRC) services, and
- III. Residual waste treatment services.

This presentation provided performance data for the quarters one and two in 2023/24 from 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023.

The officer highlighted a reduction of 5% food waste collection across the partnership compared to 7% reduction in outer London Boroughs. Whilst the volumes were down, bringing positive news for food waste reduction, however figures also showed an increase in garden waste. This could be attributed to cost of living crisis and weather.

In response to questions, the officer noted it would be important to monitor trends and patterns in changes to volume. The officer highlighted a previous campaign and noted that around 30-40% of households participated in food waste recycling programmes.

In response to questions regarding contamination, the officer noted that the partnership received regular reports and updates from contractors and there was no contamination in food waste within South London Waste Partnership. The material from SLWP was consistently good quality with waste deliveries never rejected.

In response to questions regarding collections from flats, the officer confirmed that any contamination was removed before waste was sent to Anaerobic digestors. The biggest opportunity for the borough was in redesigning services for example the bins provided and bags/sacks. From a waste composition analysis in 2022, it was found that 30% of household waste was made up of food waste. There was a huge potential as those who currently had access to food waste disposal weren't utilizing it or using it to its full potential. The campaigns gave a return of investment saving £100 per tonne when food waste was sent to Anaerobic digestors.

The officer noted that the recycling rate was averaging 66% across the 6 sites, which showed good performance. There was a substantial increase in mattress waste through HRRC's and collections. Possibly related to bed bug issue. Some of these mattresses went to third party centres for recycling, others had the metal recycled. Partnership would engage with third parties, waste, and recycling lobbying groups etc to find further avenues for recycling mattresses. Members raised the point of looking at prevention rather than recycling and looking into producer responsibility for mattresses. Members

also raised the possibility and scope of looking into specific recycling schemes as mattresses have good materials and could produce revenue.

Each HRRC was separating 33 different waste streams. Paper and cardboard showed no great change in volumes. Bag splitting trials were carried out across sites to see what goes into residual bins, results showed 30% of were recyclable. The focus would be to encourage people to separate out recycling.

There was an upcoming change in legislation for rubble charging in Sutton to prohibit charges for residents to deposit rubble. In quarters one and two, there was a good utilisation for sites and booking systems across three boroughs, with sites well utilised by vans bringing recycling.

The officer spoke of the social value of the partnership and highlighted the toy giveaway schemes, where the public could take items via charities. This was a welcomed initiative giving the cost-of-living crisis and planned to run until Christmas. The current partnership contract was due to be concluded spring in 2024.

In response to questions, the officer highlighted that recycling rates at HRRC compared favourably to other boroughs and metropolitan areas.

In response to questions about bicycles, the officer replied that within HRRC's there was a lot of recovery of bicycles that made their way to repair and reuse shops. This was part of a social enterprise which took bikes and repaired as road worthy. Bikes were highlighted as a key issue in Kingston. The partnership would engage with Veolia to get more information and report back on data.

The report highlighted just over 100,001 tonnes of residual waste processed at the Viridor residual waste facility showing a 3% increase on previous year. Residual waste appeared to be static when new housing was considered.

The report outlined an incident in October which led to a schedule 5 notice being issued to the environment agency. A couple of incidents linked to downtime at the facility through issues with UK power network supply lines both outside and within the facility. Breaks in power caused the facility to come offline as backup power supplies failed. Members of the CLG were involved in those incidents. Follow up investigations were pending with the Environment agency and Viridor to inform improvements. It has been arranged for UK power networks to take repairs and bring the facility up to track. The facility would be taken into island mode on 10-12<sup>th</sup> Dec to undertake repairs. The facility would still process waste but not connect to electricity.

The gas cannister detection project involved new artificial intelligence cameras currently being trialled. Officers were trying to track and identify cannisters as they could explode or cause damage, negatively impacting the operational effectiveness of the plant. Viridor have been running a promotional campaign for about 6 months to promote awareness. Partnership was engaged with RHRRC contractor and the environment agency to allow

some variation to site permits so gas cannisters could be received through HRRC's. This was hoped to begin from early 2024.

In response to a question regarding findings and reports, the officer informed the committee that they have raised this with Viridor who were still in their configuration phase. Once meaningful reports become produced, the partnership will report back to the committee.

Transparency of emissions data was available on virtual visitor centre operated by Viridor and could be accessed by the public.

The residual waste treatment contract, a permit variation applied for by Viridor 10<sup>th</sup> November, was still being determined by the EA. There was no fixed date for the outcome. Members highlighted they had strongly objected to the permit variation or increase in the capacity processed at the incinerator at ERF.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report and the progress of the HRRC extension at set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

13/20

### **South London Waste Partnership Budget Update 2023/24 - Period 6 Update**

The head of finance for South London Waste Partnership, provided an update on the period 6 budget which the committee are asked to note the reports contents. The forecast at month 6 of 2022/23 (30<sup>th</sup> September 2022) is an underspend of £1,375 against the revised budget. The partnership sets a budget each year for the forthcoming financial year, the spend is monitored monthly. The officer presented both the approved and revised budget.

The core budget covered staff salaries, HR, document management system and finance support. At period 6 the budget for core partnership activity was forecasted with an underspend of £6,376.

There were various communications and improvement projects such as the green waste/food waste campaigns that were approved and commenced. At period 6 these projects were forecast to be on budget.

The intelligence gathering project, at period 6 was anticipated not to begin this financial year and would be presented as an underspend in the next budget report.

Resident engagement and social media campaigns were forecast to be delivered on budget. Commissioning new recycling street contract including kerb side collectors were underway and expected to be delivered within budget.

