



**Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Waste
Collection Services Committee held
Virtually - Public Meeting on 30 September
2021**

Present: Councillor David Mansfield, Surrey Heath Borough Council (Chairman)
Councillor Kevin Davis, Woking Borough Council
Councillor Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council
Councillor Caroline Salmon, Mole Valley District Council
Councillor Janet Turner, Elmbridge Borough Council

In Attendance: Paul Anderson, Mole Valley District Council
Jo Chauhan, Joint Waste Solutions
Adrian Flynn, Surrey Heath Borough Council
Ray Lee, Elmbridge Borough Council
Kingsley Lu, Joint Waste Solutions
Martin Pugh, Amey
Damian Roberts, Surrey Heath Borough Council
Tina Siddiqui, Amey
Steve Strickland, Surrey County Council
Mark Tabner, Woking Borough Council
Helen Trew, Joint Waste Solutions
Neil Thompson, Joint Waste Solutions
Danielle Wright, Amey

Apologies: Councillor Ashley Tilling, Elmbridge Borough Council

10/JW Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Kevin Davis be elected Vice-Chairman of the Joint Waste Collection Services Committee.

11/JW Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Joint Waste Collection Services Committee held on 4th March 2021 and 1st July 2021 be approved as being a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12/JW Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

13/JW Budget Monitoring Quarter 1 (April to June 2021)

The Committee received a report summarising the financial position of Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) at the end of the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year.

It was reported that the Contract Management Office was showing a projected overspend for the year of £6,361 against its agreed budget of £2,488,501. The Core Contract budget was projecting an overspend of £193,253 predominantly due to the original calculations assuming a 1% inflationary uplift when this was in reality 2.64%. The Variable Contract budget was, at this stage of the financial year, projecting an overspend of £112,977, with £81,698 of this attributed to agency staff costs incurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic for which no budget had been set and £31,279 being attributed to the increased inflationary uplift.

It was noted that the suspension of the garden waste collections would impact on the variable budget; more data on the impacts of the suspension on budgets would be available in the financial report for quarter 2.

The Committee noted the update.

14/JW Joint Waste Services Programme Update

The Committee received a report summarising the progress made towards delivering the aims and objectives set out in the JWS Work Programme for 2021/22.

Key areas of work for JWS between April and July 2021 had included work to reduce contamination of dry mixed recycling (including a waste composition analysis across the whole County), the procurement of a new long term contracts for the collection and recycling of textiles and WEEE, reviewing planning applications and liaising with developers to ensure that the waste collection requirements and their associated implications of developments were fully considered and work to extend WEEE and textile collections to flats.

It was expected that the Government's Waste and Resources Strategy would have significant implications for all local authorities when the Environment Act passed into legislation later this year. To ensure councillors were fully appraised of the potential challenges, impacts and opportunities that the legislation would bring about, the Surrey Environment Partnership would be hosting a series of webinars on the Strategy for all councillors. JWS would also be hosting a separate webinar for the Joint Contract Authorities which would focus on the specific impacts for the joint contract area.

It was clarified that the number of complaints reported were those that were reported through the contact centre and online forms. Complaints were broken down by theme and details would be circulated.

Any aggression towards crews was reported in the first instance to site managers and recorded through Amey's Health and Safety protocols. The Account Manager then liaised with JWS to ensure that any specific complaints about the service were then followed up with residents.

It was noted that whilst analysis of close calls recorded did not show a noticeable increase in physical abuse and aggression directed towards collection crews since the suspension of the garden waste service. However there had been a significant increase in the volume of abuse directed towards collection crews, Amey and the councils online in the period since the garden waste service was disrupted.

The Committee commended the format of the report and noted the update.

15/JW Performance Report Quarter 1 (April to June 2021)

The Committee received a report summarising the position on recycling performance for the joint contract authorities at the end of the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year.

It was reported that recycling performance in the partner authorities reflected the trends being seen across Surrey with decreased tonnages of Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR), residual waste and food waste being collected when compared against the previous quarter. However the tonnages collected continued to be higher than they were before the pandemic.

In the year to June 2021, a 39% year on year reduction in fly tipping tonnages had been recorded in Elmbridge when compared to the same period the previous year. Work was underway to establish the exact reasons for this reduction although the most probably explanation was thought to be a change in how fly tipping was being recorded at the weighbridges.

