



Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Scrutiny Group

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Dorchester on
Friday, 18 November 2016

Present:

David Jones (Chairman - Christchurch Borough Council)
Daryl Turner (Vice-Chairman – West Dorset District Council)
Mike Lovell (Dorset County Council), Jane Somper (North Dorset District Council), Simon Tong
(East Dorset District Council) and Mike Wiggins (Purbeck District Council)

Belinda Ridout (North Dorset District Council - substitute member) also attended.

Officers Attending: Karyn Punchard (Director of DWP) , Paul Ackrill (Finance and Commercial Manager), Gemma Clinton (Head of Service(Strategy)), Michael Moon (Head of Services (Operations)), Andy Smith (Treasurer to DWP) and David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

Note:- These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of Group.

Election of Chairman

- 1 **Resolved**
That Councillor David Jones be elected Chairman of the Group for the year 2016/17.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman

- 2 **Resolved**
That Councillor Daryl Turner be appointed to serve as Vice-Chairman for the year 2016/17.

Code of Conduct

- 3 There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Public Participation

- 4 There were no public questions or statements received under Standing Orders 21 (1) and (2) respectively or any requests to address the Group.

Terms of Reference

- 5 The Group's Terms of Reference, as agreed by the Joint Committee, were accepted and endorsed.

Frequency of meetings

- 6 The Group considered what the frequency of its meetings should be and how these should be managed. As the purpose of the Group was to scrutinise the decisions taken by the DWP, there was considered a need for both post and pre scrutiny. To coincide with the budget setting process, the Group agreed that it would be beneficial to conduct pre scrutiny - a month or so beforehand the Budget was considered by Joint Committee - with the remaining meetings being held a month or so following the other four scheduled DWP meetings to assess the outcomes from those meetings. There was scope for the Group to also be notified electronically of any developments, as necessary, between meetings and the chairman was receptive to convening additional meetings if required. .

The Group also considered that it would be beneficial if the Group's substitute members were invited to attend each meeting in an observer capacity so they had an understanding and were kept abreast of what was being scrutinised, particularly if they were called upon to attend.

Resolved

That the Group's substitute members were invited to attend each meeting in an observer capacity

Reason for Decision

So there was an understanding of what was being scrutinised, particularly if called upon to attend.

The Dorset Waste Partnership In context

7

As a prelude to consideration of what items had been considered by the DWP Joint Committee at their meeting on 7 November 2016, the Director took the opportunity to set the scene on how the Partnership was organised, operated and what it achieved, who was involved in doing this, what assets were at their disposals and how these were used, what services were provided and the relationship with the Joint Committee and what governance arrangements were in place. Charging policies and the distinction between collection and disposal were explained, as well as what commitments the Partnership were obliged to fulfil. It was confirmed that, with regard to the Garden Waste service, the Partnership were able to charge for collection, but not for disposal. Similarly the distinction between arrangements for household waste and commercial waste was explained and how each was managed. The opportunities for energy from waste were also discussed and how these might be applied, if practicable.

The Director also took the opportunity to explain how the budget for 2017/18 had been compiled, how finances were disaggregated between the constituent authorities and other pertinent accounting arrangements.

The success of the recycling strategy was of particular interest to the Group and how this was being achieved. As well as the environmental driver behind this success, the Finance and Commercial Manager reported that significant savings had been made as budgets overall had been reduced by £3.3m as a consequence of Landfill Tax not requiring to be levied at landfill sites.

The Group acknowledged that the vagrancies in the price of and demand for recyclates played a significant part in the success of the recycling initiative. How technologies to manage waste were being developed and applied also played a critical part in how waste was to be managed and disposed of in the future.

The Group considered that the opportunity should be taken at some point to analyse in greater detail how commercial waste was being managed to determine if there was any scope for a more efficient means of doing this or to see if there was the potential for any savings being achieved.

Similarly, they asked for a review of the proposed container charging policy arrangements to be conducted to see if there was any opportunity for alternative means of charging to be made so that there might be some flexibility in how costs were applied to meet the needs of some households. What discount might be available to local councils in the collection of their waste should also be clarified and awareness drawn to this as appropriate. It was explained that a decision on charging for containers would be made at the January Joint Committee.

Noted

Consideration of items arising from the Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee on 7 November 2016

8 Financial Report - November 2016

The Treasurer to the DWP explained the background to and detail of the Financial Report - November 2016 which set out the risks of variance in spend against the 2016/17 revenue budget and the capital budget monitoring report for 2016/17.

The Group asked a series of questions of the report to which answers were provided. How packaging was being managed was of particular interest to the Group and the means by which manufacturers and suppliers were trying to minimise this, especially in terms of size and weight. The issue of the charging policy at household recycling centres was discussed and how this was being managed and how the charges were applied to rubble. The Group asked if there was any evidence of what bearing charging policies had on any increases in fly tipping being experienced. The Director explained that there was no specific evidence although this was being monitored carefully and could be reported on. How charging policies were being applied was instrumental in understanding the needs of service users and what scope there was to determine what they considered to be reasonable, appropriate and proportionate in meeting their needs.

Draft Revenue Estimates 2017/18

The Treasurer to the DWP detailed the draft Revenue Estimates 2017-18 for the Group's consideration. Details of the savings which were being applied to the 2017/18 budget and how this was being done were explained. How successful the recycling strategy was depended on the quality and condition of the recyclates received and efforts were being made to constantly improve how this was achieved.

Whilst much had already been achieved, the Group considered that there were opportunities to investigate whether customer service could be improved and whether there was scope to better accommodate the needs of those most vulnerable users of the service. Accordingly they agreed that there should be a review on how this could be readily achieved.

Capital Programme 2016/17 – 2021/22

The Treasurer to the DWP outlined the Capital Programme to 2021/22 and what this entailed. How the capital programme was managed in practice was explained and what resources were benefitting from this investment.

The Vice-Chairman suggested that in-cab technology could play a significant part in how efficiently the core fleet of waste collection vehicles were managed. The Director acknowledged this and that there was a project underway at DWP to implement this technology with the aim of contributing to the service being run more effectively and efficiently in meeting the needs of its service users.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17-2021/22

The Treasurer to the DWP outlined the principles of the medium term financial plan 2018/19 – 2021/22, what this entailed, how it was to be applied and what benefits it was designed to bring. It was noted that the MTFP represented a snapshot at a certain point in time and that, in reality, certain factors had potential to vary greatly over time.

Noted

Forward Plan/ Work Programme

- 9 As part of this process the Group were provided with the opportunity to contribute what they considered would benefit from scrutiny. In addition to the issues raised in the previous minutes, mention was made of improvements which might be made to operational issues such as how dog bins and verge litter management were managed.

The Group agreed that their purpose was to assess what and how decisions taken by the Joint Committee were arrived at and the reasoning for this, how policies could be reviewed and agreed that a close working relationship with officers was essential in achieving improvements to services where applicable and practicable.

Resolved

That the topic for scrutiny at the next Group meeting should be:-

- Vulnerable Consumers – with a focus on assisted collections and accessibility to the Priority Services Register to be led by the Chairman, Councillor Jones. Councillor Turner considered that the complaints register might serve to demonstrate if enough was being done in assisting those consumers

The following topic was to be considered at a subsequent meeting:-

- Customer Service - with a focus on payment systems for commercial waste and garden waste.

Reason for Decision

To determine the scope for improving the services provided.

Questions from Councillors

10 No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.20 pm