

## Joint Waste Disposal Board

### Notice of Meeting

Thursday, 2 March 2023 (9.30 am)

**TO: All Members of the Joint Waste Disposal Board**

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board on **Thursday 2 March 2023 at 9.30 am** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham. An agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Oliver Burt  
re3 Strategic Waste Manager

### Members of the Joint Waste Disposal Board

Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, Bracknell Forest Council  
Councillor John Harrison, Bracknell Forest Council  
Councillor Tony Page, Reading Borough Council  
Councillor Karen Rowland, Reading Borough Council  
Councillor Clive Jones, Wokingham Borough Council  
Councillor Ian Shenton, Wokingham Borough Council  
|

### Emergency Evacuation Instructions

If you hear the alarm:

- 1 Leave the building immediately
- 2 Follow the green signs
- 3 Use the stairs not the lifts
- 4 Do not re-enter the building until told to do so

**Joint Waste Disposal Board**  
**Thursday 2 March 2023 (9.30 am)**  
**Council Chamber, Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham.**

**Agenda**

**Page No**

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.

Any Member with an affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board** 5 - 12

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Joint Waste Disposal Board held on 9 January 2023.
4. **Urgent Items of Business**

To notify the Board of any items authorised by the Chairman on the grounds of urgency.
5. **Progress Report** 13 - 24

To brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on progress in the delivery of the re3 Joint Waste PFI Contract.
6. **Communications Report** 25 - 36

To brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on the Partnership's communications activities.
7. **Legislation Report** 37 - 44

To brief Members in relation to the emerging detail from the Environment Act 2021, as it relates to waste management.
8. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

To consider the following motion:

That pursuant to Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive

Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2012 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of items 9 & 10 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

*NB: No representations have been received in response to the notice under regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012*

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <p>9. <b>Financial Management Report</b></p> <p>To brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on the Partnership's current financial position.</p>                                      | <p>45 - 58</p> |
| <p>10. <b>Contract Transition Report</b></p> <p>To brief Members on steps that will be required as the councils consider, plan, and then deliver the transition of this contract.</p> | <p>59 - 62</p> |
| <p>11. <b>Date of the Next Board Meeting</b></p> <p>Thursday 15 June at 9:30am at Reading Borough Council.</p>  |                |

This page is intentionally left blank

**JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD**  
**9 JANUARY 2023**  
**(9.33 - 11.35 am)**

Present: Bracknell Forest Borough Council  
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE  
Councillor John Harrison

Reading Borough Council  
Councillor Tony Page  
Councillor Karen Rowland

Wokingham District Council  
Councillor Clive Jones  
Councillor Ian Shenton

Officers Oliver Burt, re3 Strategic Waste Manager  
Jayne Rowley, re3 Principal Finance Officer  
Sarah Innes, re3 Performance Officer  
Monika Bulmer, re3 Communication Officer  
Damian James, Bracknell Forest Council  
Claire Pike, Bracknell Forest Council  
Andrew Edwards, Reading Borough Council  
Francesca Hodgson, Wokingham Borough Council

**11. Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board**

On page 7, the second full paragraph would be reviewed and reworded if required.

On page 8 of the minutes where it mentioned Clare Lawrence and ROLE, this would be amended to Francesca Hobson and Assistant Director, Environment and Safety.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board held on the 29 September 2022, be approved as a correct record.

**12. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**13. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no Urgent Items of Business.

**14. Reuse Report and Reuse Presentation from the Contractor, FCC**

The Board received a report which provided a briefing on reuse and reuse opportunities for the re3 Board.

Rory Brian, General Manager at re3 Ltd and Liam Bould, Regional Development Manager at re3 Ltd, attended the Board to provide a presentation on Reuse from the contractor's perspective.

The key points arising from the presentation were as follows:

- The YouGov poll showed a rise in public appetite for reuse.
- Over 2000 people were surveyed.
- 44% said they had purchased in a reuse shop in 2020, this had increased by 12% to 56% in 2022.
- 80% of those surveyed agreed all HWRCs should have a charity reuse shop nearby or onsite.
- Three quarters of people who did not currently have access to a reuse shop said they would donate their items if their HWRC had one.
- 60% said they would be more likely to donate than throw away their good quality, second-hand items if they knew they would be resold at a reuse shop.
- 64% said they would prefer to be shown how to fix a broken item, at their local HWRC with 19% saying they would prefer to buy a new item to replace a broken one.
- 81% thought companies and local authorities should be encouraging people to fix their broken items, whereas 4% thought that companies and local authorities should encourage people to buy new items to replace their broken ones.
- 75% bought second-hand items.
- Almost half bought a second-hand item every six months.
- Over half of people donated items to their local charity shop every six months.
- Almost half visited their local HWRC at least once a year.
- FCC currently operated 10 reuse shops in partnership with local authority and charity partners.
- The reuse shops generated £1.7m in revenue annually for the charity partners.
- FCCs Swanton Road site in Suffolk had been reopened as a merchant drop off site for reuse items with their charity partner The Benjamin Foundation. White good repairs were also being undertaken at the site.
- re3 currently worked with Sue Ryder, Precycle for book scanning, Precycle for electrical items and bikes, pop up shops and Re3paint scheme for residents to collect free paint.
- 55,000 books a year had been scanned and sold on.
- Reuse sat under Reduce, at the top of the waste hierarchy and had the greatest carbon benefit of all the solutions for dealing with waste.
- In 2020 the UK reused 3.4 million furniture and electrical items, which was 111,664 tonnes of products and 123,236 tonnes of CO2.
- Model of reuse that could be utilised were a physical shop, pop-up shops, auctions, a Hub like at Swanton Road and working with partners such as Precycle.
- 2 repair events had been held in 2022 in Amersham, Buckinghamshire which had been continued by the local community.
- Repair built on FCCs re-use portfolio.
- 230 councils had declared a climate emergency and reuse and repair would help to combat this.
- The Environment Bill requires the Secretary of State to set legally binding targets for resource efficiency and waste reduction by 31 Oct 2022.
- Re3 would build on commercial opportunities and deliver increased social value.
- Continue delivering and developing the current commercial arrangements and pop-up events.
- Consideration of a local shop needed to be fully investigated.
- Introducing repair cafés into the 3 council areas would be considered.

Arising from the Boards comments and questions regarding the presentation, the following points were made:

- The £1.7m was given direct to charities as a profit share.
- Each shop ran as an individual business which each shop delivering a reasonable amount of profit.
- There needed to be good feed stock for a reuse shop, which was available at the re3 locations.
- There was good demand for a reuse shop following on from the pop-up events.
- There were a number of empty shop units in all three council boroughs.
- It was suggested that there be scope to look at local charity networks first.
- A bike storage facility was due to be opened in Reading under the Primark headquarters, which would be developed to have resale and repair included.
- The majority of bikes received were mainly children's bikes. Often any adult bikes received were bike parts.
- Not all charities that FCC worked with had an existing shop.

It was felt that the Board should get behind the idea of a reuse shop and that it would be unwise not to take this forward in the current climate.

The Chair requested that the presentation be circulated with Members and any feedback be sent to Oliver Burt.

**RESOLVED** that

- i. Members note the contents of the briefing.
- ii. Members indicate which of the options, if any, they would like officers and the Contractor to explore further, with the intention of returning to a subsequent re3 Board meeting with proposals.

## 15. **Progress Report**

The Board received a report briefing them on progress in the delivery of the re3 Joint Waste PFI Contract.

The report covered:

- User Satisfaction Survey
- Recycling Centre Booking System
- re3 and Council Performance Statistics
- Recycling Centre Bag Splitting
- Fire in the Material Recycling Facility
- Community Compost Scheme
- Communications

The annual User Satisfaction Survey for the re3 Recycling Centres had been conducted in autumn 2022. This was an annual survey and was an online survey to be completed after a visit. The survey was run until similar number of responses had been received as the previous year. Responses were similar as the previous year, with satisfaction falling at Smallmead by 1% to 90% and rising at Longshot Lane by 1% to 89%.

