

**TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD**  
**6<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

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**PROGRESS REPORT**  
**Report of the re3 Strategic Waste Manager**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on progress in the delivery of the re3 Joint Waste PFI Contract.

**2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **That Members note the contents of this report.**
- 2.2 **That Members instruct the relevant officers of the respective Councils and the re3 Project Team to finalise and seek approval for the Schools Programme described at 5.23.**

**3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 None for this report.

**4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to brief Members in relation to progress in delivery of the re3 Joint Waste PFI Contract.

**5 PROGRESS ON ITEMS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED**

**General Data Protection Regulations**

- 5.1 The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) place new obligations on public bodies when handling personal data, and came into effect on 25 May 2018.
- 5.2 In order to ensure compliance with the new legislation, Council contracts are being amended to contain certain prescribed clauses relating to the nature of the processing.
- 5.3 Members will recall that the legal teams at Bracknell Forest, Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils had agreed to seek a single amendment in relation to the PFI Contract and that our project legal advisors, Eversheds Sutherland, had been engaged to support the councils in ensuring that the re3 PFI contract is suitably amended.
- 5.4 Legal advisors are currently reviewing the GDPR provisions provided by Wokingham Borough Council and will propose an updated data protection clause to be incorporated into the re3 Project Agreement and O&M Contract.
- 5.5 Officers are assisting the legal advisors in understanding the data flows so that they can propose the necessary updates and will continue to keep Members informed on progress to agree a consensus.
- 5.6 A draft version of a protocol setting out how personal data should be shared between the Councils and with FCC in order to minimise the changes of personal data being

lost or mishandled was circulated to the waste officers and Customer Service Teams. It has subsequently been agreed.

### **re3Grow Compost**

- 5.7 Sales of re3Grow Compost commenced at the beginning of May and the 2000 bags were sold-out by the end of the first week in June.
- 5.8 Members approved the introduction of a multi-buy offer (3 bags for £10, instead of £3.50 per bag individually). It proved to be popular, with over 90% of sales being via the multi-buy offer.
- 5.9 Sales of compost were far higher at Longshot Lane where 77% of sales took place.
- 5.10 Despite some initial consideration of buying more compost during the summer of 2018, it was decided that it was better to wait until next year. By June, many gardeners have undertaken the tasks which require compost and so demand falls considerably thereafter. It was felt better to introduce a fresh batch of re3Grow compost early in 2019.
- 5.11 The exercise has proved to be a great learning experience in terms of getting a product up and running, marketing and selling it. Residents appear to like re3Grow as a product and it is good to be able to produce such high quality compost from our residents' own gardens as it represents a genuine example of circularity.
- 5.12 Officers will liaise with the Contractor over the course of the summer and plan for a larger batch of re3Grow to be produced in 2019. It is currently intended that the composting and grading process will be undertaken at Sutton Courtenay which will mean that up to 90% of the compost will be from re3 garden waste.
- 5.13 Officers will provide further briefings as plans for 2019 take shape.

### **Lotta Bottle Campaign**

- 5.14 The campaign has attracted 51 groups, directly involving approximately 10,000 residents.
- 5.15 Following discussions with the Chairman of the re3 Board, the re3 Project Team is implementing a next phase of the campaign that will attribute specific glass bank site to the registered charity, group or school. This development should provide a helpful focus to efforts at increasing the recycling of glass across the re3 area.
- 5.16 The bottle banks at each chosen site will show stickers advertising the potential to benefit the relevant group or school by recycling there. The groups and schools will also be encouraged to promote recycling through their own communications and initiatives.
- 5.17 The glass campaign has recently been advertised in the Primary Times magazine that is being delivered to each school in Berkshire area.
- 5.18 The objective to increase usage of bottle banks was also tied in to the 'naming of new recycling glass lorries' competition. The competition was run in March and April on social media and the public chose names: 'Jar Jar Clinks' and 'Kate Binslet' to be used for the new vehicles.

5.19 The competition received a very high interest in the media, including national titles such as BBC and international outlets such as MSN. Trucks will arrive on August and re3 Marketing and Communications Officer produced a livery for the new vehicles using 'ALotta Bottle' campaign assets.

### **Schools Campaign**

5.20 At the meeting of the re3 Board, in April 2018, Members discussed the potential for a programme of school-based work on recycling.

5.21 Accordingly, officers have explored the opportunity to establish a programme directed to primary schools based in the re3 area. The scope of the programme will look into promoting environmental awareness and behavioural change of children, principally through outdoor, practical learning.

5.22 The program is based on the successful work already undertaken at College Town Junior School, Bracknell. It includes minimising waste generation at its source and facilitates recycling and composting within the school premises. The programme is designed to operate for an initial three year period with six monthly reviews and with the provision of an annual statement to the re3 Board.

5.23 There are three levels to the programme. They are:

- All 60+ Primary age schools from the re3 area would be offered a basic level of support that includes access to the recycling guidelines, online resources, networking sessions, competitions and events.
- 18 primary schools from the re3 area (6 schools from each Council) will be involved in the detailed level of support.
- An important element of the programme is practical waste management. The learning and practices promoted in the first two levels must result in improved waste management at the schools and some genuine 'pester power' at home.

5.24 The final level, above, may be challenging to deliver. The re3 Councils each have a different approach towards school waste. However, there are also opportunities for enhanced services, particularly as a local food waste processing capability is launched in April 2019. The key outcome is that schools reduce the net cost and impact of their waste – it doesn't matter to the same extent who collects their waste.

5.25 It is estimated that each school can recycle 500 kg of food waste, 280 kg of plastic and cans and up to 7 tonnes of paper per year.

5.26 Alongside the practical improvements that can be delivered in schools, the most important factor of the proposed draft programme is the potential to communicate important messages to an important and sizeable demographic group.

5.27 The project is expected to cost up to £200k over the period of 3 years. The individual cost of £66k per council spread across 3 years: Year 1 - £40k, Year 2 - £13k, Year 3 – £13k. The cost includes set up of recycling scheme at schools, educational resources, composting tools, outdoor learning sessions and the Education Officer's salary.

5.28 It is recommended that the programme be further developed with specific input from the respective Waste Service teams at each of the individual re3 Councils and for budgetary approval for the programme to be sought therein. There is no budget for this currently, therefore additional funding would be required.

## 6 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE PROJECT

- 6.1 Members will recall that significant changes to the access arrangements at the two re3 Recycling Centres (Longshot Lane and Smallmead) were made in 2016. The changes were precipitated by the decision of West Berkshire Council to deliver savings by withdrawing payment for the use of re3 facilities by West Berkshire residents. The re3 Partnership quickly decided that it could not justify the provision of a subsidy to West Berkshire.
- 6.2 The re3 Partnership was able to successfully introduce new arrangements following work on potential service changes that had already begun. They have been well received by re3 residents and access conditions at the two Recycling Centres have improved as a result of the better flow of visitors.
- 6.3 Officers are proposing to prepare options for the further development of the services at the two Recycling Centres so the re3 Partnership remains prepared for emerging pressures.
- 6.4 In particular the project will focus on the priority themes of the re3 Waste Strategy 2018-20: reducing the net cost of waste and recycling 50% of household waste by 2020.
- 6.5 It is anticipated that the project will be formed of three parts. The first will seek to identify ways to improve the HWRC recycling rate and equalise this between the sites. Objective D in the re3 strategy recognises that the Recycling Centres must continue to improve their performance in a cost effective manner to ensure that they make a sufficient contribution to overall recycling and the objective to reduce the net cost of waste. In support of this objective, Officers will work with FCC to understand the differences that exist between the Smallmead and Longshot Lane recycling rates and make contact with other local authorities to investigate those factors that contribute to a high performing site.
- 6.6 The second part will focus specifically on treatment options for HWRC waste. Objective G of the re3 strategy states that the re3 partnership will focus on forms of collection and treatment that will have most positive impact on performance. Officers will complete 'start-up' assessments for key materials such as mattresses, carpets and rigid plastics to identify potential options for recycling and any specifications or conditions that the partnership would need to meet. In addition Officers will complete similar assessments for key HWRC wastes which are already diverted from landfill as a means of assessing whether there are more cost effective recycling options available.
- 6.7 Members will recall that wood from the recycling centres is currently sent for biomass and does not contribute to the Councils' overall recycling rate. A break clause was built into the contract with our current offtaker, to enable the Council to consider alternative processing options. With the date of the break approaching, Officers have already asked FCC for some indicative costs for recycling.
- 6.8 Lastly, Officers will review the capacity and utilisation of the HWRCs. As noted in the re3 strategy, actual numbers of households in the re3 area exceed those originally expected at the time of contract negotiation. The pressure on the facilities from visitor numbers, and the impact on queuing was eased as a result of access changes in 2016 but remains a relevant potential concern. In addition, Members will recall that although total waste arisings are below expected, the balance of waste management

has been moved towards waste being received at the Recycling Centres. This has most likely occurred as a result of a combination of waste collection scheduling and resident attitudes. The project will therefore seek to understand the relationship between the recycling centres and current and future collection services.

- 6.9 In seeking to identify options which the Partnership could manage potential under or over utilisation of the facilities, this project will contribute to objective F of the re3 Strategy: 'The re3 partnership will continue to work with its waste management Contractor to maximise utilisation of the re3 facilities where that has a positive financial or performance outcome and no detriment to re3 residents or re3 services'. It will also inform Objective L with regards to consideration for the requirement for new re3 facilities.
- 6.10 It is recommended that Members instruct Officers to report an outline consideration of options for future development to the re3 Board before the end of 2018/19.

## **7 Resources and Waste Strategy 2018 Update**

- 7.1 Officers attended a briefing by colleagues from Defra in which Government's forthcoming Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) was discussed alongside some related topics.
- 7.2 The approach of the RWS will apparently be to maximise value from resources and to minimise impacts at the end of life of a product or item. This will be achieved by developing a 'regenerative circular economy' and with the aims to 'double resource productivity' and achieve to 'zero avoidable waste by 2050'.
- 7.3 We understand that the RWS will identify plastic and food as, what it calls, 'problematic wastes'.
- 7.4 For plastic there will be a focus on achieving zero avoidable plastic waste by 2042 and to provide further detail on the four point plan in the 25 Year. The four point plan includes:
- Measures to increase producer responsibility for the impacts of their products and seeking to rationalise the number and different types of plastic in use;
  - reducing the use of single-use plastic through means such as supporting water top-up points;
  - making it easier to recycle by looking at, amongst other examples, voluntary and economic incentives to reduce littering and promote recycling of drinks containers; and
  - improving the rate of recycling, including through ensuring greater consistency in materials collected by all local authorities.
- 7.5 For food waste there will be a focus on achieving zero food waste being sent to landfill by 2030. Government is looking at a 'Farm to Fork' approach to dealing with food waste alongside the extension of food waste collection. A clarification was requested and it was explained that these steps are related to food waste collection and processing rather than collection points for food which were thought to be rather harder to establish and manage.
- 7.6 Alongside plastic and food, the RWS will apparently include steps to encourage local authorities to work together, the development of metrics around waste minimisation, a focus on waste crime, better data tracking and circular efficiency business models. There is also some scope for a requirement for collections of bio waste (food and

garden) and textiles to be added by 2025.

- 7.7 There will be specific consideration given to urban recycling. This will apparently involve steps to promote better integration between Planning and Waste (Strategic Planning Guidance was mentioned), cooperation in collection between commercial and domestic services where they are co-located, recycling on the go and improvements at transport hubs. A clarification was requested about the impact of managing agents and landlords, whose actions can potentially obstruct the good intentions of some residents and the local authority. It was explained that further discussions were needed but that it was hoped that some encouragement could be given to landlords and managing agents to be more supportive.
- 7.8 The role of tax and linked incentives has been a factor in discussions about the RWS since the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spring Statement in March 2018. The role of tax is apparently being given general consideration and that might include options like deposit return schemes (which operate via an initial 'tax' being applied at point of purchase) and the introduction of an 'incineration tax'. While the former seems inevitable, the latter is the source of some concern within both the waste management industry and local government. The waste management industry regards such a tax as being a considerable barrier to investments which are widely accepted as necessary. Local authorities regard it as a further cost in circumstances where a combination of existing legislation and the general financial position means they could not easily, if at all, avoid its impact.

## **8 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY**

### Head of Legal Services

- 8.1 As the re3 Contract is a shared agreement, it was advised that the councils work with shared legal advisors in order to agree consensus on the form of words to be added and to liaise with the Contractor to ensure timely incorporation.

### Corporate Finance Business Partner

- 8.2 None for this report.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.3 None.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 8.4 None

## **9 CONSULTATION**

### Principal Groups Consulted

Not applicable.

### Method of Consultation

Not applicable.

### Representations Received

Not applicable.

Background Papers

None

Contacts for further information

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