

**TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> September 2023**

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**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**

**Recycling App**

- 5.1** The re3 partnership has been using a bespoke app called re3cyclopedia since 2018. The recycling app has been well a useful tool; however, it has reached its potential to effectively support communications with residents.
- 5.2** The councils sourced an alternative app, called Scrapp, which proved to have a better technology, greater database, and more functionality. In addition to a manual search, residents can quickly scan products' barcodes to receive immediate local recycling advice; Moreover, the app will allow Councils to send residents notifications and help to motivate residents to recycle through gamification features and bin day reminders.
- 5.3** At the June meeting of the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board, members agreed not to renew the contract with the re3cyclopedia app and, instead, subject to a demonstration being provided, engage Scrapp to provide this service for the councils' partnership.
- 5.4** In July, two demonstration calls, led by Scrapp, were offered to re3 Board members and officers. The calls enabled participants to gain further insights into the app's capabilities and ask questions.
- 5.5** The onboarding process continues. The re3 Marketing and Communications Officer, with the help of the contractor, is currently on the final stages of sharing relevant data with Scrapp. This includes recycling advice at the kerbside, at the recycling centres, the locations of the bottle banks, TerraCycle locations, as well as the plastic bags and wrapping recycling trial areas.
- 5.6** Members were provided with a schedule outlining the relevant dates for a smooth transition. It is expected that the soft launch will occur in September, with the hard launch planned for late October. During that time, Officers will undertake relevant

testing, fine tuning of the app and engage with key stakeholders to gather relevant feedback. Communications assets are in production and will be provided to the Members in due course.

- 5.7 Simultaneously, Scrapp is engaging with the respective council IT officers to enable API connection, required for the bin dates notification feature. At the time of writing, API connection has been successfully achieved for Bracknell and Reading. We are awaiting connection for Wokingham, who are reviewing their schedules.
- 5.8 It has been negotiated that re3cyclopedia will remain available to residents at least until the end of January, with a contingency plan to continue for a longer period if required.

#### **Virtual Tours - Recycling Facilities (HWRC) and Material Recycling Facility (MRF)**

- 5.9 Since the last meeting, re3 has commissioned an external company to visit the re3 Recycling Centres, and the Material Recycling Facility, to produce 360-degree photos required for the virtual tour.
- 5.10 re3 Officers have been working closely with the provider, delivering required content to build the virtual tours. The finished tour will be similar in style to a Google Streetview.
- 5.11 It is expected that the project will be finalised within the next 3-4 weeks. The results will be shared with re3 Board Members and the councils as soon as possible.

#### **Plastic bags and wrapping recycling trial (Flex Collect project)**

- 5.12 The approval of the plastic bags and wrapping recycling trial during the previous Board Meeting resulted in six articles covering approval of the plastic bags and wrapping recycling trial: ([BBC](#), [BBC Berkshire](#), [Reading Chronicle](#), [Wokingham.Today](#), [Bracknell News](#), [Material Recycling World](#)).
- 5.13 re3 Officers were collaborating with the WRAP on production of leaflets and were responsible for overseeing print and delivery of leaflets.
- 5.14 An official press release announcing the trial, is planned to be distributed one week ahead of the commencement of the new trial service.
- 5.15 All relevant information for residents participating in the trial has been published on the Reading Borough Council, Recycle Now and re3 websites.
- 5.16 To receive more information, residents were invited to join a Facebook social group specifically created for those participating in the new trial service. The group has been created with the aim of providing residents with updates, recycling tips, and the opportunity to exchange feedback and share motivation. Communications with residents selected for the trial are also conducted using the NextDoor app, where six neighbourhood areas were selected to receive targeted updates.
- 5.17 Officers are currently working on the feedback form and reordering form that will be placed on the website.

#### **Podback coffee pods recycling service**

- 5.18 The Podback coffee recycling scheme commenced in mid-July, enabling residents to recycle their coffee pods at the re3 recycling sites.

- 5.19 The service has been very well received by the residents. Staff have reported that residents have been using the service without any issues.
- 5.20 Information about the new service was publicised in the local media ([Wokingham.Today](#)), via the re3 newsletter, and through regular social media updates. Social media content has been shared with the respective council communications officers.
- 5.21 Residents can also see new posters, at the sites, and were informed about the service by our staff members.
- 5.22 Podback promoted the service in Town & Country magazine by placing an A5 advertisement.

### **Food waste communications**

- 5.23 Food waste recycling has remained one of the key focuses during the recent months. In the recent updates, we provided residents with tips on how to reduce food waste when going away on holiday, along with a handy guide for a freezer-friendly food list. Additionally, re3 published several updates on food waste recycling, focusing on the process and addressing topics related to tea bags or oil recycling. During the early September, we focused on sustainable school lunches, providing tips how to reduce food waste and packaging.
- 5.24 re3 Officers will continue to strengthen messages on food waste recycling in the coming months. Benefits of the food waste recycling are very broad, from helping the environment, helping to save money to individuals through increasing recycling rates and reducing cost of waste disposal for the councils.
- 5.25 To highlight the topic, re3 is planning to create a dedicated newsletter, specifically related to food waste recycling. The educational updates will range from the recycling tips, environmental and economic benefits, insights into the process but also practical tips how to obtain the caddies or organise food waste recycling at home.
- 5.26 In addition, re3 has been in discussion with New Directions College to develop a series of culinary webinars that help attendees and viewers acquire valuable skills while promoting awareness of food waste.
- 5.27 Educational webinars will present a valuable opportunity for individuals to reduce their food waste and save money. While a precise programme has yet to be finalised, these webinars could focus on various aspects of cooking, including meal planning, portion control, and creative ways to use leftovers. It is hoped that we can help residents to manage their food, avoid cooking too much or do something useful with leftovers, and repurpose ingredients effectively. As a result, they not only reduce the amount of food that goes to waste but also stretch their grocery budgets, which is particularly relevant now during the cost-of-living crisis.

### **General comms activities**

- 5.28 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.
- 5.29 The following topics were included in recent communications: summer recycling tips related to the disposal of disposable BBQs; as well as advice on handling shredded paper. Additionally, re3 published several updates on plastic recycling, showcasing the

further journey of our plastic. Among other updates, residents also learned about the new refreshed signage at the Recycling Centre sites.

- 5.30 During the summer, re3 has incorporated a #FoilFriday campaign supported by Alupro into their updates. The campaign focus on different types of foil that can be recycled at home.
- 5.31 The half page advert was placed in the Town & Country magazine distributed to the Bracknell residents. The advert focused on the accessibility of the booking system in different languages.
- 5.32 In addition to the news clippings mentioned in the other parts of this report: we also noted two articles published in the trade media ([Let's Recycle](#), [Recycling Magazine](#)) that mention the AI-powered robotic arm installed at Reading's Material Recycling Facility. Additionally, re3 also had one media enquiry and article about the Government's announcement on changes to the DIY charges ([Wokingham.Today](#)).
- 5.33 Tours of the Material Recycling Facility for all members of partnering councils have been scheduled for September and October. All Members interested in the recycling process are welcome to visit.
- 5.34 Recycle Week 2023 will take place between 16-22 October 2023. This year Recycle Week is celebrating its 20th anniversary its theme - The Big Recycling Hunt - focuses on "missed capture": the items that can be recycled but are commonly missed in the home. re3 is planning to support the campaign by publishing the content on its channels.

## **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

None for this report

Contacts for further information

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