The same questions regarding the booking system had been asked as the previous year. At Smallmead the percentage of residents who said that it was easier to recycle with the booking system in place declined slightly, whilst the number of residents who said that they sometimes forget to cancel their unwanted bookings increased. However, both sites saw a decline in the percentage of users who found it hard to get a slot when they needed one and fewer users said that they preferred being able to come to the Recycled Centres whenever they liked or that they disliked planning their trip in advance.

At the re3 Board meeting in July 2022, Members received a detailed presentation on the current performance of the booking system, user satisfaction statistics and suggestions for changes. Members requested some further information, and this was presented during the meeting in September 2022 at which it was agreed to decide whether the booking system should further be retained at the January 2022 meeting.

Following the Board meeting in September 2022, Members considered several options for supplementing the Booking System. The options and the summarised discussion were detailed within the report.

A number of new and older members at Reading Borough Council had raised concerns about the booking system and as a result 2 briefing sessions for members had been held. Following this Councillor Page had sent communication to the Board detailing the upshot of the internal conversations being had. Overall Reading Borough Council had overall sympathy for the retention of the system and benefits of it, however there were issues surrounding digital exclusion especially with Reading being one of the Boroughs with the highest number of foreign languages spoken within Berkshire. So, with the high turnover of residents and linguistic challenges it was important for the information to be as clear and upto date as possible.

It was discussed that a question should be included within the Council's wider corporate surveys to why residents didn't use the recycling centres.

It was confirmed by Oliver Burt, that the a-d detailed at 5.13 in the report was more a reflection of the correspondence that had happened with members following the September 2022 meeting.

Bracknell Forest Council's view was that following the user survey residents were pleased with the current booking arrangement as the traffic congestion at the Longshot Lane site had eased and slots were readily available to book online and via the council's customer contact centre.

Wokingham Borough Council also didn't want the queues to reappear and got the point that having non bookable days could cause an issue and reintroducing queues. Generally, it was thought that the whole system was working well, and complaints were not received in regards to the booking of slots.

One complaint had been received from a resident who had booked but had visited on the wrong day and had been turned away. It was asked if there was flexibility in regard to this. Sarah Innes stated that the staff would use their own discretion and judgement in these instances, but more guidance could be issued if required.

Oliver Burt stated that the packages of options that the Board had been asked to consider would ensure that the system could be used to the best of its ability and be as flexible as possible.

It was requested that an update report on items a & b at 5.13 in the report be brought back to the Board later in the year, to see how they had been taken forward.

It was also requested that the inclusion of a question for non-users of the recycling centres be raised with whomever was responsible for the corporate surveys at each Council.

The provisional recycling rates for April – November 2022 were presented within the report. At all 3 Councils there was a decrease from the same period in 2021.

At the Joint Waste Disposal Board meeting in September 2022, Officers proposed that the activity be recommenced following Covid, alongside additional activity to help educate residents about the recyclable content of their black bag waste. Members considered the proposal and requested that the costs of the activity be reviewed.

Officers have liaised with the Contractor and following a breakdown of the costs and income it showed that there is a net cost of approximately £40k. This was based on the tonnages and types of waste sorted in 2019 and assumed that there would be one member of staff working full time at each Recycling Centre. As a result of the net cost, Officers do not recommend that the bag splitting operation be recommenced in its previous format and have proposed that alternative proposals be considered with the Contractor and if a financially beneficial option can be found, Officers will bring a recommendation back to the board.

Officers were currently liaising with the Contractor in regard to reviewing the Service Delivery Plans, with the details of any amendments being brought to the March meeting, for approval by the Joint Waste Disposal Board. The Contractor would also take the same list to their own board for agreement.

On the 28 November 2022, staff at the Material Recycling Facility noticed smoke rising from within the mixed dry recyclables, and the Smallmead site was evacuated. Staff were able to move the affected waste to an outside quarantine bay, where it was doused with water by the fire brigade and then sent for disposal at Lakeside Energy from Waste.

A battery was suspected to have been the cause which had been incorrectly placed in the MDR. Officers have facilitated some filming in relation to battery fires to increase awareness with the public and would support the Contractor and Council teams to continue to promote correct disposal.

The re3 Partnership launched the Community re3Grow scheme in 2022 which ran from April – October and 1400 bags have been given to local community groups. In return, evidence of how the compost had been used had been provided. As fewer bags were allocated than were purchased for the project, Officers proposed to relaunch the scheme in February 2023. Prior to relaunching the scheme Officers would reach out to any groups who were allocated compost in 2022 but did not collect it.

Following on from the fire in November several messages on the safe disposal of batteries had been shared with the residents via re3 social media channels and newsletter. Residents had been urged to dispose of batteries separately at the designated places and never place them with their recycling nor in residual waste bins. Re3 hosted TV crews at their facilities on two occasions in November and December to highlight the serious risk of fires that could be caused by inappropriate battery disposal.

Work was currently being undertaken with the Recycle Your Electricals to develop assets that focus on Vape disposal as these were relatively new and there were many unknowns. These would be shared with the Councils Teams and residents as soon as possible.

re3 were supporting a new study, led by the University of Reading that focused on recycling food packaging. The project includes running a workshop to find out what key stage 2 children (aged 7 to 11 years) already knew about recycling food packaging.

Adverts with a food waste reduction theme had been placed in the council magazines, which were distributed to Bracknell and Reading residents and festive communications activities directed at primary school children had been prepared and shared with local schools, in time for Christmas.

The successful public group tours of the Material Recycling Facility in Reading had recommenced after being suspended due to Covid safety rules. The tours were facilitated by the Contractor and supported by re3 Officers and had great feedback.

The overall social media followers count currently stood at over 8,000 across all networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), with Facebook being the most prominent and the most engaging platform.

The re3 Recycling Centre newsletter remained an effective and far-reaching communications tool, currently allowing to engagement with over 47k subscribers. The opening rate remains very high and above the industry average suggesting that residents found this tool very useful. The newsletter was issued at least once a month. With residents receiving essential information on safe and efficient use of the recycling centres, and also detailed urgent changes to the service such as a notice of closure due to the Queen's Funeral.

The re3cyclopedia app had been in use for four years and had been serving residents well. However, following research, an alternative app had been identified that could replace the current app. The new app had more extensive scanning capability and would include some additional features for example bin days notifications. The Officer would be liaising with the Board Members and the Waste Teams in due course.

In response to the residents' feedback received in the User Satisfaction Survey (2021), re3 had been looking at improving maps of the facility. re3 was also looking to provide residents with a virtual tour of the facilities which would include 360 degrees images.

The re3 Marketing and Communications Officer would like to propose a partnership wide anti-litter campaign. The campaign would utilise an existing national app that incentivises litter-pickers. The collaboration between re3 and the council waste and street cleansing teams would be a key to achieve results. The details of the campaign will be discussed with the Board Members and the Waste Team due course.

It was agreed that a partnership wide anti-litter campaign approach was a good idea to take forward.

Wokingham had an adopt a street program which ran itself and had volunteers looked after their streets, Reading also had an adopt a street program and had a similar approach.

Vapes were an ongoing issue, it was concluded that they shouldn't go into the residual waste. This was a national problem, and at the recycling centres there would be a separate bin for recycling vapes to show they are a different waste stream. Having bring back bins for electrical items could be discussed, however collection banks might not be a safe option as this may cause fires to occur. It was suggested that research be undertaken with the contractor, and it be looked at to see what others are doing, and a report be brought back to the board.

Soft plastics were being looked at and was detailed in the Environmental Act for the Councils to be able to collect in 2026 – if not later. The funding stream had not yet been turned on, although an announcement was expected imminently. It was important to ensure there was a secure market. The Board would be briefed as and when there was an update.

**RESOLVED** that

- i. Members note the contents of the report.
- ii. Members determine whether the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board wishes to retain or remove the booking system.
- iii. Members indicate their support for the options to supplement the Booking System, as described at 5.13.
- iv. That Members instruct Officers to relaunch the Community Compost Scheme as stated at 5.41.

**16. Exclusion of Public and Press**

That pursuant to Regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 8 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

**17. Finance Report**

The Board received the Finance Report which briefed the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on the Partnership's current financial position and to advise on the final budget for the financial year 2023/24.

