

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 19 December 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)

Councillor F Abbott
Councillor M Ali
Councillor R Ali
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor T Mayer
Councillor R Thay
Councillor C Thomas (substitute for Councillor C Miks)
Councillor S Walsh

Other Members: Councillor J Mutton (Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place S Bennett, N Cowper, S Elliott, G Holmes, A Walster

Apologies: Councillor C Miks and Councillors P Hetherton and G Lloyd (Cabinet/Deputy Cabinet Members for City Services)

Public Business

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November, 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

24. Development of a Regional Materials Recycling Facility with Partnering Authorities

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which provided an update on the progress on the development of a regional Materials Recycling Facility with partnering authorities. A copy of the report relating to this matter, which was approved by Council on 3 September, 2019, was appended to the Briefing Note.

The Council currently pays c. £1.6million per year to the private sector for the treatment of recyclable material collected in Coventry (including haulage to the treatment facility in London and any recycle value benefit). This cost has increased substantially over the last five years. Evidence from recent procurement exercises in both Coventry and neighbouring authorities shows that this upward

trend of costs is likely to continue with substantial rises as the private sector continues to move the risk of end market prices and legislation more and more to local authorities.

Therefore in 2017/18 a feasibility study was undertaken to consider the technical and economic viability of developing a Material Recycling Facility to serve Coventry, neighbouring authorities and commercial businesses across the region. This study indicated a positive business case, subject to more detailed information.

A detailed business case has concluded that a facility with a capacity of 120,000 – 175,000 tonnes would be commercially viable. Coventry City Council currently collects c.24,000 tonnes of recyclable waste per annum.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the officers on aspects of the Briefing Note and the report, and received answers and assurances on a number of issues including:-

- The partnership arrangements and any potential risk for the Council
- The financial benefits for the Council
- The access arrangements to the site and how the likely impact on traffic flows in the area could be reduced by planning routes and access times (avoiding peak times) with partners
- Consideration being given to using “cleaner” vehicles
- Groundwork being undertaken on the site, including relocating trees of value and interest within the site and additional planting
- The procurement process
- The number of potential new jobs the facility will create
- The Business Case for the facility; issues relating to state aid; the breakdown of shareholders interests; and how the Council will fund the development

In relation to the shareholders interests, it was noted that information relating to this issue would be circulated to the Scrutiny Board Members.

The Scrutiny Board expressed their support for the proposal and welcomed the opportunities it will provide, both financially and environmentally.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board note and welcome progress on this issue and request a further update in March/April, 2020.

25. **Recycling Performance in Coventry**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), together with a presentation at the meeting, which outlined steps being undertaken to increase the rate of recycling in Coventry.

The presentation covered:-

- Challenges
- Engagement and Communication
- Student/Transient population

- Confusion/disillusion
- Culture
- Contamination

New Team – Education Officers

- In cab computers – data analysis
- Targeted projects
- City wide contamination awareness/reduction project

Government Waste Strategy:-

Sets out the Government proposals to “preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy”

Specification of a core set of dry recyclable materials to be collected from all households and businesses

Weekly separate food waste collections

Toughening penalties for waste criminals

Deposit Return Scheme

Producer Pays

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the Briefing Note and received answers and assurances on a number of issues including:-

- Enforcement powers and penalties available to the City Council
- The Government’s proposals in relation separate and weekly food waste
- Data collected in relation to types of recycling
- Work undertaken to encourage compliance from residents, including financial incentives
- Work undertaken with housing associations
- Best practise from other Local Authorities and European Cities
- Information provided to residents re contamination in bins and the use of social media in this regard
- Targets for recycling
- Work being undertaken to introduce recycling bins in the City Centre

RESOLVED that progress be noted and that the Cabinet Member for City Services be recommended to consider putting recycling information stickers on all recycling bins.

26. Update on Recycled Road Surface Materials in Coventry

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note which provided an update on the performance of recently laid road surfacing containing different types of waste recycled materials.

In 2018, the Cabinet Member for City Services supported Highways Officers in looking into using recycled plastic pellets made from waste plastic products in road materials (asphalt mixes). Significant preparatory work was undertaken, including working with Cumbria County Council, who had already laid trials of this material. Working with supply chain partners, Tarmac, trials of different recycled materials were laid in the following roads:-

- Montalt Road – Rubber and plastic
- Birmingham Road – Rubber and Plastic
- Sandy Lane, Cheveral Avenue, Lydgate Road – Rubber and plastic
- Guilsborough Road – Rubber

Inspections of these sites over the last year or so has revealed no noticeable deterioration and the roads are performing in line with expectation of a standard asphalt road over this time period. Tarmac also recommended a trial of asphalt containing rubber from waste tyres as an alternative way of providing road surfaces with environmental benefits. A more in-depth analysis was appended to the report.

Discussions around the use of both plastic waste and rubber waste in asphalts is ongoing across the industry. Highways England have recently started to use the rubber mix on trunk roads and motorways. Current views within the bitumen industry is that waste plastic materials do not bond properly when mixed into bitumen, meaning that the surface might break up sooner than if it did not contain plastic. There are also debates continuing into how much extra heat is required to melt and mix the plastic and hence that the plastic additive is not environmentally friendly. Another concern is how the plastic waste will behave when the surface is finally removed in relation to pollution. At this time, there are no British or European Standards for asphalts containing waste material, so all roads laid using this material are at the Council's risk.

The Scrutiny Board noted Highways England, Tarmac and the City Council were recently shortlisted for the Highways Awards Ceremony (Highways Magazine) in London, for the innovative product of the year for asphalt containing rubber.

The Briefing Note concluded that the trials completed so far in Coventry have been successful and no undue deterioration of surfaces has been noted. There is enough concern within the industry about the use of waste plastic material in asphalt to suspend the use of it until more industry research is carried out. There is sufficient evidence that the use of shredded rubber in asphalt is effective in terms of improvement to the product and environmental benefits.

The Briefing Note recommends that Coventry Highways Team should continue to lay a proportion of rubber mix asphalt as part of the overall surfacing programme and that the Council should further modify its approach to recycled materials in roads as research is carried out and such materials become more widely available.

The Scrutiny Board asked questions and received answers and assurances in relation to a number of issues including the equipment used to lay the recycled

material (which is the same as that used for conventional materials) and any difference in costs (none).

The Scrutiny Board welcomed work undertaken in this regard and asked that they be kept informed of any developments and innovations relating to this matter.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board support the conclusions of the Head of Highways with respect to the future strategy for the use of recycled materials in asphalt mixes where these will be used in Coventry roads and that this recommendation be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for City Services.

27. Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2019/20

The Scrutiny Board received and noted their Work Programme for 2019/20.

28. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.30 am)