

At a meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 22 September 2023 at 10.00 am at The Auditorium - Harrow Council Hub, Kenmore Avenue, Harrow, HA3 8LU.

Present:

Councillor Julia Neden-Watts (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Councillor Guy Lambert

Councillor Eddie Lavery

Councillor Stephen Greek (joined virtually)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Deirdre Costigan

Councillor Krupa Sheth

73. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Deirdre Costigan and Councillor Krupa Sheth.

74. Declarations of interest

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

75. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2023, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

76. West London Waste Authority Business Plan 2023/24

Members received the report which provided details of the strategic priorities that form the basis for the Authority's Business Plan.

Sapna Dhanani, Finance Manager, introduced the report and drew attention to the five strategic priorities. In response to a question regarding the uncertainty around the UK Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) and the joint opportunities in mitigations to reduce cost implications, it was noted that the indicative savings were aggregated across boroughs and included such items as a reduction in contamination from dry mixed recycling. In response to a further question, Members were informed that the impacts of ETS also included logistics carbon and logistic savings.

Emma Beal, Managing Director, informed Members that, in addition to the long term risk outlined in the report, net zero, waste reforms and expected legislative changes would be factors going forward. Attention was drawn to strategic priority 5, organisational excellence, and the update of the inclusion of internal work on governance. In response to a question, Members were informed of the details of the three posts deemed to directly support organisational excellence.

The Chair stated that an action point for Members would be to have discussions with Environment Directors and for Finance Directors to act to avoid silo arrangements.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the shared financial risk posed by the emissions trading scheme be noted and Borough Environment Directors and Finance Directors be encouraged to engage in early budget savings discussions with West London Waste Authority to inform 2024-25 budget settings, priorities and programmes;
- (2) the action plan resulting from the employees engagement survey in section 4 of the officer report be approved;
- (3) the changes to strategic priority 5 Organisational Excellence be approved;
- (4) the accountability and responsibilities for each of the 2023 Strategic Priorities, as set out in Appendix 1 to the officer report, be noted.

77. Programmes Update

The Members received a report which provided an update on the Authority Programmes.

Peter Tilston, Projects Director, introduced the report and advised that work continued on delivering on target savings across Communications, HRRC, Social Value and Reuse and Smart Cities Data Programmes. He stated that it was important that officers from the Boroughs were available to work with the Authority on these programmes.

Members noted that the two key risks identified in the report continued and were classed as amber. The food waste savings would be reported to Members following the next round of waste composition analysis in December. Work with regard to the Smart Cities Data programme was being undertaken with Brent around rerouting.

In response to a question regarding collection of data, Members were informed of the difficulty of integrating a number of different systems. With regard to a question on the composition of the waste analysis, it was noted that it was broken down into each Borough across such factors as housing types and streets.

Members expressed their thanks for the work undertaken by the three officers who were leaving the Authority.

RESOLVED: That the information within the report be noted.

78. HR Services Update

The Members received a report which provided an update on the Authority's Human Resources (HR) services. The key point was that the Authority was on track to deliver against the improvement plan set out in the June HR Services Update.

Tom Beagan, Head of Service Delivery, introduced the report and advised that good progress had been made following the Audit. The Authority was on track to deliver against the improvement plan by the end of six months except the policy review. There would be some slippage into October due to minor IT issues.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

79. Contracts and Operations Update

Members received a report which provided an update on the Authority's waste treatment arrangements and procurements.

Tom Beagan, Head of Service Delivery, introduced the report and advised on some operational issues regarding transfer management. He drew particular attention to the outbreak of 25 fires, and provided detail on the two major fires. As a result there had been discussion with the contractor resulting in some operational changes and a different approach to work with the fire brigade to minimise delays. A fire prevention task force had been established with the Boroughs. With regard to procurement, four contracts had now been signed and four were ready for signing.

A Member expressed concern at the increase in the number of fires despite the investment made and was informed that it was a national issue that was being addressed locally. Examples of work being undertaken to improve the situation included: a broad multi system approach with contractors responsible for inflammable materials; a workshop on key communications to be held the following week; work at local transfer stations to engage and educate the public; containers to separate flammable materials; encouraging Boroughs to send only bulky waste to be shredded at the site; and thermal imaging on site.

In response to questions, it was advised that the Authority was lobbying the government regarding the programme for the disposal of vapes. Meanwhile they were treated as electronic waste.

A Member referred to long delays at the Victoria Road transfer station, mainly due to the unreliability of the cranes which resulted in the inability to complete rounds. This inconvenienced residents or required overtime payments. An urgent resolution was required as in a five and a half week period there had been delays on eighteen days.

The Head of Delivery Service stated that he would be meeting the contractor on the following Monday regarding these unacceptable delays. There had been signs of improvement following preparatory work on the cranes and the contractor was trying to bring forward their replacement in advance of the current date of April 2024. It was agreed that an email update be circulated to the Members and Directors on progress before the next meeting.

In response to a question it was advised that progress on the update of the West London Waste Plan and any elements that would impact the Authority would be brought to the attention of the Members.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the work to support the boroughs in creating and adopting a new West London Waste Plan be approved.

80. Finance Report July 2023

Members received a report which provided an update on financial and operational matters.

Sapna Dhanani, Finance Manager, introduced the report and outlined the key points.

It was stated that inflationary pressures and an anticipated increase in insurance premiums could mean that there were overspends to budget. However, the Authority had reserves set aside to manage such risks.

In response to a question as to whether there was a risk to insurance cover due to the number of fires, the Members were informed that this would be examined.

Emma Beal, Managing Director, advised of a session on budgets to be held in November between the Chair, Vice Chair and officers. The first draft would be circulated for comment and finalised in January 2024.

RESOLVED: That the current financial position and forecast for 2023/24, the Key Performance Indicators to date, the delegated decisions and the Treasury Management outturn for 2022/23 and update for 2023/24 be noted.

The meeting finished at 11.13 am.

The minute taker at this meeting was Miriam Wearing.