

JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
17 JUNE 2021
(9.30 - 10.45 am)

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

Reading Borough Council
Councillor Adele Barnett-Ward
Councillor Tony Page

Wokingham District Council
Councillor Parry Batth
Councillor Gregor Murray

Officers Monika Bulmer, re3 Marketing & Communications Officer
Oliver Burt, re3 Strategic Waste Manager
Andy Edwards, Reading Borough Council
Kevin Gibbs, Bracknell Forest Council
Sarah Innes, Reading Borough Council
Damian James, Bracknell Forest Council
Clare Lawrence, Wokingham Borough Council
Richard Bisset, Wokingham Borough Council

27. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board held on the 21 January 2021, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

30. re3 Progress Report

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

The report covered:

- re3 and Council Performance Statistics
- re3 grow
- re3 paint
- Rigid Plastics Recycling Trial
- Climate Change
- Communications

Sarah Innes reported the performance statistic for all three Council, which included the provisional figures for April 2021, which showed that all three Council were in the

low to mid 50%. All three Councils had now rolled out a food waste collection service, Reading in February 2021 and Bracknell in March 2021. The statistics reflected this change and highlighted the difference for both Bracknell and Reading in their statistics compared to last year. Wokingham had also seen an increase in their recycling figures, which was due to the new recycling bags, which had been introduced in March 2021. These had proved to be successful in keeping the contents dry with no rejections reported since mid-March. It was expected that the April 2021 figures would be reflective of future performance.

Monika Bulmer, reported that the re3grow sales had been very successful, and the report stated that to date over 75% of stock had already been sold. However, in the past few weeks, all the bags had Smallmead had been sold, with a small number left at Longshot Lane. This gave confidence that a similar or higher order next year would be successful. Full numbers would be reported at the next meeting.

It was requested that more comms be done regarding the re3grow process and the processing cost, as well as highlighting that this was non-profit. It was confirmed that this information was already in the public domain, but the message would be reemphasised next year when the bags went back on sale.

Repaint, had now been available to residence since December 2020, it had a slow start due to lockdown and winter months, however due to increased promotion and a change of location of paint cabinets at both sites the offering was looking more promising. April had been the most successful month so far with half a tonne of paint being redistributed to the public. There would be further promotion with stickers being placed on the tubs, so residents could take photos of their DIY projects which could then be shared on social media and raise awareness. There would also be comms regarding which type of paint would be suitable for reuse would also be created as well as details regarding hardening old paint. It was requested by the Chair that each Council advertise the paint service in their communications.

It was reported that there were now over 20,000 users of the re3cyclopedia, which had double in the last 12 months. The app had been well used and since the start of the year there had regularly been over 10,000 searches a month. The app was awaiting an upgrade which would include a barcode scanning option, which was the first of its kind anywhere in the UK and was at its final testing stage. It was hoped that this would be ready by late summer/early autumn.

Each of the re3 partner councils had made commitments to take action to reduce their carbon emissions and communications relating to Climate Change were key moving forward. A online calculator that shows how recycling of single household items can contribute to efforts in combating a climate change will be added to the re3 website. Using this tool, residents would be able to see how much CO₂e could be saved by recycling and will learn how this amount of CO₂e relates to the number of cars taken off the roads. These calculations will be used to develop recycling awareness messages within a wider focus on the environment and practical steps that residents can take. The current plans would be shared with members for comments, but transport and energy usage could be included.

The re3 Partnership was keen to explore the options available for extending their recycling services and Officers had previously looked into a number of different possibilities for the recycling of rigid plastics but an option had not been found that was cost effective and allowed for a stable outlook for the waste. An option had now been found which would meet both of those aims and a trial was now planned to start at the start of July. There was a specific list regarding what could and couldn't be recycled and the trial would enable the partnership to establish the quantity of waste

that can be diverted from landfill and the input needed in order to meet the quality requirements of the offtaker. A meeting had been held with the contractor and signage would be placed at the sites. Members would be kept up to date regarding the progress of the trial.

It was questioned what would happen to the hard plastics once they had been taken off site. Sarah Innes confirmed that a desktop audit had taken place in relation to what would happen to the waste. The ridged plastic would be taken to a centre on the South Coast and separated into different polymer types and baled up. It would then go to the north of England where it would be processed, and they would be turned in to pellets and would be made into a product which would be able to be sold. Concerns were related to the emissions in regard to the travelling that the plastic would be doing. It was suggested that during the trial the ridged plastics could be used to create something useful in the community of one of the three Councils. A video had been offered by the offtaker that the Board were keen to use.

