



Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Scrutiny Group

Minutes of the meeting held at Dorset Councils' Partnership offices, South Walks House, Dorchester on Monday, 30 October 2017

Present:

Councillor Jane Somper (Vice Chairman – in the Chair)
Councillors Ronald Coatsworth (West Dorset District Council), Hilary Cox (Dorset County Council), Andrew Parry (East Dorset District Council), Gill Taylor (Weymouth and Portland Borough Council) and Mike Wiggins (Purbeck District Council).

Members Attending

Councillor Lucy Hamilton - Weymouth and Portland Borough Council
Councillor Anthony Alford – Chairman of the Dorset Waste Partnership (West Dorset District Council) – observer.

Officers Attending: Karyn Punchard (Director of Dorset Waste Partnership), Andy Smith (Treasurer for Dorset Waste Partnership), Paul Ackrill (Finance and Commercial Manager) Michael Moon (Head of Service (Operations)), Louise Bryant (Service Development Manager) 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 the Group to be held on **Monday, 30 April 2018.**)

Apologies for absence

30 An apology for absence was received from Councillor David Jones (Christchurch Borough Council).

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Jane Somper, assumed the Chairmanship for the meeting.

Code of Conduct

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

Councillor Jane Somper clarified that her business had a business account with the Partnership.

Minutes

32 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

33 There were no public statements or questions received under Standing Orders 21 (1) or (2), nor any requests to address the Group.

Minutes of Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee

34 The minutes of the Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee held on 12 September 2017 were received and noted.

Draft Revenue Estimates 2018-19

35 The draft Revenue Estimates for 2018-19 were considered by the Group, providing the opportunity for their views on what the estimates should be based and how this

could be achieved to be taken into consideration by the Joint Committee at their meeting on 6 November 2017.

The report set out the budget process and what the key aspects, assumptions and drivers of this were, together with some of the sensitivities and risks which needed to be taken into account. Holding a series of informal Budget Workshops - designed to give prior consideration to options for future savings and how they could be delivered - had played a significant part in what was now being recommended.

As the proposed budget was to be maintained at £33.1 m, this was seen affordable for partner authorities. However there remained a £700k funding shortfall to meet what could be prudently considered necessary to effectively deliver the Service during 2018/19. Drawing on the Budget Equalisation Reserve if required, was also a possibility. The Group were being asked to identify what alternative means could be found to satisfy that budget shortfall.

An illustration of how savings could be found for 2018/19 to meet the funding shortfall was set out in Appendix 3 to the report. As well as changing some of the budget assumptions, consideration was also being given to the part closure of 8 of the 11 household recycling centres, for 2 days per week. Officers explained what this would be subject to further consideration by the Joint Committee and public consultation. .

Whilst recognising what was being proposed and understanding that it was necessary to identify a means of bridging this gap, the Group were conscious not to undermine the good work already achieved by the Partnership in instilling the benefits of recycling and in responsible waste disposal methods.

Concern was raised that what the HRC's had to offer should not be unduly compromised. They provided an essential service in complementing the kerbside collections, meeting recycling targets and for convenience to the public. The Director confirmed that the Medium Term Financial Plan was more of a forecast and assumed that HRC provision would remain constant and that HRCs would be likely to continue to play an essential part as a means for disposing of waste.

It was in the interests of all that HRCs were able to play an important part in deterring any perceived need to resort to fly tipping and, as such, every opportunity should be given to how they might operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. It was suggested that this could be an issue for the Group to scrutinise in the future.

The opportunity was given for questions to be asked of the Treasurer's report and officers provided clarification in respect of the points raised.

How glass recycling and isolated, rural collections could be managed more efficiently were also being taken into consideration as part of the assessment process for efficiency savings being made, with more work being done to see how this could be achieved and what the process for doing this might entail.

The Group were generally satisfied with the illustration of how savings could be achieved, as set out in Appendix 3, but asked that the points they had raised on what other savings could be considered and the way in which this could be done be borne in mind by the Joint Committee.

Recommended

That the content of the report be acknowledged and the Joint Committee be asked to endorse the illustration for how savings could be achieved for 2018/19.

Reason for Recommendation

That the means of achieving the savings required for 2018/19 be realised and that the

Joint Committee be able to take into account the views of the Group before consulting on the draft estimates with the partner authorities.

Capital Programme to 2022/23

36 The Partnership's Capital Programme 2022/23 was considered, what this entailed and how it would be applied.

Of significance was a proposed new waste facility at Blandford, how containers and vehicles were to be systematically and sequentially replaced and the programmes for doing this and how a replacement ICT system was required to meet the future successful delivery of the Service.

How capital expenditure was funded and allocated was explained, particularly the way in which finance was obtained through the host authority and the rates of interest charged for these. The reasons why the capital expenditure being proposed was necessary was acknowledged by the Group. It was understood that the number of vehicles required to deliver the Service would be governed by what growth in households and waste tonnage occurred.

The Group acknowledged that the Capital Programme was designed to ensure that the Service maintained its means of delivering what was necessary to meet agreed outcomes and waste disposal and recycling targets.

Recommended

That the Joint Committee be asked to endorse the Capital Programme 2022/23, what it was designed to deliver and the way in which this was to be done.

Reason for Recommendation

To ensure that the Service had the means to deliver what was necessary to achieve its agreed outcomes and that the Joint Committee be able to take into account the views of the Group before consulting on the draft estimates with the partner authorities.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 - 2022/23

37 The Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2022/23 was designed to provide the means for the DWP to remain viable and sustainable so as to meet its waste management commitments in the medium term. How this would be achieved, what would be necessary to do it and the means by which this would be done were set out in the report and explained in more detail by officers. Assumptions on what would be needed were made based on what could reasonably be anticipated. These covered the costs of expected pay awards; the consequence of household growth as well as other more volatile factors such as the fluctuation of fuel and recycle prices .

The Group acknowledged the budget trends being forecasted at Appendix 2. It was recognised that an increasing number of households would necessitate an increase in the service being provided and therefore growth in collection services would be required to accommodate this. Although there would be more demands on the Service, this might well be offset to some extent by additional Council Tax revenue.

The Group appreciated that it was necessary to plan for what could reasonably be expected in the medium term. Whilst they considered that the right things were being considered to meet that future need and would ensure that the Service was able to continue to meet its commitments going forward, there was a recognition that the funding constraints of each individual authority would have an impact. The Group considered that, in future years, there might be greater opportunity for there to be a closer relationship between the budgetary commitments of the DWP and those of the constituent authorities. This is would enable each to recognise the obligations of the other.

Recommended

That the Joint Committee be asked to endorse, and adopt, the Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2022/23 to provide the means for the Service to remain viable and sustainable so as to be able to meet its waste management commitments in the medium term.

Reason for Recommendation

To ensure that the Service remained viable and sustainable in the medium term and that the Joint Committee be able to take into account the views of the Group before consulting on the draft estimates with the partner authorities.

Review of Enforcement Policy and Procedures and Guidelines

38 The Group considered a report by Head of Service (Strategy) in reviewing the Enforcement Policy, Procedures and Guidelines to serve the Partnership.

The review was designed to take account of changes to legislation – particularly around the Deregulation Act 2015 – and to formalise the approach taken to enforcement. The policy, procedures and guidelines provided a basis for how waste enforcement would be applied, and the processes and procedures to be followed in doing this.

How the Partnership was to address enforcement action for abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and dropped litter, amongst other things, was set out in the report and what tools the Service could use in doing this. Currently, the attitude taken to enforcement has been to provide informal advice and guidance, with warning letters sent out where appropriate.

The revised procedures would provide the means to enable a more robust and resolute attitude toward waste enforcement and its contravention involving the issuing of warnings, Fixed Penalty Notices, prosecution through the courts and waste collection charging. Furthermore, to have a staged approach to dealing with repeat waste collection offences and an incremental scale of charges for infringements was considered to be a measured means of particular infringements being assessed on their own merit and for appropriate and proportionate responses to be made.

Whilst securing a prosecution for an infringement was seen to be the most conclusive outcome, it was seen to be in the best interests of all that an issue did not escalate that far, with education, advice and campaigning being the best means of achieving this. As an example, a current campaign “Bin your Butt” focused on the correct disposal of cigarette ends, being designed to limit that common practice by raising awareness. In certain circumstances however, the Service would still be prepared to seek a prosecution if it was seen to be justified and in the public’s interest. This sent out an important message in demonstrating the Service’s determination to address such matters where necessary.

Fly tipping was obviously seen to be a high profile, major concern in blighting the landscape and what was being done to target this and the means by which it was being done was explained. An enhanced relationship between the Service and Dorset Police, asking the public to be vigilant and the use of cctv technology were crucial means of being able to significantly reduce that practice.

The Group considered that education and awareness could play a significant part in targeting litter being discarded without regard, particularly from moving vehicles, so that those responsible might reflect on the consequences of their action. This had become more prevalent over the years with the nomadic eating culture now apparent coupled with the prominence of takeaways and fast food outlets in town centres. To this end, the Group considered that another practical means of avoiding the

escalation of enforcement action was in setting an example, as in Parish Councils organising rubbish collection volunteer groups. It was felt that all those in the public sector could play some part in this. A scheme had been introduced in Weymouth and Portland on a trial basis to address littering, with £40 fixed penalty fines being imposed for infringements where these could be readily determined. This was seen to have been of some benefit - particularly as a deterrent - but the overall success of the scheme had to be determined once it had run its course. The Group would be updated in time on how successful it had been.

The Group were pleased to see that the Service was becoming more resolute and determined in ensuring that that waste contraventions were readily enforced and that they had what was necessary available to them to be able to do this successfully and with assurance. On that basis they would be asking the Joint Committee to endorse the recommendation to ensure that enforcement action was as effective as it could be.

Recommended

- 1) That, in reviewing the revised Enforcement Policy and Procedures and Guidelines documents and what they were designed to do, the Joint Committee be asked to support a more robust approach to waste crimes and waste collection offences i.e. issuing of warnings, Fixed Penalty Notices, prosecutions and waste collection charges, where applicable.
- 2) That the Joint Committee be asked to agree with the staged approach for dealing with repeat waste collection offences.

Reason for Recommendation

To enable officers to deal with waste crimes appropriately and proportionally.

To enable officers to deal with repeat waste collection offences with education and advice followed by formal enforcement where required.

Forward Plan and proposed dates of meetings in 2018

39 The Group considered its Forward Plan until the end of 2018, together with the Joint Committee's Forward Plan. The opportunity was given to comment on the Programme and to suggest items for future inclusion and to their priority. The Forward Plan was considered to be appropriate as it stood.

The dates of meetings during 2018 were confirmed and it was acknowledged that, as it stood, it would only be necessary to hold two meetings during 2018, these being:-

- Monday 30 April – 10.00 am in Committee Room 1 , County Hall, Dorchester
- Monday 29 October - 10.00 am in Committee Room 2 , County Hall, Dorchester

with scope for meetings to be called should the need arise.

The Group also agreed that the meeting scheduled for Monday 1 December 2017 at Christchurch Borough Council offices should be cancelled as there was insufficient business to consider which could not be meaningfully dealt with by alternative means.

Resolved

That the dates of the meetings of the Group during 2018 be agreed and the meeting scheduled for 1 December 2017 be cancelled.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that there was sufficient opportunity for meaningful scrutiny of the Partnership to take place.

Questions from Councillors

40 No questions were received from members under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 11.30 am