

Joint Waste Disposal Board

Notice of Meeting

Thursday, 11 January 2024 (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 11 January 2024 at 9.30 am** in the Council Chamber, Wokingham Borough Council. An agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Oliver Burt
Project Director

Members of the Joint Waste Disposal Board

Councillor Helen Purnell, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Mary Temperton, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Karen Rowland, Reading Borough Council
Councillor Liz Terry, Reading Borough Council
Councillor Ian Shenton, Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Lindsay Ferris, Wokingham Borough Council

Emergency Evacuation Instructions

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**Joint Waste Disposal Board
Thursday 11 January 2024 (9.30 am)
Wokingham Borough Council.**

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. **Urgent Items of Business**

To notify the Board of any items authorised by the Chairman on the grounds of urgency.
4. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board** 5 - 10

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Joint Waste Disposal Board held on 21 September 2023.
5. **Progress report** 11 - 22

To brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on progress in the delivery of the re3 Joint Waste PFI Contract.
6. **Environment Act report** 23 - 32

To provide Members of the re3 Board with a briefing on Simpler Recycling.
7. **Communications report** 33 - 42

To brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on the Partnership's communications activities since the last meeting.
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 4 & 5 which involve 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

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| <p>9. Financial management report</p> <p>To brief the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on the Partnership's current financial position.</p> | <p>43 - 62</p> |
| <p>10. Strategic Development report</p> <p>To provide Members of the re3 Board with a briefing on plans for the strategic development of the re3 Partnership and transition from the current contracted arrangements.</p> | <p>63 - 74</p> |
| <p>11. Date of the Next Board Meeting</p> <p>7 March 2024, Reading Borough Council</p> | |

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**JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
21 SEPTEMBER 2023
(9.30 - 11.41 am)**

Present: Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Mary Temperton

Reading Borough Council
Councillor Karen Rowland (Chair)
Councillor Liz Terry

Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Sarah Kerr
Councillor Ian Shenton

Officers Oliver Burt, re3 Strategic Waste Manager
Monika Bulmer, re3 Marketing & Communications Officer
Sarah Innes, re3 Performance Officer
Damian James, Bracknell Forest Council
Claire Pike, Bracknell Forest Council
Richard Bissit, Wokingham Borough Council
Graham Rasdall-Lawes, Reading Borough Council

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillor Helen Purnell, Bracknell Forest Council

43. Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Karen Rowland (Reading Borough Council) be appointed as Chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24.

44. Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Ian Shenton (Wokingham Borough Council) be appointed as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24.

45. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

46. Urgent Items of Business

There were no Urgent Items of Business.

47. Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Councillor Kerr asked that an action regarding investigating a no-plastic solution for collecting soft plastics be added to the minutes of the previous meeting.

48. Presentation from Rory Brien, General Manager re3 Ltd

The Board received a presentation from Rory Brien, General Manager for re3 from FCC on issues currently pertinent to re3 business.

Waste composition analysis had shown the percentage of waste which could have been recycled which was in waste bins, and Rory explained there was approximately £5m total savings which could have been achieved by Councils if all waste had been placed in correct containers. Re-sampling was underway for waste composition analysis for this year, and the outcome of this would be applied to waste flow forecasts across the re3 Councils to see if the potential savings figures were still relevant, taking into account fluctuation in material recycling values. This year's resampling would take into account any materials in general waste which could have been collected under the FlexCollect scheme. The outcome of the resampling would allow Councils to identify any particular waste placed in the wrong bin which could be addressed through local communications and initiatives.

Rory commented on whether near zero landfill as achievable for the re3 district. At present, lots of the landfilled waste through re3 was bulky fly-tipped materials. New legislation diverted some materials to Energy for Waste, if the material was shredded and appropriately mixed with other material. FCC were investigating whether a new shredding facility within re3 or be using an existing FCC shredding facility would deliver additional savings to Councils. Rory also commented that as re3 managed some asbestos at its sites, it was not possible to achieve absolute zero landfill but there was the potential for 99% diversion.

Members noted that re3 were looking to build on the Reuse pop-up shops in October and were working with Sue Ryder to divert as many items as possible from disposal.

Rory presented on the prevalence of single-use vapes and the incorrect disposal of them. According to surveys, only 17% of single-vape users claimed to recycle them. 700 fires per year were linked to disposed batteries and vapes, which could start fires when damaged in the general waste collection process. In the year to date, there had been 8 fires across re3 sites linked to batteries of vapes within the waste. Although none of these fires had progressed to cause serious damage, the fire service had been called three times. Once a fire was extinguished, any material which was wet could no longer be reprocessed or sold. There were concerns about what would happen if there was a large incident at either Longshot Lane or Smallmead, and the potential disruption to service could be catastrophic. It was stressed that communications with the public needed to be increased on the subject, and the correct disposal of batteries and vapes should be promoted. FCC were investigated potential single-use vape drop-off points in public places such as universities, libraries and other suitable community sites.

Members thanked Rory for his presentation and the following points were noted arising from questions:

- Members were interested to find out how re3 authorities compared with other local authorities on the waste composition analysis. It was commented that the Local Government Association may have access to this data and officers agreed to investigate this further. **(Action: Oliver Burt?)**
- The drop-off units for single-use vapes were specially designed to minimise the danger of batteries exploding. The Government was exploring putting the responsibility on the producer for disposal of single-use vapes, but this was not yet in place. It was commented that the single-use vape market had taken off so quickly that the associated infrastructure for disposal had not yet caught up.
- The existing FCC shredding facility was in Oxfordshire. Proposals for an re3 shredding facility would include a traded service to other neighbouring

authorities and trade waste commercial organisations, and any costed proposals would be presented to re3 members for their consideration.

- There was already a kerbside bulky item collection, and there was not thought to be significant interest in a kerbside collection for wood specifically. Rory agreed to send the figures around wood in general waste bins which had been explored through compositional analysis. **(Action: Rory Brien/Oliver Burt)**
- Members requested that officers consider appropriate avenues for ongoing lobbying in terms of vape disposal responsibility. **(Action: Oliver Burt)**
- Members requested separate reports to come to a future meeting on the options and costs associated to single-use vapes, and the shredding facility proposition with options and costs. **(Action: Oliver Burt)**

49. **Progress Report**

Sarah Innes, re3 Monitoring and Performance Officer presented the Progress report.

The report included the usual review of performance statistics, including provisional recycling rate figures. The data for April to September 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 showed that recycling rates had gone up across all three Councils. Garden waste had also gone up, likely driven by the wet weather over the summer. Other recyclable tonnages had gone down, and the impacts of this would be addressed by the finance report.

Arising from questions, the following points were noted:

- There was no suggestion that additional funding from Government would be issued for DIY waste.
- Members queried the procurement process around the WEEE banks, and it was confirmed that no bids had been received in the initial round. There had been subsequent discussions with companies around the branding on the banks, and if an agreement on branding was achieved, officer planned to apply for a waiver from the corporate procurement rules to proceed with Material Focus. Members requested that officers conduct market testing based on the new branding arrangement before proceeding with the initial company, to ensure best value for money. **(Action: Oliver Burt / Sarah Innes)**
- Other neighbouring Councils were using the identified company to deliver their WEEE bank collections.
- Officers agreed to find out whether single-use vapes would be accepted in WEEE banks, and whether this would inundate the drop off points. **(Action: Oliver Burt / Sarah Innes)**
- The booking provider for the Recycling Centres had been asked about identifying demolition and DIY waste ahead of time to ascertain which items were chargeable and which were free of charge, and it was hoped that a technical solution could be found to monitor chargeable waste. A report would follow to the January Board meeting. **(Action: Oliver Burt)**

RESOLVED that

- 1 Members note the contents of this report;
- 2 Members approve the rescheduling of the AGM to be at the summer meeting of the re3 Board from 2024 onwards;

- 3 Members approve the Strategic Principles as described at 5.42 and listed at 5.44.

50. **Communications Report**

Monika Bulmer, Marketing and Communications officer, re3 presented the Communications report.

The work towards installation of the new recycling app provided by Scrapp was progressing, and the final stages of the data sharing agreement were being confirmed. It was hoped that the app would be received for testing and promotional materials by November 2023. Scrapp were working with the IT teams in each Council to ensure notification reminders and other locality specific elements would work smoothly. Residents would be able to access the existing app until January 2024. The virtual tours of the Recycling Centre and Materials Recycling Facility were progressing well and the final product was due shortly, and Monika agreed to share the product with Board members when available. **(Action: Monika Bulmer)**

Communications activity for the FlexCollect recycling trial were progressing well, and had received coverage in national media. Monika thanked all Board members for their promotional work. Officers had continued to engage with trial participants for their feedback, and had used the Next Door app and a Facebook group.

