



Minutes of Waste Hub Liaison Group

26 January 2023, 5.30pm, via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Paul Cassell, Local Representative	PC
Cllr Garnet Marshall, Middlewich Town Council	GM
Cllr Graham Orme, Middlewich Town Council	GO
Simon McGrory, Local Representative	SM
Kevin Melling, MD, Ansa Environmental Services Ltd	KM
Jane Thomason, Deputy MD, Ansa Environmental Services Ltd	JT

Other Attendees:

Megan Bowyer, PA to Kevin Melling (Minutes)	MB
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Apologies Received:

Cllr Mike Hunter, Cheshire East Ward Councillor	MH
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Agenda Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p>Welcome KM welcomed attendees declared the meeting open and chaired it throughout.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>2.1 The Minutes from the meeting on 3rd November 2022 were approved as an accurate and correct record.</p> <p>2.2 Matters Arising</p> <p>In cab technology – JT advised that we have updated the Ansa website to include an easy-to-follow piece about it and how it works so that residents can better understand it. We are planning to add more info including photographs of our crews using the technology.</p> <p>Site visit – MB advised she had contacted the Middlewich Town Clerk to ask if she could gauge interest in the town councillors also attending but is awaiting a response. The plan would be to hold the visit in late February. KM added that as well as a tour of the site we would like to include a briefing by the Ansa waste prevention team and the waste reduction volunteer co-ordinator. Action MB brought forward</p> <p>Tree maintenance – the planned tree maintenance took place last weekend when the conifers were reduced in height, as advised.</p>	MB

	<p>MB confirmed that she had circulated the minutes to attendees for review and comment prior to publication on the website and will continue to do so.</p> <p>Ansa financial statements for year ended 31/3/22 have now been published on Companies House website and GM confirmed he had a copy.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Operational and Community Events Update</p> <p>JT advised, as previously mentioned, that the tree maintenance was completed last weekend as planned.</p> <p>There have been no further environmental agency inspections since the last meeting, although they can visit unannounced at any time.</p> <p>Operationally Christmas was a busy time, especially in terms of increased waste tonnages. In the new year the snow hit very hard in the east of the Borough and some of the collections could not be made. GO mentioned the reduction of gritting routes and asked if this had affected the routes. JT advised it is difficult to measure the impact. The drivers are used to driving in difficult conditions. They are aware of which roads have not been gritted and do a dynamic risk assessment on each occasion they need to. Where necessary alternative arrangements are made by the drivers. SM remarked that he thought we had got off lightly on gritting compared to other areas.</p> <p>GM gave an example of a bin lorry being blocked from collecting several brown bins by a parked car and asked if the information re the missed bins would be logged. JT confirmed that this is an example of where the crew will use the in-cab technology to log an access problem resulting in missed bins.</p> <p>JT reported on Community Event activities in and around Middlewich. The Ansa team attended the Middlewich Christmas light event giving advice on reducing waste and using alternatives to Christmas wrapping paper. There are also monthly visits planned to the Middlewich Warm Hub starting in February, to provide residents with tips on how to reduce waste, how to dispose of items such as batteries and how to recycle successfully.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Middlewich Petition – Ansa Response</p> <p>KM introduced this item explaining that he believed it dated back several months. A petition was organised by the Fight for Middlewich Group. It received 5,600 signatures which qualified it for discussion by the Council. This took place and a formal response was then issued including responses from Ansa to three of the questions contained therein. KM confirmed that those responses will now be in the public domain and available for anyone to read. There was a brief discussion about any next steps. SM confirmed that the Council’s obligations under the petition have been fulfilled. GO remarked that there may be follow-up questions and it was thought that if this was the case a new process would be triggered.</p> <p>KM shared three questions and answers relating to Ansa (numbered 13,14 and 15 on the petition).</p> <p>He confirmed there is already capacity within the site to accommodate new housing growth.</p>	

	<p>With regard to future expansion of the site, he explained that legislation may mean that there would be a need to adapt facilities to take account of new ways of waste collection.</p> <p>GO asked whether there is potential for more landfill, especially as there is a site identified on the border with CWaC for this purpose. KM said it's extremely unlikely that the site will be needed. Ansa's operations have changed massively in the last few years and where previously 40% of kerbside waste was going to landfill, this has now reduced to below 2%, and the strategy is to continue to reduce. The Danes Moss site near Macclesfield is closed, and the Maw Green site is also closed – although that site does still have capacity, the reduction in landfill demand has accelerated its closure.</p> <p>GM referred to Ansa's financial statements and the section entitled 'events since balance sheet date' which mentions procurement activities. He asked if these are in relation to expansion. KM confirmed that this is not the case and assured attendees that this was nothing to do with landfill or expansion generally.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council Budget Consultation KM brought the consultation to attendees' attention and displayed it on screen.</p> <p>He remarked specifically on page 16 of the document where there is a Summary of Finances, and it is set out clearly how income needs to match expenditure; the Council is facing a shortfall and needs to bridge the gap by looking at cost cutting measures and ways to raise funds.</p> <p>KM concentrated on the Environment section as this is where Ansa's costs sit. There are two main proposed areas of impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A substantial reduction to the Grounds Maintenance budget, which will affect parks, grass mowing, hedge cutting etc. (ii) Introduction of a charge for collection of green waste. <p>He advised that local residents have until 30 January to respond to the survey online if they want to make their opinions known. After that date the results will be collated, and the findings debated at a full Council meeting in February.</p> <p>GO remarked that in 2019 the Council had a surplus and it's a shock to see how things have changed in such a short period of time.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Update on Project Vanguard GO said that Middlewich Town Council understood that this would have a positive effect in the long run so were supportive of the project, but in response to the original planning application one of the questions raised was the importance of suitable earthing and protection for the effects of static in a hydrogen plant. He asked if the defective components mentioned at the last meeting were part of this protection.</p> <p>JT advised that this is still a project in the commissioning stage and a testing stage took place. During testing it was discovered that they could not fully load the hydrogen into the vehicles, and this needed investigation to find out why. It was identified that a cabinet inside the unit was at fault and needed replacement. The cabinet had to be specially manufactured abroad and this is taking longer than expected.</p>	

