



**Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Waste
Collection Services Committee held at
Council Chamber, Woking Borough
Council, on 2 October 2019**

Present: Councillor Vivienne Chapman, Surrey Heath Borough Council
Councillor Kevin Davis, Woking Borough Council
Councillor Mary Marshall, Elmbridge Borough Council

In Attendance: Alan Bowley, Surrey County Council
Adrian Flynn, Surrey Heath Borough Council
Ismina Harvey, Joint Waste Services
Pat Hindley, Joint Waste Solutions
Ray Lee, Elmbridge Borough Council
Tim Pashen, Surrey Heath Borough Council
Matt Smyth, Joint Waste Services
Douglas Spinks, Woking Borough Council
Mark Stammers, Amey
Jack Straw, Mole Valley District Council

Apologies: Councillor Mike Goodman, Surrey County Council
Councillor Claire Malcolmson, Mole Valley District Council

1/JW Election of Chairman

It was noted that the meeting was inquorate and therefore it was agreed that this item would be deferred to the Committee's next meeting.

2/JW Appointment of Vice-Chairman

It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the Committee's next meeting due to inquoracy.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN IN THE CHAIR

3/JW Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Committee noted the minutes of the Joint Waste Collections Services Committee meeting held on 25th April 2019.

4/JW Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

5/JW Improving Service Resilience

The Committee received a presentation setting out the work that Amey was undertaking to improve the resilience of the waste collection service across the four partner areas and to minimise the impacts of any industrial action that could arise following recent union activity in the Partnership area.

Service Resilience

Staffing

The Committee was informed that work to recruit a pool of operational staff to cover periods of annual and sick leave was nearing completion with the final interviews taking place over the next two weeks. To give Amey greater control over the number of staff members on leave at any one time, an agreement had been reached with agencies that Amey would be responsible for signing off leave requests from agency staff.

Pay rises had been agreed for approximately two thirds of Amey's current operational staff and the introduction of a performance and attendance bonus system had been well received.

A restructure of the operational management was underway to improve accountability at unit level and place an increased focus on safety and compliance. Under the new structure each depot would have a single site manager so that the sites operated to the requirements of the contract.

Vehicle Reliability

Hire companies were no longer hiring 70:30 vehicles and work was taking place to review requirements or acquire alternative vehicles so that the unreliable 70:30 vehicles currently in use across Mole Valley could be removed from service as soon as possible. As an interim measure, additional mechanical support and vehicle inspections had been brought in to address problems with the reliability of the 70:30 vehicles currently in use and additional vehicles had been sourced from other existing contracts to enable rounds to be completed with minimal disruption in the event of a vehicle breakdown.

Complaints

Work had taken place to ensure that all the in-cab technology units had accurate and up to date information relating to those properties requiring assisted bin collections.

Due to the volume of requests received, an external delivery company was being used to ensure that additional bins were delivered in good time.

Route Optimisation

Work was underway to equalise routes across Mole Valley and adjust those routes where the 70:30 vehicles were being used so that these vehicles could be phased out.

Alongside this, work was taking place on the narrow access garden route in Elmbridge and the restricted access route in Surrey Heath.

Industrial Action

The Committee was informed that the GMB union had threatened industrial action following a request that its members receive a 17% pay increase, 33 days annual leave (on top of statutory bank holidays) and full sick pay for a period of six months was turned down by Amey, who were offering pay equalisation across all four sites over a two or three year period.

It was reported that the majority of staff in Mole Valley were represented by the Unite union and therefore unaffected by the threatened action. An agreement on pay and conditions had been reached for both the Streets and Refuse Teams in Mole Valley consequently, any industrial action would have a minimal impact on the area. Pay agreements had also been reached with staff in Woking and with Elmbridge's Streets Team. Work to reach an agreement with staff in Surrey Heath and with Elmbridge's Refuse Teams was ongoing. The Committee was informed that whilst all GMB members were being balloted any industrial action would be localised to those sites where a majority of GMB members working from the site voted in favour of industrial action.

It was reported that ballot papers would be distributed to GMB members on 4th October 2019 and it was expected that a result would be declared within two weeks. If a majority were in favour of industrial action then the parties would be expected to go to arbitration before any industrial action occurred. The Union had to provide Amey with 14 days notice of any intended industrial action and the vote would be valid for six months.

In order to reduce the impact that any industrial action might have on residents, Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) and Amey were working together to ensure that business continuity plans were robust and up to date and that essential collections were prioritised.

Arising from the Committee's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that the changes brought in to improve resilience across the contract were fully funded.
- Vehicle manufacturers were exploring a number of different ways to reduce carbon emissions including LPG powered vehicles and using electric hydraulics to power the lifting mechanisms.
- It was possible to track idling times of vehicles and the employment of a data analyst would enable Amey to regularly monitor this area in future.

The Committee noted the update.

6/JW Communications and Engagement Action Plan

The Committee received a report setting out the Communications and Engagement Plan for Joint Waste Solutions (JWS).

The Committee was informed that following the combining, and subsequent restructure, of JWS and the Surrey Waste Partnership, JWS had assumed responsibility for the delivery of communications and engagement activity across Surrey. The Communications and Engagement Plan had been developed in partnership with local authority communications leads. The work programme had been broken down into three main areas of work: service delivery, waste and recycling and fly-tipping and was intended to take a much more proactive approach to communication with residents than had been the case in the recent past.

It was proposed that a similar approach be adopted for the work programme for 2020/21 and a workshop would take place in November to enable members to contribute to the plan's development.

It was acknowledged that reducing waste at source was vital however there had been limited success to date in getting suppliers and producers to engage with this work. Notwithstanding this it was expected that the introduction of measures set out in the Government's Waste and Recycling Strategy including a tax on producers would bring about significant changes in the not too distant future.

The Committee noted the update.

7/JW Recycling Contamination Action Plan

The Committee received a report summarising the work taking place to reduce the increasing levels of contamination being identified in recycling waste as reprocessors increasingly demanded better quality material from materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and the MRFs in turn conducted more checks and rejected an increasing proportion of the materials delivered to them as being unsuitable for recycling.

The Committee was informed that Amey crews were required to inspect the visible contents of recycling bins to ensure that they contained no incorrect items before they were emptied. If contamination was obvious then the bin was to be left unemptied and a notice left for the householder explaining why the bin had not been emptied. These checks were considered vital to reducing contamination and JWS was working with Amey to ensure that crews were comfortable with the processes that should be followed.

Residents' actions were also key to reducing contamination of recycling and an updated service guide, detailing what could and could not be recycled, would be distributed to all households in the partnership area in November. Where repeated contamination was identified at a property then the Operations Team worked directly with residents to ameliorate the problem.

JWS and Amey were also working with the MRFs to develop a better understanding of their requirements and to better identify the sources and types of contamination.

The Committee noted the update.

8/JW Policy Alignment

The Committee received a report setting out proposals to further align charging policies across the partner areas.

It was reported that substantial work had taken place to transition towards a single set of aligned policies and charges since the contract had been entered into. However there were a number of anomalous areas where different charging policies remained in place and work had been done to identify the following areas which could be aligned with minimal impact on individual partner authorities:

- Removal of charges for the provision of temporary additional bins.
- Removal of charges for the provision of new smaller residual waste bins if a household decided to downsize their residual waste bin.

The Committee agreed in principle that:

- i. The policies identified as having minimal impact on partner authorities should be aligned.
- ii. Where possible future annual reviews of fees and charges continue to support alignment.

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