

At a meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 24 September 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 and Councillor Julia Neden Watts

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Krupa Sheth

**116. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Krupa Sheth.

**117. Declarations of interest**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interest was declared:

Agenda Item 9 – London’s Community Kitchen

Councillor Guy Lambert declared, during the course of the meeting, a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a Trustees of a food bank in the London Borough of Hounslow. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

**118. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2021**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**119. Finance Update July 2021**

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

Maria Grindley, Associate Partner, and Larisa Midoni, of Ernst & Young LLP, introduced the Authority’s Draft Audit results report, set out the context for meeting the new deadline for the publication of the final audited accounts of 30 September 2021 and acknowledged the considerable work involved in the preparation of the accounts and report. She drew Members’ attention to the Executive Summary, highlighted that the Pension Fund liability was an outstanding issue and outlined areas of audit focus.

In response to a Member’s question as to how food waste expenditure had been adjusted in the accounts, Jay Patel, Finance Director explained that this was a presentational issue and that the bottom line was not affected. He went on to outline the remainder of the report, advising that there had been a reduction in waste flows, a large

underspend on both waste transport and disposal costs and that all key performance indicators were on target (green). In terms of Treasury Management, the Finance Director reported a correction in that £68,000 investment income was returned. He also highlighted the Authority's low risk approach to treasury management.

The Finance Director reported that the recruitment exercise for an Independent Member of the Audit Committee had been successful with a strong field of applicants. Following interviews by the Chair of the Audit Committee and Treasurer, it was recommended that Robin Pritchard be appointed to this role. In response to a Member's question, the Finance Director indicated that the offer of remuneration for this role had elicited a greater number of applications.

A Member raised queries in relation to the key performance indicators (KPI) and questioned whether they were stretch targets and whether benchmarking with other similar organisations was undertaken. The Finance Director advised that, in terms of KPI 4, population growth was lower than growth in cost which had resulted in the indicator moving in the opposite direction. In response to a question on the People Development KPI, this was part year and the Authority had invested time and resources into the staff team and had changed the metrics. The management team were of the view that staff were progressing well. He confirmed that benchmarking exercises were carried out, particularly in terms of financial accounts figures, but that the West London Treasurers were keen for there to be more detailed reporting.

In response to a question on reserves, the Finance Director explained that in terms of high-level budget setting, these were set at the start of the year to enable the Authority to manage risk. This year, due to the level of activity, a buffer had been built up as a result of underspend which would enable the Authority to deal with issues of growth. There would be a slightly lower Pay As You Throw (PAYT) levy for the constituent authorities.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the current financial position and forecast for 2021/22 be noted; (2) the 2021/22 Key Performance Indicator performance be noted; (3) the financial decisions taken under the Scheme of Delegation be noted; (4) Robin Pritchard be appointed as the new Independent Member of the Audit Committee; (5) the Treasury Management Outturn for 2020/21 and update for 2021/22 be noted; (6) the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts be approved.

## **120. 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, outlined the content of the report and challenges faced by the service and advised that services had operated well despite severe staffing challenges over the summer period.

A Member expressed her gratitude to the officers for the support provided to Richmond following the fire at their reuse and recycling centre but also questioned whether communication with residents about the potential fire hazard caused by waste was adequate. She reiterated comments made the previous meeting in relation to ensuring easy access to the site by those on foot or cargo bike to encourage residents to do the right thing in relation to travelling to the HRRC.

In response to a Member's question in relation to Viridor's MRF, the Head of Service Delivery explained that the facility was specifically for dry mixed recyclables and that

other boroughs could join Ealing on the contract. He added that, in his view, there would be some changes to this aspect of the waste industry as a result of new legislation.

A Member stated that other boroughs appeared to attempt street waste bin recycling and flats above shops recycling and questioned whether any consideration had been given to this by officers. Emma Beal, Managing Director, advised that she wanted to develop a suite of recycling methods and that one borough in Essex was working hard in relation to on street bin recycling. The deposit return scheme was another method of tackling this issue. The Chair indicated that it would be useful to establish what other boroughs were doing in relation to street waste bin recycling.

