

COUNCIL

3 APRIL 2013

JOINT AUTHORITY QUESTIONS

1. Councillor T Pickstone

Could the Council's representative to Greater Manchester Waste Authority please update members on the current progress, and any delays, on the Private Finance Initiative development of new waste disposal facilities? Is there an issue of surplus capacity in the facilities? Will Greater Manchester be taking waste from another area and if so which area(s) and how much waste?

(To be answered by Councillor Cummings – Representative on the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority)

A. In April 2009, GMWDA entered into a PFI contract with Viridor Laing (Greater Manchester) Ltd for the development and operation of new waste infrastructure in Greater Manchester. This contract is the largest waste management contract in Europe and required £631 million of investment in 43 facilities. This has required a four year construction programme that is now approaching the final stages. To date, 40 out of the 42 facilities to be built in Greater Manchester are complete and operational. The 2 remaining Greater Manchester facilities are a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant that is undergoing commissioning tests and an In-Vessel Composting (IVC) facility that is under construction. The MBT plant is currently c. 12 months behind programme due to additional structural steel work that was required to be installed within the anaerobic digestion tanks. Despite the delay, the facility is constructed and operational and has been processing waste throughout the delay period. Under the PFI contract, if a facility is not handed over by the programme date then penalties can be applied and this is the case with this facility. The IVC plant is not in delay and is on programme to commence commissioning in April 13 and handover in September 13.

The 43rd facility is the combined heat and power (CHP) station being built at Runcorn that will process the fuel produced by the MBT plants. The construction contractor is currently forecasting that the facility is c. 6 months behind programme. Again, at this facility failure to hit a programme date results in penalty deductions being applied. Given the

number of facilities being developed and the size and complexity of several of them, then some potential for delay was anticipated. However, delay risk sits with the contractor under these arrangements and GMWDA is protected.

On spare capacity, when the contract negotiations were undertaken, waste arisings were at 1.35 million tonnes per annum and increasing. Based on WCA forecasts on tonnage, the network of facilities that has been built has the capacity to deal with up to the 1.35 million tonne figure. Since that time, the economic downturn, changing consumer behaviours and changes to collection arrangements have seen a reduction in overall waste arisings to c. 1.1 million tonnes per annum. The largest decline has been in the HWRC waste stream, down from 330ktpa to c.200ktpa. The other significant reduction has been in the residual waste collected by WCAs in the form of regular kerbside collections and bulky waste. The introduction of charging for bulky waste by most WCAs has significantly reduced this tonnage and the rollout of paper/card, dry recyclables and biowaste collections has reduced the overall tonnage of "black bag" type residual waste collected at the kerbside by around 80ktpa. As a consequence of this, modelling shows that the IVCs treating biowaste will be at capacity, the MRF treating recyclables will also be at capacity but the MBT plants (500 ktpa capacity) will have c. 80ktpa spare capacity available.

Under the Contract, GMWDA is able to market any spare capacity at the facilities to other local authorities and retain any income generated, therefore getting value for money from the facilities. The approach to marketing spare capacity has been agreed by the full Authority and has been reported to several meetings as part of the measures to deliver AGMA efficiency targets. Recently Merseyside WDA have delegated their waste disposal functions to GMWDA for the processing of 80ktpa of residual waste by MBT for a 2 year period starting in April 2013. This is for the interim period prior to MWDA treatment facilities becoming available and will generate an income stream for GMWDA over this period. A further agreement is in negotiation with another local authority for an interim period pending completion of their contract, but this is not confirmed as yet so remains commercially confidential at this stage.

2. Councillor J Columbine

Can the Fire and Rescue Authority Representative ask the Authority what the long terms plans for Ramsbottom station are? We have assurances for the next year only.

(To be answered by Councillor Matthews – Representative on the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority)

A. As a Service we have had to respond to the financial climate and the ever changing risks that are present within our borders and communities. In the Corporate Plan 2012 - 2014 we described our intended response to the budgetary cuts we faced and the prevailing and changing risks across the county. In 2012 we commenced those changes, and in April 2012 moved to a revised shift duty system which operates across our 35 whole-time Stations, which enabled us to reduce our establishment by 341 posts.

The Corporate Plan indicated that we would look to review those Stations which do not operate the Shift Duty System and are not whole-time stations We have six such Stations, which includes Ramsbottom. Ramsbottom currently has two fire appliances - one which is crewed on a 'day crewed' basis which effectively means that it is available 24/7, 365 days per year. The second appliance is crewed by Retained or part-time firefighters and primarily provides cover at weekends and nights only. Evidence shows that the second appliance has averaged only 30 calls per year over the past 3 years and as such is no longer operationally efficient and is therefore to be utilised as a strategic reserve, (which means we would keep the fire appliance, but would not ordinarily 'crew' it. Should a situation require the use of that fire appliance, we could temporarily increase crewing levels and utilise it). Currently this appliance is still available for use and has not yet been removed from service.

A current review is being undertaken specifically looking at future recommendations for Ramsbottom. This review is being focussed on maintaining the existing day crew cover but examining options for providing a more efficient duty system. There is no intention to reduce the level of serve to the public of Ramsbottom other than utilising the second appliance as a strategic reserve. Once the review is complete there will be appropriate consultation with regards to any proposed changes.