

Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Wednesday, 30 September 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Heather Timms (Chair)

Councillor Neil Dirveiks

Councillor Jenny Fradgley

Councillor John Horner

Councillor Andrew Wright

Ruth Dixon, Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager

Tamalyn Goodwin, Project Manager (Waste Strategy and Commissioning)

Isabelle Moorhouse, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

Andrew Pau, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Waste & Environment)

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Councillor Margaret Bell

Richard Dobbs, Corporate Director – Streetscape

Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Howard Roberts

Dan Green, Head of Environmental and Public Realm Senior Management Team

Jim Perkins, Interim Waste and Transport Manager

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Councillor Ian Shenton

Craig Bourne, Contracts Manager

Angela Lloyd, Streetscene Lead Contracts Officer

Warwick District Council

Councillor Moira-Ann Granger

Graham Folkes-Skinner, Business Support and Development Manager (Neighbourhood Services)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Becky Davies, Recycling Development Officer (Warwick District Council) and Zoe Court, Contract Services Manager & Parking & Ranger Service Manager (Warwick District Council) who were substituted by Graham Folkes-Skinner, Business Support and Development Manager (Neighbourhood Services)

Apologies for Glen McGrandle, Head of Waste and Transport (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council) and Julie Lewis, Head of Community and Operational Services (Stratford District Council) were received in the meeting.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None

(3) Chair's Announcement

None

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2020 were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

2. WM Performance Data

Andrew Pau (Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Waste & Environment) presented a PowerPoint to the partnership on performance. He noted that there were unusual circumstances due to Covid-19 in the first financial quarter. Recycling, reusing, composting and energy recovery from waste all increased and waste tonnage decreased. Energy recovery is obtained from burning waste which is better than landfilling waste. Landfilling waste remains the most harmful way of disposing of residual waste. Household waste decreased by 1.5 thousand tonnes. Andrew Pau concluded that performance for the first quarter increased and the accepted waste decreased.

In response to Councillor Ian Shenton, Andrew Pau stated the decrease in landfill rates were most likely caused by Covid-19. The County Council's landfill rates are usually less than 10%. The council has two energy recovery contracts which are utilised to their fullest as there is a contractual tonnage limit to the waste that can be sent for energy. Landfilled waste in Warwickshire primarily consisted of household waste from the HWRCs which is bulky and cannot be burnt at an Energy from Waste facility as easily.

Councillor Moira-Ann Grainger noted that these figures should be achieved after the pandemic and advertised more.

Councillor John Horner queried the conflict of the declared climate emergency in Warwickshire and burning waste for energy. Andrew Pau replied that generating energy from pre-produced waste is a good option as it would otherwise be landfilled but reducing, reusing, recycling and composting are preferable.

The Chair added that a lot of waste goes to Coventry plant which produces electricity and heat which is then used in nearby student flats, offices and leisure centres. Andrew Pau continued that the Coventry plant is a combined heat and electricity power facility. Councillor Shenton stated as much energy from waste should be obtained as possible.

Following a query from Councillor Jenny Fradgley, Andrew Pau responded that he didn't think the facilities the council uses have carbon capture as this is rare in the UK. Combined plants like the Coventry plant are best environmentally. It was agreed that the carbon impact of waste disposal methods would be discussed at the next partnership meeting.

Andrew Pau reminded the partnership that the joint strategy states energy should be obtained from waste and it is cheaper to send waste for energy than to a landfill which produces methane. The county council is a shareholder in the Coventry plant, but they do not get revenue from it.

In response to Councillor Howard Roberts, a very small amount of waste collected by Warwickshire goes to Cemex in Rugby to be 'ClimaFuel'. Richard Dobbs, Corporate Director – Streetscape at North Warwickshire Borough Council added they are in discussion with the Coventry plant for the new regional MRF to be powered exclusively through solar panels on the roof.

Andrew Pau continued that the performance data for 2020-21 was estimated following the trend during lockdown. Following a query from Councillor Grainger, Andrew Pau stated that he believed there were behavioural changes caused by lockdown which induced the reduction in waste.

Andrew Pau noted that the recycling centres were closed during part of the first quarter (all recycling sites in Warwickshire have since reopened); therefore, their collection statistics were 2% lower than normal. Between April – July 2020 the amount of composting collected via kerbside collection was up by 10%, recycling was up by 12% and residual waste was up by 4%.

Following concerns raised by Councillor Shenton, it was agreed that reviewing recycling targets should be a future agenda item. However, this would be as part of the review of the Warwickshire Waste Strategy.

Andrew Pau added that kilograms per household figure or per person were targets that were only for the waste collected at the kerbside; in this data, the numbers reported included the tonnage of waste collected at the recycling centres. The first round of consultation as part of the government strategy commenced in early 2020 and the second round is expected early next year. The joint municipal waste management strategy will be reviewed after this; this would be the best time to set new recycling targets. The second consultation should be released February-March 2021.

Resolved

The Waste Partnership notes the provisional data for the 1st Quarter 2020/21.

3. Current service changes due to Covid-19

Andrew Pau reiterated that all recycling centres in Warwickshire have reopened, the booking system will remain for at least another six months following government advice. Visitors to the centres since reopening have decreased by 1/3 but waste tonnage is only 2/3 of the previous level; this meant that the public are making better use of their visit. There are over 12000 weekly slots for members of the public to use with 75%-85% of these slots being used. Overall, all sites have good capacity and social distancing remains obligatory which meant it was more difficult to open all materials on all sites; it varies by site, but glass, textiles and engine oil have been reintroduced. Everything is online.

In response to Richard Dobbs, Andrew Pau stated it is too early to say if the booking system will remain post-pandemic but there are benefits for this.

Councillor Margaret Bell informed the meeting that the booking system received mixed reviews in North Warwickshire, but it had been mostly praised; she queried if no booking could be required at

quieter times in the week. She continued that not all members of the public can use the online booking system so an alternative is needed.

Following a query from Councillor Bell regarding larger vehicles such as vans and pick-ups and whether they are allowed at recycling centres, Andrew Pau and Ruth Dixon (Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager) stated that these restricted vehicles are allowed under certain circumstances and with vouchers. The rules were introduced initially in 1998 so traders did not abuse the HWRCs.

Richard Dobbs added that if the booking system was kept then it might be easier to manage abuse of the HWRCs by traders. Members of the public with commercial vehicles or vans might then be able to use recycle centres in those vehicles. Andrew suggested the review of the policy could take place when the Warwickshire waste strategy review takes place.

The Chair and Councillor Shenton commended the booking system.

Richard Dobbs stated that North Warwickshire borough's service had returned to normal but green waste charging was delayed to April 2021.

Graham Folkes-Skinner (Business Support and Development Manager (Neighbourhood Services) at Warwick District Council and Dan Green (Dan Green, Head of Environmental and Public Realm Senior Management Team) at Rugby Borough Council informed the partnership that both their respective councils have new waste and recycling collection vehicles due to the extra demand. Dan Green added that Rugby borough had returned to normal service.

Craig Bourne (Contracts Manager) at Stratford District Council confirmed that service returned to normal in Stratford District and charging for green waste will be brought in in March 2021.

Andrew Pau added that charging for green waste could potentially have an impact on the residual waste contract and on the bio waste processing contract which has minimum tonnage. Officers from the different authorities will need to consult on this.

The Chair and Andrew Pau commended the work of the waste collection authorities and the positive public change in attitude towards their waste services.

4. Update on environmental crime, littering, fly tipping

Andrew Pau raised that fly-tipping had increased in parts of Warwickshire since lockdown. Since the last waste partnership meeting, a joint officer meeting involving all the District and Borough Councils, the Environment Agency, waste planning authority and Police regarding organised environmental crime took place. Fly-tipping and littering continue to be monitored and the campaign 'Don't be a tosser' was launched to tackle this.

Richard Dobbs noted that every borough in Warwickshire participated in the campaign and disputed the idea that the booking system for recycling centres caused the fly-tipping increase. He stated that they had issues with interviewing fly-tipping suspects due to social distancing and obtaining vehicle registration plates from the DVLA due to their restricted response to certain types of environmental enquiry. However, rural crime has been more recognised in North Warwickshire and more engagement with parishes councils.

Councillor Bell queried if fly-tipping levels will return to normal. The Chair agreed that a shared-joint targeted strategy is needed. The Chair stated that officers could meet offline to discuss a joint strategy, including a strategy to persuade members of the public to report fly-tipping. Councillor Grainger noted that it is difficult to inform the public on the complexities on enforcement and a joint strategy may be difficult as each borough and district deals with fly-tipping differently.

Dan Green said that there were some specific fly-tipping hotspot areas, but it had not increased significantly or been widespread. Dan Green had spoken to parish councils who could provide them with locations and days of the week that fly-tipping occurred, but as soon as measures were implemented it moved location.

Councillor Grainger stated that fly-tipping had not increased in Warwick District during lockdown.

Craig Bourne stated that fly-tipping had increased during lockdown in Stratford District and is still higher than before.

5. Seasonal communication campaigns

Ruth Dixon informed the partnership that her team are responsible for promotional campaigns and collaborate with officers from the districts and boroughs. Each of the districts and boroughs will soon start to talk to their residents about Christmas collection timetables, which allows us to spread additional recycling messages rather than just what day bins will be collected instead of Christmas Day. Ruth Dixon showed the partnership a list of their regular communication channels and topics such as reducing food waste and plastic packaging and promoting composting. She added that they tie these into national campaigns such as National Recycling week. They also sell subsidised compost bins both online and at the recycling centres, encourage savvy shopping and repairing or giving away belongings before throwing them away. They also provide general information such as when recycling centres open. In October they will focus on Halloween pumpkin waste and autumn composting, followed by Christmas food, packaging and presents.