When discussing the proposed Agenda-Setting Meeting, it was suggested that this could consist of representatives from each authority on a rotated basis, and that the meeting would be held via Teams.

**RESOLVED** that:

- i. Members note the Partnership's financial position for the current year.
- ii. Members approve the Partnerships Final draft of the Budget for 2023/24.

- iii. Members note the HWRC patronage allocations for FY23/24. These were obtained from the Booking System data for the period 1st Nov 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2022.
- iv. Members approve the commencement of an Agenda-Setting Meeting.
- v. Members endorse the proposed quarterly Waste Management Risk Forum.

18. **Date of the Next Board Meeting**

Thursday 2 March 2023 at Wokingham Borough Council.

19. **AOB**

At the last Board meetings, Members agreed to write about the situation with POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants - chemicals applied to soft furnishings as flame retardants).

The letter had been circulated the Board Members prior to the meeting and was not massively different from similar correspondence by waste bodies and associations, but the timing of this correspondence is considered important for the councils and was important to communicate these views to residents.

It was suggested that the letter be copied to EA and DEFRA officers as well as the Minister.

Oliver requested that any amendments and responses be sent back to him within the next 24 hours so that the letter could be sent as soon as possible.

**CHAIRMAN**

**TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023**

**PROGRESS REPORT**  
**Report of the re3 Project Director**

**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 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 That Members indicate how they would like Officers to proceed in relation to the potential introduction of banks for the collection of small electrical appliances, as described at 5.15.
- 2.3 That Members indicate which of the reuse options, listed at 5.33, they would like Officers to explore further, with the intention of returning to a subsequent re3 Board meeting with proposals.
- 2.4 That Members review the proposed revisions to charges for non-household waste, shown at 5.37, and confirm if these should be implemented to deliver full cost recovery.
- 2.5 That Members instruct Officers to allocate compost under the relaunched community scheme, on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to appropriate allocation between the councils and the fulfilment of the agreed criteria.
- 2.6 That Members agree a date for a first agenda setting meeting as described at 5.50.

**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 IN RELATION TO WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**re3 and Council Performance Statistics**

5.1 The provisional recycling rates for April 2022 – January 2023 are presented below, alongside a comparison with the full year of 2021/22.

	<b>2021/22 April-March</b>	<b>2022/23 April-January</b>	<b>Decrease</b>
BFC	56.2%	54.6%	1.6%
RBC	51.5%	49.5%	2.0%
WBC	54.2%	53.2%	1.0%

- 5.2 Graphs setting out the quarterly performance have been included in Appendix One.
- 5.3 In Bracknell and Reading the residual waste tonnages in Qtr3 (October-December) were similar to those received the same period last year. In Wokingham residual waste tonnages were still lower than seen last year, but as recycling tonnages were down by a similar percentage, an equivalent recycling rate was achieved.
- 5.4 In each council, compostable waste remains an area in which fewer tonnes are generally being collected. (In Wokingham, however, it should be noted that a suspension of the green waste service took place in October 2021 resulting in more garden waste tonnages being received in Qtr3 compared to the same period of 2022).
- 5.5 A full analysis for 2022/23, including a breakdown by material stream, will be presented to the Joint Waste Disposal Board at the next meeting, in June.

### **Waste Tracking**

- 5.6 Since 2004, Local Authorities have had to report their waste data to Government via the Waste Data Flow System. This includes the tonnages of waste collected and details of how and where each tonne is treated. Amongst other things, this is used to facilitate benchmarking and to monitor progress towards targets.
- 5.7 In addition, operators holding Environmental Permits must complete quarterly waste returns (about the waste they have received) and consignee returns (covering any hazardous waste).
- 5.8 Later in 2023, or in 2024, these systems are due to be replaced by a digital waste tracking service.
- 5.9 The waste tracking service is designed to provide information about waste transfer, movements and activities in a single place, and to provide 'real-time' information. Officers understand that waste from kerbside collections will need to be recorded at the point at which it arrives at the receiving site and the site operator will have to record what subsequently happens to it.
- 5.10 Defra is building the system up gradually and it is understood that they will work on plans for local authority usage and provision of data in the first half of 2023. Officers will seek to be part of the discussions so that the implications for data entry and monitoring can be better understood.

### **WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Banks**

- 5.11 At the January meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board, Members instructed Officers to investigate the idea of using a network of recycling banks to collect small electrical appliances. Such banks would provide a convenient service for residents, which could encourage them to dispose of electrical items in the correct manner. This in turn could help to maximise the recycling rate and reduce the risk of fire at the re3 facilities.
- 5.12 Officers have spoken to three local authorities who currently use banks to collect these items. Of the three, only one advised of issues with fires in the banks. These fires were not caused by the electrical items themselves but instead were caused by vandalism. It was therefore recommended that any re3 banks should be situated in locations with high footfall and good lighting.

- 5.13 The local authorities were also able to advise that they had had no issues with theft from the banks and that the banks are well used. However, some fly-tipping (particularly of WEEE too large to go in the banks) does occur.
- 5.14 Officers have consequently sought an indication of the costs of providing and emptying the banks from the reprocessor who currently collects these items from the recycling centres. At the time of writing this report, it is understood that there would be a monthly fee per bank of around £18. This information has been used to inform an expression of interest in relation to the Material Focus WEEE fund. Costs for monitoring and communication (which could be used to help discourage fly-tipping, as well as to promote correct use of the banks) have also been factored in.
- 5.15 At the time of the JWDB meeting in March, Officers should know if re3 has been invited to submit a full application in relation to funding for this project. If this invitation has been received, it is recommended that Members instruct Officers to complete this and to provide a briefing on the outcome. If this has not been received, Officers would recommend starting with a trial of a smaller number of banks so that the benefits in the re3 area can be fully assessed.

### **Recycling of Flexible Plastic Packaging**

- 5.16 At the January Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board, Members asked Officers to investigate options for recycling flexible plastic packaging.
- 5.17 As Members may be aware, a small number of Councils are currently trialling collections of plastic films via the Flexible Plastic Fund 'FlexCollect' Project. This project follows the proposal in the Defra consultation on Consistency for these items to be collected by all local authorities no later than March 2027. It seeks to understand a range of factors including: the volume of flexible packaging arising from households, the impacts of collecting this material on other recyclables, the success of various communications and the costs and challenges of collecting, sorting and reprocessing this.
- 5.18 The Councils taking part in the project are required to supply a range of data to help inform best practice and, in return, benefit from funding and project management support.
- 5.19 The FlexCollect team are currently looking for more Councils to take part in the trial and Officers have expressed an interest on behalf of the re3 Partnership. A meeting has subsequently taken place so that the Delivery Manager for the project could visit the MRF (Material Recycling Facility) and a discussion could take place about the practicalities of sorting, storing and reprocessing the waste. Subject to the outcomes of testing in the MRF, the wishes of the re3 Board, and the desire of the FlexCollect team to pursue the project with re3, further discussions will take place with the waste collection teams to identify a potential trial location.
- 5.20 Officers will keep Members updated as the discussion progresses.

### **Booking System Translations**

- 5.21 At the Joint Waste Disposal Board meeting of January 2023, Members agreed to retain the booking system at the Recycling Centres. A variety of ways to supplement the booking system were discussed at this time.
- 5.22 One way to help minimise the risk of digital exclusion is to provide translations into other languages. Officers have previously investigated different routes via which this

would be possible and have now requested that the system provider add Google Translate to the booking form. Officers understand that this will provide options for the webform (including introductory text, booking questions and confirmation page) to be translated into most other languages.

- 5.23 Officers will work with the system provider to ensure that the function is located prominently on the form. It is expected that this work will be completed by early March.