31. Review of Recycling Centres' Booking System

The Board received a report briefing the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on access options for the re3 recycling centres.

Members supported the retention of the recycling centre booking system during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to provide clarity in communications for site visitors. At the JWDB meeting of January 2021, Members requested that future access options be considered. The booking system was introduced to minimise the queues which may have resulted from the 'one in, one out' policy; used to help maintain social distancing at the recycling centres. Benefits of managing the flow of residents arriving at the recycling centres were detailed within the report.

There was soon to be an upgrade to the booking system which would allow a postcode look up option. This would help officers to be able to tell where residents were traveling from to use the sites. This would be helpful in the future to allocate funding and work out tonnages.

Three different options had been drafted for members to consider; these were:

Option 1 – Removal of the booking system which would see a return to pre-COVID access arrangements.

Option 2 - Retention of the booking system, with current profiling and additional slots.

Option 3 - Retention of the booking system, with weekday profiling and additional weekend slots.

As this meeting of the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board was unable to meet in person and due to the changes in the remote meeting protocol, the Board were unable to endorse one of the options within the report. So, it was proposed that as a trial the additional weekend slots be added from this weekend (17 June 2021) and that this continued until September when the data from this trial would be presented to Members and an informed decision could be made.

As a result of the Members comments and questions, the following points were made:

- The number of additional bookings would be gauged through the trial, to see what the optimum number could be, this was also linked to the social

distancing guidelines, and as soon as this was released more scope may be given to the numbers able to visit.

- A scale hadn't been included on the graphs, so they weren't on the same scale. What was intended by having the 2 graphs was to show the peaks and troughs of busy periods. Whereas the booking system has been able to maintain a steady flow throughout the week. A copy of the graph with scales on could be circulated to Members after the meeting.
- The booking slots could be increased by units of 6, it was very difficult to say what the number would be at this point.
- Bracknell took fly tipping very seriously and would prosecute. Fly tipping would always be investigated thoroughly and the "enviro crime" team was expanding so there would be a strong presence across the Borough.
- Feedback on the booking system had been positive, with many of the positives outweighing the negatives.
- There would be no desire from Reading to go back to the "free for all" system, which caused terrible queues at Smallmead and often disrupted the A33 with queuing.
- It was requested that the next 3 months be used to gather data on the trial and bring the information to the next meeting in September where a formal decision can be made.
- Longshot Lane, although didn't suffer from the same queuing issue as Smallmead, did have different access issues that still needed to be resolved.
- It was confirmed that Wokingham residents had also been positive regarding the booking system.

It was confirmed by the Chair, that the trial would be carried on until September and an options report would be brought to the next meeting for Members to make a formal decision.

32. **re3 Strategy Report**

The Board received a report which briefed the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on progress in the delivery of the renewed re3 Strategy.

At the January 2020 re3 Board meeting, Members requested the preparation of a strategic pathway for the re3 partnership. The Covid-19 pandemic had delayed progress in developing the strategic pathway however at the re3 Board meeting in 2020, Members received a strategic briefing. At the board meeting in January 2021, the Members held a workshop in which Members recorded their strategic aspirations as individual councils and as partners.

The report detailed a short analysis of the data collected from Board Members and a first draft strategy for the partnership, which also reflected the emerging legislative environment and the re3 council's respective climate change commitments.

The strategy was organised around five themes, which were:

- A. Climate Change
- B. Waste Collection
- C. Waste Management
- D. Innovative Partnership
- E. Communication

It was proposed that between now and the September meeting or Christmas that further consultations are undertaken both internally and externally before a further draft version is brought back to the re3 Board.

33. Environment Bill - Resources and Waste Strategy Consultations Report

The Board received a briefing on two consultations, under the Resources and Waste Strategy sections of the forthcoming Environment Bill.

Due to the dates of the consultations, it had not possible to report to the JWDB prior to the submission of the two consultation responses, though some separate Member briefings were arranged.

The report provided an opportunity to formally record the response made by the re3 partnership.

34. Exclusion of Public and Press

Pursuant to Regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 10 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

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

35. re3 Finance Report

The Board received the Finance Report which briefed the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on the Partnership's current financial position and confirmed the second draft budget.

36. Date of the Next Board Meeting

It was agreed that the Annual Meeting of the Board would be moved to the 7 September 2021, with Reading Borough Council offering to host a hybrid meeting with Board Members attending in person.

CHAIRMAN