

Minutes of Waste Hub Liaison Group
30th January 2020, 5.30pm,
Environmental Hub, Cledford Lane, Middlewich CW10 0JR

Present:

Paul Cassell, Local Representative - PC
Cllr Mike Hunter, Cheshire East Ward Councillor - MH
Cllr David Latham, Middlewich Town Council - DL
Simon McGrory, Local Representative - SM
Kevin Melling, MD, Ansa Environmental Services Ltd - KM
Jane Thomason, Deputy MD, Ansa Environmental Services Ltd - JT
Megan Bowyer, PA to Kevin Melling, (Minutes) - MB
Dan Griffiths, Programme Manager, CE Council - DG (items 1 -3)
Apologies Received: None

1. Welcome
KM declared the meeting open and chaired it throughout.
2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising
2.1 The Minutes from the meeting on 28th November 2019 were approved.
2.2 Matters Arising
MB confirmed that an auto reply had been added to the Facebook site
3. Project Vanguard
Introductions were made to Dan Griffiths, Economic Development Programme Manager & ELENA Energy Programme Manager from Cheshire East Council, (CEC) who attended the meeting to present to attendees on a new council initiative affecting Ansa.

DG explained that CEC aspires to be carbon neutral by 2025 and is looking at innovative ways to decarbonise its operations. One of the ways it has identified is through a new way of powering its Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs). RCVs are big fuel consumers and electric power is suited to smaller vehicles which travel short distances e.g. in city centres. An alternative power source is hydrogen. DG advised that this is a well-used fuel in Europe but in the UK less so. Aberdeen uses it to power its buses and Fife Council already uses it to power RCVs. PC confirmed that he has had experience of hydrogen powered vehicles in Sweden a number of years ago.

DG explained that CEC has been offered funds from the Warrington LEP to pilot a refuelling site at the Environmental Hub with support from Storengy, a company based at Stublach, between Middlewich and Northwich. This would be to conduct a pilot using hydrogen initially for two vehicles. It would involve installation of solar panels, a water collection system and an electrolyser powered by the solar energy to produce hydrogen from the water in an on-site compound.

Subject to all approvals including planning, it is hoped to have the pilot underway by the end of 2020. This would be an exciting project for Middlewich which would be the only site of this kind in the North West, the nearest being in Sheffield. It has good environmental benefits with emissions being oxygen and water vapour.

All agreed that safety would be important. DG said that the key is getting used to handling the fuel. He explained that there are already well-established safety requirements which he detailed and that these would all be adopted on site.

Attendees asked a number of questions and all were keen that local residents are fully informed. With this aim in mind, DG was asked to compile a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which could be published together with a press release to reassure local residents and make sure they are well-informed prior to any planning application being made.

In summary this is a 3 year project on two vehicles and is considered a positive for Middlewich as the town can be seen as leading the way and it is expected that there will be considerable interest in the concept.

Next Steps – DG will compile a list of FAQs as suggested. A press release will be drafted and a planning timeline prepared. Action, once all this information is to hand, KM will share it with members of the group.

Action KM

4 Update on Waste Collection re-routing and caddy distribution

JT advised that re-routing has gone well. The major challenge was over the Christmas period when 10 days' waste had to be collected in 7 days. As anticipated, it is taking the operatives time to get used to the new routes but finish times are already improving. Ansa records the success rate for missed bins which has now improved to 99.8%; it is acknowledged that this needs to improve further and tweaks are needed to improve matters but things are moving in the right direction. It was also acknowledged that due to the re-routing a greater number of vehicles would be visible when working within the vicinity of Middlewich on the early part of the week with some of the green waste vehicles using local roads throughout the week. It was agreed that this would be monitored over the summer months to determine if any further routing adjustments could be considered. JT reported that 478 routes have been re-planned and 180,000 households are affected. The number of RCVs used has reduced as has the number of miles driven around the borough.

Caddy distribution started at the beginning of January with Middlewich being the first town to receive them. Approx. 100,000 have been delivered and deliveries in the South of the Borough are now complete. The distribution in the North continues and completion is anticipated in the next 2/3 weeks. The concept of turning food waste into compost has been favourably accepted with many schools, WI, Probus and other groups all getting involved in initiatives.

5 Middlewich Community Issues

4.1 Middlewich Community Pride

DL & MH explained that there are several groups in Middlewich – one attached to Middlewich Town Council called 'Pride of Middlewich' and the other 'Middlewich Community Pride'. KM confirmed that Ansa is keen to support both groups. The former is not progressing at the moment but it was suggested that KM attends a town council meeting in the future so that possible opportunities can be identified and progressed.

The latter group, Middlewich Community Pride has been in existence for a considerable time and has been involved in Middlewich in Bloom, town tidy ups etc. It was relaunched by DL after Jonathan Williams' passing last year. Members have been cleaning and tidying up the town and making it more appealing and DL thanked Ansa for its support in providing equipment to the group. There are a number of other potential areas where Ansa could help and it was agreed that a separate meeting between DL and KM would be arranged so that 'grot spots' can be identified and a plan drawn up. Action MB to arrange a convenient date

4.2 Speeding Vehicles

DL reported that unfortunately he has had reports once again about speeding vehicles and he brought a list of vehicle registration numbers, times and dates to the meeting for investigation. JT briefly demonstrated the software that is used to investigate such complaints from the tracking data that's available. All complaints are investigated and taken seriously, with drivers facing disciplinary procedures if proven. Anecdotally she said that it is often perception rather than actual speeding. All the incidents reported will be fully investigated and action taken as appropriate. Action JT to advise the outcome of the investigation to the group. JT

4.3 Cross Lane and Warmingham Lane

There have been a number of complaints reported to MH and DL plus complaints from residents via the Facebook site about Ansa vehicles using the route once more. Over the Christmas period one resident had complained she had not received responses to her Facebook messages. MB explained that due to holidays and her working hours it had not been possible and that she had identified a need for help. This is now in place and the Ansa Communications team are monitoring and responding to posts and messages on the Facebook site.

Attendees advised that the main complaints received are about Ansa vehicles not giving way and showing a lack of respect to other road users. KM and JT both agreed that this is not acceptable and that they would look at measures to improve matters.

PC remarked that it was difficult for people to note down vehicle registration numbers and suggested an alternative to make it easier to identify. This involves putting an ID number on the side of the vehicle – he showed a ‘mock up’ picture of how this would look and all agreed that it was a good idea and one that Ansa will implement. This may take a while to put in place but it is hoped that it will have a positive effect. Action JT to investigate.

Action JT

5 Any Other Business

5.1 Site Noise Inspections

JT explained that currently site noise tests take place every six months but as all have been met and nothing has changed she wanted to check whether the group would support an application to move to twelve monthly checks and/or checks if any changes had been made. In view of the potential impact of Project Vanguard it was agreed to keep ‘as is’ at the moment.

5.2 Planting

KM advised that a beech hedge has recently been planted around the perimeter of the site facing Booth Lane. Once it has grown and become more established the plan is to remove the green mesh fencing. A review of the shrubs has occurred and a number have been replaced.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm. Next Meeting to be held on 30th April 2020