The PodBack service was going well and was being regularly promoted. Residents had been using the service to bring their coffee pods for recycling, and positive feedback had been received.

The amount of food waste had dropped, and Council communications teams had pushed food waste messaging through the summer. Further communications work on food waste was planned, including an opportunity to discuss food waste at New Directions college food courses.

Recycling Week was scheduled for 16 to 22 October 2023, and there would be enhanced communications from each Council during this time.

Material Recycling Facility tours had been scheduled for Board members in September and October. Other Council members were welcome to attend and were asked to contact Monika to book a place.

In response to questions, it was noted that Wokingham Borough Council had recently finished their new website, work on which had postponed work on the Scrapp app however now the website was live, officers were happy to promote the new app.

Members received and noted the report.

51. **Environment Act Report**

Oliver Burt, re Strategic Waste Manager and Project Director presented the Environment Act report.

The Board considered the potential local implications of the Deposit Return Scheme, including contractual implications and some access issues for residents.

DEFRA had released a statement on 20 September 2023 to rename the Consistency in Recycling project 'Simper Recycling' amongst other changes to the scheme, and

members were asked whether the proposed actions highlighted in the report remained relevant after this Government announcement.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- It was unlikely that compositional analysis of waste would be detailed enough to cross-reference the types of inappropriate material being put in bins, to see whether residents who put glass in their bin also put other recyclable materials in their bin.
- Colour separation for glass was not required, as the technology was in place to sort the colours at the material recycling facility.
- It was unlikely that the sale of glass would be sufficient to cover the kerbside collection cost, and if kerbside collection was mandated, it was not yet clear where the funding to do so would come from.
- While residents would not have another bin to contend with on the kerbside, there were challenges around how glass collection would be practically implemented and at present, the only option would be to run a separate glass collection due to the fact that paper and glass could not be mixed in the recycling process. It was possible to collect plastic, glass and cans in one collection, however this would incur additional costs through the re-engineering at the plant.
- While the report as published proposed to lobby government, it was unlikely that any further detail would be released following the DEFRA statement. Instead, officers proposed to start to gather information and plan in anticipation of further details from the Government.
- Board members requested that any work done on the cost of glass collection should include the environmental cost of the collection, including increased emissions. **(Action: Oliver Burt)**
- There was no clarity on Extended Producer Responsibility yet, and members requested that officers write to appropriate government ministers to ask for clarity on plans for Extended Producer Responsibility. **(Action: Oliver Burt)**

In summary, the Board agreed that:

- 1 re3 officer should progress information gathering and lobby government wherever possible for further detail
- 2 local surveys should continue to take place as outline in 5.17 of the report

52. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED 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 12 and 13 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

53. **Financial Management Report**

Jayne Rowley, re3 Principal Finance Officer presented a report to brief the Board on the Partnership's current financial position.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that

- 1 Members note the Partnership's financial position as at the end of 2022/2023 as described at 5.1 and 5.2;
- 2 Members note the financial outlook for 2023/2024 as described at 5.5;
- 3 Members note the 1st draft budget for FY2024/2025 as described from 5.16;
- 4 Members approve the proposed date change from 31st October to 31st July as the date from which the preceding 12 months of booking system data will be used to apportion HWRC costs between the 3 Council;
- 5 Members endorse the steps, described at 5.13, to seek to address the current year financial outlook.

54. **Data and Privacy Report**

Oliver Burt re Strategic Waste Manager and Project Director presented a report on Data and Private report in light of a recent issue.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 Members note the contents of this report;
- 2 Members agree to receive a future report detailing the feedback and/or requirements from the referral of the re3 partnership to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), as described at 5.14, with potential recommendations.

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

11 January 2024 (Wokingham)
7 March 2024 (Reading)
13 June 2024 (Bracknell)
19 September 2024 (Wokingham)

CHAIRMAN

TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
11th January 2024

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 ratify their decision to implement an amendment to the Recycling Centre Booking System, so that non-household waste can be identified and charged for, as described at 5.9.

2.3 That Members approve the recommendation at 5.29 for the WEEE bank project to come to an end.

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-November 2023/24 are presented below, alongside a comparison with the Qtr1-Qtr3 statistics for 2022/23.

	April 2022 – December 2022	April 2023 – November 2023	Change
BFC	54.9%	55.8%	0.9%
RBC	49.8%	49.7%	-0.1%
WBC	53.6%	55.3%	1.7%

5.2 Members will recall that the increase in garden waste seen over the wet summer has contributed to the overall recycling rates.

5.3 Despite the increase in garden waste, the table below shows tonnages of kerbside residual waste have increased in Bracknell Forest and Reading Borough Councils when compared to the same 8 months of 2022/23. At the same time, tonnages of kerbside food and mixed dry recycling (MDR) have declined.

	Kerbside Residual	Kerbside Recycling	Kerbside Food	Kerbside Green
BFC	3.5%	-2.8%	-4.1%	15.1%
RBC	3.1%	-0.7%	-5.4%	15.9%
WBC	-1.2%	0.0%	1.3%	16.6%

5.4 A compositional analysis of kerbside residual waste took place in September 2023, to help the Partnership to obtain insights into the type and quantity of recyclables still present in the 'black bag' waste. Council officers are in the process of analysing the results and making plans to utilise the findings.

Chargeable Wastes at the HWRC

5.5 As Members will recall, whilst Local Authorities are required to accept household waste without charge at their Recycling Centre facilities, there is no obligation to accept non-household waste. Construction and demolition waste is currently classed as industrial waste for the purposes of providing Recycling Centres. The re3 Councils have imposed a charge for receipt of rubble and hardcore, soil from landscaping activities, plasterboard, and asbestos since 2016.

5.6 On the 22nd of November 2023, an amendment to the Controlled Waste Regulations was laid before parliament. It specified that, from the 31st of December 2023, construction and demolition waste should be classed as household waste where each of the following conditions are met:

- The waste is produced at a domestic property by occupiers of that domestic property carrying out their own construction or demolition works, including preparatory works.
- The waste is not from construction or demolition works, including preparatory works, for which payment has been or is to be made.
- The amount of waste delivered to any waste disposal site in a single visit is either less than 100 litres and capable of being fitted into two 50 litre bags, or a single article of waste no larger than 2000mm x 750mm x 700mm in size.
- The waste delivered to waste deposit sites does not exceed four single visits per household in any four-week period.

5.7 As a result of the change in legislation, Local Authorities will need to accept some waste that would hitherto be considered construction and demolition waste at their Recycling Centres, without charge.

5.8 As non-household waste will be defined both based on volume, and frequency of deposit, Officers have liaised with the providers of our Recycling Centre Booking System to ensure that the re3 Partnership will be able to identify the non-household waste and minimise the financial implications of the legislation. Following liaison with the re3 Monitoring and Performance Officer over the autumn, a 'DIY module' has been developed by the booking system providers, that can sit alongside our existing system. This will flag to the Contractor's Meet and Greet staff when a user has exceeded their free allowance, and a charge should be made.

5.9 In order to ensure that the DIY module could be implemented from the 31st of December, Members of the Joint Waste Disposal Board received briefings in

November and December. Following their agreement to proceed, it is recommended that the Board ratify the decision at this meeting.

- 5.10 Members will recall that in preparation for the change in legislation, Officers liaised with the Contractor about the operational policies that should apply, and that colleagues in the legal and trading standards team at Reading Borough Council agreed the suitability of the proposed procedures. In addition, the Manager for the Council's contract with Bookinglab was consulted, and the Change Management team approved the use of the IT amendment. Communications for residents and staff have been produced and these will be covered in more detail in the Communications Report.
- 5.11 Officers will monitor implementation of the new policies in the New Year and will respond to feedback and challenges as appropriate.

