

Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Addendum

Date: Wednesday 6 December 2023

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

Items on the agenda: -

(4) Minutes of the previous meeting, including matters arising

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Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Wednesday 27 September 2023

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Heather Timms (Chair)

Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne

Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher

Councillor Tim Sinclair

Andrew Pau, Head of Waste & Country Parks

Ruth Dixon, Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager

Tamalyn Goodwin, Project Manager (Waste Strategy and Commissioning)

Andy Carswell, Democratic Services Officer

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Councillor Margaret Bell

Cath James, Interim Corporate Director – Streetscape

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Councillor Sue Markham

Jonathan Snell, Assistant Director - Environment and Enforcement

Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret

Stratford District Council

Councillor Lorraine Grocott

Warwick District Council

Councillor Will Roberts

Katy Wild, Contract Development and Enforcement Officer

Steve Partner, Head of Neighbourhood and Assets

Others Present

Councillor Ian Shenton

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Margaret Bell had sent apologies as she would be late attending.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Chair's Announcement

There were no Chair's announcements.

(4) Minutes of the previous meeting, including matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

2. Waste Management Performance Data for Q1 2023/24

The item was introduced by Andrew Pau, who drew members' attention to the provisional waste management data for the Q1 period, April-June (table 1). Compared with the same Q1 period last year, recycling/reuse was up by 884 tonnes, which was an increase of 1.1 per cent, there had also been an increase of over five per cent for composting (3,753 tonnes). These increases helped to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill in the county. The amount of residual waste generated decreased overall compared to the same period in the previous year. Andrew Pau stated these changes could mainly be attributed to the new waste collection services that had been introduced in the Warwick and Stratford districts.

Members' attention was drawn to estimated performance for year 2023/24 (table 2).

Andrew Pau said there had been an overall increase in the use of household waste recycling centres. There was variation in recycling rates across the HWRCs. Hunters Lane in Rugby had the lowest recycling rate. Shipston had the best rate.

Councillor Tim Sinclair said praise should be given for getting the Burton Farm HWRC reopened so quickly following an accident. The accident involved an agricultural vehicle striking the bridge on the access road, which forced the HWRC to temporarily close while checks were carried out by Network Rail to ensure the bridge was safe. The team were initially told the HWRC may be closed for four to six weeks, but it reopened after only five days. During its closure, the Wellesbourne HWRC had its opening hours extended and acted as a temporary waste transfer site for separately collected food waste. Councillor Sinclair said there had been a request from residents to extend the opening hours at Wellesbourne HWRC on a permanent basis. Andrew Pau said the alternative arrangements when Burton Farm was closed were successful, but putting the arrangements in place was time consuming and placed a significant strain on resources within the team to manage it. The solution could be implemented again more quickly if there were to be issues in the future. Regarding extending the opening hours at Wellesbourne, Andrew Pau told members the HWRC was currently open on the three busiest days of the week but the site was only booked for around 65 per cent of the time. It was therefore felt that the opening hours were sufficient to cope with demand.

Responding to a question from Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret regarding the low recycling rate at the Hunters Lane HWRC, Andrew Pau said the HWRC was by far the busiest in Warwickshire and there was a lot of pressure on the site infrastructure. Hunters Lane performed less well than other HWRCs because the other HWRCs had improved their performance, whereas performance at Hunters Lane had remained static due to the consistent high demand. Solutions that would make it easier for people to recycle more easily at the HWRC were continuing to be investigated. Councillor Watson-Merret said she would raise this with Rugby Borough Council's Cabinet to see if they had any suggestions that could help.

Responding to a point raised by Councillor Lorraine Grocott, Andrew Pau said appointments were not needed to access the recycling shops at the HWRCs. In some cases, there was a separate parking area and no need to drive through the whole of the HWRC to get to the shop.

Action: The WCC waste team would carry out checks to see if the website could be clearer in clarifying this point.

Councillor Sue Markham said she had been contacted by a resident who had phoned Judkins HWRC to ask if they could bring a van. The resident was told they could but that they must book a visit; however when they tried to book online the booking form said no vans were allowed. Andrew Pau said the HWRCs accepted trade waste but there was a charge for this. Some tradespeople were trying to circumvent the charges by claiming it was their own household waste rather than trade waste. Andrew Pau said the HWRC in question was not managed by a contractor on behalf of the Council and this may be where the confusion had arisen. Ruth Dixon said residents could apply for a permit to visit the HWRC with a small van or pick up truck, if this was their only vehicle. Vehicle logbooks were used to determine if a vehicle was classified as being a commercial vehicle. There were no plans to review this policy in the near future. Andrew Pau said if the policy needed changing then this would be a change which would need to be reviewed and serious consideration would need to be given to the financial impact on the Council.