### **Links Between Booking Systems and Fly-tipping**

- 5.24 In 2022, DEFRA funded a project to examine whether there was a link between a national increase in fly-tipping and the use of booking systems at recycling centres.
- 5.25 A company conducted surveys and interviews with local authorities; and re3 Officers contributed information about the experience of the partnership through these routes. Fly-tipping statistics were also examined in detail for six local authority areas and a literature review was conducted.
- 5.26 A report (*'HWRC booking systems and incidents of fly-tipping – research into possible links'*) was published in January 2023 setting out the findings and conclusions from the project.
- 5.27 The report noted that no academic literature was found which provided evidence of a link between fly-tipping and booking systems. The report authors suggested that a lot of media coverage had been generated focussing on feelings and instincts, rather than evidence. In addition, no local authorities who had a booking system (or who previously had a booking system and then removed it), felt that their booking system had influenced fly-tipping numbers.
- 5.28 The report concluded that “a link between fly-tipping and booking systems cannot be ruled out, but from a look at the data there is clearly no indication that such a link exists.”
- 5.29 Most booking systems at recycling centres were introduced in response to the Covid pandemic and the report surmises that the pandemic itself, and its impact on waste tonnages, may have affected the fly-tipping statistics.

### **HWRC (Household Waste Recycling Centre) Reuse Options**

- 5.30 At the JWDB meeting of January 2023, Members received a report from Officers, and presentation from the re3 Contractor, about the current reuse activities undertaken at the re3 facilities and the potential for future expansion to divert items from the waste stream.
- 5.31 Members will recall that the report set out some of the benefits of reuse. These spanned a range of categories including environmental, social and financial.
- 5.32 Following the Contractor’s presentation, Members were invited to consider whether there were ideas and opportunities that Officers, and the contractor, should explore further.
- 5.33 Some of the new options mentioned or discussed were as follows:
- Repair workshops
  - Upcycling

- 'Libraries' (Through which a range of items could be borrowed).
- Permanent reuse shops (for instance at an offsite location)
- Online reuse shops

5.34 It is recommended that Members confirm which (if any) of the above options they would like Officers to investigate and subsequently report back on.

### Review of HWRC Charges

5.35 As a result of increased costs, Officers have reviewed the prices being charged for disposal of non-household waste at the re3 recycling centres.

5.36 Current prices are designed to recover the cost of handling and disposing of non-household waste and are non-profit making. For construction and demolition waste disposed of by residents, the charges also ensure that the person benefitting from the works funds the cost, rather than this being covered by all taxpayers.

5.37 As Members have previously requested that prices be rounded, there are some materials for which an increase in costs is effectively already covered. However, there are a small number of materials where an increase would be unavoidable if costs are going to be fully covered in 2023/24. Officers therefore propose the following amendments to the pricing structure.

User	Material	Unit	Current Price	Proposed Price (where different)
Residents and Businesses	Plasterboard	25L	£1.50	
	Rubble	25L	£2.50	£3.00
	Soil	25L	£2.50	£3.00
	Asbestos	20kg	£8.00	
	Gas Canisters	Per item	£6.00	
Businesses	Bagged General Waste	25L	£1.50	
	Garden Waste	25L	£1.00	
	Wood	25L	£1.00	
	Paper, Cardboard, Tins, Cans, Plastic Bottles, Pots, Tubs and Trays	25L	£0	
	Glass Bottles and jars	25L	£0	
	Scrap Metal	25L	£0	
	Textiles	25L	£0	
	Bulky Residual Items	Per item	£7.00	£8.50
	Chairs, Armchairs, Stools, Cane sofas	Per item	£9.50	
	Sofas	Per item	£22.00	
	Recliners and Metal Framed Sofas	Per item	£46.00	
	Small Electrical Items	Per item	£1.00	
	Large Electrical Items (WEEE)	Per item	£4.50	£5.50
	Computers/TVs	Per item	£1.50	£2.00
	Fridge/Freezers	Per item	£5.00	£6.00
	Commercial Fridge/Freezers	Per item	£65.00	
	Ink Cartridges	Per item	£1.00	
	Engine Oil	5L	£1.00	

- 5.38 Members will recall that charges for non-household soil and rubble were previously set at £3 per 25L bag between October 2018 and April 2021.
- 5.39 Any agreed changes to the charges will be implemented from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. Changes to the prices would be updated on the re3 website, site signage and the booking webform.

#### **Actions from the HWRC User Satisfaction Survey**

- 5.40 The annual User Satisfaction Survey for the re3 Recycling Centres was conducted at the end of 2022 and the statistical results were presented to the meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board in January.
- 5.41 Members will recall that there was a high level of satisfaction at the re3 sites. At Smallmead the number of respondents rating their overall satisfaction levels as 4 or 5 out of 5 was 90% whilst at Longshot Lane, this figure was 89%.
- 5.42 In addition to the questions that generated numerical outputs, respondents were also asked if there was anything re3 could do to improve their next visit. Officers have analysed the feedback to identify some areas for further consideration and liaised with the contractor to propose some suitable actions. These are set out in Appendix Two, alongside some indicative timescales.
- 5.43 Officers will monitor implementation to ensure that high levels of satisfaction are maintained at the site. Officers also plan to include a summary of this table on the re3 website, so that residents can see how the Partnership is responding to their feedback.

#### **Community Compost Scheme**

- 5.44 At the January meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board, Members agreed to relaunch the community compost scheme with the bags of re3Grow left over from the 2022 project. Through the scheme, local community groups will again be able to apply to receive free bags of compost to help promote environmental principles, community activity and local improvement works.
- 5.45 During the first phase of the project, it was agreed that compost would be available for a set number of months, and a given number of bags would be available in each of these months for Councillors to allocate. When the project relaunches, Officers recommend that the compost be allocated on a first come-first serve basis, subject to the applicants meeting the advertised criteria, and there being a fair split between the authorities. This should help to minimise administration and speed up the approval process for users.
- 5.46 Community groups who were awarded compost in 2022, but who had not received it at the start of 2023, were approached in February to confirm if they still required the bags. Following this, Officers are able confirm that the number of bags available for allocation under the relaunched scheme are as follows:

Bracknell Forest: 1365  
Reading: 1108  
Wokingham: 494

- 5.47 If Members approve the recommendation at 5.45 above, Officers will keep Members informed as to the groups approved and the number of bags remaining.

#### **Agenda Setting**

- 5.48 As previously reported to the re3 Board, an audit of the re3 arrangements was completed in 2022.
- 5.49 Members will recall that one of the audit recommendations was for a section on risk management to be presented at meetings of the Joint Waste Disposal Board. Alongside this, it was proposed that the Chair of the Board should set an agenda and action plans for the quarterly meetings. This should enable the Board to look further ahead and mitigate against potential risks.
- 5.50 Officers consider that an Agenda Setting meeting, chaired by the Chairperson, may assist in forward planning. Members are therefore invited to agree a date for the first meeting.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY**

### Head of Legal Services

- 6.1 None for this report.

### Corporate Finance Business Partner

- 6.2 None for this report.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 None.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 None

### Climate Impact Assessment

- 6.5 None.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

### 7.1 Principal Groups Consulted

Not applicable.

### 7.2 Method of Consultation

Not applicable.

### 7.3 Representations Received

Not applicable.