Flexible Plastic Packaging Recycling Trial

- 5.12 Members will recall that the first phase of the re3 project with FlexCollect commenced in trial areas of Reading Borough Council (RBC) on the 18th of September.
- 5.13 Officers are working with FlexCollect, our Waste Disposal Contractor, and with Waste Collection colleagues in order to gather appropriate learning from the project. Since the launch, Officers can report the following updates:
- In the first 10 weeks of the project, 4722 blue Flexcollect bags were received in the Material Recycling Facility (MRF). Of these, the waste contractor recorded 30% as empty and 11% as contaminated.
 - In response to findings about the number of empty bags, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) are in the process of making amendments to the 'nudge' leaflets, to promote the double knotting of bags. These leaflets will go out to the participating RBC households at the start of the new year. Officers are also planning to include a link to a survey alongside the nudge leaflet, in order to obtain some more information about resident participation in the trial.
 - Officers requested that the re3 Disposal Contractor undertake some sampling on the bags they class as contaminated. This found that 34% of the contents was made up of existing target materials (such as cardboard, paper and plastic bottles) and may therefore be the result of resident confusion. General non-recyclable waste made up 15% of the contents. (This is lower than the overall recycling contamination rate in RBC). The data will be shared with FlexCollect, so that changes to resident leaflets can be considered.
 - RECOUP collected 150 bags of RBC trial waste for analysis on the 20th of November. Results are expected in the new year, detailing the composition of the RBC waste (including plastic types).
 - Officers met with FlexCollect and the re3 waste disposal contractor to consider alternative collection methods for flexible plastics. Challenges for sorting the waste in the MRF and in collecting accurate data mean that there are currently no other options for a comingled collection system. However, it should be noted that single use bags are not expected to be the long-term solution to collecting plastic films. The use of bags is currently allowing the re3 partnership to collect data that can potentially be used to develop better solutions for the future.
 - re3 participated in a trial of thinner collection bags. Plastic films were re-packaged in bags containing 20% less plastic and processed through the MRF. This resulted in no

deterioration of capture. Use of these bags in later stages of the project will help to make bags lighter to deliver and easier for residents to tie.

- The waste collection operatives who service the trial area in Reading were asked to participate in a survey, in order to capture their views on resident participation and the impact on the team's working day. These results are currently being discussed with the crew supervisors.
 - Officers note the high proportion of flexible plastics identified in the re3 compositional analysis of kerbside residual waste. On average this made up 11% of the residual waste by weight.
- 5.14 FlexCollect have written an interim report detailing the initial findings from their local authority projects, and this is due to be published shortly. Officers hope to be able to share the headline results with Members at the meeting in January.
- 5.15 The re3 FlexCollect trial is due to be expanded to include households in Bracknell Forest Council in March 2024. A meeting has been scheduled for the new year to discuss the operational details including suitable rounds and deliveries of bags and leaflets. Officers will provide Members with an update in due course.

Wokingham Borough Council Participation in the Flexible Plastic Packaging Recycling Trial

- 5.16 When the re3 Partnership agreed to take part in the FlexCollect plastic packaging recycling trial, it was agreed that households from within each of Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council would be able to participate.
- 5.17 Unfortunately, on the 21st of November, the re3 Councils were informed that Wokingham Borough Council would not be able to join the trial as originally planned. There are several reasons for this.
- 5.18 On the July 25th, 2023, the Government announced that it was deferring the commencement of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) element, of its Environment Act changes, by a year, from October 2024 to October 2025. EPR is the scheme via which councils will be funded for supporting the recycling of in-scope items, such as flexible plastic packaging. The deferment increased the period over which the FlexCollect project would need to support trials before EPR could begin to support their continuation and expansion by trial councils. In addition, the expenses from the trial areas (activities such as collecting, transporting, sorting and processing flexible plastics) have generally proven to be more costly than was initially envisaged.
- 5.19 In response to the budget pressures, the decision was taken by the Flexible Plastics Fund (FPF), which includes manufacturers and brands, to reduce the number of FlexCollect projects. The scale of all projects, bar one, has also been reduced.
- 5.20 The re3 project was originally expected to be classed as one of nine FlexCollect projects. Under revised arrangements Reading and Bracknell will now be classed as separate trials. In this configuration, it was not possible to include each of the re3 Councils and the FPF made the decision not to pursue the trial in Wokingham. The FPF recognised that the introduction of Alternate Weekly Collections may pose an additional challenge to the FlexCollect trial and noted that there was uncertainty about the use of bags for flexible plastic collections.
- 5.21 Officers have asked FlexCollect to provide some information on the scale of the funding

gap and will provide further information to Members and colleagues when available. In the meantime, all three councils will share in the learning from the two trials which are progressing.

WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Banks

- 5.22 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 as kettles, irons and hairdryers).
- 5.23 Following discussions with a local WEEE recycler, an application for funding was subsequently submitted to the Material Focus WEEE fund.
- 5.24 Members will recall that the application for funding was successful. It was based on pre-procurement engagement with prospective suppliers. However, in the subsequent procurement exercise, the councils received no bids from prospective service providers.
- 5.25 Officers have since sought to engage with the local recycler who provided information for the funding application, but no further engagement has been forthcoming.
- 5.26 Discussions have therefore taken place with other WEEE recyclers; and Officers can confirm that there is enthusiasm to work with re3 on a WEEE bank project. However it has been advised that significant changes would be needed to the original specification. re3 would need to purchase the banks (rather than rent them), and as such, arrange for the maintenance and insurance of the banks. This would likely mean we would need to undertake separate procurement exercises for the purchase, servicing, and (possibly) maintenance of the banks. We would also potentially need to take a greater role in managing the schedule of collections and dealing with any contamination left in the containers.
- 5.27 Material Focus remain keen to support re3 and would be happy to consider a revised project; even if this involves shorter timescales, fewer banks, and a later start date than was originally planned.
- 5.28 Therefore, whilst a project remains possible, a much greater amount of officer time would be needed both to set up the service, and to manage the ongoing operations, than was initially envisaged.
- 5.29 As a result, Officers now recommend that the WEEE bank project comes to an end.
- 5.30 Funding was initially approved for the provision of WEEE banks and the promotion of repair cafes, and Officers would plan to see in Material Focus would still be happy to support the second activity.

Recycling Centre User Satisfaction Survey

- 5.31 The annual User Satisfaction Survey for the re3 Recycling Centres was conducted in the autumn of 2023.
- 5.32 The survey was once again conducted online (as it has been for the last few years); with invites to participate being sent out to recent visitors through the booking system.
- 5.33 The survey was commenced on the 13th of October and 1,617 responses were received for Longshot Lane, whilst 1,506 responses were received for Smallmead.

- 5.34 At Longshot Lane the number of respondents rating their overall satisfaction levels as 4 or 5 out of 5 was 91%. At Smallmead this figure was 92%.
- 5.35 A further comparison of the two sites is presented in Appendix One, alongside the equivalent results from 2022. The results show improved levels of satisfaction at both sites; and across all key areas.
- 5.36 Officers will review the full results of the survey with the Contractor to identify reasons for the changes and to identify further areas for improvement. In response to the 2022 survey, Officers proposed to develop and implement a 'mystery shopper' scheme, whereby a small group of users can provide ongoing feedback about their experiences on site. This has not yet been delivered, but the project remains one that Officers are keen to introduce. This should help ensure that agreed procedures are used consistently at the Recycling Centres.
- 5.37 As part of the 2023 user satisfaction survey, residents were also asked where they recycle key items of waste. The results highlight areas of contamination in the mixed dry recycling and areas where capture rates of recyclables could be improved. A summary of the data is presented in Appendix Two. This data has also been analysed by local authority area and the age of the respondents and further detail will be presented during the January meeting.

Reading Borough Council Corporate Survey

- 5.38 Following the re3 Board meeting in September 2022, Members considered several options for supplementing the Recycling Centre Booking System.
- 5.39 The re3 Board welcomed the use of Corporate User Satisfaction Surveys, or equivalent, at each of the respective Councils, as a way to assess the views of non-users of Council services, including the Recycling Centres. At re3, this could inform future improvements of the booking system and other supporting processes.
- 5.40 A survey commenced in Reading Borough Council in July 2023. In this survey, respondents were asked if they had used the Smallmead Recycling Centre in the last 12 months. Where the respondent had not visited, they were asked about the reasons.
- 5.41 Of the 1,003 respondents, 46% had not recently used the Smallmead Recycling Centre. Of these, nearly two thirds advised that the reason was because they did not need to use the Recycling Centre. Other reasons given (at much lower percentages) included that residents did not own a vehicle, did not know about the recycling centre or did not know how to book. Full results are shown in Appendix Three.
- 5.42 The results indicate that most residents are able to access the Recycling Centre when they need too. However, Officers and Members are keen to identify and address any areas of social exclusion. Officers have therefore undertaken further analysis in order to ascertain if there are links between any barriers to use and demographic factors; including ward area, age and ethnicity. Key results included:
- Younger respondents were more likely to say that they did not know about the Recycling Centre (although the percentages were still very low).
 - Respondents at both extremes of the age spectrum were less likely to use the Recycling Centres due to not being able to drive or access a vehicle.
 - Older respondents were more likely to say that the booking system is not easy to use (although the percentages were still very low).
 - Respondents from Park and Emmer Green wards were more likely to say that the Recycling Centre is too far away, whilst residents in Katesgrove and

- Tilehurst were more likely to say they didn't own a vehicle or couldn't drive.
- Residents of Battle and Thames wards were more likely to say that they didn't know about the Recycling Centre.
- There was one ethnic group where respondents were more likely to say that they didn't know about the Recycling Centre – but there appears to be an overlap with the ward areas in which they live in.
- There was no clear link between the demographic factors analysed and residents who said they didn't know how to book.

5.43 In response to this analysis, Officers plan to share targeted messages via the NextDoor app and to contact local community organisations and libraries with the possibility of disseminating information in order to increase knowledge of the Recycling Centres in the wards of Battle and Katesgrove. Areas have also been identified where future initiatives (similar to the WEEE banks) may have most impact.

Glass Collections (Sept/Oct 2023)

5.44 As Members will be aware, there was a period of disruption to the emptying of the re3 glass banks from the 18th of September.

5.45 Glass banks are serviced by the re3 Contractor, and we would usually have two members of staff working throughout the week. Unfortunately in the week of the 18th, one member of staff was unable to work due to a broken hip; and potential replacements had suffered a back injury or were recovering from a recent heart attack. A second member of staff was on annual leave. This resulted in a short period of time in which no one was available to empty the banks.

5.46 In order to minimise the impact, the re3 Contractor brought an agency driver in for the week of the 25th, and a member of staff returned early from their time off. re3 Officers liaised with the Contractor about the scheduling of the collections to seek to ensure that the period of disruption was minimised, and both the re3 contractor and the council street teams worked to clear any overflows.

5.47 The re3 Councils were financially compensated through the Contractual Performance Mechanism for the period of disruption, and the efforts of the Contractor meant that the catch-up was largely complete by the 3rd of October, with normal collections resuming from this point.

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 - September 2023

Contacts for further information

Sarah Innes, re3 Monitoring and Performance Officer
01189 373459
sarah.innes@reading.gov.uk

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

Appendix One – Summary of User Satisfaction Survey Results

% rating sites as 4 or 5 out of 5.	Smallmead		Longshot	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Cleanliness	78%	80%	86%	87%
Customer care	83%	86%	82%	85%
Safety posters/advice on site	70%	73%	75%	76%
Queuing	82%	85%	83%	86%
Meet and greet team/Entrance staff	85%	89%	84%	86%
Overall rating	90%	92%	89%	91%

% rating staff as 4 or 5 out of 5.	Smallmead		Longshot	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Helpfulness	89%	91%	87%	90%
Politeness	88%	91%	87%	88%
Knowledge	88%	91%	89%	90%

Appendix Two – Waste Disposal by re3 residents

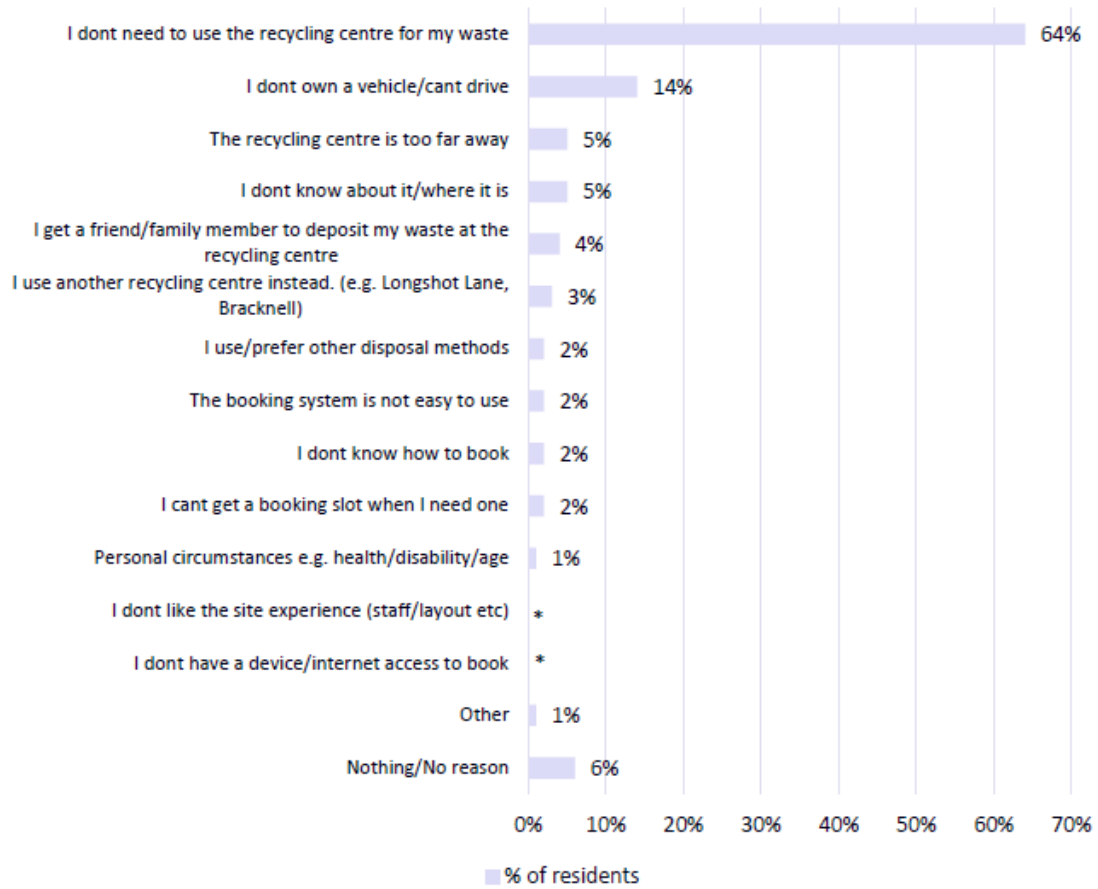
	At Home via my kerbside recycling collections	At an re3 Recycling Centre (Island Road, Reading or Longshot Lane Bracknell)	At a Local Recycling Bank or Supermarket Collection Point	Via another route for Recycling or Reuse (e.g. Charity Shop or Home Compost Bin)	N/A - I don't recycle this item
Glass Bottles and Jars	7%	17%	73%	1%	3%
Paper and Cardboard	89%	10%	1%	0%	0%
Plastic bottles (e.g. drinks and detergent bottles)	97%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Plastic Pots, Tubs and Trays (e.g. fruit punnets and yoghurt pots)	90%	6%	1%	1%	2%
Plastic films (e.g. bread bags and carrier bags)	32%	2%	32%	3%	32%
Rigid plastics (e.g. buckets)	17%	72%	1%	1%	9%
Tins and Cans	97%	2%	0%	0%	1%
Aluminum Foil	80%	4%	1%	0%	14%
Textiles and Clothing	2%	25%	35%	35%	3%
Food Waste	91%	0%	0%	3%	5%
Garden Waste	54%	39%	1%	4%	3%
Household Batteries	5%	36%	48%	3%	8%

Note: Percentages have been calculated to exclude residents who indicated that they don't produce a particular waste type.

Purple = Possible areas of MDR contamination.

Orange = Areas where capture rates of recyclables could be improved.

Appendix Three – RBC Corporate Survey Results (“If you don’t use the Smallmead Waste Recycling Centre, please tell us why”)



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TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
11th January 2024

re3 CONTRACT REPORT
Report of the re3 Project Director

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the re3 Board with a briefing on Simpler Recycling.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Members note the contents of this report.**
- 2.2 **That Members agree to establish a working party, as described from 5.40, and request reports from each working party at every JWDB meeting.**

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The report explores the range of headline options but recommends that the re3 partner councils should work together to identify specific options and, ultimately, a preferred option.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendations reflect the briefing provided and ask the Board to establish a working party, from which future decision reports will emerge.

5 BACKGROUND

- 5.1 In December 2018, the Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy which revealed plans for a wholly new approach to waste management. A series of consultations followed.
- 5.2 In 2020, Government published its Circular Economy Package. It established the objectives of recycling 65% of Municipal Waste by 2035 and of reducing (to no more than 10%) the amount of Municipal Waste being sent to landfill by the same year.
- 5.3 The Environment Act was passed in November 2021. It incorporates a host of changes, for waste management, including: (i) the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to fund recycling, (ii) the introduction of a deposit return scheme (DRS) for England, to capture plastic bottles and drinks cans, and (iii) originally under the banner of Waste Collection Consistency, now called Simpler Recycling, changes to improve the consistency of the way recycling is collected and the types of materials captured.