Surrey Heath's recycling rate had fallen when compared to the same period the previous year and the residual waste tonnages had increased by 9%. A change that was attributed to an increase in the number of loads being rejected due to contamination.

The Committee noted the report.

16/JW Amey Improvement Plan and Service Update

The Committee received a presentation in respect of the work taking place to achieve the targets and objectives set out in the Contract improvement Plan for 2021/22.

The shortage of HGV drivers continued to be the main area of concern for Amey and whilst agency drivers had been secured there were currently 11 vacancies across the joint contract area and sites were loaning drivers between areas to ensure that core collections could be maintained. It was reported that since June 2021, 22 drivers had left Amey's employment, 15 of these had been full time employees and 7 had been employed through agencies. The majority of drivers (21) leaving had indicated that they were moving to higher paid roles with one driver leaving as their family had relocated out of the area.

In September, Amey had introduced an enhanced recruitment and retention scheme for drivers with the introduction of driver retention payments of £2,000, £1,500 bonuses for new drivers, an increase in the refer a friend payments from £360 to £700 and the introduction of £2,000 retention payments to recognise the work of existing employees.

Securing the services of two additional drivers had enabled Amey to implement one-off garden waste collections across the joint contract area, with subscribers to the Garden Waste Service receiving one collection over a two week period. Collections had started in Woking the week commencing 27th September 2021 and these would be followed by collections in Surrey Heath and Mole Valley during the weeks commencing 11th and 18th October 2021. Following a break over the half term period, garden waste collections would take place in Elmbridge for a two week period commencing 1st November 2021. Bulky waste collections had been reinstated, initially on a 50% capacity basis, in all areas.

In the longer term, a range of initiatives had been developed to help address the driver shortage including intensive HGV training, a leave buy back scheme, attendance bonuses, targeted recruitment and an expansion of the HGV Driver Apprenticeship offer with eight employees working towards the qualification.

It was noted that two employees had initially signed up to the apprenticeship scheme but had withdrawn because they felt that they would struggle with the English and maths elements of the course. It was hoped that, with its reduced emphasis on academic elements, the introduction of the Intensive HGV driver course would encourage those members of staff who were not confident about their English and maths skills to pursue the training opportunity. Where additional support was required to support staff complete these training schemes then this would be provided.

It was noted that the average age of drivers across the contract had been in the early fifties for some time now. A factor that was attributed to more experienced HGV drivers moving across to the service in search of regular hours and a more settled work location.

It was clarified that implementing the leave buy back scheme would constitute a change in workers' contractual terms and conditions. Consequently, approval from Amey's central Human Resources Team was required and consultation with unions needed to take place before it could be implemented.

It was confirmed that, at the current time, the joint contract area was largely unaffected by the national difficulties being experienced in obtaining fuel. The depots in Elmbridge, Surrey Heath and Woking had their own diesel tanks on site and these were well stocked. Mole Valley did not have storage facilities on site and made use of fuel cards to refuel at local petrol stations instead; queuing for fuel was impacting on the service and vehicles were refuelling at the Elmbridge depot when petrol stations were closed or queues were too long and additional fuel had been ordered for the Elmbridge depot to cover this increased demand. Amey's fuel supplier had confirmed that they would continue to prioritise fuel deliveries to the depots and that they did not currently have concerns about obtaining supplies. The supplier had also stressed to all their customers that fuel orders should be made on the same basis as usual and that orders should not be increased on the basis of media reports because this would impact on supplies.

The implementation of Whitespace, a new ICT system, was underway and was expected to go live for waste collections in mid-December and for street cleansing in February 2022. It was noted that Whitespace was a cloud based system and would continue to be available to the contract authorities even if the contractor changed.

The Committee commended the efforts that were taking place to ensure that the service continued to be delivered. However concern was also expressed that there appeared to be no real sense of urgency in the actions being taken to tackle a problem that had been known about since June and was expected to become worse in the spring unless all services were operating normally. The Committee's concerns and the apparent disconnect between the communications between JWS, Amey and the Councils were noted.

17/JW Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Joint Waste Collection Services Committee would take place on Thursday 2nd December 2021 at 11.30am.

CHAIRMAN