

At a meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 3 December 2021 at 10.00 am at the Council Chamber, Harrow Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2XY.

Present:

Councillor Graham Henson (Chair)

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, Councillor Guy Lambert, Councillor Eddie Lavery, Councillor Krupa Sheth and Councillor Julia Neden Watts

127. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

128. Declarations of interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

129. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

130. Health and Safety - Annual Review of performance in 2020 - 21 and the plans for 2021 - 2022

Members received a report which reviewed the Authority's Health and Safety arrangements for the year 2020-21, presented the Health and Safety Plan for 2021-22 and sought approval to the Health and Safety Policy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Annual Health and Safety Performance Review 2020-2021 and Action Plan for 2021-2022, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) the adoption of the updated Health and Safety policy documents, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed.

131. 2022 - 2023 Budget

Members received a report which outlined the draft 2022-23 budget for consultation with borough Finance and Environment Directors.

A Member questioned the increase in the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) SERC charges whilst there was a reduction in growth (paragraph 15.13) and it was acknowledged that there was an error in the table. This would be corrected for the final budget report to be submitted to the January Authority meeting. The Finance Director advised that there had been a reduction in PAYT charges due to lower forecast volumes. The Fixed Cost Levy had risen to £14.2m largely due to mattresses and haulage costs in relation to HRRC activity.

Ian O'Donnell, Treasurer, reported that the key consideration was the level of reserves. The level of reserves was backed by an analysis of risk and in his view was appropriate. The Authority had the lowest level of reserves when compared to other London Waste Authorities which reflected good budget management and the position that the organisation was in, that is, secure with a long-term contract. In terms of the overall position, there had been a relatively small increase in organisational costs compared to inflation.

In response to a question about PAYT figures, the Finance Director referred to paragraph 15.9 of the report and advised that overall tonnages were down and that the PAYT levies were also decreasing which reflected the boroughs lower volumes of collected waste. The increase in transport costs had led to an increase in the Fixed Cost Levy (FCL) charge. He added that he would include an explanatory paragraph in the next report and was happy to discuss this separately with the Member in more detail but reassured the Members that the methodology was the same as had been used in previous years.

A Member requested clarification in terms of Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) materials and whether they reduced residual waste or recycling. The Finance Director advised that the sensitivity analysis looked at the composition of residual waste coming through the system but in terms of the impact of the DRS, the financial modelling did not make any conclusions but simply reflected various scenarios. The Managing Director stated that reducing waste reduced carbon throughout the waste system and that it was always better to do more collections. The added benefit of removing food waste from residual waste was that recyclables might also be removed.

In conclusion, the Treasurer advised that there had been a formal budget process and range of challenge to provide Members with confidence that officers had tried to find savings to return to each constituent authority and that consideration had also been given as to how these could be passed back. He thanked the officers, in particular the Finance Director, for their work and noted that paragraph 15.13 of the report required revisiting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the 2022/23 budget for consultation with boroughs be noted;
- (2) the payment of £0.2 million per borough for agreed improvements, principally HRRC diversion rates, be noted;
- (3) the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) rates, as set out in section 15 of the report, and the PAYT levy made up of two components totalling of £50.4 million be noted;
- (5) the Fixed Cost Levy (FCL) of £14.2 million, as set out in section 16 of the report, be noted;
- (6) the recommended trade and construction prices, as set out in section 17 of the report, and delegated authority to the Treasurer to change these in year should the need arise be noted;
- (7) the new proposed capital budgets, as set out in section 18 of the report, be noted;
- (8) the target level of reserves of £9.2 million to act as a buffer for managing risks and avoiding supplementary levies, as set out in section 19 of the report, be noted;

- (9) the Medium and Long Term Financial Plan, as set out in section 20 of the report, be noted.

132. Circular Economy and Net Zero Carbon Update

Members received a report which provided an update on the partnership activities to progress circular economy, net-zero carbon and climate emergency projects.

Peter Tilston, Projects Director, introduced the report and outlined the partnership work being done with the six constituent boroughs and wider sub-regional groups to build a response to the climate emergency and net-zero carbon targets. Work was also underway to create a circular economy. The stakeholders included borough Regeneration Teams as well as other services.

In response to a Member's questions in relation to planning for the sites, how they would operate and residents' access, how they would run in terms of finance and funding and the potential for making existing sites work, the Projects Director advised that it was a work in progress with engagement across the sector. Work was underway at Abbey Road and he added that the aim was to create self-sustaining businesses and that each partner would have a different business case. He reassured Members that officers were working to identify what businesses were already doing, for example, recycling of phones.

Emma Beal, Managing Director advised that, in terms of the Circular Economy Hubs, it was for the Authority to facilitate the work that was already being undertaken by organisations and to establish a communications link between these organisations. A Member commented that whilst there were many initiatives, residents were not aware of them. There needed to be a cohesive message.

A Member requested that the term 'green infrastructure' be changed to 'sustainable infrastructure'. Victoria Lawson, Chief Technical Officer, advised that there was an aim to broaden beyond sustainability and that the terminology had been discussed with West London Leaders and that it would therefore be difficult to change.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair commented that the Authority was an enabler. The London Community Kitchen would be using food waste to provide Christmas Dinners and the Authority was also leading work to reduce consumption.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Circular Economy Strategy, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be adopted;
- (2) the information within the report and the attached Appendices B and C be noted.

133. Finance Update October 2021

Members received an update on financial and corporate matters.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the current financial position and forecast for 2021/22 be noted;
- (2) the 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators be noted.

The meeting finished at 11.03 am.

The minute taker at this meeting was Alison Atherton.