3. Update on Stratford and Warwick 3-2-1 and Collection Service - One Year On

The item was introduced by Steve Partner, who reminded members the 3-2-1+ scheme had been introduced to the Stratford and Warwick districts in August 2022. Although there had been initial problems at the start of the contract, significant progress had been made and the scheme had been well received by the public. During the first year in Stratford District, 68 per cent of collected waste had been recycled and there had been 23 per cent less residual waste generated. The new contract for the reprocessing of the food waste had been implemented. A total of 85,000 garden waste collection permits had been sold.

Steve Partner said that problems relating to the scheme tended to be in specific areas of Leamington, namely those with high populations of students. The Council was looking at improving resourcing and working more closely with the university, private sector housing teams, landlords, and residents' groups to try and eliminate these issues. As a last resort fixed penalty notices could be given out. Consideration was being given to changing the frequency of collections in certain areas, but there were cost implications for what was a very localised issue.

Councillor Will Roberts said the programme had been very successful, and the figures for recycling were higher than the national average.

Ruth Dixon said dry mixed recycling from neighbouring authorities would also be sent to the Sherbourne MRF. This included Coventry, where there was also a high proportion of students. Collection arrangements were now the same for Coventry and Warwickshire, so it was hoped there could be some communication through the universities about the recycling arrangements.

Councillor Tim Sinclair said the issues may stem from the transience in population in student areas, and suggested stickers on the recycling bins would help those renting rooms in houses of multiple occupancy know what the waste collection arrangements were. Councillor Sinclair asked whether there were other benefits from the 3-2-1+ scheme, such as value/income from the food waste, energy generation from reprocessing the food waste, or a reduction in CO2 emissions from fewer vehicle movements.

Action: It was agreed that an answer regarding benefits of the 3-2-1+ scheme (value/income, energy generation, reduction in CO2 emissions) would be collated and circulated to Councillor Sinclair outside of the meeting.

Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret said Rugby Borough Council were keen to introduce the 3-2-1 method. She asked what the capacity was for the kerbside bins for food waste, and how robust the material they were made from was. Councillor Will Roberts said, as Warwick District Council's portfolio holder for waste, there had not been any issues with breakages and most bins were still underutilised, so there were no issues with capacity. Councillor Watson-Merret asked, in terms of the food waste total tonnage (9,914 tonnes), whether this total weight was measured against the financial outlay of the full year, with the mileage that was covered factored and do collection routes in rural areas make practical or financial sense.

Action: It was agreed an answer regarding the financial outlay would be collated and circulated to Councillor Watson-Merret outside of the meeting.

4. Update on the Development of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England

The item was introduced by Ruth Dixon, who said there had been an announcement from DEFRA the previous week regarding consistency in recycling. Following this announcement it would be for each local authority to determine whether to collect all dry recycling in one mixed bin, as per the current system in Warwickshire, or to collect this separately at the kerbside. There were no plans to deviate from the current dry recycling collection methodology used in Warwickshire, as the Sherbourne MRF would be used to sort the waste. DEFRA had also announced the term consistency in recycling would be replaced with simpler recycling. More information would be released but there was no clear timescale on when this would be.

Rollout of the deposit return scheme had been deferred until October 2025.

Data for the extended producer responsibility scheme was still being collected, with an expected end date of May 2024 for this exercise to be carried out. Ruth Dixon said local authorities were not expecting to receive their first payments from this scheme until October 2025. Members were invited to sign up for a monthly update newsletter from DEFRA. Ruth Dixon said some members or local authorities may be asked to contribute to focus groups. Each local authority would be invited to nominate a lead finance officer and a lead waste officer.

Draft regulations had been released at the end of July and a consultation on them was now taking place. Ruth Dixon highlighted that only five of the 30 questions specifically referred to local authorities, as the consultation looked mainly at the commercial sector. Sample questions referenced how much money each local authority would get and how this would be decided. There was also some detail on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Local Authority's waste operations. If these were not deemed efficient then an improvement plan may be required, and if there were insufficient improvements then the amount of money the Council would be granted would be decreased by up to 20 per cent. Ruth Dixon said the results of the consultation were likely to be announced on 30 September 2024. Payments would then be made quarterly, in arrears. However any income earned from the sale of packaging waste would be taken off, to calculate a net cost for running the service.