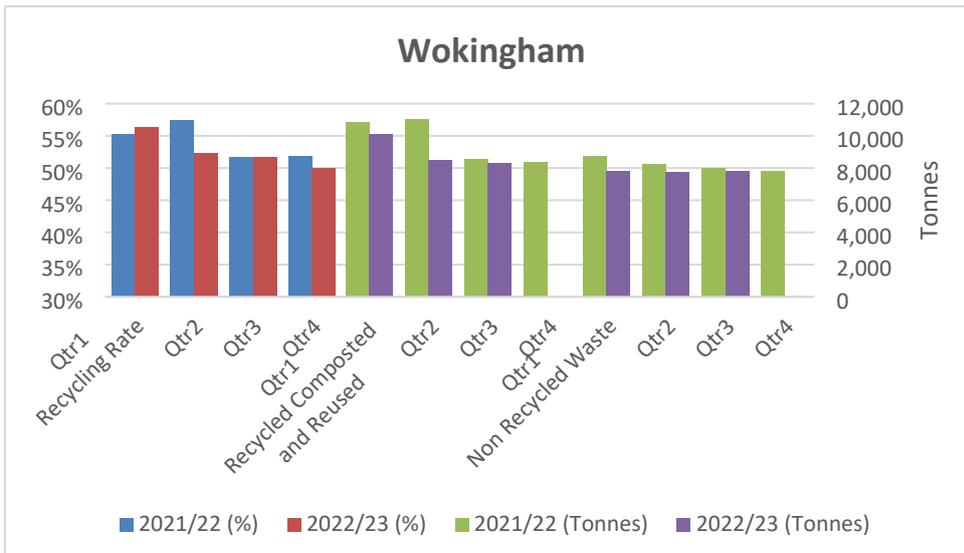
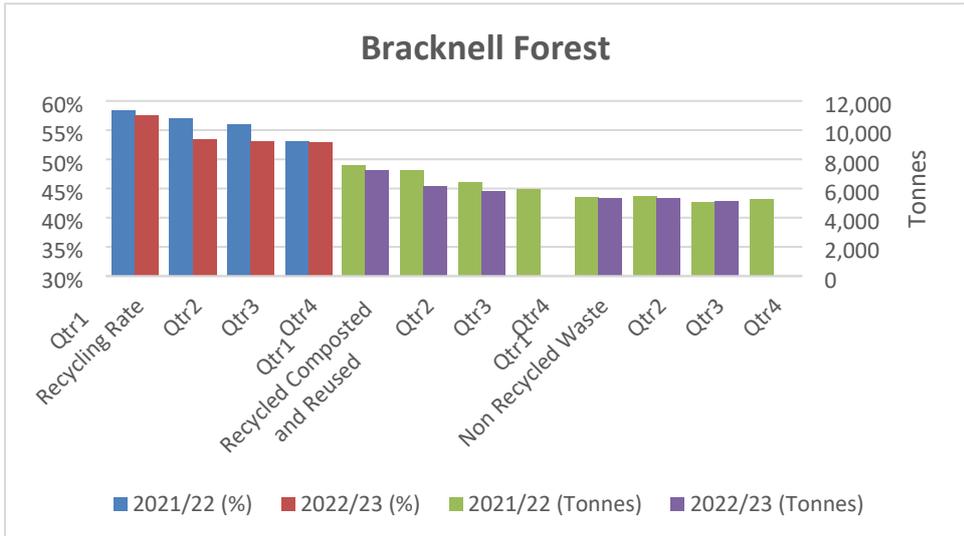
### Background Papers

JWDB Reports - January 2023

Contacts for further information

Sarah Innes, re3 Monitoring and Performance Officer  
0118 937 3459  
sarah.innes@reading.gov.uk

Oliver Burt, re3 Project Director  
0118 937 3990  
oliver.burt@reading.gov.uk



Please note that the Qtr4 recycling rate for 2022/23 only currently reflects performance for January.

## Appendix Two – Actions from the HWRC User Satisfaction Survey

Topic	User Feedback	Re3 Action/Response	Due Date
Bookings and Access	Remove the need for proof of address and introduce a car registration system	Proof of address is checked to ensure that re3 taxpayers are not funding the disposal of waste from other areas. This task is carried out by meet and greet staff who also fulfil a range of other functions (including taking payments, identifying non-authorized trade waste and checking bookings). We will talk to other councils who use digital services in place of these meet and greet functions to consider the potential advantages and disadvantages.	Autumn 2023
	Allow more access at short notice	1) We will reduce the booking policy from 1hr in advance to 30 mins in advance. 2) We constantly keep the number of bookings under review and will assess whether additional slots can be added.	Spring 2023
	Enable later cancellation of unwanted appointments	We will reduce the cancellation period from 3hrs to 1hr.	Complete
	Review missing bookings on the iPads	Our check-in system is in the process of being upgraded and it is anticipated that this will resolve the occasional problems with staff being unable to find a booking on the system	Spring 2023
	Make the booking form easier to find online	We will review options to make the link easier to find on the re3 website.	Spring 2023
Parking and Direction	Increase visibility of parking spaces in top half of the Longshot Lane site to reduce queuing	Officers will liaise with the Contractor to investigate potential options.	TBC
	Review signage for smaller items (e.g. batteries, paint)	Officers are currently liaising with the Contractor in relation to a full review of site signage.	TBC
	Prevent vehicles from parking on Island Road	Officers will discuss options with the highways team at Reading Borough Council.	Spring 2023
	Provide more direction for visitors when parking in the Smallmead HWRC	The Contractor will cover this point in a toolbox talk to staff. Staff will be encouraged to provide direction to vehicles who cause obstructions to others.	TBC

	Produce an online map of the site	We will update the map on site and look to add a virtual tour and map of the site online. This should help residents to plan their visit in advance.	Spring 2023
Other	Provide more assistance in unloading vehicles and ensure staff are welcoming	1). The Contractor will cover this point in a toolbox talk to the staff. 2) The Contractor will look to give staff the opportunity to undertake qualifications in customer care 3) Officers will implement a 'mystery shopper' scheme to help ensure that agreed policies are being implemented consistently. 4) Quarterly sessions with the meet and greet teams will take place so feedback can be given and received.	TBC
	Remove or lower the barriers for garden waste at Longshot Lane	The barriers are in place to help keep walkways clear of waste and trip hazards and to enable maximum use of the recycling area. The barriers are set at 1.1m high which is the minimum legal requirement. This is the same height as the wall at the top of the facility over which general waste is deposited. We recognise that the yellow barriers are narrower than the concrete walls on site and will work with the contractor to investigate ways in which the design of the barriers could be improved. In the meantime, residents are encouraged to ask staff for assistance if this is needed.	TBC
	Review signage at the reuse areas to make it clearer which items are acceptable	Changes to the reuse signage have been agreed with the Contractor and the new signs will be printed and displayed on site.	TBC
	Recycle and reuse more items at the site – particularly plastic films.	Officers will review options for collections of plastic films at the recycling centres alongside participation in the FlexCollect project.	Summer 2023

This page is intentionally left blank

TO: **JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD**  
**2nd March 2023**

**COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**  
**Report of the re3 Project Director**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on the Partnership’s communications activities.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 **That Members note the contents of this report.**

**3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

3.1 None for this report.

**4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

4.1 The purpose of the recommendation is to brief Members in relation to progress in delivery of communications activities.

**5 PROGRESS IN RELATION TO COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES**

**re3Grow Community Compost scheme**

5.1 The re3grow community compost scheme was directed at local organisations and schools. It is planned to be relaunched in early March 2023.

5.2 The scheme will be promoted to the public via local news outlets, social media, newsletters, and directly to potential beneficiaries.

5.3 The press release and social media assets are currently being prepared and will be available to use by the councils’ communications officers. A sample promotional banner is shown below.



5.4 Continuous advertising and promotion of the scheme runs throughout the project. This includes a bi-weekly update of the groups which benefited from the re3grow compost last year.

- 5.5 Simultaneously, feedback and photos received will be gathered and shared publicly to increase awareness of the scheme.
- 5.6 Sales of re3Grow compost, to residents, will commence at the end of February. A new poster, promoting its features was produced and will be displayed at both sites. the new poster is shown below.



### Contamination awareness

- 5.7 A set of infographics, presenting the current contamination level in each Councils' recycling bins have been produced. It includes environmental impacts and costs, and the infographic for each council can be found at Appendix One.
- 5.8 For the last year (Jan – Dec 2022) contamination levels ranged between 12.3% - 19.8% across the three Councils. The most frequent contaminants are bagged general waste, plastic film, and glass.
- 5.9 Across re3, £487k could have been saved last year, if all items were sorted correctly. Incorrect items deposited in the recycling bins also impact the quality of recyclables and reduce the efficiency of the sorting processes. It is estimated that last year, 281 operational hours were lost due to processing contaminated items.
- 5.10 The infographics will be periodically updated and should help residents to understand the importance of the quality of the dry recyclables delivered to the Material Recycling Facility and will facilitate further communications assets.