In response to a Member's question about the information derived from the HRRC booking system, the Head of Service Delivery advised that details included where individuals had travelled from and what type of waste they brought to the HRRC. This enabled officers to identify areas requiring kerbside service improvements and helped improve the efficiency of running HRRCs. The Head of Service Delivery acknowledged the Member's suggestion that further information from the booking system is made available in the future.

Following the recent demonstrations around the M25, the Head of Service Delivery confirmed that long term contingency plans were in place to address and manage such incidents.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **121. Procurement Update**

Members received a report which provided an update on the Mattress Recycling Services procurement.

**RESOLVED:** That Managing Director, following consultation with the Chair and Chief Technical Officer, be authorised to award the Mattress Recycling Services procurement.

#### **122. Projects Update**

Members received a report which provided an update on the Authority's main projects.

Sarah Ellis, Operations Manager, outlined the content of the report and advised that it was currently Recycle Week and that WEEE was now to be known as E Waste.

Members made comments and asked questions which were responded to as follows: -

- Options for funding the collection of e-waste were being explored in conjunction with Traid who were currently offering a collection of e-waste alongside a booked textile collection.
- The Projects Director would progress the meetings with the Lead Members and Environment Directors on his return from leave.
- The economics of both E Waste and TRAIID were challenging but the Member's comments about mixed messages and potential conflicts of interest were noted.
- A Member's comment that there had recently been a shortage of cardboard and suggestion that the quality of tape used might impact on reuse/ recycling potential was noted and would be given consideration.
- The Environment Bill was currently in the House of Lords, but some delay was possible due to amendments.

- In terms of textiles, if other countries would not accept them it was still important to sort and remove from general waste. The grade/ quality of the textiles affected to route through refuse/ recycle/ reuse. There was currently no funding to assist with this work, a carbon project.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **123. Circular Economy Update**

Members received a report which provided an update on the Authority's Circular Economy activity.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **124. London Community Kitchen - Presentation and Site Visit**

The Chair welcomed Taz Khan, London's Community Kitchen, and Glen Hearnden, Chair of Harrow VCS Forum to the meeting.

Taz Khan gave a presentation, stating that the mission of London's Community Kitchen was 'Zero waste, zero hunger'. He explained that Harrow Council had worked with the voluntary sector during the pandemic helping those in need, that the service had been delivered in a different way and he outlined what had been achieved. The conversation had now started with the Authority and that a virtual food sharing app was being considered.

During the presentation, Members were informed that work was underway in Harrow to create the first urban farm. The aim was to bring the community together, run a programme 'from plant to plate', educate children from an early age so that they understood where food came from and to encourage allotments in school grounds.

Glen Hearnden explained that in terms of waste, partnership was key. Food outlets now knew where to take any leftover food but inevitably some ended up in waste. Taz Khan added that the urban farm would be able to use food waste due to anaerobic plants so this would remove food from landfill.

In response to a Member's question as to the source of the food received by London's Community Kitchen, Taz Khan advised that there was a vast network of organisations that had excess food including supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, Billingsgate and Spital Fields markets. In terms of markets, any produce not sold on the day had to be disposed of and whilst the Kitchen could not accept all of it, it could take some. He added that due to the negative stigma in relation to the term 'foodbank', the preferred term was 'surplus foodmarket' so that those in need could see that they were doing a service by accepting the food which would otherwise would have gone to waste. Glen Hearnden went on to explain that the Kitchen was a pathfinder to other services.

In response to a Member's question, Emma Beal, Managing Director, stated that the Authority was funded to take waste from households and was encouraging people to waste less. Consideration as to how the Authority could assist this project without becoming a free waste disposal service.

The Members thanked Taz Khan and Glen Hearnden for their presentation and attendance and requested that the presentation be circulated following the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation be noted.

**125. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED:** That in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
10.	Contracts and Operations Update - Appendix	Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

**126. Contracts and Operations Update - Appendix**

Members received a confidential appendix to the Contracts and Operations Update report.

Members expressed support to an approach where additional income resulting from the changes described in the report was re-invested improvement projects.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the decision explained at recommendation 1 of the confidential appendix be noted;  
(2) the negotiating position set out in Section 3 of the officer report be approved;  
(3) the Managing Director, following consultation with the Treasurer and Chair, be authorised to accept an offer and agree Heads of Terms.

**The meeting finished at 12.25 pm.**

The minute taker at this meeting was Alison Atherton.