

TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
9th July 2020

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 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That Members note the contents of this report.**
- 2.2 **That Members endorse the retention of the booking system for the remainder of 2020, as described at 5.30.**
- 2.3 **That Members agree to review access to the HWRCs at each subsequent JWDB meeting, and until the end of social distancing, as described at 5.32.**

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

Covid-19 Global Pandemic and re3 Services

- 5.1 The re3 area has a combined population of c460,000 residents. Their waste is managed through two busy facilities, either by council collections or visits to the two Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).
- 5.2 Staff at the re3 facilities have continued to receive, sort and process waste from the three councils, throughout the period of the virus pandemic. Indeed, waste services in general, including collection and across the re3 area, have thus far been largely unaffected – only a short period of suspension of green waste collections in Bracknell Forest and Reading aside. This compares well, nationally, as is shown in national statistics for the first four weeks of lockdown, and included at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 It is appropriate to recognise the diligence of the Contractor, FCC, alongside the respective council teams involved in waste collection and management, throughout the period. All re3 facilities have remained available for service throughout, despite <20% staff absence, through self-isolation and shielding.
- 5.4 As has been previously reported, visitors to the Longshot Lane site on March 23rd (the date upon which the Prime Minister announced the UK lockdown) numbered over 1500. For a ten-hour day, that is equivalent to a new visitor every 24 seconds. Those conditions are not abnormal, for either site, during the spring and summer.

5.5 To ensure that the facilities could operate safely and efficiently, in support of public health, the re3 partnership set itself several objectives for the resumption of the HWRC service, during the period of the virus pandemic, and lockdown measures. They are:

- That the protection of public health (as it relates directly to the Covid-19 virus) is the objective, and guiding principle, to which all measures [relating to the operation of HWRCs during the virus pandemic] are directed.
- That elements of social distancing will remain in place for a significant amount of time (either in its form as at the date of this proposal or some other form, according to Government guidance).
- That the re3 councils will work as partners and in a manner which is supportive of the wider waste management service, including in relation to communication and messaging.
- The respective councils will fully support the measures that are ultimately agreed (either those contained herein, or as amended).

5.6 Those objectives were central to the prior planning and operational delivery of the Services, following their reopening on 18th May 2020.

5.7 This report will provide a brief review of the resumption and look ahead to service delivery over coming months.

Booking System

5.8 The council booking system was opened at 10am on Friday 15th May. It was quickly overwhelmed with demand and was taken off-line in the afternoon. It was turned-on again later the same day.

5.9 Officers worked continuously over the weekend to support the system, which was operable but still being overwhelmed. Full numbers of bookings were taken for the first three days (18th to 20th May). However, considerable frustration was apparent because the system was not able to cope with demand.

5.10 In parallel with those early difficulties, officers prepared to migrate bookings to a new system, that they had already identified for a parallel purpose. This system was commissioned and went 'live' at just after 8.30am on Thursday 21st May.

5.11 The new system immediately coped with the continuing high demand and bookings have continued to be taken since.

5.12 The current system is robust and functional but some limitations are apparent. These include:

- The ease with which residents can identify the days upon which advance bookings can be made (colour coding).
- Limitations for residents whose vision is impaired.
- Levels of control with which bookings can be cancelled and reconciled with real-time records on site.

- Some inconsistencies in the receipt of booking confirmations by residents – prompting residents to seek confirmation by calling the councils.
- Absence of postcode look-up function.

Site Operation

- 5.13 The sites reopened at a level of 23 vehicles each half-hour (total 460 per day). As soon as it became clear that numbers of bookings per hour have gradually been increased, to balance demand with safe operation – both for residents and staff. At time of writing, the number of available bookings per day is 637 per site, which is approximately 60% of usual levels of patronage. Opening hours of the sites have also been extended, by an hour, to 7pm.
- 5.14 From the resumption of the service, on 18th May 2020, safety has been the principal concern.
- 5.15 Both sites opened in full, accepting all waste types from residents and allowing the safe purchase of re3grow compost. This is in contrast to some sites, elsewhere in the country, that have preferred to offer a very limited range of services.
- 5.16 Both re3 sites used additional, floor markings and utilised barriers to assist visitors in social distancing. Those steps also helped with the interaction between pedestrians and vehicles.
- 5.17 The willingness of residents to adapt to the conditions put in place is apparent. Examples include:
- Residents have appeared happy to maintain social distancing on-site, often waiting at a short distance for a specific area of the site to become available.
 - Many residents have fully loaded their vehicles, to take advantage of their visit. This has most likely helped to moderate number of journeys, compared to pre-lockdown conditions.
 - While the earlier booking system had to be replaced, the concept of booking appears to be generally accepted and indeed is associated with the enhanced conditions on-site and ease of access.
 - After a period of intense demand, following the closure of the sites, availability of bookings seems to be appropriate now.

Off-site, Highways, arrangements

- 5.18 Elsewhere in the region, long queues and, in some cases, public order issues have been experienced, following the reopening of HWRCs. Via the combined measures put in place by the re3 partnership, those issues have not been experienced at Longshot Lane or Smallmead.
- 5.19 Neighbouring businesses (including Royal Mail, traders on Longshot Lane Trading Estate, DHL and Thames Water) have mentioned no adverse issues. Additionally, other council services have been able to access the sites without delay, not least the respective refuse and recycling collection services.
- 5.20 Officers are preparing for the removal of off-site Highways support (indeed at the date of the meeting the measures will have been removed). This is based on the need to control costs and to establish procedures for access which are sustainable

whilst social distancing conditions remain (in whichever form they take). This process will be undertaken, as throughout, to ensure moderation of queuing and the preservation, as much as possible, of the aspects of the service that have been appreciated by visitors and neighbours.

- 5.21 Accordingly, and remaining within the scope agreed at the resumption of the service, officers have begun to profile the availability of bookings through the day and week. This involves reducing available bookings slightly during periods when a particular site, and/or surrounding roads, are busiest but making-up those reductions in other periods.
- 5.22 The weekend is a period in which increased numbers can be accommodated, particularly on a Sunday. This is achievable because the other integrated facilities (such as the transfer stations, where council refuse is received) are not operational on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. Making use of on-site queuing measures, such as those required in the Planning Permission for Longshot Lane, mean that the impact on surrounding roads can be moderated even over busier weekend periods.
- 5.23 By profiling available bookings, officers intend to maximise access to the HWRCs, to operate efficient reception of council waste collection and also to minimise the impact of the sites on neighbouring businesses.

Ongoing Operation of the site as Covid-19 Measures Evolve

- 5.24 On 28th June, Simon Clarke MP, Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, and Rebecca Pow MP, Minister for Environment, wrote to councils across England on the subject of 'Public access to tips and toilets'.
- 5.25 The letter encouraged local authorities to ensure that they were not applying '*unnecessarily tight restrictions*' on access for residents at Recycling Centres. Officers are confident that the conditions applied within the re3 area allow for both reasonable access, to support the needs of residents, and safe access, to moderate the risk of virus transmission at what could otherwise be busy sites.
- 5.26 With effect from 4th July, the advice on social distancing is set to change. The UK Government has announced that, for England, a '1 metre plus' approach will be adopted. That means that where it is possible to observe the original 2 metre rule (recognising scientific advice that 2-metre distance remains safer) individuals should observe it. Where that is not possible, *1 metre plus* (with 1 metre being the absolute minimum) should be observed alongside other measures such as face coverings or individuals avoiding face to face exchanges.
- 5.27 The situation at the HWRCs allows for 2 metres to be observed. A one metre plus rule won't make significant difference at re3 sites (in contrast to how it would make a difference at pubs and cinemas etc).
- 5.28 As described elsewhere in this report, the approach of the councils to increase numbers of visitors as soon as operational experience indicated that safety would allow it, has meant that the re3 sites are already receiving more visits than many other HWRCs.
- 5.29 Officers will refresh signage at the HWRCs to reflect official guidance – both to make it clear that re3 is complying and also to support general public messaging.
- 5.30 To provide residents and other site users with certainty, officers are proposing that a booking system for the HWRCs is confirmed for the remainder of the calendar year.

That would support the following outcomes:

- Continued profiling of bookings during each week to maximise safe numbers of visits.
- Supporting making changes to the current booking system to address aforementioned limitations.
- Clarity in communication for site visitors.
- Certainty for the other council services who use the two sites.
- Support for businesses proximate to the two sites.

5.31 If all forms of social-distancing are abandoned before the end of the year, then the retention of the booking system would instead be reviewed at the first opportunity.

5.32 To support the above proposal, Members are recommended to request a review of HWRC operation at each subsequent Joint Waste Disposal Board meeting. Accordingly, the first such review would be presented, for consideration by Members, at the September re3 Board meeting.

re3 Waste Statistics

5.33 At each of the meetings of the Joint Waste Disposal Board in 2019/20, Officers have presented performance against key targets and indicators from the re3 Strategy 2018-20. The principal themes of this strategy were to: (i) reduce the net cost of waste, and (ii) recycle 50%.

5.34 Whilst a new strategy is being developed, the equivalent data for quarter 1 of 2020/21 is presented in Appendix 2. This reflects the provisional results for April and May 2020, but excludes the data for June as this is in the process of being collated at the time of writing the report.

5.35 The provisional headline results are as follows:

Recycling Rate

Council	2019/20 Full Year Recycling Rate (Provisional)	April-May 2020
Bracknell Forest	42.6%	42.9%
Reading	35.3%	29.1%
Wokingham	50.3%	52.3%

5.36 As Members will be aware, recycling rates tend to be highest at the start of the year, and consequently, a direct comparison of quarter one 2020/21 is presented against the same period last year in Appendix One.

5.37 The overall recycling rates for all three councils have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular the HWRCs were shut for much of the period covered by the statistics. The recycling rates at the HWRCs make an important contribution to overall recycling, and this is a significant factor in why the recycling rates presented are lower than the same period last year. It should be noted however that reopening of the HWRCs from the 18th of May (albeit with restricted visitor numbers) may have a positive impact on the overall recycling rates once the data for June is considered.

5.38 The decline in recycling rate in Reading is more pronounced than in the other two councils and this appears to be most closely linked to a suspension in green waste collection services at the start of the pandemic. Reading has not yet seen the same return in green waste tonnages that was experienced in Bracknell and Wokingham.

- 5.39 Glass tonnages collected through the bring bank scheme have increased across the Partnership area, leading to this aspect also contributing more highly to the overall recycling rate. This is believed to be linked to more people drinking at home, rather than in bars and restaurants, which have been closed.
- 5.40 As shown at Appendix 2, kerbside recycling rates (of mixed dry recycling) have increased when compared to last year. The kerbside recycling rate represents council waste, collected for recycling, as a proportion of total household waste. Due to the closure of the HWRCs, this tonnage currently represents a greater proportion of total waste.
- 5.41 As the

6 COMMUNICATIONS

COVID-19

- 6.1 The re3 Marketing and Communications Officer has led COVID-19 communications activities, collaborating with the Councils Communications teams related to the resumption of the HWRCs. Examples relevant to this section are included at Appendix 3.
- 6.2 The communications messages focused on new rules imposed on the operational changes such as introduction of the booking system, adherence to the social distancing guidelines and a limited capacity on the site.
- 6.3 Both sites feature clear signage allowing residents to familiarise themselves with the new guidelines.
- 6.4 The 'Click & Tip' campaign, promoting the booking system, was launched in mid-May. It was communicated to residents via the councils' own channels: website, social media and newsletters. A press statement was released and shared with the local press, radio and local & regional TV and Parishes
- 6.5 Residents feedback towards the booking system was very positive. The booking system is being well used with both sites being continuously fully booked for the upcoming days.
- 6.6 The compliance rate is very a high averaging at 95% with only ~5% of visitors being denied an access due to the lack of valid booking per day.
- 6.7 A large volume of positive feedback was received directly at the sites, via contact form or online within the first month following the reopening.
- 6.8 Residents expressed their gratitude towards the staff working at the Recycling Centres, praised their politeness, respecting the new safety measures and expressed compliments towards the site operation, including a booking system.
- 6.9 Over the course of the first month since the re-opening, re3 noted on average 170 calls a day, with up to 400 calls per day immediately following the reopening. There were 150k overall website visits (65k entries to the Click&Tip Service page).
- 6.10 Social media engagement has significantly increased during the lockdown period, with 35% increase of followers on Facebook in Q2 vs Q1 (up to 4,400). The re-opening announcement post attracted 52.5k users.

Awards nominations

- 6.11 re3 Partnership has been shortlisted in the National Recycling Awards (NRA) 2020, in three categories. Both our recycling centres, Longshot Lane, Bracknell and Island Road, Reading have been nominated in the Recycling Facility of the Year category.
- 6.12 In addition, the re3yclopedia app has been shortlisted in two categories: Local Authority Success and Innovation Award – Technology.
- 6.13 The National Recycling Awards are the biggest recognition in the waste industry sector and have been established for more than 20 years. The Awards ceremony will take place in December.
- 6.14 The re3 Marketing and Communications Officer has been preparing relevant communications activities to promote these successful nominations, including banner displayed on each site, press releases and social media assets.

Glass recycling

- 6.15 Over the course of lockdown, re3 has noted a significant increase of glass recycling during the first 11 weeks of the lockdown with an average increase by c45% in comparison to the same period last year.
- 6.16 To maintain this high engagement glass recycling campaign “Don’t Bin it. Bank it” is planned to be promoted across re3.
- 6.17 Basic information on glass recycling has been translated into several languages – Arabic, Urdu, Polish, Romanian, Nepali and Mandarin to reflect a diverse community living across re3 area.
- 6.18 The stickers feature a QR code which, when scanned by a smartphone, lead to the information in different languages. A sticker will be attached to each bottle bank across area.
- 6.19 A visual of the sticker that residents will see is presented at Appendix 3.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY

Head of Legal Services

- 7.1 None for this report.

Corporate Finance Business Partner

- 7.2 None for this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 None.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

None

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Principal Groups Consulted
Not applicable.

8.2 Method of Consultation
Not applicable.

8.3 Representations Received
Not applicable.

Background Papers

None

Contacts for further information

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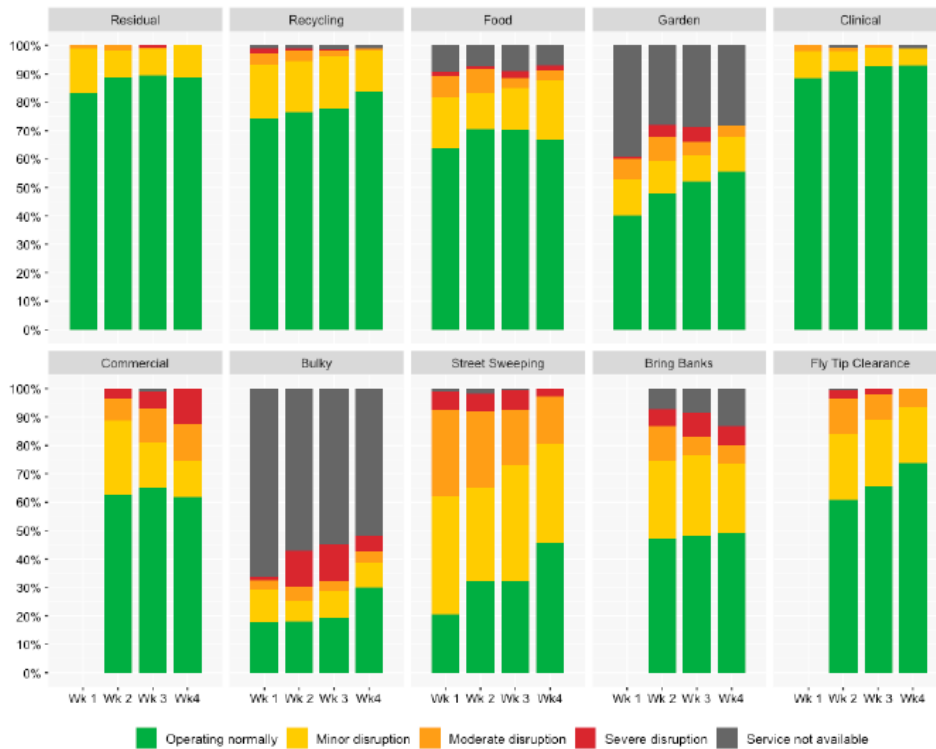
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APPENDIX 1 – Covid-19 WASTE SERVICE CONTINUITY (England)

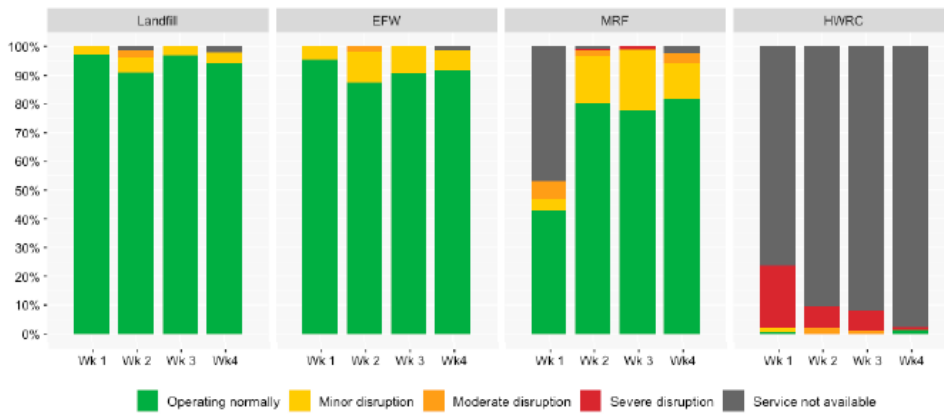
The graphs below illustrate the first four weeks of the weekly survey, conducted from w/c 30th March, on the continuity of waste services in England.



Collection Services



Disposal Services



APPENDIX 2 – WASTE STATISTICS

Bracknell Forest

Category	Background	Quarter 1		Equivalent Period 2019/20	
C1A Statutory Recycling Target	This target is the traditional 'recycling rate' target that should be comparable with other councils in the UK.	42.85%		45.61%	
C1B Kerbside Recycling	Using the respective weekly council kerbside collections is an effective way to recycle. This indicator looks at this service alone.	31.82%		25.28%	
C1C Including Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA)	<i>Despite displacing 'virgin' materials, the recycling of IBA into building blocks is not yet counted as 'recycling' by the Government. Nonetheless, re3 recognises the value of this activity.</i>	8%		7%	
C1E Contamination	<i>Contamination is the term used to describe items which are not supposed to be present within recyclables. The level of contamination is, therefore, an indicator of the effectiveness of waste collection arrangements. It also has an impact on recycling because at high levels of contamination it can become harder to separate 'good' recyclables from the unwanted items.</i>	Target	82.80%	Target	85.70%
		Non Target Paper and Card	6.32%	Non Target Paper and Card	6.56%
		Other Non-Target and Non-Recyclable Material	10.88%	Other Non-Target and Non-Recyclable Material	7.74%