Simpler Recycling

- 5.4 On 21st October 2023, Government published its response to the consultation on Simpler Recycling.
- 5.5 Simpler Recycling is intended to provide a national standard for recycling which will remove some of the differences between council services and, it is hoped, lead to greater clarity for residents.

- 5.6 The Government response confirms the type of materials that will need to be made available for collection. It confirms the type of collection service that Government will support. It also confirms timescales for local authorities and for businesses (with exemptions for micro-businesses) to engage in the new collections. The specific details are shown at Appendix A.
- 5.7 Simpler Recycling will be supported by the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regime (previously reported to the re3 Board). EPR is the mechanism which will generate funding for the services covered by Simpler Recycling. Under EPR, producers of 'in scope' packaging will be charged for the material they place on the market. The intention of the charge will be to cover the efficient and effective capture, for recycling, of as much of that material as possible.
- 5.8 It is widely expected that EPR will not cover full costs. The formulae that will be used to allocate costs and the mechanisms for assigning councils into broad 'nearest neighbour' cohorts will be supplemented by an assessment regime. It is understood that any authority that is not assessed as the 'best in class' will be at risk of receiving an improvement notice. Any authority receiving an improvement notice will be at an increased risk of receiving deductions in its allocated funding (of as much as 20% of the allocation). Any deduction would almost certainly hamper an authority in seeking to improve performance and may impact on corporate finances.
- 5.9 However, at present, councils in England do not know the scale of funding for the collection and processing of in-scope materials. They cannot compare future funding with their current financial status. They cannot scrutinise the formulae that will determine their allocation, nor assess how best to ensure their services meet the criteria for 'efficient' and 'effective'.
- 5.10 Defra has made some undertakings in relation to future funding. They include the following:

Defra undertaking	re3 Commentary
<i>Continue to engage [with stakeholders], with the aim to communicate to individual LAs a final estimated amount for the 2025/26 financial year by 1 November 2024</i>	Budget-setting is well underway, if not largely complete, by November, each year. This timescale is asking councils (already under financial pressure) to make considerable investments to achieve compliance, without an understanding of the relative levels of current and future funding. It may also compress the period within which investment can be made, so there is a mismatch between market capacity (vehicles, engineers, materials, receptacle) and market demand.
<i>Final payment will be confirmed in 2025</i>	This would leave about 1 year between funding and the commencement of the new compliance regime. As above, that may not be enough time to undertake works or buy vehicles. If there are adverse changes to the 'estimated amount' that may cause significant financial problems to councils.
<i>LAs will receive their first payments by the end of December 2025</i>	This is 8-9 months into the year to which the funding applies. Retrospective payment terms are not necessarily a problem, but

	they increase short-term financial uncertainty for local authorities.
<i>Payments intended to be made quarterly in arrears on a financial year basis (from year 2 of EPR)</i>	As above, retrospective payment terms are not necessarily a problem, but they only add to financial uncertainty for local authorities. Any inconsistency and/or inaccuracy of funding will represent a risk to local government.

5.11 The re3 Project Team has been working, with colleagues across the re3 councils, to prepare an annual Net Cost of Waste assessment. The re3 Project Team is also working with the Data Intelligence and Policy Team at the Administering Authority. In both cases there is an intent to move towards a state of readiness, for the re3 partnership, in relation to the reporting of data and ensuring an effective claims process for EPR funding.

5.12 Alongside the financial arrangements, described above, the principal elements of Simpler Recycling are focused on: (i) the type of items the councils must collect, and (ii) how those items are to be collected from residents and businesses.

5.13 Appendix 1 shows the range of materials that must be collected. This will, over time, ensure that all residents in England will have access to the same services.

5.14 There were previously three service archetypes, to guide the decision on how recycling is collected. That has been simplified, to an extent, in Simpler Recycling. Waste for recycling can now be collected comingled (all mixed together), which is how the re3 councils currently collect dry mixed recycling (DMR).

5.15 Government has also specified the frequency of collection for non-recyclable waste (or waste that is presented for disposal). The recent Government response says:

We intend to include in statutory guidance that the minimum service standard should be that local authorities provide a fortnightly collection for residual waste (alongside a weekly food waste collection).

5.16 The status of statutory guidance is understood. Authorities must have regard to statutory guidance (should take it into account). However, the parallel process of assessing 'efficient and effective' collections for the allocation of funding, through EPR, may penalise any authorities exceeding a collection of residual waste once every two weeks – despite a three-week cycle potentially being the source of enhanced efficiency and effectiveness. This is something to monitor closely.

5.17 The two material types for which a collection is not currently offered by the re3 councils are glass and flexible plastics. This report will now focus on the options for compliance relating to those materials.

Kerbside Collection of Glass (packaging)

5.18 Glass is a heavy material and a challenging material type, in terms of its properties and their impact on other materials and vehicles/facilities. Broken and ground glass is a known contaminant for other materials (fibre and plastics notably) and can cause damage to collection vehicles and sorting machinery.

5.19 As reported to the re3 JWDB in September 2023, the re3 Partnership is currently

capturing an estimated 77% of available glass. The re3 councils are collecting 8,000 tonnes per annum and the recent composition analysis estimates that 2,300 tonnes of glass bottles and jars remain within residual waste.

- 5.20 The task for the re3 Partnership will be to comply with the expectations of Simpler Recycling in a way which best balances: (i) the financial impact of the new service, (ii) the funding that is ultimately available (through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)), and (iii) the associated service outcomes such as resident utility, quality of recycling and sustainability.
- 5.21 There is likely to be considerable supply chain pressure, as councils across the country try to purchase new processing capacity, vehicles, receptacles.
- 5.22 The principal, headline options for the re3 councils are shown in the table, below (with more detail provided at Appendix 2).

1	2	3	4	5
Retain bottle banks only (no kerbside collection), until it is economic to change collection/ sorting	Separate collection of glass from the kerbside	Separate collections of Glass from the kerbside, arranged through the re3 PFI Contract.	Collect Co-mingled and undertake retrospective engineering to allow new mix of dry recycling to be sorted.	Collect Co-mingled but send all dry recycling to a merchant MRF that already sorts that material.

- 5.23 Option 1 recognises that Simpler Recycling will be based upon statutory guidance. statutory guidance is not legally binding and therefore a local authority would need to have regard for the guidance in service delivery but would not necessarily need to follow it. This is a genuine option because, as noted above, it is not expected that funding through EPR will cover all costs. If the re3 Partnership cannot identify a compliant solution that it can confidently invest in, the status quo should remain an option for an interim period.
- 5.24 Option 2 relates to the separate collection of glass. This would require the provision of additional vehicles and receptacles. Existing services would remain unchanged and so would the quality of the dry material collected. This option would likely be the best in terms of recycling outcomes, and for the optimisation of sales revenues, but would have an ongoing revenue cost.
- 5.25 Option 3 relates to the provision of a collection service through the mechanism of the re3 contract. There would need to be certainty, in procurement and legal terms, that this could be delivered but from a practical perspective it has some merit. It could be a single service, thereby avoiding the potential for excess provision (relative to three separate new glass collection services). It would reflect the fact that glass is the only material for which the re3 contract already provides the *collection* service (via bottle banks) and may be helpful in addressing any qualifying change in law (QCIL) complications that may arise from the new legislation.
- 5.26 Option 4 relates to the comingled collection of dry recyclables, including glass. This option would require considerable retrospective engineering of the re3 material recycling facility (MRF). The MRF would need to expand in size, with the addition of a mechanical glass-breaking process, new conveyor belts and optical sorting units. Those elements would significantly reduce (by as much as 50%) the space in which

recycling is received from the councils. It is likely that the comingled collection of glass would moderate some wear and tear on collection vehicles but would increase maintenance costs at the MRF. Material values and, for fibre and plastics particularly, the recyclability of dry recycling would likely be downgraded. From a resident perspective this would be the simplest option.

- 5.27 Option 5 assumes that dry recycling is collected comingled, including glass, but that the re3 councils and Contractor, send the mixed recycling to another MRF for sorting. Commissioning the sorting process from a merchant MRF, which already sorts glass, would avoid the initial capital cost of retrospective amendments but would have revenue and likely environmental costs. However, the space currently occupied by the re3 MRF may be repurposed to address other local imperatives – it would comfortably house a generously sized reuse and repair shop, alongside other activities. Storage of materials, shredding items that contain persistent organic pollutants (POPs), parking vehicles (that require charging), or a host of other potential activities, could all make purposeful use of the space.
- 5.28 Detailed assessment of the broad options will be required before the re3 partner councils can determine how to proceed. This is discussed in more detail, towards the end of this report.

