

Lancashire Waste Partnership

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 12th November, 2020 at 10.00 am – Virtual Meeting

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Jimmy Eaton BEM, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council
Councillor Paul Cox, Hyndburn Borough Council
County Councillor Charles Edwards, Lancashire County Council
Councillor Kevin Wilkie, West Lancashire District Council
Councillor David Clegg, Pendle Borough Council
Councillor Tony Austin, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor Susan Jones, South Ribble Borough Council
Councillor Dave Brookes, Lancaster City Council
Councillor Jim Hobson, Blackpool Council
Councillor Afrasiab Anwar, Burnley Borough Council
Councillor Jim Casey, Blackburn with Darwen Council
Councillor John Kirkham, Fylde Borough Council

Officers

Ruth Hunter, Wyre Borough Council
Duncan Coward, Preston City Council
John-Paul Lovie, Blackpool Borough Council
Tony Watson, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Joanne Swift, Burnley Borough Council
William Maxwell, Lancashire County Council
Carole Taylor, Pendle Borough Council
Linda Boyer, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Adrian Harper, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Doug Cridland, Chorley Borough Council
William Griffith, Lancaster City Council
Michelle Williams, West Lancashire Borough Council
Steven Hunter, Lancashire County Council
Sean Spencer, Burnley Borough Council
Gareth Matthews, Fylde Borough Council
Cat Holden, Lancashire County Council
Beverley Ford, Lancaster City Council
Joanne Mansfield, Lancashire County Council

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

County Councillor Jimmy Eaton had been appointed Chair of the Lancashire Waste Partnership following an online vote, and Councillor Paul Cox (Hyndburn) was appointed Vice Chair at the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th November 2019

5. Matters Arising

William Maxwell reported that the issue of contamination letters would be picked up at the OpStrat meeting and asked for Districts to provide the relevant information in time for the next meeting.

6. Environment Bill - Update

Carole Taylor had circulated a written update prior to the meeting on the current status regarding the Resources and Waste Strategy, Environment Bill and consultations.

The Key Strategic Aims and the main policy areas of the Resource and Waste Strategy were outlined in the written update.

The Environment Bill which was the primary over-arching legislation required for the Strategy proposals set out four priority areas: Air Quality, Water, Biodiversity and Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction. The Bill was currently in the Committee stage in the House of Commons and the waste element was being debated twice weekly. It was expected that the Committee stage would be completed by Christmas and passed by the House of Commons and then debated in the House of Lords in the New Year. It was noted that the Government was not expected to accept any amendments tabled during this stage of the Bill's progress.

Following the publication of the Strategy in December 2018, the Government had consulted on the three key policy areas of Consistent Collections, Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility on Packaging between February and May 2019. Based on the consultation responses from LARAC, individual local authorities and other industry organisations, the Government had provided details of their proposals which were outlined in the paper circulated.

All local authorities and waste operators would be expected to collect a core set of consistent materials from 2023 and the Extended Producer Responsibility would help fund some of these extra collection costs. In addition, weekly, separate food waste collections for all householders and relevant businesses was likely to be mandatory for all councils from 2023. A final decision on whether garden waste collections should be free of charge was being considered further.

Lots of work had been done on Extended Producer Responsibility and payments would be coming to local authorities based on what was collected. LARAC had asked for the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme to be delayed until after the Extended Producer Responsibility had been implemented in 2023, due to the effect it would have on kerbside collections. It was noted, however, that the Government still intended to introduce a DRS in 2023.

DEFRA had originally planned to issue the second round of consultations on the three key policy areas in Summer/Autumn of this year but this had been delayed due to the Covid pandemic. Meetings had re-commenced as virtual meetings in the summer at which LARAC was strongly represented. These discussions would inform the second round of consultations which was planned for March 2021. However, due to purdah, a 12 week consultation period was being pushed for.

The issue of free garden waste would be included in these second round of consultations. LARAC's view was that this should be decided by individual authorities rather than central government. However, if government decided that garden waste should be free of charge, it was noted that they would provide funding for this from the new burden system. Carole reported that

there had been no increase in fly tipping or bonfires since Pendle had started charging for garden waste 7 years ago.

Resolved: The Lancashire Waste Partnership noted the update on the Environment Bill.

7. Food Waste - verbal presentation on the Lancaster City Council trial

A presentation was provided by Beverley Ford, Lancaster City Council on Lancaster's Food Waste Trial.

Beverley reported that Lancaster's trial had been due to start in April 2020 but as it had been delayed due to Covid, the trial was now due to start in January 2021 – a meeting was organised for next week to agree the start date.