Members' attention was drawn to the seven materials the government had targeted to improve design of packaging and to lessen their impact on the environment, with advice that local authorities may want to consider them in terms of their own strategies, particularly those relating to climate change or sustainability.

Responding to a point from Councillor Grocott, Ruth Dixon said the government programme aimed to increase producing products in a modular way that supports repair, and that there may be more of an emphasis on manufacturer take back schemes, there is also a 'right to repair' focus, so it should become easier to get a replacement part instead of having to replace an item in its entirety. She added that 45 per cent of climate emissions came from consumable goods, so reusing of items would help to reduce emissions.

5. Waste Partners Update

North Warwickshire

Cath James said the transfer to using the Sherbourne MRF had gone well, and the Council was receiving useful information on contamination. Until now all recycling had been delivered to a waste transfer station prior to being sent to the MRF to be sorted. A trial was taking place to see if the recycling could be taken directly to Sherbourne MRF, to cut down on unnecessary journeys. Overall recycling rates in North Warwickshire had increased by 1.8 per cent, meaning the district was close to a 50 per cent recycling rate. North Warwickshire was looking at vehicles powered by HVO.

Councillor Margaret Bell noted Warwickshire County Council was about to start a survey on usage of HWRCs, and North Warwickshire Borough Council had been asked to conduct one. She asked if it would be possible to combine the two to save duplication. Andrew Pau said consideration was still being given to how the survey would be conducted, with a view to make it accessible to as many people as possible, such as carrying it out online or by interviewing HWRC users. It was likely to take place in autumn or winter, so the next Waste Partnership meeting was likely to be too soon for an update. Andrew Pau said he was happy to share the methodology with Councillor Bell once the survey was underway. The Chair said non-users of the HWRCs may give perceptions of something they did not use, but Councillor Bell said the survey could be helpful to determine why those people did not use the HWRCs. A suggestion was made to potentially ask the Citizens Panel.

Action: Update on the survey results to be given the Waste Partnership once available.

Nuneaton and Bedworth

Jonathan Snell said a new collection route had recently started. No issues had so far been reported, although there had been a mixed reception from residents regarding how the changes were communicated to them. Delivery of a new refuse collection vehicle had been delayed. It was hoped the Council would be able to start using Sherbourne MRF in the near future. Staff would be attending Nuneaton market to spread communication messages regarding recycling.

Rugby

Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret said the Council would begin using Sherbourne MRF from 9 October.

Stratford

Councillor Lorraine Grocott said the Council had started using Sherbourne MRF from 14 August and its usage was being monitored. She said concerns had been raised prior to the introduction of the 3-2-1+ scheme, that it could lead to an increase in fly tipping. Although there had been an increase, it appeared to be commercial waste that was being dumped and not related to the changeover. Councillor Watson-Merret said Rugby Borough Council had had low rates of securing convictions relating to fly tipping. It was agreed officers would discuss ways of tackling this outside of the meeting. Andrew Pau said there was a separate officer group that works on fly tipping and waste enforcement, which was coordinated by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.

It was suggested there could be an item on fly tipping at a future meeting.

6. Update on Climate change

The Chair updated the members regarding the draft sustainable future strategy. The strategy was in the process of being reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees, having been reviewed by focus groups (including stakeholders from local businesses and transport and energy providers). She hoped the strategy could be approved by Cabinet and then Full Council by the end of the year. After this action plans would be developed, and sources of funding could be identified.

The Chair said she hoped a more substantive item on the strategy could come to a future Waste Partnership meeting once it had been approved.

The Chair said there had been some internal staffing changes and the Director of Climate Change had moved to the Communities Directorate.

Andrew Pau said Warwickshire County Council, along with some of the Districts and Boroughs, was carrying out some investigative work on using vehicles that were powered by HVO (hydrogenated vegetable oil). The vehicles may cost more to run, and this would need to be balanced against the environmental benefits. Andrew Pau said there had been some negative stories in the press because some types of fuel were derived from palm oil. Electric vehicles were also being considered for waste management, and for mobile libraries as the current vehicles were getting old. This was being discussed in greater depth at the Climate Change Forum. The Chair

said there were a lot of climate change champions across the County Council and staff had been trained on carbon literacy.

7. Agenda item suggestions for next meeting

It was suggested to have a presentation item regarding the Sherbourne MRF and from the winning contractor of the recently tendered food waste reprocessing contract, including the carbon benefits related to this contract.

8. Dates of future meetings

Members noted the dates of the next two meetings as 6 December 2023 and 13 March 2024.

The meeting rose at xxx

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Chair

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