Kerbside Collection of Soft Plastics

- 5.29 After glass, flexible plastics are the remaining material class that the re3 Partnership currently does not collect or process.
- 5.30 However, the re3 Partnership is currently one of 8 trials as part of a national programme to assess the impacts from collecting and treating flexible plastics. The trials, under a programme called Flex Collect, began in Reading for September 2023 and will extend to Bracknell Forest early in 2024.
- 5.31 There is insufficient capacity in the UK for processing flexible plastics, at present. The requirement to collect this material stream will inevitably prompt an increase in UK processing capacity and/or a change in its use as a packaging material.
- 5.32 The trials allow for some accurate data capture on processes and costs to be generated. At present the cost of recycling flexible plastics, as estimated by our Contractor, could be as much as £500 p/t. For comparison, that price is about three times the cost of disposal and would, at a national level be uneconomic to continue (and is most unlikely to be covered by EPR). If high costs remain, and recycling is unaffordable, a change in the use of the material/s is a potential outcome.
- 5.33 The learning from the 8 trials will be invaluable in preparing for the second phase of Simpler Recycling for households, from March 2027. The direct experience of collecting flexible plastics, and feedback from residents, will also be most helpful to the councils.
- 5.34 Unlike for glass, the impact on the MRF from processing flexible plastics will be more moderate. There is likely to be a need for some investment in sorting capability (more optical sorting technology and/or robotics) but it is unlikely to have the impact on the MRF that would be required to sort glass.

Associated Developments

- 5.35 On December 28th the Government published a consultation on reforms to the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations (WEEE) 2013. The consultation will

explore initiatives which may further extend Producer responsibilities (which are long established in terms of WEEE). The consultation closes on 7th March 2024.

- 5.36 Of specific interest to the re3 Partnership is the potential for there to be collections of WEEE from households across the UK. It is unclear whether that would be an obligation upon local authorities. Other measures include the potential for retailers to make ‘drop-off’ points available, in-store, for residents (apparently without the need to have bought a replacement product) and to extend the widely available offering of taking away an old item when delivering a new one.
- 5.37 Proposals emerging from the consultation will also extend to vapes, an area of interest for the re3 Board and the re3 councils.

Next Steps

- 5.38 Given the complexity and uncertainty that remains, not least in relation to finances, the re3 Partnership may be well advised to approach compliance more as a journey than a single destination. Full compliance by the dates shown in Appendix 1 may not represent the best outcome for the councils and may not be possible, given the timescales that exist at the time of writing this report.
- 5.39 Of secondary, though still considerable, importance to the services delivered by the councils will be the need to report, backed by detailed evidence, council performance. This aspect will be important in supporting the councils in securing future funding.
- 5.40 It is advised that the re3 Partnership works together to assess options and identify actions and outcomes which are appropriate for residents and the councils. An intra-partnership working party could draw-in the experience and capacity of the full re3 partnership, maximising the potential for complementary and coherent solutions to be adopted by the partners.
- 5.41 Clause 6 of the Constitution of the Joint Waste Disposal Board reads as follows:
- The Committee may appoint working parties as it considers necessary to advise it in the discharge of its functions or to exercise those functions.*
- 5.42 In respect to the *functions* of the Committee, Clause 7 of the Constitution explains the following:
- The function of the Committee is to administer the operation of the waste disposal arrangements of the Councils in accordance with the Joint Working Agreement and in accordance with the Principal Contract...*
- 5.43 Accordingly, the establishment of any working party by the re3 Board (The Committee) might normally be contained only within the remit of the re3 Board. If consideration of issues outside the remit of the Board was required, as in the case of Simpler Recycling, it should be resolvable by the development of clear terms of reference for any working party, and with the agreement of the partner councils.
- 5.44 In the case of Simpler Recycling, the terms of reference would need to reflect the inherent fact that our waste services are a system and that, especially for unitary councils, the best outcomes have regard to both statutory functions, in balance. The Board could then consider system-wide evidence in the delivery of its function and (in any case) identify where any recommendations would be ‘plugged-into’ the existing decision-making structure at each council.

- 5.45 It is recommended that the three Assistant Directors, working together and with appropriate support from across the partnership, be tasked with developing a working party on re3 Partnership compliance with Simpler Recycling.
- 5.46 The working party should report to each meeting of the re3 Board and, in parallel to the senior leadership of the three councils. It will require dedicated officer time to undertake research and development and may need to call upon external support.
- 5.47 In parallel the re3 Project Team should continue its current work on data analysis, and the annual Net Cost of Waste assessment, to prepare the re3 partners for reporting requirements under EPR. This too should be reported to each meeting of the re3 Board and should feed into the preparations.
- 5.48 The WEEE consultation will close on the same day as the next JWDB (7th March). Officers will include a draft response for internal consultation, within reports to the Board.
- 5.49 At the previous re3 Board meeting (Sept 2023), Members asked the re3 Project Director to write to appropriate Government Ministers to enquire about plans for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Most of the detail Members sought has been provided within the information released by Government on Simpler Recycling (such as the timings of payments, shown at 5.10, and in terms of the commencement dates shown in Appendix 1).
- 5.50 It is advised that any gaps in information that emerge through the work of the working parties be incorporated into future correspondence from the Board to Ministers.

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

Principal Groups Consulted

Not applicable.

Method of Consultation

Not applicable.

7.3 Representations Received

Not applicable.

Background Papers

JWDB Legislation Update Report – 2nd March 2023

Contacts for further information

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

Appendix 1 – Simpler Recycling (When and When)

	Paper and Card	Metal	Glass	Plastics	Food Waste	Garden Waste
Included materials/items	All paper and card except: Paper and card that contains glitter or foil, is laminated, stickers and sticky paper, padded lined envelopes, paperback and hardback books, wallpaper.	steel and aluminium tins and cans , aerosols, foil, food trays, jar and bottle lids, tubes.	Glass packaging including bottles and jars.	Plastic bottles, (PET, PP , HDPE), pots,tubs,trays (PET, PP, PE), plastic tubes larger than 50mm x 50mm, cartons, plastic film packaging (mono-PE, mono-PP, mixed polyolefins (PE and PP).	all food intended for human or household pet consumption and/or from the processing or preparation of food, including inedible food parts such as bones, eggshells, fruit and vegetable skins, tea bags and coffee grounds.	All organic material from the garden, except: Ash, full-sized trees, invasive weeds and species, soil, turf cuttings and waste products of animal origin.
Non-household Municipal Premises:	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025 (Film from March 2027)	31 st March 2025	-N/A-
Households	31 st March 2026	31 st March 2026	31 st March 2026	31 st March 2026 (Film from March 2027)	31 st March 2026	31 st March 2026
Micro-firms (those with fewer than 10 FTE employees)	31 st March 2027	31 st March 2027	31 st March 2027	31 st March 2027	31 st March 2027	-N/A-
Other comments			Options for this new collection are discussed within the report.	Cartons (e.g., Tetrapak) now to be included within plastics. This is now a most complex class of materials. It has been identified by Gov't as one: Plastics. It is actually 6-10 different materials across many different items.		Duty to collect garden waste only arises once the householder has requested its collection and has paid any charge. May recover a reasonable charge for collection under the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012.

Materials shown in bold type (steel and aluminium tins and cans, PET and PP plastic bottles) are those which will also be targeted by a Deposit Return Scheme for England.