As illustrated in the Government's White Paper, separately weekly food waste collections were likely to be mandatory from 2023. Lancaster had received £25k funding from the county council to carry out the trial. Approximately 900 properties in Heysham would be involved in the trial with a mix of executive housing, middle range housing and social housing. The trial would last 6 months.

A letter had been hand delivered to the residents about the importance of food waste recycling and why they had been selected to be involved in the trial. This gave residents the opportunity to discuss the trial with the officers on delivery of the letter. Alternatively, a telephone contact was provided in the letter. Another letter plus a leaflet and collection calendar was due to be sent out to residents. In addition, social media, local radio, local newspapers, the intranet, newsletters and the local school were being used to promote the importance of recycling food waste.

Residents in the trial would be given both a kerbside and kitchen caddy, plus 50 compostable kitchen caddy liners. It was intended that 2 officers would go to the trial area every Monday during the collection, to observe which residents were putting the bins out and to check on contamination. The success of the trial would be measured by a significant drop in the weight of the residual bin and the weight and quality of the waste in the kerbside caddy. Residual bin collection rounds would need to be looked at again in conjunction with weekly food waste collections, with options for a 3/4 weekly residual collection or smaller bins. From next week, residual waste weights would be monitored from the 900 properties until Christmas then this would be re-commenced in January 2021. Discussions would take place on how the trial could be rolled out and how it would affect current collections.

Thanks were expressed to the team at Lancaster who were involved in the trial. Positive feedback had been given by local people. Beverley added that some residents from the surrounding area had indicated their willingness to be involved in any future trial.

Although the amount of funding for the weekly food waste collections was not known at this stage, the government had confirmed that funding would be available through the new burdens. Once the Lancaster trial had been completed, the cost of this and future trials would be worked out.

William Maxwell congratulated Lancaster on all the work that had been put into this trial. In response to a query from a member, William confirmed that the food waste from the trial would initially be taken to the Thornton site and made into compost-like output. The county council were also looking at a trial to use anaerobic digesters which were available at both the Farington and Thornton sites, to see if these could be changed to accept pure food waste as they were not currently designed for this. We needed to understand the composition of the waste first and see if it could be used to generate electricity from either of the sites.

A member asked how the food waste would be put into the RCV and whether a risk assessment had been done for this. Beverley confirmed that the plan was for the caddies to be taken straight to the wagon, as opposed to using slave bins due to splashback, although a final decision on this had

not yet been made. Beverley agreed to share the risk assessment with the LWP. The issue of musculoskeletal issues was discussed in relation to the collection crews – Beverley confirmed the caddy to be used in the trial had long handles so the success of these would be monitored.

The Food Waste Trial presentation would be sent out to the Partnership.

Resolved: The Lancashire Waste Partnership noted the update on Lancaster City Council's food waste trial.

8. Residual Waste Contract

Lancashire County Council provided an update on the Residual Waste Contract.

9. Target Setting for Lancashire - what are the counties ambitions within the LWP Strategy 2021 to 2030

William Maxwell presented a document on the waste hierarchy actions and targets.

The LWP Strategy was due to expire this year but the introduction of a new strategy would be delayed until the outcome of the consultations on the Environment Bill were known. Although the second round of consultations had been delayed, there was a clear direction from government on some of the issues and we needed to factor in those changes that we were aware of.

The government had placed a duty on councils to 'push' materials up this waste hierarchy as far as possible. In simple terms, we needed to dispose of less, recover more, recycle more, reuse more and ideally not produce so much waste to start with. The levels in the hierarchy were as follows:

Dispose – the disposal of materials to landfill was the least effective thing we could do.

Recover – although we get some value back from **recovery**, this can only be done once. In order for materials to keep their value, they could be thermal treated to produce electricity. We needed to increase the percentage of waste tonnage sent for recovery and drive down the figure currently sent to landfill.

Recycle – better than recovery as materials were continuing to be kept in circulation – as an example, bottles could be recycled 20/30 times. More quality recycling was needed. Lancashire's target for recycling was 50% in 2020 and we were currently at 46/47%. William thanked the districts for all their work in reducing the amount of contamination in paper and card collections – this had now been reduced to 2/3%.

Reuse – there were still lots of recyclable materials in waste streams which were not finding their way back into the recycling stream. Although pulling out reusable items from recycling centres and moving them to charity shops was a really good way of reusing materials, there were issues around how the items get stored, checked and transported. Also, the shops often only had the use of a vehicle for one day per week which would make it difficult to pick up furniture that became available on another day. However, we needed to carry on moving forward with this and work up partnerships with charities who were interested.

