

All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the committee/panel. To find out the date of the next meeting please check the calendar of events at your local library or online at [www.merton.gov.uk/committee](http://www.merton.gov.uk/committee).

## SOUTH LONDON WASTE PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2023

(6.30 pm - 9.10 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Natasha Irons (in the Chair),  
Councillor Billy Christie, Cummings, Roche, Sweeney, Lewis and  
Woolmer

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The Chair welcomed those present.

### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

.Apologies were received from Councillor Ian Manders.

### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

### 4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

The Chair informed the Committee that Item 9, Triennial Survey Findings, on the Agenda would be heard first, with Item 5, Contract Performance Update to be heard later in the order. The minutes will be recorded in agenda item order.

### 5 CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Partnership Director introduced the report. In response to questions, the Director confirmed that Purley Oaks and Villiers Road have a high percentage of green waste recycling, which is down to the demographics of the area, which contributes to higher recycling rates at those sites. The Waste Composition Analysis will give a better picture of the reasons for changes in due course. The Environment Agency sets the emissions limits at what they believe is a safe level, and the ERF mostly runs well within those levels within only momentary spikes. The toy giveaway is expected to be repeated next Christmas and also looking at options to build on the project and provide a more frequent facility.

It was RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

## 6 PARTNERSHIP BUDGET UPDATE - MONTH 7 (Agenda Item 6)

Officers introduced the paper. In response to questions, officers confirmed that the contract improvement budget was not fully used, the improvements were delivered at below the budget level.

It was RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

## 7 PROPOSED 2023/24 SLWP BUDGET (Agenda Item 7)

Officers introduced the report and the proposed budget.

The Chair and members of the committee raised concerns around approving a budget that has not been interrogated or challenged as robustly as other council budget lines, which are under pressure.

Officers informed the committee that the majority of the partnership costs were in staffing, and the savings provided were not from the Partnership Budget, but impact on other borough budget lines.

Croydon is operating under a section 114 notice, which means that all financial decisions are under intense scrutiny, and this budget is no exception, and greater understanding of options would be appropriate before approving the budget.

Officers agreed to arrange a budget workshop for members and facilitate an in depth discussion around budget options, how money could be saved.

RESOLVED:

That the budget was approved, however, the budget should be reviewed over the next quarter with a meeting to discuss options to find savings, Future years should hold budget discussion earlier in the cycle of meetings.

## 8 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

The report was introduced by officers and in response to questions confirmed that work is ongoing to identify and installing technology to detect gas bottles within waste. The issue is with larger canisters, the small canisters that can be seen littered are small enough to go through the systems, tend to be single use and are therefore discharged, the larger canisters are more likely to have residual compressed gas, and that is the issue. In the meantime there is work going on to ensure there are facilities to accept these items safely, in the meantime bottles should be returned to retailers where possible, and not put them in general waste.

## RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the contents of the report

### 9 TRIENNIAL SURVEY FINDINGS (Agenda Item 9)

The Communications Officer for SLWP introduced the item. This is the fifth survey since 2010, conducted by DJS Research, 1007 telephone interviews conducted between August and September 2022, the interviewees are not random, but represent a cross-section of the borough by age, gender and working status. An additional 370 surveys were conducted within the locality of the Beddington Farmlands site to see if views differed to those further away from the site.

Although there are some dips in positive results across the survey, but the overall result is positive,

16-34 age group are the least likely to engage with recycling, there are a variety of reasons to explain this, and is consistent with other findings. The tonnage of waste has again lowered after the 20/21 'Covid blip' when people spent more time at home.

Around a third of participants are not sure that their efforts are worthwhile, and work needs to be done to reassure that individual efforts do make a difference, and that the items they put into recycling are indeed, recycled. The awareness of the rate of recycling tallies with how much recycling actually takes place. Satisfaction with tips remains high. A third of respondents are uncertain about what ought to be done with unrecyclable waste, the next most common response, a quarter, suggested energy use. Satisfaction with waste collection has remained stable, compared with 2019, though satisfaction with cleanliness of streets has reduced.

Speakers from Sutton Council raised the following concerns about the survey and the ERF:

- The incinerator impacts on recycling, particularly close to incinerators
- No mention in the survey of mechanical/biological treatment, plastics ought to be buried rather than burnt to reduce CO2 releases into atmosphere
- The borough with highest levels of recycling, Kingston, is furthest from incinerator
- Residents belief that future recycling levels could reach 76% demonstrates that they don't understand recycling
- No acknowledgement that the emissions from the ERF breach guidelines, on average on a monthly basis, some 40 times since opening
- Information on breaches is not readily available to residents
- This gives a false perception that the facility is clean
- Every day the incinerator adds pollutants to the London atmosphere
- Monitoring is not taken place around the homes schools and gardens of local residents

In response, officers highlighted that data on emissions from the ERF are published fortnightly. Samples are taken from the stacks every 10 seconds. Monitoring points around the borough would be an issue for Sutton Council rather than the SWLP. The Environment Agency determine which emissions are monitored. The Beddington plant is a leader nationally in the extent of the data shared with the public.

There are a number of factors that impact recycling rates, officers can research correlation between proximity to ERFs and recycling rates, though this tends to be more greatly influenced by the type of housing than the proximity to the ERF.

In response to questions from Councillors, officers confirmed that a breach of the emission limits Environmental Agency does not necessarily have a significant negative impact on the environment. Each breach is investigated and Viridor receive a compliance score, and depending on the score impacts the money that Viridor pay to the EA.

Officers informed the committee that the ERF was built as part of a shift away from landfill, mainly because of the methane released from landfill. The Beddington site was approaching capacity prior to a tender for a new solution. The ERF is very well regulated by the EA, it is cost effective and our waste tonnages have reduced and recycling has gone up since we reduced reliance on landfill. The carbon reduction is significant.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the contents fo the report.

#### 10 WASTE COMPOSITION ANALYSIS FINDINGS (Agenda Item 10)

Officers introduced the waste composition analysis results. In response to questions they confirmed that campaigns are ongoing to target more properties around recycling participation, financial implications will impact how much food is thrown away over the coming years, and that will help with improving reductions in waste and increasing recycling. However, the overall results are positive. The Waste Partnership is working with regional and national organisations to learn from other successes, particularly to improve results from flats and HMOs.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the contents of the report.