## Vapes recycling

- 5.11 Vapes represent a risk, within waste management, because they have been known to cause fires. The re3 councils have experience of fires cause by batteries at the shared facilities and in refuse trucks. Single use vapes are also a source of litter.
- 5.12 The re3 Communications and Marketing Officer shared with council Officers some guidance, social media assets and a press release that focused on vape devices disposal and recycling.



- 5.13 A dedicated container and poster (Appendix Two) are to be displayed at the HWRCs, to raise awareness.
- 5.14 Suggested guidance to residents is to recycle vape pens, including single use & disposable devices via the take back schemes that should be offered via vapes retailers. Alternatively, residents can also recycle vapes at the Recycling Centres.
- 5.15 re3 Marketing and Communications Officer has been in contact with colleagues in Trading Standards and is now collaborating across the councils to ascertain the next steps forward.
- 5.16 It has been established that the majority of local vape retailers have not set up the take back schemes. Trading Standards believe this is due to lack of information in relation to their legal obligations. The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has been appointed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to enforce the regulations in the UK in relation to these obligations.
- 5.17 As the next step, the re3 Communications and Marketing Officer intends to approach the OPSS to seek further guidance. Trading Standards have advised it might be helpful for re3 to support retailers by contacting them and providing guidance on how to set up the take back scheme. Further support could also be given by funding the purchase of posters and stickers promoting the take back scheme.

## Recycling Centres inclusion campaign

- 5.18 A press release informing the public that the booking system has been retained has been shared with relevant Officers.

- 5.19 The online booking system webform will be enhanced by integrating translation services for over 100 languages. This new feature will aim at improving accessibility and clarity for residents whose first language is not English.
- 5.20 The new feature will be advertised using social media advertising, aiming at multicultural audiences living locally.
- 5.21 An advert presenting some inclusive services such as Paint Reuse and the Reuse Area were placed in the Bracknell's magazine: "Town and Country", as shown in Appendix Three. Adverts will be placed in similar magazines in the coming months.
- 5.22 Further research and analysis will be done to map areas of low usage and to advertise the service in those areas. Potential reservations and concerns of residents are also being explored. Target groups under consideration are residents who:
- have recently moved to the area.
  - live in rented and shared accommodation.
  - have low literacy levels.
  - have low technical skills.
  - have a disability or impairment.
  - live in a deprived area.
- 5.23 After consideration, a range of visual assets will be produced and trialled using social media advertising to reach specific groups.
- 5.24 An opportunity to advertise the services amongst listed target groups will be explored by reaching out to other council departments for example social care and housing.

#### **Safety at HWRCs campaign**

- 5.25 re3 is taking part in the trial safety campaign launched by the FCC Environment across their four contracts. The campaign aims at reducing the number of accidents on site.
- 5.26 The campaign was launched at the end of January and included issuing the press release, displaying posters at both sites and distributing leaflets and business cards to residents (Appendix Four).
- 5.27 Assets contain a QR code to the dedicated website that lists the site rules and allows the public to report any near misses on site. By mid-February, the website was accessed over 100 times across all testing areas.
- 5.28 Media release was published by [Wokingham Today](#) and [Reading Today](#) outlets.

#### **Anti-litter campaign**

- 5.29 The re3 Marketing and Communications Officer presented details of an anti-litter campaign that utilises an existing national app called LitterLotto. These incentivise residents to pick up and dispose of litter correctly.
- 5.30 The full scope of the campaign has not gained approval from all partnering councils, however re3 is keen to support any council keen to trial the tool.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY**

Head of Legal Services

6.1 None for this report.

Corporate Finance Business Partner

6.2 None for this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 None.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 None

Climate Impact Assessment

6.5 None.

**7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 Principal Groups Consulted

Not applicable.

7.2 Method of Consultation

Not applicable.

7.3 Representations Received

Not applicable.

Background Papers

None for this report

Contacts for further information

Monika Bulmer, re3 Communications and Marketing Officer  
0118 937 3460  
monika.bulmer@reading.gov.uk

Oliver Burt, re3 Project Director  
0118 937 3990  
oliver.burt@reading.gov.uk

Appendix One

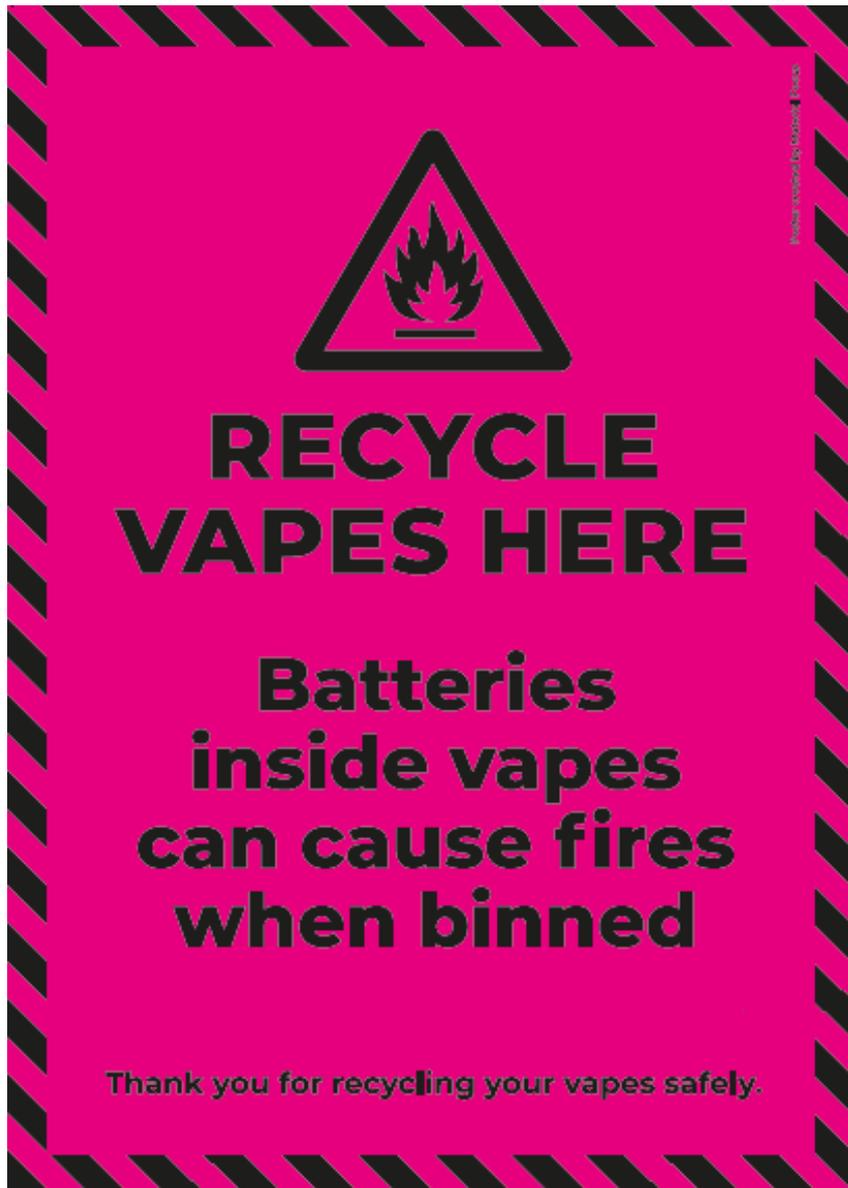








Appendix Two



Appendix Three

**IS IT TIME FOR  
A SPRING CLEAN  
AND DECLUTTER?  
CHECK OUT  
OUR SERVICES**

**RECYCLING CENTRE  
LONGSHOT LANE,  
BRACKNELL**

**BOOKINGS REQUIRED  
AND AVAILABLE**

**FREE PAINT**  
TAKE TINS OF USEABLE  
WATER-BASED PAINT FOR YOUR  
MAKE-OVER PROJECTS

**REUSE AREA**  
WE WILL OFFER YOUR UNWANTED  
ITEMS TO A LOCAL CHARITY OR  
FIND THEM A NEW HOME.  
BRIC-A-BRAC, BIKES, FURNITURE, TOYS, SMALL  
ELECTRICALS AND MORE ARE ACCEPTED.

