

At a meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 2 December 2022 at 10.00 am at the Meeting Room 4, First Floor - Harrow Council Hub, Forward Drive, Harrow.

Present:

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, Councillor Katherine Dunne, Councillor Eddie Lavery, Councillor Anjana Patel, Councillor Krupa Sheth and Councillor Julia Neden Watts

28. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

29. Declarations of interest

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

30. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2022

Members noted that Councillor Guy Lambert had been absent and unable to submit his apologies for the previous meeting due to ill health. Councillor Katherine Dunne had been appointed as Hounslow's representative on the Authority in his place.

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

31. WLWA Business Plan

Members received a report which provided an update of the Authority's Business Plan for 2022/23.

Emma Beal, Managing Director, outlined the content of the report and drew attention to the Environment Directors' priorities which were in line with the Authority's Business Plan. She advised that there were a significant number of risks facing the waste and recycling industry and it was difficult to move forward without the responses to government consultations, including the emissions trading scheme which had the potential to increase costs.

In terms of food waste, a Member sought reassurance that there was sufficient capacity within the food recycling plant to deal with the food waste removed from residual waste. Tom Beagan, Head of Service Delivery advised that there was capacity at the site and that the contract had been let in that way so that the service could be expanded.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Boroughs be requested to communicate to residents the urgency and importance of using the food waste recycling systems;

- (2) it be noted that the updated risk register would be reported to the Audit Committee in January 2022;
- (3) Environment Directors and Finance Directors be requested to include the potential West London Waste Authority savings for consideration during Borough budget setting processes.

32. 2023/24 Budget

Members received a report which set out the 2023/24 budget proposal for consultation with the boroughs.

Jay Patel, Finance Director, outlined the background to the budget and advised that the biggest driver of spend was activity levels related to waste transport and disposal so the Authority had little control. Officers did work with boroughs to reduce spend in these areas which were in the boroughs control. The budget report set out the framework for the following financial year and the borough Finance Directors would be requested to submit their comments on it by 5 January 2023 after which the final budget would be submitted to Members.

The Finance Director advised that there were three key messages:-

- Officers have been responding to feedback from boroughs around the financial challenges they were facing. The Authority was expecting to receive income from the residual waste services contract and proposed to pay boroughs approximately £1m each to assist with their finances and enable Finance Directors to plan and give more predictability to their budgets;
- The budget was being set in the context of inflation running over 10% which was challenging as a contracting authority. Work to manage the costs was being undertaken.
- The programme of work that the Authority was looking to undertake in 2023/24 would directly benefit borough budgets and carbon footprint.

The Finance Director advised that the emphasis in the long term was to reduce the residual waste volume.

In terms of contracts and the cost of living crisis, a Member asked whether contractors were putting pressure on for renegotiation of contracts and was advised that the Authority was well mitigated against this.

Members requested an update in terms of what had changed within the budget since the budget challenge panel meeting noting that growth appeared to have reduced. The Finance Director responded that the key change was the commitment to the early payment of approximately £1m to each borough. This was welcomed by the Members given Councils' budget situations and it was noted that there would potentially be another disbursement at the end of the year. The volatility of electricity prices was however a concern in terms of the reserves position. The electricity generation levy, a tax on energy from waste, was another factor. The Finance Director also noted that there had been a significant reduction in the waste budget since the challenge session and minor reductions in other budgets. The Managing Director confirmed that lobbying by Waste Network Chairs, NAWDO and ADEPT was being undertaken to ensure that local authorities were not accidentally disadvantaged for investing in waste disposal and she undertook to take on board the comment that the Authority should write to the government on this issue.