Freecycle could also be used when people were looking to give away items that could be reused – details of this company were already on the county council's website although ways to promote it more could be looked into. Lancaster currently sponsored their local Freecycle group and promoted them on social media etc. Lancaster were also working in partnership with their local Furniture Matters, which was now part of the Calico group to maximise the reuse of materials; Wyre had a similar partnership with Calico. Although Wyre were seeing diversion rates from reuse of 50/60% plus recycling, people needed to plan ahead a bit more when wanting to pass on items for reuse.

The county council were working with the Children and Young People's Team to help vulnerable families get access to reusable items and the prison service's laundry facilities were being used to clean the items. Burnley were currently piloting working with some wards to educate them on the benefits and value of re-using items and a report would come to a future LWP, once the pilot had been completed.

Reduce – we needed to produce and collect less waste and recycling to begin with. We needed to encourage the public to think about what they were buying and filling up their residual bin with as we would be judged against the amount of residual waste per household per week. Although it was agreed that we needed to clamp down on fly tippers, and organised crime groups were being dealt with, there were heavy costs involved in taking household cases to court. We needed to educate the public more on what materials were disposable and the choices that they make around disposing of waste. 10% of carbon emissions across the country was from waste and it was important that this was reduced.

It was reported that another ambition of the Environment Bill was to make Household Waste Recycling Centres more consistent in terms of opening times, charging policies etc; the challenge to accommodate commercial/trade people on site was noted.

William would email districts after the meeting asking for their comments on the suggested targets and for them to indicate what targets they think could be achieved in their area. These would then be picked up through the Environment Bill once it had been approved through Parliament when we would have more clarity on what was expected.

Resolved: The Lancashire Waste Partnership noted the suggested targets and actions they could take in relation to the waste hierarchy and that they would be asked to indicate what targets they would be likely to achieve.

10. Progress and Performance Update

William Maxwell presented the updated Progress and Performance information for waste recovery and disposal for November 2020.

Figures were provided on residual waste and tonnes of household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting from 2019/20 to date. Details of all household waste arisings were provided for the same period, with separate figures for the following:

- District household – Composting
- District household – Recycling
- HWRC – Composting
- Compost-like output
- HWRC – Recycling
- Residual waste

District figures for residual and both streams of recyclable waste were provided.

Improvements had been made in reducing residual waste although this needed to reduce further. This was an important measure as the Government wanted to see us reporting against this going forward and reducing residual waste was where the biggest savings, both from cost and environmentally, would come from.

A separate document on district figures for paper and cardboard collections was provided from September 2019 to August 2020. It was noted that there had been decreases in these collections in some districts during the first lockdown due to temporarily ceasing collections, service frequency

changes and the method of collection. However, it was noted that there were still some good news stories in the figures.

There had been an increase in all household materials collected during lockdown which was partly due to more people working from home and there had also been a decrease in trade waste during this time. It was reported that, of the additional recycling tonnage, almost 2k tonnes was from pots, tubs and trays.

Following changes being made at the HWRCs due to Covid, including temporary closures, changes to opening hours and householders only being able to visit one bay, the capacity of the HWRCs is being monitored closely. All HWRCs are currently receiving about 75% of the customer visits compared to 2019. William would report back to the next meeting with more details of the impact of Covid on the HWRCs.

The issue of whether the increase in district collected household residual waste was reflected in what was happening at the HWRCs would be picked up at the next OpStrat meeting.

Resolved: The Lancashire Waste Partnership noted the presentation on the progress and performance update and the separate district figures in relation to paper and cardboard collections.

11. Question and Answer Session

A member raised the issue of 'zombie' batteries. Batteries were not being disposed of properly and there was a risk that they could cause fires at Household Waste Recycling Centres when people put them in their recycling bins. This had resulted in a high insurance cost for the HWRCs and had increased the cost at the MRF where materials were processed. Recycling points for batteries were available at supermarkets but ideally, batteries should be doorstep collected. The county council agreed to help districts enforce the message to residents that batteries had to be recycled separately and could also not be put in residual bins. Wyre currently had a doorstep collection for batteries which was well utilised and an increase in these collections had been seen. Residents put their batteries in something that could clearly be identified as being different to their usual recycling and placed it on top of their bin/boxes.

12. Urgent Business

13. Date of Next Meeting

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston