

**TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD**  
**21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2017**

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**RECYCLING CENTRE CHANGES AND WASTE ACCEPTANCE POLICY UPDATE**  
**Report of the re3 Strategic Waste Manager**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the outcomes of the 2016 HWRC access changes.

**2 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Board note the contents of this report.

2.2 That the Board considers the recommendation to introduce a minimum waste charge for chargeable waste at re3 Recycling Centres, and that the Waste Acceptance Policy be amended accordingly.

2.3 That the Board considers the recommendation to maintain the Waste Acceptance Policy criteria for sign written vehicles.

2.4 That the Board considers the recommendation to end the allocation of new and replacement residents' permits.

**3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

3.1 None for this report.

**4 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

4.1 Prompted by the decision of West Berkshire Council to cease payments for the use of re3 facilities by West Berkshire residents, the re3 Partnership made some changes to the way that re3 Recycling Centres operate.

4.2 The first change came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 and restricted Recycling Centre access to re3 area residents only. Residents are now required to display a residency permit in their vehicle or provide specific documentary proof of residency to visit the re3 Recycling Centres.

4.3 The second phase of changes came into operation on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Residents wishing to deliver their waste in a commercial or commercial-type vehicle now need to apply for a permit before visiting the Bracknell and Reading sites and charges were introduced to cover the cost of certain types of waste.

4.4 All these changes have been carefully designed and implemented in order to improve waste management service efficiency and make savings.

**5 PROGRESS OF CHANGES**

5.1 From July 2016 – March 2017, re3 avoided disposal costs totalling £943,000 as a direct result of introducing the Recycling Centre access changes and the ensuing

reduction in tonnage and costs. This is currently on target with the savings estimated prior to the change.

- 5.2 Recycling Centre tonnage had decreased by 9,500 tonnes overall from July 2016 – March 2017 compared to the same time the previous year. Half of this reduction is due to less general waste being sent to costly landfill.
- 5.3 There were over 101,000 fewer visitors to both sites from July 2016 – March 2017 compared to the same time the previous year. There were 20% fewer visitors using the Smallmead site, and 8% fewer using the Longshot Lane Recycling Centre. Officers estimate that the reduction in visits was the result of the denial of access to non-re3 residents and also to reductions in trade waste deliveries.
- 5.4 It is estimated that 95% of all Recycling Centre visitors now use a residents' permit to gain access to the sites. The remainder use one of the advised forms of personal identification.

## **6 Introduction of a Minimum Waste Charge**

- 6.1 Feedback from onsite Meet and Greet staff has highlighted that some residents' may not have been charged for soil, rubble and plasterboard if the amount they brought to site was less than 25 litres. This is due to the current lack of a minimum rate for chargeable non-household waste in the Waste Acceptance Policy (WAP).
- 6.2 re3 is recommending that the Waste Acceptance Protocol (WAP) be amended to reflect a minimum rate for chargeable non-household waste of £1.00 if the quantity presented is less than 25 litres but still a sufficient amount to warrant a charge.
- 6.3 A minimum charge rate will help re3 to protect savings and should help discourage residents from making multiple journeys with small amounts. The minimum rate of £1.00 reflects a practical and reasonable contribution to the waste processing costs for small amounts of soil, rubble and plasterboard, and is not for profit.
- 6.4 Meet and Greet staff will continue to exercise reasonable discretion when implementing the minimum charge, while referring back to the WAP. Charges are assessed on a case by case basis and the staff member's decision is final.
- 6.5 For all quantities above 25 litres, charges will continue to apply in multiples of whole bags. Items such as toilet pans, sinks, toilet cisterns and sink pedestals will still be charged as single items.
- 6.6 Members are being recommended to agree to the introduction of a minimum waste charge for soil, rubble and plasterboard.

## **7. Commercial and Commercial-Type Vehicle Permits for Car Club Vehicles and Similar Sign-Written Vehicles**

- 7.1 Car clubs allow members to hire a vehicle for periods of an hour onwards and provide a flexible, cost effective way for people to use a car on a temporary basis without the full range of expenses associated with car ownership. There are several car club schemes open to residents in the re3 area, and are typically not for profit organisations.

Car club vehicles can be sign written, and as such fall under the criteria of requiring a commercial and commercial type vehicle permit for a Recycling Centre visit, as stipulated in the WAP.

- 7.2 Although car club users are, in all probability, mostly residents, an exemption for car club vehicles from the commercial and commercial-type vehicle permit scheme could provide an opportunity for trade waste abuse.
- 7.3 By requesting that car club users apply for a commercial and commercial-type vehicle permit, we are also able to ascertain that they are re3 area residents and not residents from outside of the re3 area who have used a Bracknell Forest, Reading or Wokingham car club scheme.
- 7.4 Members are being recommended to agree that sign written car club vehicles, and similar sign written vehicles such as taxis, are not exempted from the commercial and commercial-type vehicle permit criteria.

## **8 Increasing the frequency of commercial and commercial-type vehicle permit data downloads**

- 8.1 re3 officers are working with IT staff in Reading Borough Council and FCC in order to increase the frequency at which data from commercial vehicle permit applications is uploaded to the FCC database.
- 8.2 Currently users are asked to apply for a permit at least 24 hours before they visit. This ensures that the permit is present on the FCC system at the time of the resident's visit, and is the easiest way for staff to cross-check application details.
- 8.3 In exceptional circumstances however, a resident in a commercial-type vehicle may be allowed to enter the Recycling Centres with a permit that is not yet available on the FCC database.
- 8.4 Staff are required to manually record the permit number and Officers have been advised of instances in which residents have tried to utilise a single permit on multiple visits.
- 8.5 re3 officers are working to increase the frequency of file transfer in order to significantly reduce the period of 'notice' that residents are required to give. Details of these changes and the timescales involved would be made available to residents and staff and the intention would be that permits would no longer be accepted before the corresponding details were available.

## **9. Ending the Allocation of New and Replacement Residents' Permits**

- 9.1 An online application system was put in place for those residents who did not receive their original Recycling Centre residents' permit, who had lost it or who were new to the area and required one.
- 9.2 Since the online application system started just prior to the change implementation in July 2016, 12,357 permits have been issued, in addition to the original 182,000 in the mailing to every household in the re3 area.
- 9.3 Although applications peaked at 2,747 for the month the change was implemented, an average of over 1000 replacement permits were still being sent in Q4 of the 2016-17 financial year.

- 9.4 Members are recommended to agree to ending the application system for new or replacement residents' permits. Ending the supply of new or replacement permits will help to maintain and protect the savings being made at the Recycling Centres as a result of residency requirements.
- 9.5 Residents who are new to the area, or have lost their permit, will still, as has always been the case, be allowed to visit the Recycling Centres with ID and proof of residency.
- 9.6 re3 is recommending a six week wind down period before ending the new or replacement residents' permit online application process. This allows time for Meet and Greet staff to communicate the change to those residents still visiting the Recycling Centres without a permit but with ID.

## **10. Supportive Systems and Communications**

- 10.1 Customer care teams, comms and website teams at the re3 Councils and Contractor would be informed that the allocation of new and replacement residents' permits is due to end, and websites will be amended accordingly.
- 10.2 A series of communications marking the first anniversary of the visitor access changes is planned to report their outcomes. These include a clamp down on trade waste abuse, on-target savings and quieter facilities with improved access.
- 10.3 A training session for Meet and Greet staff will congratulate them on a successful implementation so far and reiterate the importance of charging for the relevant non-household waste items correctly and consistently.
- 10.4 By evidencing the positive outcomes of the changes, re3 can thank residents for their co-operation and compliance, and encourage them in behaviours that contribute to better waste management and improved recycling rates.

## **11 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY**

### Head of Legal Services

- 11.1 None for this report.

### Corporate Finance Business Partner

- 11.2 None for this report.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 11.3 None.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 11.4 None.

## 12 CONSULTATION

### Principal Groups Consulted

12.1 Not applicable.

### Method of Consultation

Not applicable.

### Representations Received

12.2 Not applicable.

### **Contacts for further information**

Anna Fowler, re3 Marketing and Communications Officer  
0118 937 3460  
[anna.fowler@reading.gov.uk](mailto:anna.fowler@reading.gov.uk)

Oliver Burt, re3 Strategic Waste Manager  
0118 937 3990  
[oliver.burt@reading.gov.uk](mailto:oliver.burt@reading.gov.uk)