In response to Councillor Roberts, Ruth Dixon stated they did some PPE littering social media posts. Councillor Roberts requested a campaign on how littering PPE equipment harms wildlife.

6. Waste Partners Updates

Graham Folkes-Skinner informed the meeting that Warwick District Council have a new joint head of service with Stratford District. They had received final tenders for street cleaning and grounds maintenance with the aim to award the contracts by the end of September 2020 to start in April 2021. They are negotiating an extension for their waste collection contract and reviewing joint opportunities with Stratford District Council. Waste campaigns for university students and their landlords had started. Fly-tipping is on-par with 2019 at 551 incidents and the 'Don't be a tosser campaign' had been well received.

Dan Green informed the partnership that Rugby Borough Council have 11 new vehicles with Covid-19 safety stickers and warnings for fly-tippers. They have continual reviews of their risk assessments in their business continuity and have no Covid-19 cases within their waste and recycling team. Officer teams had been split. Garden waste figures remained high, so a new collection round was implemented. He concluded that tonnage on commercial waste had reduced so the financial viability of this will be reviewed within six months.

Richard Dobbs stated that North Warwickshire Borough Council also have new vehicles with Covid-19 safety messages on. North Warwickshire's commercial waste had been impacted as their system was not operating the same and their contracts will be renewed at the end of February 2021 to start in March-April 2021; therefore, they asked all their contract holders if they would like their contracts renewed. They have had a lot of officers who self-isolated which strained the service, so other officers and the fire service were on standby to stand in.

Craig Bourne from Stratford District Council commended the work of Biffa during the pandemic and concurred with Graham Folkes-Skinner regarding progress for the joint waste contract bid for Stratford and Warwick districts.

Resolved

The Waste Partnership acknowledges the updates on the various waste activities taking place in each area since the last partnership meeting in June 2020.

7. Smarter joint working

Andrew Pau asked the partnership if they wanted to pause or continue with the agreed closer working joint project. The project was set up to start baselining work in terms of service, provision and costs from each council in order to potentially provide services more effectively and efficiently with lower costs as well as better quality. An external consultant was to be brought in to help with this.

Councillor Bell stated that no one would argue with being more efficient, but waste collection is the only thing that all members of the public see, this affects how a council is seen.

Richard Dobbs suggested that officers discuss the implications of the project and potential ways forward and bring this to the partnership to see where the conversation will lead. He reminded the meeting of the MRF project and that Warwick District are looking to become a partner in it which may lead onto wider benefits around haulage, procurement, joint working, and a model for recycling collection to be shared around the county.

The Chair stated that the project should be paused because of the pandemic and green/biowaste waste should be focused on instead.

8. Action on Climate change

Andrew Pau stated that there are ongoing council meetings regarding climate change with members, portfolio holders and a new officer group which was set up to focus on climate change issues, joint working and sharing best practice. They also discuss electric vehicle charging, emissions, vehicle strategy and baselining.

Ruth Dixon presented the figures that Scotland put together on carbon metric. She stated that if waste is burnt it produces 388 kilograms of carbon dioxide compared to 452 kilograms if it went to a landfill. The English figures are yet to be produced and Andrew Pau noted that Scotland's assumptions may not always apply to us.

Andrew Pau pointed out that Warwickshire's residual waste contributes 35,000 tonnes of carbon a year to the Warwickshire total. This is more than the county council's own estate and fleet. So, any

work we can do to keep residual waste reducing is a significant contribution to reducing climate impact. Kerbside recycling provides negative carbon which means it is positive environmentally; this took the council's total environmental benefit from processing waste down to 1.5 thousand tons of carbon. Carbon levels are important regarding waste management.

In response to Richard Dobbs, Andrew Pau clarified that the Scottish system makes assumptions and from information provided it was likely that more waste was managed kerbside than at recycling centres.

The Chair stated that for Warwickshire to go carbon neutral it must eliminate 5.3 million tonnes of carbon. A programme manager was employed by the county council to manage this and the county council's COVID-19 recovery plan will suggest a grant scheme to community organisations, parish and town councils, districts and boroughs to take part in with looking at carbon reductions and mitigation actions on climate change.

Andrew Pau added that the waste conference in 2021 will focus on climate change, will be virtual and would be held February or March 2021.

9. Any urgent items

None.

10. Agenda item suggestions for next meeting

After the second round of consultation by Government, a review of the Warwickshire waste strategy including recycling targets will take place.

Richard Dobbs to provide an update on the MRF project.

More information on electric and hydrogen waste collection vehicles to see if this is possible.

11. Dates of future meetings

The next dates for the Warwickshire Waste Partnership are:

9th December 2020

17th March 2021

The meeting rose at 16:06

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Chair