**COMPOST**  
PREPARE YOUR GARDEN WITH  
PEAT-FREE COMPOST MADE FROM  
RECYCLED GARDEN WASTE

**www.re3.org.uk**

**re3**  
zeroing in on waste

## Appendix Four

Working in partnership | re3 | FCC Environment | Bracknell Forest Council | Reading Borough Council | WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Stay safe on our site

- Drive safely**
  - Stick to the sites speed limit
  - Follow the one-way systems
  - Check your mirrors before moving
  - Always keep children under 16 and pets in cars
  - Turn off your engine when parked
- Handle waste with care**
  - No fly tipping permitted on site
  - Waste dropped on floor is a hazard - pick it up so others don't get hurt
  - Wear gloves when handling waste to prevent cutting yourself
  - Wear suitable footwear to prevent injuries on our sites
  - No throwing waste into skips from ground level - this could potentially hurt someone
  - Do not remove waste from the site - theft may lead to prosecution
- Prevent accidents**
  - Use the walkways provided
  - No smoking permitted on site
  - Report accidents / hazards / near misses to site staff
  - No climbing on gantries or in skips
- Waste handling tips**
  - Separating your waste before coming to site saves you time and means everything can be deposited in the right areas
  - Prevent unnecessary landfill by using the Reuse containers on site
- Respect our staff**
  - Staff are here to help - please do not abuse them
  - If you need assistance, please ask a member of staff

Scan me to find out more  
Visit [staysafe.fccenvironment.co.uk](http://staysafe.fccenvironment.co.uk)



### Visitor information

# Stay safe on our sites



Working in partnership | re3 | FCC Environment | Bracknell Forest Council | Reading Borough Council | WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023**

---

## **LEGISLATION UPDATE REPORT** **Report of the re3 Project Director**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief Members in relation to the emerging detail from the Environment Act 2021, as it relates to waste management.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That Members note the contents of this report.**

### **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 the emerging detail from the Environment Act 2021, as it relates to waste management. Further reports will be published, when decisions are required or in the event of any further detail which has operational or contractual significance.

### **5 LEGISLATION UPDATE**

#### **Environment Act 2021**

- 5.1 The background and context to the current legislative status can be described as follows:
- On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy which announced sweeping plans to change the way that waste is collected and treated in the UK.
  - There followed two rounds of public consultations (2020 and 2021), in which Government sought input on how the three main limbs of the strategy (Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and Waste Collection Consistency) should work. These three parts are now bracketed under the name of 'Collections and Packaging Reform' (CPR).
  - A fourth limb, which establishes a tax on plastic products that have a recycled content below 30% is already in effect but has little direct, operational impact on the councils' day to day service delivery.
  - The results of the most recent Government consultation on EPR were published on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022.
  - The results of the most recent Government consultation on DRS were published on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
  - The results of the most recent Government consultation on Waste Collection Consistency are awaited.
  - The detail of each limb has been keenly anticipated but has undoubtedly been delayed by demands on Departmental resources (e.g. Brexit preparation and the Covid-19 pandemic).

- Details of when separate parts of the forthcoming legislation and statutory guidance will become operative are included below, where that detail is known.

5.2 The purpose of the Environment Act, in so far as it relates to waste management, is the intended promotion and delivery of: (a) extended producer responsibility, to include the costs for the treatment of packaging, (b) increased recycling, (c) the simplification and increased consistency of waste collection across the UK, (d) the development of a circular economy, and (e) the reduction of litter.

5.3 There are three principal limbs in the waste-related sections of the Environment Act, presented under the umbrella title of 'Collections and Packaging Reform' (CPR). They will be discussed in the sections below, with particular reference to the elements that will directly impact on council services.

### **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**

5.4 Government wants producers of packaging to pay the full net cost of collection and treatment associated with the packaging placed into circulation. This is to encourage better overall design of packaging and systems of capture, and to promote resource circularity.

5.5 Under EPR, producers will pay modulated fees, set according to the assessed environmental impact and/or treatment cost of the packaging they put into circulation. The aggregated fees will be used to make payments to local authorities for the costs of managing packaging (ultimately replacing central funding). Government believes that fee modulation will encourage greater recyclability and packaging design, that reduces environmental impacts.

5.6 There will be some significant changes to the way that waste collection and management performance is measured. This will be important in aligning the payments through EPR with the expectations of the packaging and retail sector.

5.7 An important example of this will be in relation to waste collection performance. Councils will be assessed according to the relative 'Efficiency' and 'Effectiveness' of their service. Councils will be placed within a performance cohort, wherein their costs and their performance will be benchmarked against a 'best in class' council. Each cohort will be drawn from councils that share some similarities. Individual councils deemed to be sub-optimally 'efficient' and/or 'effective' may be presented with an Improvement Notice. When an Improvement Notice is issued, it will also identify future-year funding reductions that will be applied if the requirements of the Notice are not satisfied.

5.8 Performance will initially be assessed on modelled estimates of council costs. The scheme will eventually assess actual council costs.

5.9 There will be potentially significant changes to the way performance data is captured, and likely larger amounts of data needing to be captured. There are current statutory requirements to sample the quality of recycling delivered by the three councils to the re3 Material Recycling Facility (MRF); we expect the frequency and sample sizes to be increased as a result of the EPR requirements. In terms of waste collection, the cost of staff, vehicles, maintenance, depot space and administrative overheads are all likely to be captured for benchmarking, alongside the capture rates of council collections and recycling rates.

5.10 The arrangements will be quite different from current operating conditions and will likely mirror more commercial operating conditions.

- 5.11 The timescales are subject to change but, at present, local authorities are expecting to be presented with their initial funding allocation during the 2023/24 year.

### Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

- 5.12 A deposit, an additional sum on top of the normal sale price, will be added to in-scope packaging, at the point of sale. To encourage the return of the packaging, the deposit will be reclaimable via reverse vending machines at retailers and via smaller shops.
- 5.13 In-scope packaging will have specific labelling and iconography, to support consumers in knowing which items are part of the DRS and to identify appropriate items that require being scanned for reverse vending.
- 5.14 In-scope packing will include all Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic bottles and tins/cans (aluminium and steel) between 50 ml and 3 litres. Neither High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) nor glass bottles will be included in the DRS in England.



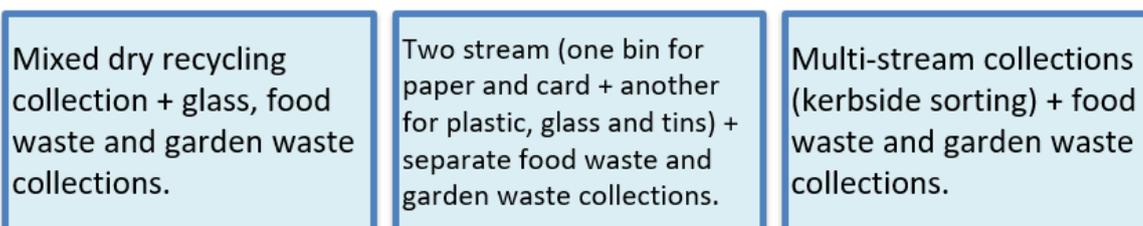
\*at time of writing we are double-checking the inclusion of 'food' tins. The most recent Government document refers to 'drinks' containers.

- 5.15 The level of the deposit will be controlled by the Deposit Management Organisation (DMO). The deposit will most likely be a sum such as £0.20 per item - a sum that has been widely referred-to throughout the consultations. The Government will set a maximum amount for the deposit, though the sum will be determined by the DMO. The deposit will apparently be applied to all single, in-scope, items and also those sold as part of a multi-pack.
- 5.16 The DMO will be an industry-based organisation, representative of companies and trade associations. Any unredeemed deposits will be used to cover the costs of the scheme.

### Waste Collection Consistency

- 5.17 It is important to note that we await the Government response to the second round of consultations on Waste Collection Consistency. The details shared below are reflective of current expectations but may be subject to change.
- 5.18 Councils will be mandated to collect newspapers and magazines, cardboard, glass bottles, plastic bottles, plastic pots/tubs/trays and steel and aluminium cans or tins. A separate food waste collection will also be required. The list of mandated materials, for councils to collect, retains materials that are in-scope for the DRS, described above.
- 5.19 Plastic film, aerosols, cartons and foil will be added to the list of mandated materials, most likely in 2027.

