

TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
13 December 2012

JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD - PROJECT UPDATE
Report by the Project Director

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Joint Waste Disposal Board (JWDB) of progress since its last meeting on 2 October 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note progress made since the last meeting on 2 October 2012.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

EA Guidance on Street Sweepings and Gully Emptyings

- 3.1 As was reported at the Joint Waste Disposal Board meeting on 12 July 2012, the Environment Agency (EA) has issued guidance on the management of street sweepings and gully emptyings.
- 3.2 Since then the re3 councils have written to the EA in order to express our concern at the implications of the guidance. Copies were also sent to each of the Members of Parliament who represent the re3 area.
- 3.3 One of the principal complaints made by the re3 councils was that, in reiterating the guidance, the EA was taking a 'blanket' approach to the composting of all street sweepings, regardless of their content or composition. Officers are aware that this point has also been stressed by other concerned parties too.
- 3.4 The point appears to have been accepted by the EA because a process has been initiated whereby interested councils can have their street sweeping material tested. The main method for testing seems quite complex and the re3 councils are considering a secondary method (though still within the EA scheme).
- 3.5 Subject to the results of the testing process specific elements of street sweeping material may be classified as acceptable for composting.
- 3.6 The re3 councils, with particular support from Wokingham Borough Council, have submitted a request to partake in the trials.
- 3.7 There are two further complicating factors which should be acknowledged. Firstly that the EA have set a lower limit of 40 trials to make the endeavour worthwhile. Secondly, that the Ash Die Back disease may have an impact on the stance of the EA in respect of street sweepings (which obviously contain a high leaf content).
- 3.8 Officers will keep Members informed of developments.

Results of the 2012 Transfer Station User Satisfaction Survey of Council Crews

- 4.1 The councils' re3 PFI Project Team surveyed colleagues who make regular use of the PFI facilities— principally, the transfer stations. This survey was conducted to assist with contract management; identifying any potential areas of improvement and making recommendations where necessary.

- 4.2 Between October and November 2012, a survey was carried out to gauge the views and experiences of council users (refuse and street cleansing crews), and some charity users, in relation to the waste transfer stations at Smallmead, Reading and Longshot Lane, Bracknell.
- 4.3 A total of 58 responses were received. These included most refuse, recycling, garden waste and street cleansing crews from Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell councils, as well as 14% of the approved charities.
- 4.4 The main results from this survey are detailed below.
- 4.5 In contrast to the results of the 2010 survey, Council vehicles using the Longshot Lane transfer station experienced longer and more frequent periods of queuing when accessing the site than visitors to Smallmead. The percentage of users stating that they queue for more than 15 minutes to pass the first weighbridge at least once a week at Longshot has risen from 45% in 2010 to 90% in 2012. This is compared to a rise from 52% to 70% at Smallmead. When asked how they rated this wait, only 30% of Longshot Lane users and 22% of Smallmead users answered 'good' or 'excellent'.
- 4.6 It is possible that these changes have been partly influenced by recent computer/mechanical problems at the weighbridges. However users also commented on the loading positions of articulated vehicles and mentioned that a lack of staff in the weighbridge office can also lead to queuing. The latter is reflected in the fall in users who rated the sites as having sufficient staff.
- 4.7 Another factor which may have affected these results is the introduction of split bodied vehicles by Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Councils.
- 4.8 The percentage of Council dustcart drivers who believed the 20 minute turnaround policy to be insufficient has risen from 3% in 2010 to 14% in 2012 at Longshot Lane and from 0% to 6% in the same period at Smallmead. These longer turnaround times may be resulting in longer queuing periods; particularly at Longshot Lane where more split bodied vehicles are now used.
- 4.9 The introduction of split bodied vehicles has also had an impact on user's opinions of the site layouts. The percentage of respondents rating the layout as 'good' or 'very good' fell to 50% at both sites, largely as a result of the difficulties encountered when manoeuvring between weighbridges in order to discharge waste from the second compartment.
- 4.10 The percentage of users stating that the Longshot Lane site always feels like a safe place to visit has increased from 64% in 2010 to 70% in 2012. This is in contrast to the results at Smallmead where results have fallen from 64% to 50% in the same period.
- 4.11 When asked what the Contractor could do to make the sites feel safer, users of Smallmead commented about the speed of incoming traffic, the slippiness of the transfer station floor and the loading positions of the articulated vehicles.
- 4.12 Overall, the number of users who stated that they had seen a copy of the site rules had increased; rising from 86% of all users who answered this question in 2010, to 93% in 2012.
- 4.13 In turn, the number of respondents who provided a basic list of the PPE required to access the site increased by 1% on the 2010 levels.

- 4.14 With regards to opening hours, 72% of all users surveyed said that opening hours were always sufficient. This has fallen from 83% in 2010.
- 4.15 The means by which users thought opening hours could be improved was varied. A large proportion of the Reading Borough Council dustcart drivers said that the Saturday opening hours after a bank holiday were insufficient (although that issue has not been raised by the council formally). In addition a couple of council drivers said that opening hours were not sufficient at Christmas and a couple of Wokingham Borough Council drivers said that the opening hours did not provide sufficient time to collect green waste in the summer (again, something which has not been raised formally). One charity said that they would like to be able to visit more at the weekends or evenings.
- 4.16 The re3 Project Team have circulated the results of the survey to both the council waste teams and the contractor, with whom they are discussing the implications of the findings.

Waste Strategy

- 4.17 The re3 Project Team has begun the process of information gathering in support of the development of an re3 strategy.
- 4.18 Among a range of activities relevant to the strategy, the re3 Project Team has commenced or undertaken the following:
- a strategic analysis of the situation facing the re3 councils,
 - calculation of the carbon emissions associated with transporting waste from the Key Project Facilities to its next destination,
 - modelling the likely impact on material markets of the current economic situation,
 - analysis of the service levels at the re3 facilities,
- 4.19 Further information gathering is required in a number of areas and this will take place over the next few months.
- 4.20 In order to produce a sense of ownership, it is hoped that officers from each of the three councils will be able contribute to this (and subsequent) phases of the strategy production.
- 4.21 Discussions regarding the level of resources available for completion of this project are currently ongoing between the councils.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Board Reports 2nd October 2012

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