	<p>KM confirmed that safety is paramount, and it is only when the cabinet is replaced and tested successfully that the project can be fully commissioned and put into service. JT added that it's worth saying that hydrogen isn't being stored at present. It's frustrating as we have adapted vehicles ready to use the hydrogen. We are keen to get them into operation to test how we can improve on emissions.</p> <p>GM remarked that Ansa states in its financial statements that we are unable to reduce our carbon footprint in any other way. KM confirmed that in rural areas such as our own, electric vehicles aren't effective due to the distance covered and hydrogen is seen as a credible future alternative.</p>	
7	<p>Middlewich Community Issues</p> <p>7.1 Increase in bin emptying due to new housing and access to Warmingham Lane for Refuse Collection Vehicles</p> <p>GO advised that 420 new houses are being built on Glebe Farm. He asked about how Ansa's recruitment drive was going, whether there would need to be an increase in Ansa's workforce and whether additional vehicles and longer days would be needed to accommodate the increased demand, especially as he was aware there are still further new developments in the pipeline.</p> <p>JT advised that Ansa has not been recruiting extra people, we have been recruiting to replace employees (especially drivers), who had left. There was a period last year where we were understaffed. Recruitment has been exceptionally difficult across the board due to the national shortages experienced.</p> <p>Unless legislation changes, we don't plan to increase the number of our refuse vehicles. We try to future proof when we roll out new rounds and put in capacity to absorb additional developments. Logistically this can be a problem and the rounds may need to be tweaked due to geographical concentration levels of new housing.</p> <p>We will have to work out access routes for the houses at Glebe Farm, but because it is near to the depot, we have plenty of vehicle capacity to cover this.</p> <p>SM mentioned the Council process for planning services for new houses and said that historically 1900 additional houses were considered, of which Glebe Farm was part and that it was catered for based on local plans.</p> <p>GM noted that in the current operations there is capacity and asked what would happen if collection frequency was to change to every 3 weeks. JT said that if it were to happen it would be due to a policy decision by CEC. If that was to occur, everything would need to be completely replanned by Ansa and bearing in mind the number of houses and the 3 different waste streams this would be an extremely complex process.</p> <p>7.2 Speeding/Toolbox Talks</p> <p>GO advised that the Middlewich Town Mayor has mentioned that there are concerns re speeding within Middlewich and the town council are proactively monitoring. He asked if Ansa has been carrying out recent toolbox talks about speeding and its effects</p> <p>KM reminded the group, that if residents see our vehicles speeding, to encourage them to report it to us as soon as possible and we will investigate. Regular toolbox talks with employees are held.</p>	

	<p>JT gave more detail. She explained the different methods Ansa uses to communicate with employees which include: 1-2-1s, team meetings, specific rounds meetings, messages via work phones and in-cab technology, tv screens in the depot with messages of the day.</p> <p>Toolbox talks – there is a regular schedule, and these are delivered in a very formal environment by team leaders reading from a script so that the messages are consistent. Examples include driver behaviour and legal compliance, PPE, Customer Service, General Health and Safety, Cold Weather, Near Miss and Accident Reporting.</p> <p>Additionally, if we have a complaint, there will be a 1-2-1 conversation and a memo or formal letter will go out to the individual(s) as a follow up.</p> <p>There is a raft of ways we communicate so that we cover all the different ways that people absorb information. Toolbox talks are part of a portfolio</p> <p>JT also reminded attendees that Ansa holds ISO 140001, 450001 and 90001 – all of which are audited on an annual basis.</p> <p>7.3 Missing brown bin collections KM advised that this was back in September when we were experiencing staffing issues and he does not believe that it is an ongoing problem.</p> <p>7.4 Camfil – any further tests It was mentioned in a previous meeting that blowing air through the system had been considered and an update was requested. KM advised that the system is tested regularly, and the filters have recently been replaced. Blowing air is still an option to be considered. The supplier suggested that it may increase the life expectancy of the carbon in the filters. However, at present we have had no further reports of odours and we have increased the frequency and timing of the replacement filters.</p> <p>GM asked if Ansa has bought the Camfil system and will it need to be depreciated and replaced. KM it is more complex than a standard depreciation model and that various components within the system are replaced regularly at differing intervals.</p>	
8	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Monitoring air quality within Middlewich GO reported to the group for information purposes that additional hotspots have been identified re poor air quality in Middlewich, and the Town Council has purchased a portable air monitoring system that can be moved around the town. It doesn't measure fugitive emissions, however. The by-pass will be built, and construction traffic is likely to cause an increase in poor air quality.</p> <p>Good Neighbours. GM noted that last year Ansa made a significant contribution to planting of wildflowers and asked if there were plans to do the same this year. KM didn't have details but said that we are always keen to assist through local sponsorship or specific event funding. If there are things that Ansa can help to support, please advise and we will consider.</p> <p>GM also mentioned that lighting of fires and causing smells can ruin people's barbecues in the summer months and asked for confirmation that Ansa will be a good neighbour and not do so. KM replied that we never light fires and hopes that the measures we</p>	

	have in place re carbon filter changes will ensure there are no bad smells from the depot.	
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The meeting closed at 19:07. Next meeting to be held on Thursday, 27th April 2023 at 17.30.