Appendix 2 - Simpler Recycling - Implications of Compliance (Glass)

	1	2	3	4	5
	Retain bottle banks only (no kerbside collection), until it is economic to change collection/sorting	Separate collection of glass from the kerbside	Separate collections of Glass from the kerbside, arranged through the re3 PFI Contract.	Collect Co-mingled and undertake retrospective engineering to allow new mix of dry recycling to be sorted.	Collect Co-mingled but send all dry recycling to a merchant MRF that already sorts that material.
Compliance	Would not comply with Simpler Recycling. However, statutory guidance is not legally binding.	Separate collection is permissible under Simpler Recycling.	Separate collection is permissible under Simpler Recycling.	Co-mingled collection is permissible under Simpler Recycling.	Co-mingled collection is permissible under Simpler Recycling.
Extended Producer Responsibility (payments)	TBA. Possible this option would prompt a reduction in future re3 EPR payment. However, that may still be less costly than other options (within time window for contract change)	TBA dependent on criteria, which are unknown. Potential for partner councils to maximise efficiency of collection assets by working together. Possibility of some revenue costs being covered by New Burdens.	TBA dependent on criteria, which are unknown. Procurement advice needed. Glass is Contract Category A waste and the collection from bottle banks is part of the Services. May moderate contract change costs (Gov't is not going to support those).	TBA. Co-mingling would comply with the wording of Simpler Recycling (so may avoid any principled reductions in EPR payment. But the re3 partnership may take-on debt which has no compensatory EPR benefit.	TBA dependent on criteria, which are unknown. Business case to assess whether higher haulage costs and alternative use of existing facilities (this option) outweighs the avoidance of high capex cost of option 4.
Residents	No change from current service (77% capture). Would require justification, and may be a temporary step, but may help avoid impacts to other corporate services.	Additional to current 'dry collection' (which would be unchanged). Removal of most bottle banks. Frequency of collection TBA but increased utility for residents as glass collected directly from them. Extra receptacle.	Current services unchanged (with exception of bottle banks). Frequency of collection TBA but increased utility for residents as glass collected from them. Extra receptacle.	Increased service utility for residents, as glass collected directly from them. Would likely require wheeled bins for recycling.	Increased service utility for residents, as glass collected directly from them. Would likely require wheeled bins for recycling.
Facilities	No impact. Storage already in place at both sites.	No impact. Storage already in place at both sites.	No impact. Storage already in place at both sites.	Upgrade to current function of MRF. Retrospective works will use more space, reducing capacity to receive material. Likely reduction in quality of outputs (and income). Higher maintenance cost for MRF.	Use of current facilities for alternative treatment: POPs, shredding for EfW, Re-use shop, repair functions, material storage.
Collections	No additional collection vehicles needed. Potentially some additional haulage cost.	New collection fleet needed. Opportunity to moderate costs through frequency and/or by working together.	Single collection arrangement across re3 area (avoids potential duplication). Cost estimated and agreed alongside any QCiL negotiations.	TBA. Additional mass (of heavy glass) may require marginal expansion of fleet but some balancing loss of material via DRS. Working together essential.	TBA. Additional mass (of heavy glass) may require marginal expansion of fleet but some balancing loss of material via DRS. Working together essential.

TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
11th January 2024

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, since the last meeting.

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

Changes for non-household waste (DIY waste)

- 5.1 Under new legislation, residents may bring up to 100 litres of loose DIY waste, or one large item no bigger than 2m x 0.75m x 0.7m such as one bathtub, in a single visit. Those amounts can be delivered four times per household over a four-week period. Where a delivery does not exceed the conditions, it should be received without charge.
- 5.2 re3 has updated our available communication assets that refer to non-household waste (DIY waste). This includes updates to the re3 website, as well as new information posters and charges signage (Appendix 1a).
- 5.3 The re3 Communications and Marketing Officer also prepared a flow chart (Appendix 1b), a guide for the Meet & Greet staff as well as a set of social media cards that can be used on the re3 and council channels.
- 5.4 In each case these assets should help explain the changed conditions, which have been widely reported as simply representing an end to charges.
- 5.5 Information about the changes has been incorporated in the "information banners", on the website pages that are displayed during the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) booking process for residents.
- 5.6 Residents who have subscribed to the re3 mailing list will also receive a dedicated newsletter about the changes.

Virtual Tours – Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) and Material Recycling Facility (MRF)

- 5.7 The virtual tours of the Recycling Centres in Bracknell and Reading, as well as the

Material Recycling Facility (MRF), that were previously reported to Members of the Board have recently been completed.

- 5.8 This new initiative provides users with the opportunity to explore Bracknell and Reading Recycling Centres and the re3 Material Recycling Facility through immersive 360° views, accompanied by images, videos and interesting facts about local waste management.
- 5.9 The virtual tours of Recycling Centres have been designed to familiarise visitors with the facilities, aiding them in better preparing for their visits, navigating efficiently around the sites, and alleviating any potential anxiety associated with such trips.
- 5.10 Furthermore, the virtual tour of the Material Recycling Facility has been developed to support the re3 public engagement program. Given the limited availability and age restrictions, only a select number of residents can visit the sorting facility. This virtual tour, therefore, allows a broader audience, especially schools, to experience an authentic behind-the-scenes look at how recycling is managed locally.
- 5.11 All tours are enriched with facts and advice, including site maps, photographs, videos, and 360-degree views of key areas, providing both aerial and internal perspectives of the facilities. Tours are mobile friendly and accessible via the re3 and councils' websites as well as via Google Street View, enabling users to closely examine the facilities without leaving their homes (Appendix 2).
- 5.12 The tours were promoted via local media, community groups and a variety of channels including social media, the re3 newsletter and the Recycling Centre booking system journey. A press release has been sent and published in the local media (Wokingham Today). To further promote the Material Recycling Facility tour, re3 is looking to prepare a campaign dedicated to schools (Spring 2024).
- 5.13 Tours can be accessed via the following links: [Recycling Centres](#) and [Material Recycling Facility](#).

Battery recycling and fire prevention media campaign

- 5.14 Following the significant fire at the Reading Transfer Station in October, re3 intensified efforts to highlight the danger of inappropriately disposed of batteries.
- 5.15 The incident enabled re3 to approach several media outlets to increase awareness of correct battery disposal. re3 messaging including the CCTV clip of the fire was featured multiple times in the national and regional media - [BBC News](#) and [BBC News, ITV](#) (TV programmes and online) as well as articles were published in local media ([Berkshire Live](#), [Reading Today](#), [Reading Chronicle](#), [Wokingham.Today](#)) as well as some industry media outlets ([Fire Protection Associations](#)).
- 5.16 Correct disposal of batteries was promoted on the re3 and the council social media channels as well as via the newsletters.
- 5.17 At the same time, re3 engaged with and used the 'Zombie Batteries' campaign assets prepared by the Environmental Services Association (ESA), as well as promoted messaging produced by the Recycle Your Electricals campaign.

Recycling App

- 5.18 The replacement of the current app (re3cyclopedia) with the new Scrapp app, as approved by the re3 Board at its June 2023 meeting is continuing.

- 5.19 The re3 Marketing and Communications Officer has finalised the data sharing and personalisation requirements with the developers of Scrapp. This includes recycling advice at the kerbside, at the recycling centres and the locations of the bottle banks.
- 5.20 The Scrapp technical team is fully engaged with the respective council IT officers to share data, required for the bin dates notification feature. It has been apparent that some additional time is required to have this feature implemented.
- 5.21 The app has been now tested by the Reading' ICT department to check its suitability for public launch. Once completed, the app will be made available to residents.
- 5.22 re3 has drafted communications materials that are ready to be used when appropriate. This includes press release, posters to be displayed at the recycling centres, social media cards and banners to be used online via the newsletter or recycling centres confirmations email.
- 5.23 It has been negotiated that re3cyclopedia will remain available to residents during the transition period.

Foil Recycling Campaign

- 5.24 The re3 Project Team has secured full funding from the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation (Alupro) to run a foil awareness campaign across re3 Partnership.
- 5.25 The plan of the campaign will be discussed in January, with the campaign to be launched in early Spring. All details will be shared with Board Members and Communications teams.

Recycling awareness communications

- 5.26 The re3 Project Team has contributed to the "Food Loss & Waste and beyond: towards a Circular Economy" workshops run by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. A video featuring re3 Chair, Councillor Rowland, was used as a talking point to seek ways of overcoming barriers to the food waste recycling and better participation in the service.
- 5.27 Adverts themed "Put Your Waste in the Right Place" were placed in the "Town & Country" magazine distributed to all Bracknell residents and "Your Reading" magazine distributed to all Reading residents. The advert promoted the food waste recycling, by highlighting the volume of food waste currently placed in the residual bins. In addition, the advert had an environmental messaging angle, helping residents understand the amount of greenhouse gas emissions saved if discarded food waste in the residual bins was recycled.
- 5.28 In addition, "Your Reading" magazine, also included a half page re3 composition analysis showing what makes up a grey bin in Reading and signposting residents to where they can recycle the elements that shouldn't be in there.
- 5.29 Ongoing communications activities are run on the re3 social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor), and key messages are also communicated via re3 newsletter on a regular basis. Re3 Marketing and Communications Officer is planning to engage with the audience via TikTok as of New Year.

5.30 Between October – December, re3 published 60 different posts on Facebook and Instagram, reaching in total over 105k users and receiving over 1,500 engagement reactions.

5.31 Four Reduce, Reuse, Recycle e-newsletters from re3 were sent out between September and December to 57,000 subscribers, with seasonal information and hints and tips for recycling. The opening rate of the newsletters remains very high, regularly reaching between 44%-50%.