- 5.20 At present, the re3 councils are well-placed to comply with the requirements of waste collection consistency through the facility to process many of the waste types, through the shared arrangements. The commonly collected, 'kerbside', materials of newspapers, cardboard, plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans or tins and aerosols have been collected for many years. In 2017 the re3 MRF was amended to allow for the inclusion of plastic pots/tubs/trays and cartons. Food waste was incorporated into the shared arrangements in 2019.
- 5.21 Glass collection and plastic film collection and processing will need to be added to current services to achieve compliance.
- 5.22 Businesses will also be required to make available for collection most of the items listed above, with some flexibility according to the size of the business. This element of the legislation has not been fully pursued at the same time as for household waste but it will be introduced.
- 5.23 Councils will be required to move from their current form of waste collection to one of three service archetypes, designed by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). They are likely to be defined as follows:



- 5.24 The first archetype most resembles the collection system operated by each of the councils within the re3 partnership, save for the requirement to collect glass.
- 5.25 If a change to current service design (to adopt one of the archetypes) is not considered appropriate, there will be a process of justification that councils can pursue. It will be via enhanced form of assessment of the technical, economic and environmental practicability (TEEP) of retaining a non-compliant service design. Non-compliance and failure to satisfy TEEP criteria, may link to the assessment of efficiency and effectiveness, described above, and the level of funding allocated to a council.
- 5.26 Government consulted on whether councils should provide free garden waste collections. Many councils make a charge for the service, based on the premise that the recipients of the service should pay for it, rather than the cost being levied against all residents in an area. Government is apparently considering two options: (a) a free scheme for residents or, (b) an assessed reasonable charge, based on estimates put together by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), and pitched at about 50% of current service charges. If Government chooses to go for the first option, free garden waste collections, the re3 partner councils have estimated that they will face a budget pressure of £3.32m.

### **Potential Impacts and Opportunities**

- 5.27 It is important to recognise that the precise impacts from the Collections and Packaging Reform (CPR) package will not be known for some time, until they have operated alongside each other, and the operating environment has adapted. However, at the time of writing this report, it is clear that the suite of changes are considered to represent a significant challenge to local authorities. This section of the report will seek

to highlight some of the potential challenges and opportunities.

- 5.28 Defra recognises that the ‘full net cost’ referred to above (and in the consultations) is unlikely to equate to the full *prevailing* cost for each local authority. The benchmarking process, within cohorts of similar councils, will allocate available funding according to an assessment of what the service should cost.
- 5.29 The likelihood that an individual council will receive an Improvement Notice will be relatively high (as only one council in each cohort can be ‘best in class’). It remains to be seen how prescriptive each Notice is but local decision-making, and/or prioritising, may be affected by the process.
- 5.30 The additional cost of the deposit cannot be avoided by consumers when they buy in-scope items of packaging. There are potentially millions of UK residents who, through disability or age (or other, non-protected characteristics), may find it challenging and/or inconvenient to access and utilise a reverse vending terminal. There appears to be a potentially mistaken assumption that the admirable logistical efficiency of large retailers and producers can, and should, be replicated in the lifestyles of UK residents, for recycling purposes. Government is due to update its impact assessment for DRS at some point this year.
- 5.31 At time of writing the following examples of the proportion of the deposit, relative to the new net cost, were identified from the online sales website of a leading UK supermarket:
- 12 x 330ml Diet Coke £5.40, DRS £2.40 (33.77%)
  - Heinz Baked Beans £1.40, DRS £0.20 (12.50%)
  - Robinsons Orange Squash £1.85, DRS £0.20 (9.76%)
- 5.32 Government has decided to allow the retention of unredeemed deposits by the scheme, so that producers or retailers can reduce their costs of compliance.
- 5.33 The removal of up to 90% of plastic and metal drinks containers from recycling collections is likely to prove challenging to many councils who have contractual obligations that relate to waste composition, financial value or tonnage. It should be anticipated that Contractors may seek contractual relief and/or compensation through Change in Law (CiL) provisions. As part of the re3 response to the Government consultations on the Environment Act, in 2021, the re3 Project Team worked with the Contractor to assess the likely cost on the re3 contract across three principal areas of impact. The cost was assessed, by the Contractor to be £1.47m. The cost was derived from an assessment of the loss of income and contractual costs, in the following sums £0.58m loss of income, up to £0.43m contractual costs, £0.45m reduced tonnage costs. It is important to recognise that Government has not recognised these costs at the time of writing this report and so officers assume they will be a budget pressure until otherwise informed.
- 5.34 The co-collection of household and trade waste, where appropriate (and subject to the eventual inclusion of trade obligations, as described above) should be pursued with caution. It has hitherto been broadly good practice for a council to seek to supplement funding through discretionary commercial activity. It remains to be seen, however, whether the funding principles of forthcoming CPR arrangements will simply ‘net off’ any income from commercial activity.
- 5.35 The subsequent inclusion, within materials that councils are mandated to capture, of ‘soft’ plastics should be monitored with care. The logic of the transition has perhaps

not been fully considered by legislators. The CPR arrangements explicitly seek to encourage changes to packaging – through modulated fees which effectively penalise less recyclable packaging. It would not be efficient or effective if the councils were now to make, potentially expensive, business decisions, to capture soft plastics, only for those materials to be designed-out of circulation by Producers. That quandary may be more likely in relation to ‘soft’ plastics, whose enduring utility is arguably less than for other types of packaging.

5.36 There are also some potential areas of opportunity for councils to exploit, and risk mitigations, subject to local risk appetite. Early examples include the following:

- The re3 partnership would be well advised to consider operating its own reverse vending service, within the partnership area. It could be a way of extending access to harder to reach groups, or to position DRS at other publicly convenient locations, such as transport hubs or in neighbourhoods. This might be a way of supporting the existing investment of the councils in their sorting facility and retaining important engagement with residents.
- Alongside that, the councils should consider how waste collection can assist residents for whom DRS is either impractical, due to disability or advanced age, or even just inconvenient, such as residents who live in flats or HMOs where their capacity to store recycling (until they next go to the reverse vending machine) is reduced. This might be through pursuing the concept of a Digital DRS, as is being trialled in Wales, which could allow users to scan in-scope items at home for inclusion within the existing council collection. This approach would also help to moderate the scale of any compensation/relief that could be claimed by the Contractor to the re3 partnership (as described above).
- Waste collection is an important universal service, with high levels of recognition by residents and thus reflects on the councils as whole. Accordingly, they should prepare to be creative in both service provision and local communication, to ensure that the value of the extant waste service is not negatively impacted by the ‘market entrant’ of DRS.
- With the requirements for collections to satisfy exacting ‘efficiency and effectiveness’ standards, the development of a glass collection service should be given careful consideration. If opportunities exist to reduce costs, and/or moderate likely long lead-in times for vehicles, through working as partners, they could be worthy of exploration.

5.37 It is recommended that the council partners, seek to identify and exploit all possible opportunities to thrive within the new and still emerging legislative environment. As described above, the position of local government is not obviously bolstered by the new arrangements and that may have wider implications, beyond waste management.

5.38 Further reports will be prepared for the re3 Board as materially significant detail is release by Government (such as Secondary Legislation or Statutory Guidance) or for decision-making purposes.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY**

Head of Legal Services

6.1 None for this report.

Corporate Finance Business Partner

6.2 None for this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 None.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 None

Climate Impact Assessment

6.5 None.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 Principal Groups Consulted

Not applicable.

7.2 Method of Consultation

Not applicable.

7.3 Representations Received

Not applicable.

### Background Papers

December 2021 re3 Board

### Contacts for further information

Oliver Burt, re3 Project Director  
0118 937 3990  
oliver.burt@reading.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of  
Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive  
Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England)  
Regulations 2012.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of  
Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive  
Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England)  
Regulations 2012.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank