

Minutes of Waste Hub Liaison Group

30th April 2020, 4.00pm

Via Conference Call

Present:

Paul Cassell, Local Representative - PC

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

Apologies Received:

Cllr Mike Hunter, Cheshire East Ward Councillor – MH

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 30th January 2020 were approved.

2.2 Matters Arising

Community Pride – DL & Russell Cooper had held a meeting with Charlie and Caroline Griffies from Ansa about Community Pride activities and how Ansa could support them.

Speeding Vehicles – JT reported that from the details given at the last meeting, all were investigated and two were identified as going above the speed limit. We are continuing to use the technology, speaking to drivers and reminding them of their responsibilities.

Visible numbers on vehicles – we are seriously considering this excellent suggestion, but at present it's been postponed due to Covid 19 challenges.

3 Project Vanguard Update

KM reported that the project team appreciated the feedback given which had allowed them to target communication and produce a detailed set of appropriate FAQs.

The Planning Process is advanced and they are expecting to get a determination by mid-May.

A planning reference number has been assigned and is 20\0767C . Responses have been received to the planning application from Environmental Protection & the Canals and Rivers Trust but none were objecting.

Ongoing work is proceeding with the design and a site survey has taken place. The hazard identification process has now started.

DM confirmed that it had been useful to have the information as it meant that he had been able to answer many questions and reassure people who raised concerns about explosives, safety of vehicles and how the hydrogen power would work.

KM advised that he believes the project is still on track at the moment and he will continue to update group members.

4 Update on Covid 19 Operations

JT gave an update confirming that all our services are continuing. There have been tweaks in Street Cleansing where resources have moved to rural areas from town centres and the Parks and Grounds teams have been carrying out a lot of grass mowing and focusing on recreational areas where people take their daily exercise.

The stress point has been waste services. Lockdown has generated a lot of extra waste and with higher than normal absences and increased volumes this has proved challenging. All our grounds maintenance and street cleansing staff are trained to work on waste services and have been able to step in as necessary. It was imperative that we didn't stand down services, so we ensured we had resilience through redeployment of our own employees and also use of agency employees.

Volumes – last week organic waste was up by 40% more tonnage than the same week last year. We had never modelled to accommodate that level but the service continues and we managed to collect it. We have put additional resources in place to continue to collect including use of relay and shuttle vehicles to keep the main crews out on the rounds. SM asked if food waste had an impact but JT advised that it was mostly garden waste rather than food.

There have been increases in recyclate and residual waste also but not to the same level as the organic waste. JT gave credit to the crews for staying at work. She reported that there is constant monitoring each morning of any issues so that we can react quickly. We are managing to source the right levels of PPE and are very pleased that we have not had to stand down services; this is a public health issue and we want to keep collecting waste.

PC asked whether the fact that HWRCs are closed is having an effect and JT confirmed that was the case despite communications asking residents to store waste until they re-opened.

SM commented that it's great to see how well Ansa is maintaining its services unlike some other areas. We know that fly tipping is still happening but hopefully to a lesser extent than elsewhere and it's good to see that the town is staying in reasonable shape.

KM's final comment on this subject was to say that although HWRCs did need to shut, there are plans to get them re-opened. Watch this space and we hope that their re-opening will not cause chaos with long queues of traffic. There will still be social distancing in place and strict safety measures if they do re-open.

5 Middlewich Community Issues

5.1 Waste crews not wearing protective gloves. JT advised that although we were struggling at the beginning to get items such as protective gloves and sanitisers, we have never run short. Disposable and workwear gloves are given out to crews on a daily basis and we are constantly reinforcing messages re hygiene and social distancing. We are also encouraging residents to disinfect their bins. PC raised this issue and has a couple of photos re a recent black bin collection where an operative was not wearing gloves.

A discussion followed re the protection provided by the gloves both for the operatives and the public. JT advised that most of our refuse collection vehicles have hand wash basins, hand wipes and sanitisers in the cabs. Ultimately even if crews aren't wearing gloves but are washing their hands that is better.

PC said that the perception is that they should be wearing gloves all the time and a message went out to the public about it and they don't know there are washing facilities in the trucks. JT said that we will continue to provide gloves and encourage crews to wear them.

JT mentioned wearing of face coverings (not masks) as encouraged in Scotland. We can see it coming in England as a possible protection. Ansa is working with a local volunteer group, that have been making scrubs for Leighton hospital, to supply face coverings for staff ; this is not PPE and employees will be given a choice whether or not to wear them.

DL mentioned that in areas where bins are collected from sheltered housing and retirement bungalows where the residences are close together it would be a good idea to ask crews to wear face coverings. JT said she thinks it will be the norm and we want to be in a position to have a supply when we need them.

KM said that Ansa is trying to pre-empt the next change in guidance. The face coverings are there to protect other people and over time we will be steered by government guidance and will develop protocols. It will all help give reassurance to people. Good discussion on gloves, protection is absolutely a two way process and we continue to try to put everything in place. Sanitisers and surgical wipes are also being used and our Communications team will feed through messages to the public.

PC said that on a constructive note there are lots of positive comments towards bin collectors on the Facebook page especially about how hard working Ansa's employees are. KM said he has been in work most days and one thing he has noticed is the lovely pictures that children have drawn thanking the bin crews.

5.2. Dead Fish in the Canal – DL mentioned that there is a problem adjacent to the site and a large number of dead fish have been found. This has been tracked by the Environmental Agency and Canals and River Trust and they have said that there is a pollutant in the water leading to great concern about animals and wildlife. The Cledford Lane site is close to the canal and some people think it's Ansa.

KM really appreciated being advised. His first impression was that sometimes in warmer weather a lack of oxygen can cause deaths to larger fish. However now he knows that pollutant is involved he genuinely believes that it cannot be Ansa as the drainage system does not go anywhere into the canal and does not go into the water courses. KM would appreciate DM keeping him updated on any developments.

5.3 Truck Movements/Speeding – DL advised that at the beginning of February in the early morning he parked just after the junction of Cross Lane and Warmingham Lane to observe truck movements. He saw 15 trucks in the space of 25 minutes from 6.48 to

7.13 in the morning and considered that some of the vehicles were speeding. He gave details and JT promised to investigate and get back to him. He also commented that some of the vehicle registration plates were dirty and not clearly legible. The vehicles shouldn't be going down Cross Lane at that time in the morning and we've discussed this several times so he highlighted concerns and asked why vehicles can't use the whole length of Warmingham Lane or the new route that was previously discussed via Sandbach.

KM responded by saying that since going live with the composting site on 6th January what we've picked up is that there are more movements that we can't avoid going that way to the composting

site. We need to get through this initial green collection season and then evaluate what can be done. There is no excuse for speeding vehicles. We will aim to alleviate traffic on Warmingham Lane where it is possible. We have looked at alternative routes but the aqueduct on the A530 has insufficient clearance for our vehicles.

Action KM

We will investigate and feedback before the next meeting

5 Any Other Business

DL remarked that Ansa employees are very friendly and professional and there have been a lot of comments of how impressed and grateful the public are together with thanks from the Middlewich Pride group for Ansa's assistance.

KM concluded by thanking attendees for their participation and mentioned that we will consider holding future meetings via video conference or similar

The meeting closed at 5.15 pm. Next Meeting to be held on 30th July 2020