The boroughs were undergoing commissioning for street cleansing and household waste collections which were anticipated to be delivered on budget.

Francesco highlighted the following two typos in the report which the committee were asked to note:

1. Table beneath paragraph 3.7, under the forecast line, the total figure reads £26,250 however the correct figure should be £56,250.
2. Table beneath 3.11, the waste transfer station infrastructure project line, forecast spend is written as £70,000 which is £5000 more than budgeted figure. This additional £5000 has not been added into the top line under commissions support. Where forecast for commission support is £265,00 it should be £270,000 with a variance of £5,000.

**RESOLVED:** to note the contents of the report.

#### 14/20 **Recommended budget 2024-25**

The head of finance for South London Waste Partnership, set out the recommended SLWP partnership team budget for the next financial year 2024/2025. The recommended budget of £233,240 per borough was a 26% saving on the current year budget.

The officer gave an overview of the recommended budget which was broken down into two categories. The first category was the core partnership team activity that included advisors and corporate support, document storage and SLWP staffing cost with a total budget of £875,759. Costing £218,940 per borough.

The second category was the behaviour change campaigns costing £58,000, calculated at £14,500 per borough. This came to a total partnership budget of £933,759.

The officer highlighted the function of the joint committee which was to make arrangements for the disposal of waste, provide places for the deposit and disposal of waste and to advise participating councils on the delivery and separation of waste.

Operational functions of the committee included the management of existing treatment and disposal contracts, of which there were seven, the resolution of contract issues as well as the procurement of new replacement waste treatment services.

The SLWP joint committee constitution required that each year, the committee agreed a draft annual budget for the following annual year, reasonably required to achieve its outcomes and discharge their functions as a joint

committee. The budget was monitored monthly by SLWP finance lead and flexed where appropriate to respond to pressures that may arise.

The top line for advisors and corporate support budget was £136,000 or £34,000 per borough. This included costs of HR, IT, Finance Support from hosted borough and ad-hoc support from communications lead and any external advisors. Document storage was budgeted at £21,000. Core SLWP staff budget was £718,758 or £179,960 per borough and enabled SLWP to manage joint procured treatment and disposable contracts, contract performance and contract management activities on behalf of four councils.

The recommended communications budget would enable the continuation of food waste recycling participation campaign, shown to deliver 10% increase in participation. Recent waste composition analysis showed food waste made 30% weight of the average rubbish bin. The budget was £40,000 total and £10,000 a borough. The proactive communications budget of £12,000 or £3,000 per borough related to Beddington ERF social media campaign to raise awareness of their virtual visitor centre. Enhancement of the SLWP website was budgeted at £6,000 or £1,500 per borough, this was to increase confidence in the recycling system being delivered. The new bin smart searchable directory would be developed and would explore whether it could be embedded into each boroughs website to improve access.

2024/2025 would be the final year with Veolia, there was a total of £47,500 per borough invested with Veolia collection contracts. This included campaigns to improve quality of recycling collected from communal properties, continuation of the contamination excess waste education program, annual service reminder letters, collection calendars and garden waste promotion.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the recommended budget 2024/25 as set out in the report.

15/20

## **Communications and Engagement Update**

The Communications Advisor for SLWP presented a report on communications and engagement covering the period of June to November 2023. The visit to borough collectors' facility in Mitcham took place in July, due to local resident complaints of odour issues. Borough collectors showed digestate tanks which they had implemented to control odours, they felt that odours were unfairly attributed to them as there were other operators nearby who could be responsible. Environment agency hotline were the regulators for the bio collector's facility. SLWP was keeping a close eye through regular contract meetings.

The residual waste treatment contract and Beddington ERF was awaiting decision on contract variation. Second round of consultations took place in July. The power outage highlighted gaps and weaknesses in communications

protocols in terms of how Viridor informed local councils and residents. SLWP was working to ensure incidents were better communicated.

Omissions were uploaded to the Beddington ERF website. There had been 14 visits to ERF sights as well as 6 public open days; it was one of the priorities in the 2-year communications plan to improve availability and visibility of facility tours and visits. Dates for 2024 were being agreed and will be uploaded to website for booking.

The Veolia waste collection contracts food waste campaign involved a nudge letter sent to 3,900 households which resulted in a 4.25% increase in food waste recycling.

The core food waste campaign was delivered to 38,000 properties across the boroughs. This involved visiting properties, putting no food waste stickers on their residual bin, and posting a pack through the door. This has shown a 10% increase in participation. A dedicated Veolia van was employed to deliver containers quickly, 16,000 containers in total to meet the spike in demand. This campaign has been delivered to over 100,000 households since 2020. The Kingston Electric Vehicle launch was launched using the food waste campaign budget.

The plastic solution campaign was an innovative photo-led campaign to reduce plastic waste and linking in carbon footprint, to inform public why plastic should be kept out of bins. This was being funded via Veolia, the SLWP and Viridor.

The officer highlighted the school's engagement project, with 43 applications for Veolia Orchards Project with schools applying to get fruit trees. From the newsletter in June, 12 schools booked in 'Recycling Rockstars' assembly. Regarding a question about participation and providing subsidised caddy liners, the officer responded that liners were expensive, and it would be difficult to show return of investment. As part of the core campaign, a free roll of 12 liners were provided to households in Merton, Sutton, and Croydon but not for Kingston. Results did not show enough variation to suggest free liners improved participation.

Regarding facility tours, the officer responded that there were limited availability tours related to public and individuals but for school groups, scouts, or community, this can be arranged with the officer.

**RESOLVED:** to note the contents of the report.

16/20 **Date of the next Meeting**

Chair advised officers would be in contact to arrange the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.27 pm

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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