RESOLVED: That (1) the 2023/24 budget for consultation be noted;

- (2) the programme of work to be met from the PPP (that is, electricity) income be noted
- (3) the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) rates in section 15 of the report and the PAYT levy made up of two components totalling of £53.1 million be noted;
- (4) the Fixed Cost Levy (FCL) of £14.0 million in section 16 of the report be noted;
- (5) the recommended trade and construction prices in section 17 of the report and delegated authority to the Finance Director to change these in year should the need arise be noted;
- (6) the anticipated PPP income and payment to boroughs of approximately £1.0 million per borough in July 2023 of their share of PPP income 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 £10.3 million to act as a buffer for managing risks (including the risk around the level of PPP income), as set out in section 19 of the report, be noted;
- (9) the Medium and Long Term Financial Plan set out in section 20 of the report be noted.

33. Projects 2023/24 Introduction

Members received a report which provided an introduction to the proposed Authority programmes for 2023/24.

Peter Tilston, Project Director, outlined the content of the report and explained that the three projects, Digital Twin, Social Value and Reuse and Communications, were designed to deliver savings and flowed from the six project areas and crossed a number of budgets.

Members welcomed the report and the projects planned.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the initiation of the West London Waste Authority projects 2023/24 before April 2023 be approved;
- (2) the report be noted.

34. Food Project Update

Members received a report which provided an update on the West London Waste Authority investment in borough food waste projects.

Peter Tilston, Projects Director, reported that the food project was ongoing alongside the three programmes outlined in the previous item. Overall food waste remained the largest proportion of the Authority's residual waste and that food waste could be diverted to a different system at a lower cost. There continued to be a saving arising from the

food waste service. The waste composition analysis was quite detailed and enabled officers to look at where and how the service was being used.

A Member spoke about the reduce and recycle messages in relation to food waste and the opportunity due to rises in food prices. Residents could be assisted in spending less on food, wasting less food and also reducing the amount of food in residual waste. Members noted that this was a key message that the Authority had been communicating and that once residents realised how much food they were wasting they did not then buy it. This saved money and was a key principle of the food waste system.

A Member expressed the view that avoidable food waste such as out of date food still in the packaging, was more likely to be put into residual waste than unavoidable food waste. The Projects Director advised that communications around this topic were adapted accordingly and that the breakdown of avoidable and unavoidable food waste had been shared with boroughs.

Members discussed the messaging currently being undertaken in boroughs and it was suggested that a communication, prepared by the officers to be used by boroughs, could be helpful recognising that residents were facing a cost of living crisis and this could potentially help save money. Members also requested that details of communications undertaken in boroughs be shared. Victoria Lawson, Technical Adviser, advised that she and her counterpart from Brent were going to have discussions with the West London Communications Group about powerful collective messaging in relation to food waste.

Members discussed the channels that were used for communications on food waste such as twitter and facebook and whether they were effective and acknowledged that most younger people used the social media platforms Tik Tok and Instagram.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

35. 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, in introducing the report advised that there had been an incident at the London composting site in that a tyre had exploded and resulted in two workers suffering severe leg injuries that would require surgery. The incident was being investigated.

The Head of Service Delivery provided an update in terms of the residual waste contract, key performance indicators, rail strikes and contingency plans.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Members best wishes be conveyed to the two injured workers.

36. Health and Safety: Annual Review of Performance in 2022 and the Plans for 2023

Members received a report which reviewed the Authority's Health and Safety arrangements for the calendar year 2022 and presented the Health and Safety Plan for 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Health and Safety Performance Review 2022 and Action Plan for 2023, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

37. Finance Update October 2022

Jay Patel, Finance Director, introduced the report which provided an update on financial and operational matters.

A Member commented that there appeared to be a favourable variance in relation to trade waste and was advised that the closure of a nearby site had had an impact resulting in additional income. In terms of the booking system, Emma Beal, Managing Director, explained that it had enabled a smooth flow of residents and therefore Trades persons could navigate the site more quickly thereby enabling them to do more jobs.

Members welcomed the best practice at the Abbey Road site.

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

The meeting finished at 11.08 am.

The minute taker at this meeting was Alison Atherton.