5.32 The following campaigns were included in recent social media communications: WRAP' Recycle Week, Hubbub's Eat Your Pumpkin & Second Hand Santa, ESA's Zombie Batteries and Alupro's Foil Friday. Among other updates, residents also learned about the progress of the plastic bags and wrapping trial, winter opening hours, fire at the transfer station, food waste recycling tips, lost ring at the bottle banks and Christmas recycling tips.

5.33 **Councils Teams Communications Update**

5.34 Bracknell Forest Council

- Recycling Roadshow took place on 30th September. Over 2 tonnes of WEEE and 895kg clothing were collected, with 500kg of the WEEE deemed acceptable for re-use.
- Waste and recycling e-newsletters were sent out in October and December, with seasonal information and hints and tips for recycling. Recycle Week communications were put out on social media from 16-22 October and Christmas comms have been out on social media since 1 December. The latest edition of Town & Country magazine, which is delivered to every property, also has 3 pages dedicated to waste and recycling information.

5.35 Reading Borough Council

- In November Your Reading magazine was delivered to over 70,000 households in the borough. It included a page on Christmas recycling, giving tips and advice on recycling as much Christmas waste as possible with an additional focus on food waste and electricals, batteries and vapes.
- The email sent out to around 90,000 residents December confirmed all Christmas waste and recycling collection date changes, including promoting the online collection day look up webpage. It also promoted the 11 Christmas tree recycling points that will be set up around the borough from 4 to 26 January to help people recycle their Christmas trees without needing to book a re3 appointment. Pauses to garden waste and bulky waste services over Christmas were also confirmed.
- A Christmas social media campaign will have included food waste recycling messages, recycling wrapping paper, glass recycling and Christmas trees, along with collection day changes.

5.36 Wokingham Borough Council (info to be added)

- The waste collection changes awareness campaign was launched in October, with a media release and dedicated webpages containing useful messaging on details of the changes and waste reduction.
- A total of five articles explaining the changes were published since October in twice-weekly flagship Residents' Round-up newsletter, which goes to almost 18,000

subscribers.

- The campaign has been run on the social media with at least one social post per week on the waste collection changes, in addition to the supplementary posts specifically driving sign-ups to Rubbish & Recycling newsletter.
- General waste and reduction messages, including festive related recycling tips have been regularly published on the social media

Media relations

- 5.37 In addition to the news clippings mentioned in the other parts of this report: re3 also secured a radio interview and 8 articles published in the national local media that mentioned a heart-warming story of a lost ring that was recovered from the bottle bank ([BBC](#), [Yahoo](#), [Wokingham.Today](#)). re3 was also featured on the [ITV Meridian news programme and online](#), promoting Christmas Recycling messages.

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 1a

Free allowance of DIY waste per household



Max. of 100L of DIY waste or one bulky item per visit



Max. of 4 visits in any 4-week period

Important

- All items over the free allowance will incur charges.
- Unused allowances cannot be rolled over or excess waste counted towards a future visit.
- Mix load of DIY Waste permitted only for rubble, soil and plasterboard.
- Asbestos must be delivered under a separate booking to other DIY wastes.
- Trade Waste is not accepted unless relevant permit produced.
- There is no free allowance for trade customers.



Appendix 1B

Can I dispose of my DIY waste free of charge?

New regulations regarding DIY waste acceptance at the Recycling Centres.

Are you bringing less than 100L of DIY waste or max. of one bulky sanitary ware item (no larger than a bathtub).

YES Have you disposed of your DIY waste less than 4 times in the last 4 weeks?

NO You will be charged for any waste that exceeds 100L limit or for any additional bulky item.

YES You can dispose of your DIY waste free of charge*.

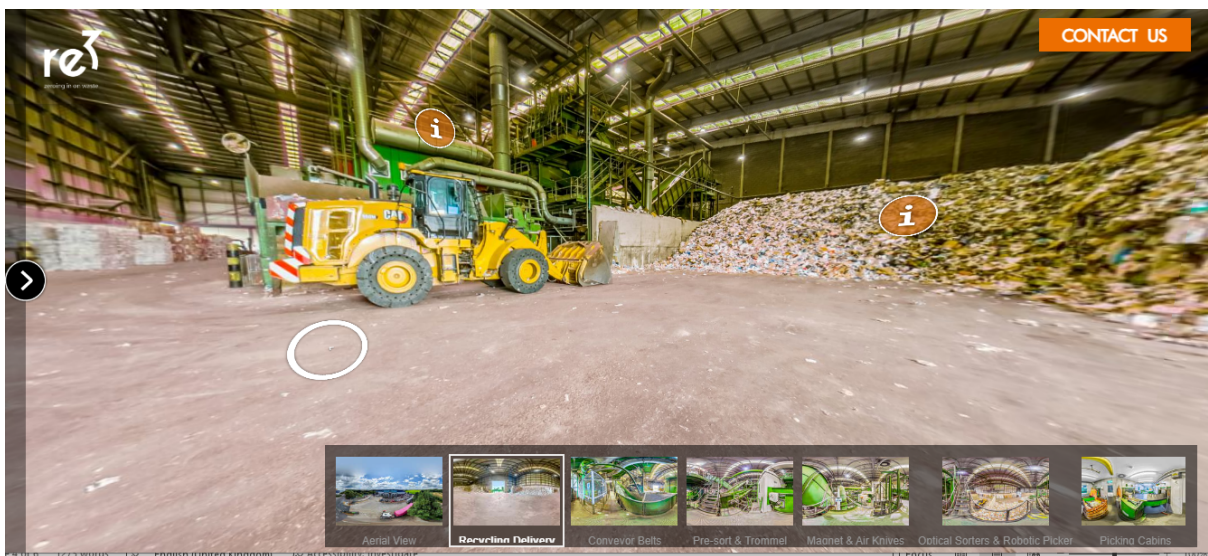
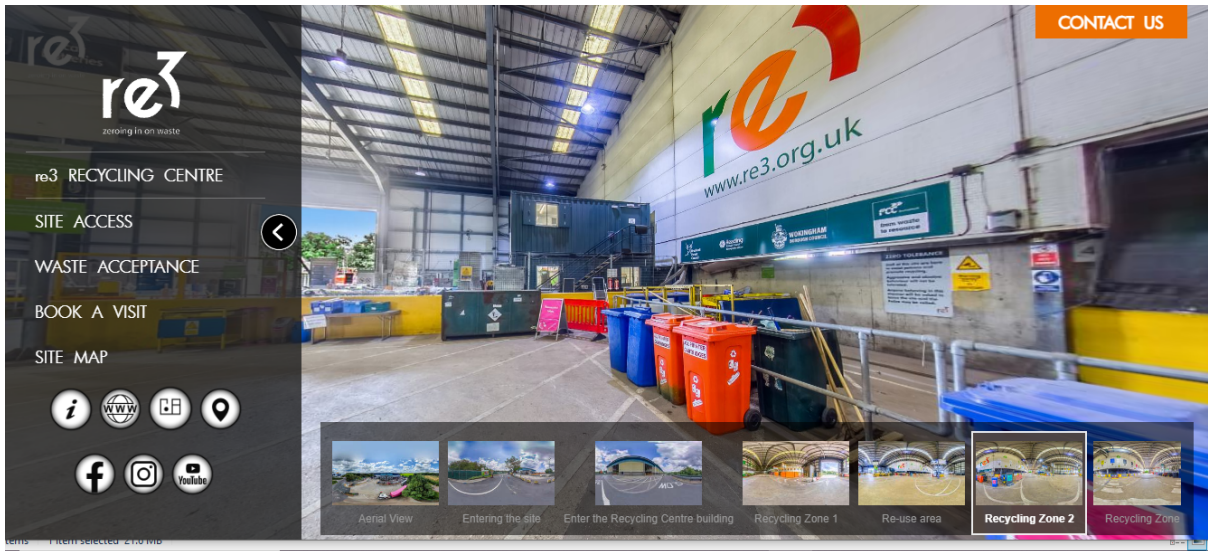
NO After fourth visit in any 4-week period, you will be charged for your DIY waste.

* up to 100L of DIY or one bulky item in a single visit and no more than 4 visits in the 4-week period.

Important

- All items over the free allowance will incur charges.
- Unused allowances cannot be rolled over or excess waste counted towards a future visit.
- Mix load of DIY Waste permitted only for rubble, soil and plasterboard.
- Asbestos must be delivered under a separate booking to other DIY wastes.
- Trade Waste is not accepted unless relevant permit produced.
- There is no free allowance for trade customers.

Appendix 2



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