Reading

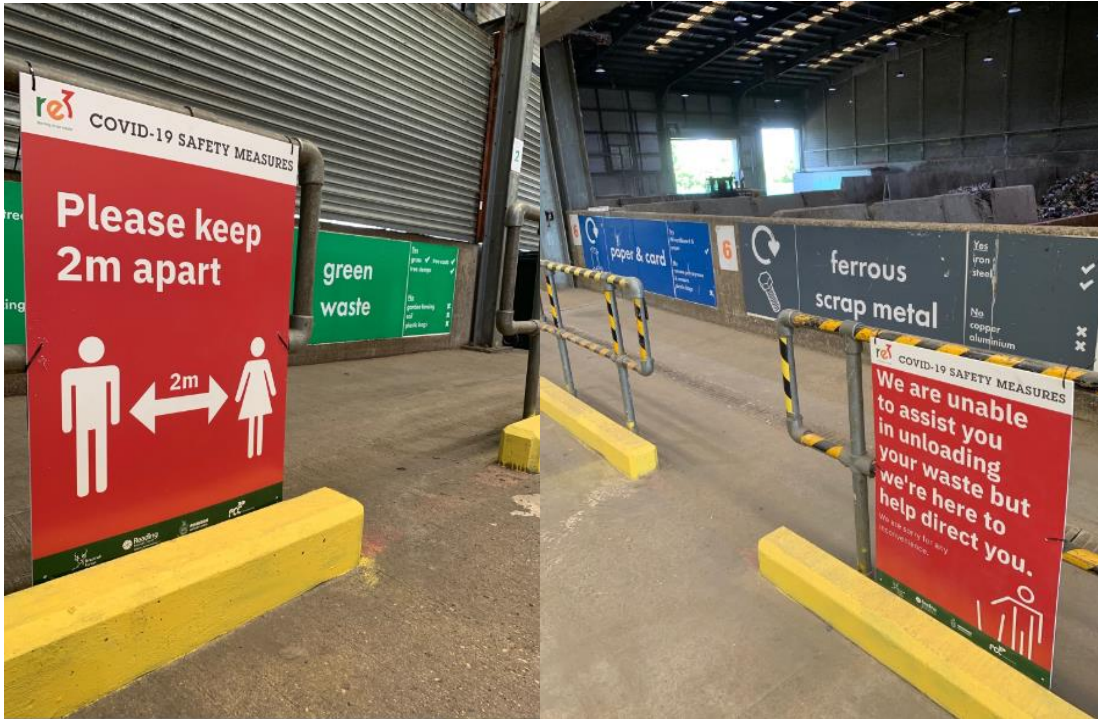
Category	Background	Quarter 1		Equivalent Period 2019/20	
C2A Statutory Recycling Target	This target is the traditional 'recycling rate' target that should be comparable with other councils in the UK.	29.11%		37.86%	
C2B Kerbside Recycling	Using the respective weekly council kerbside collections is an effective way to recycle. This indicator looks at this service alone.	22.23%		20.40%	
C2C Including Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA)	<i>Despite displacing 'virgin' materials, the recycling of IBA into building blocks is not yet counted as 'recycling' by the Government. Nonetheless, re3 recognises the value of this activity.</i>	11%		9%	
C1E Contamination	<i>Contamination is the term used to describe items which are not supposed to be present within recyclables. The level of contamination is, therefore, an indicator of the effectiveness of waste collection arrangements. It also has an impact on recycling because at high levels of contamination it can become harder to separate 'good' recyclables from the unwanted items.</i>	Target	77.50%	Target	82.62%
		Non Target Paper and Card	2.29%	Non Target Paper and Card	1.45%
		Other Non-Target and Non-Recyclable Material	20.21%	Other Non-Target and Non-Recyclable Material	15.92%

Wokingham

Category	Background	Quarter 1		Equivalent Period 2019/20	
C3A Statutory Recycling Target	This target is the traditional 'recycling rate' target that should be comparable with other councils in the UK.	52.27%		55.73%	
C3B Kerbside Recycling	Using the respective weekly council kerbside collections is an effective way to recycle. This indicator looks at this service alone.	42.09%		31.45%	
C3C Including Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA)	<i>Despite displacing 'virgin' materials, the recycling of IBA into building blocks is not yet counted as 'recycling' by the Government. Nonetheless, re3 recognises the value of this activity.</i>	10%		7%	
C1E Contamination	Contamination is the term used to describe items which are not supposed to be present within recyclables. The level of contamination is, therefore, an indicator of the effectiveness of waste collection arrangements. It also has an impact on recycling because at high levels of contamination it can become harder to separate 'good' recyclables from the unwanted items.	Target	83.04%	Target	79.52%
		Non Target Paper and Card	4.81%	Non Target Paper and Card	10.05%
		Other Non-Target and Non-Recyclable Material	12.16%	Other Non-Target and Non-Recyclable Material	10.43%

APPENDIX 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

1. COVID-19 visuals



re3 COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES

re3 COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES

Have you booked your visit?

Please ensure you have made a booking. Access will be denied if your vehicle isn't on our list.



We are limiting the number of cars on site for everyone's safety.

It may take longer to access the site. Please be patient.



Click&Tip



Book a time slot
if you are no longer able to store your waste safely



Arrive within the time slot
be patient it may take longer to access the site



Keep 2m apart when at sites

Before you click

- I don't have any symptoms which indicate coronavirus
- I am no longer able to safely store my waste
- I have proof of address that I can bring with me



Keep safe on site



KEEP 2m APART

FOLLOW STAFF ADVICE



Click&Tip - FAQ

I can't book and now seeing message 'Booking is not available' - why?

✔ Bookable slots are available on a rolling 7 day basis. For example if it's 10am on Monday, you can book slots up to 10am next Monday, subject to availability.

If the the screen says 'booking is not available' this means the slot has not been released yet. If there are spaces left, the box has a darker colour. If no slots are available, please check again later. New slots are added on a half hourly basis.



Click&Tip - top tip


Arrive within the time slot



! Each slot last 30 minutes. Please try not to arrive too early. If most people arrive in their designated time slot, this will help to speed up your visit.



2. Feedback



re3 Recycling: re3 to re-open recycling centres...

ANNOUNCEMENT From Monday, 18th May we are re-opening re3 recycling centres at Longshot Lane, Bracknell and Smallmead. Reading & visiting the sites during the COVID-19 pandemic will be different and to access you will have to 2 BOOK A TIME SLOT. See...


Performance for your post

Estimated reach: **52,473**

Organic: 90% (46K)
Paid: 12% (6.1K)

re3 Recycling
Published by Monika Butler (T) · 21 May · G

Thank you to everyone who has already visited our recycling centres at Longshot Lane, Bracknell and Smallmead. Reading for your patience and doing everything you can to keep safe and maintain appropriate distance on site. By controlling the number of visitors on site, we can reduce queuing off site, keeping the roads clear for our busy neighbouring businesses and ensuring that the council waste collections services can continue to work effectively. Please only visit you have made a booking bit.ly/re3clickandtipservice



3,566 People Reached

124 Reactions, comments & shares

50 Likes	50 On post	0 On shares
3 Love	3 On post	0 On shares
65 Comments	63 On Post	2 On Shares
6 Shares	6 On Post	0 On Shares

721 Post Clicks

191 Photo views	131 Link clicks	399 Cover clicks
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“Great experience at the tip today (longshot Lane). The booking system did have a few teething troubles to start with, but once it was working I managed to book a slot with ease. On the day itself I was able to drive straight in once my details had been checked. All the staff were just brilliant and the whole thing was incredibly well managed. Thank you to all involved. You’ve had a lot of flack to deal with when the booking system crashed but you now have a great system in place. Thank you.”

“Thanks to the guys at Reding tip today. Super cheerful, friendly and helpful as always”

“Just been to do a tip run and I’m seriously impressed how well managed it was. In and out within ten minutes and no queue. Thanks guys. “

“I would like to say a huge thank you to the team at the Bracknell tip. I booked online last week and was lucky enough to get a slot this morning. It was so well organised. I really appreciated the friendliness and kindness of the guys giving directions from beginning to end. The safety measures were excellent, and it was so quick. “

“Smallmead very well organised and staff all friendly. Went this morning. In and out like a dream. Well done re3. Excellent job. “

“Fantastic set up, friendly helpful staff. Checking in and unloaded in five minute. Well done!”

“Really hope this becomes the new norm. So efficient and easy. Thank you team!”

“I used the Bracknell recycling centre this morning and just wanted to feedback how excellent the experience was. A lot of effort has obviously gone into organising the site with the new Covid-19 measures and it felt completely safe and easy. The staff were all very friendly and gave good instructions. You should absolutely keep a booking system in place when things do eventually return to normal! Just wanted to let you know, as it’s very easy for people to make a complaint when things go wrong but not always so quick to provide positive feedback.”

3. Glass recycling QR code sticker visual

