

At a meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 4 December 2020 at 10.00 am at the .

Present:

Councillor Graham Henson (Chair)

Councillor Philip Corthorne, Councillor Guy Lambert, Councillor Mik Sabiers, Councillor Krupa Sheth and Councillor Julia Neden Watts

77. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Jasbir Anand, the newly appointed Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Action, London Borough of Ealing, to the meeting as an observer.

78. Declarations of interest

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

79. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2020 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

80. Draft 2021/22 Budget for consultation

Members received a report which set out the 2021/22 budget proposal for consultation with boroughs.

Jay Patel, Finance Director, outlined the content of the report in detail and advised that the draft budget would be discussed with the constituent Borough Treasurers the following week with the final draft budget being reported to the Authority in January for approval. Following approval, the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) and Fixed Cost Levy (FCL) would be levied. Since drafting the report, the results of the spending review had been announced which, as a result of no public sector pay rise, would have a £65,000 reduction impact on the budget. He emphasised that the strategic focus was to deliver savings by reducing residual waste and that this accounted for 67% of all spending.

In response to a Member's question as to how savings were tested for robustness, the Finance Director advised that budget managers submitted bids which were then scrutinised by the Senior Management Team and a budget scrutiny process. Whilst he had a good level of confidence in most of the activities he advised that the greatest risk related to waste forecasting volumes as the Authority was reliant on boroughs budget forecasts.

A Member sought clarification on the source of pension savings and was advised that there was a valuation of the Pension Fund every three years and that the latest requirements meant that the Authority was no longer required to pay a lump sum every year. The latest valuation had shown the Authority to be in a better than expected position but the Finance Director added a note of caution in that valuations could go down as well as up.

In terms of risk, particularly in relation to COVID 19 and Brexit, the Finance Director advised that a range of activities had been undertaken in order to identify these. Some reserves had been set aside to manage the risks associated with Brexit and allowance had been made in the waste forecasting for the pandemic.

A Member commented that depreciation was slightly larger than expected. The Finance Director explained that this related to one significant asset, the SERC, and that the depreciation would be gradual over a period of 25 years. He added that each 5 year cycle should be fairly stable.

In terms of capital, the Finance Director reported that the key item was the Victoria Road improvement and that the business case would be submitted to the Authority in due course. Following a question it was agreed that the outline business case would be considered in line with the direction agreed within the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Update to ensure all options were explored. Section 19 of the report set out the reserves position and was recommended that a cautious approach be adopted and reserves be retained.

A Member questioned whether population growth had been factored into the budget. The Finance Director advised that, whilst it was not currently as the model used was not sophisticated enough, officers were looking to develop this.

RESOLVED: That (1) the 2021/22 budget for consultation with boroughs be noted; 2) 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 £52.3 million be noted; 3) the Fixed Cost Levy (FCL) of £12.9 million, as set out in section 16 of the report, be noted; 4) the recommended trade/DIY prices, as set out in section 17 of the report, be noted and the Treasurer be authorised to change these in year should the need arise; 5) the new proposed capital budgets, as set out in section 18 of the report, be noted; 6) the target level of reserves of £7.4 million to act as a buffer for managing risks and avoiding supplementary levies, as set out in section 19 of the report, be noted.

81. Contracts and Operations Update

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

Tom Beagan, Head of Service Delivery, introduced the report and advised that all contracts were performing well and experiencing increased waste flow.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

82. Procurement Update

Beth Bayley, Contracts Manager, introduced the report which provided an update on changes to the Authority's Procurement Rules.

The Contracts Manager advised that the procurement rules would require minor amendments in terms of terminology with effect from 31 December 2020 due to Brexit but that the thresholds would be unchanged.

RESOLVED: That the West London Waste Authority Procurement Rules be agreed.

83. Projects and Waste Minimisation Update

Members received a report which provided an update on the Authority's waste minimisation, efficiency and joint working projects.

In response to a Member's question as to the risks associated with the roll out of electric vehicles to the waste collection fleet, Peter Tilston, Projects Director, advised that the impact of this was being considered including the use of renewables to power them.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

84. Budget Monitoring Report Period 7 (October)

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

RESOLVED: That (1) the current financial forecast position for 2020/21 be noted;
(2) the key performance indicators be noted;
(3) the financial decisions taken under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be noted.

85. Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Update

Members received a report which provided an update on the carbon reduction element of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for the Authority and the Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames for the years 2020-2035.

Emma Beal, Managing Director, gave a detailed introduction to the report and emphasised the long term carbon waste reduction plan. She explained that whilst the Authority had been successful in diverting waste from landfill, economic drivers were needed to increase recycling. The 65% recycling target tasks each household to reduce their waste by half and to double their recycling. She added that reducing residual waste would have the greatest impact and that an increasing population should not lead to increased waste.

Paul Walker, Chief Technical Adviser, outlined the work being done with the Borough Environment Directors and the lead role that Harrow was playing for London in reducing emissions by 2030 by two-thirds. Partnership working was key to achieving this and Environment Directors and Climate Emergency Officers were working collaboratively, with new relationships being formed and best practice shared. Work was also being done to expand skills in communication in colleges across West London. A presentation on the work being undertaken and how awareness could be raised in boroughs would be submitted to a future meeting of the Authority.

Members were supportive of the approach and agreed that working together and sharing best practice was to be welcomed. Emma Beal advised that since the onset of the pandemic there had been increased joined up working and working relationships across boroughs had accelerated at a faster rate and provided the opportunity to look at waste differently across London. She acknowledged Members comments that the impact on residents had to be considered, for example the available space for waste/ recycling bins in properties, and stated that it was important to understand the views and needs of residents and that the service worked for the individual.

The Chair advised that it might be necessary to respond quickly to the Environment Bill and this would be dealt with by email consultation with Authority Members. He stated that it was also important to consider how better use could be made of the HRRCs.

RESOLVED : That the key messages in relation to waste carbon savings, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

The meeting finished at 11.23 am.

The minute taker at this meeting was Alison Atherton.