

Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Wednesday 17 March 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Heather Timms (Chair)

Councillor Neil Dirveiks

Councillor Jenny Fradgley

Councillor John Horner

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

Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council

Councillor Jill Sheppard

Glen McGrandle, Head of Waste and Transport

Rugby Borough Council

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

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Councillor Ian Shenton

Craig Bourne, Contracts Manager-Streetscene

Angela Lloyd, Streetscene Lead Contracts Officer

Warwick District Council

Julie Lewis, Head of Community and Operational Services (for Stratford and Warwick District Councils)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillors Alan Rhead and Howard Roberts

Zoe Court (Contract Services Manager - Warwick District Council)

(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 previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

2. Waste Management Performance Data

Andrew Pau (Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Waste & Environment)) showed the partnership the data comparison from 2019-2021 as shown in the report. There had been an increase in the recycling and reuse rate mainly due to the increase in kerbside recycling collected. The composting rate increased in terms of tonnage but is 1 percentage point down; more kerbside biowaste had been collected. The amount of re-use, recycling and composting increased by 3,500 tonnes but the percentage slightly decreased.

Landfill rates decreased substantially due to the Council sending more waste for energy recovery. Andrew Pau confirmed to Councillor Ian Shenton that putting waste in a landfill is the least desired option in terms of the waste hierarchy, energy recovery is the level above in the waste hierarchy so better environmentally and better economically. The Council had two contracts for energy recovery and both contracts have maximum tonnage limits. The Council consciously increased the amount of waste that was sent for energy recovery to the maximum amounts. Following a supplementary query from Councillor Shenton, Andrew Pau stated that zero waste to landfill waste was not possible yet. Most waste that is sent to landfill is bulky waste as it is difficult to treat this kind of waste at energy from waste facilities. Also, the Council has a long-term landfill contract with a minimum tonnage. The Chair noted that technology related to waste was changing so resolutions would need to be pragmatic. Household waste increased by 4.2% due to the Covid-19 lockdown with more people staying and working at home; this was a national trend with some areas having a 10%+ increase in household waste.

In response to Councillor Neil Dirveiks, Andrew Pau confirmed that the lockdown caused commercial waste to reduce by 1/3 during the latest lockdown.

Andrew Pau stated that by the end of the financial year the Council should have recycled and composted 51.5% of waste which was less than the original prediction of 51.952%; this was caused by increases in kerbside residual waste. Despite the population increase, the Council were forecasting that the kilograms of residual waste per household would reduce slightly. Recycling tonnage from household waste recycling centres reduced due to the closure during the first lockdown and the booking system.

3. Consultation update, development of local JMWMS and public consultation

Andrew Pau informed the partnership that they were waiting for central government to publish the second round of consultations for the national Resources and Waste strategy, this should be published before June's meeting. They will publish it as one round of consultation with three parts, extended producer responsibility, the deposit return scheme and consistency (mainly relating to recycling). Any changes will include a transition period for local authorities so they can adapt to the new way of collecting and financing waste.

In response to Councillor Margaret Bell, Andrew Pau stated separate weekly food waste collections seems likely, this way the food can be treated with anaerobic digestion so it can produce electricity. Central Government would prefer local authorities to provide a free collection service for kerbside green waste; a lot of local authorities lobbied against this as they felt government money could be spent better and also query the carbon impact. Central Government has a list of materials that they want every local authority to collect for recycling, including plastic film, but the deadline for plastic film would come after glass and paper.

Andrew Pau stated that the government strategy required a 10-12-week consultation period which will put pressure on officers to respond. Locally, officers will start a strategy development exercise for the joint municipal waste management strategy for Warwickshire once the consultation has been released. The current strategy was due a refresh; a public consultation for this was recommended. The five-year review was delayed so as to include the information/details from the consultation.

In response to Councillor Jenny Fradgley's questions, Andrew Pau stated that Central Government were likely going to make soft plastic collection and recycling compulsory (these were already recycled in Warwickshire), hard plastic materials like garden furniture was more difficult to recycle due to the lack of outlets, but the government strategy could help this issue. Andrew Pau continued that the Council's two energy from waste contracts were looking into the issue of carbon capture.

Richard Dobbs (Corporate Director – Streetscape) added the MRF in Coventry were prepared to deal with soft plastics and film e.g. cling film.

In response to the Chair, Andrew Pau confirmed that the Cemex plant uses climafuel, which uses the light fraction of waste, as such a lot of MRF reject material was taken in by the Rugby plant. Cemex also take some of residual waste from Daventry.

4. Update on MRF project

Richard Dobbs reminded the partnership that MRF project involved all district councils in Warwickshire and Coventry, Solihull and Walsall. Site clearance had been completed between Whitley Depot and the waste plant at Coventry. Renewable energy that cannot be provided by the MRF to operate it will be provided from the sustainable energy generated by the Coventry Plant. Planning consent was given by Coventry City Council, but the plans were since amended to shrink the building, so planning consent for the amended plans were now needed. The amended plans included traffic management, ecology, and renewable energy e.g. with solar panels. In response to Councillor Shenton, Richard Dobbs stated that they reduced the MRF size because the process engineers had a solution that would take up less space; therefore, money will be saved on construction by building a smaller building. Machine X/GMI have been hired as the process contractor as they provided the most technologically advanced solution; their system will be automated with infrared robotics and only six pickers. 47.5 tonnes of waste would be processed per hour and all councils were ready to sign off the final business case which contained encouraging information. The building contractor submitted their maximum price so they know what the maximum cost is to build the MRF which will start in May 2021. The MRF will produce two businesses, Sherbourne Recycling Limited and Sherbourne Recycling (Trade) Limited in April 2021 and all the remaining contracts will be awarded soon too. The MRF will be completed and contracts accepted from June 2023.

Following a question from Councillor Shenton, Richard Dobbs confirmed that the MRF will not cost more than the £58 million predicted as the Machine X/GMI solution was cheapest in the long run despite being the most expensive option.

Councillor Dirveiks suggested tours for members and officers when the MRF opens.

In response to Councillor Jill Sheppard, Richard Dobbs agreed to investigate the viability of the MRF recycling Christmas wrapping paper (as many have plastic in and cannot be recycled). The machinery adapts but wrapping paper would be difficult to deal with due to its hybrid approach. Richard Dobbs added that they are planning to allow schools to visit the MRF and they will offer apprentice positions there.

5. Seasonal communication campaigns

In response to the Chair, Ruth Dixon (Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager) confirmed that the Christmas communication campaign asked people to consider buying recyclable cards and paper only. The Christmas campaign was well read, shared, and commented on; December's newsletter had a 40% open rate and February's had 47%, both were higher than average. 9% of the 9000 recipients went onto other websites to look into something that was referenced in the newsletter; this meant that there were more people buying composting bins. 1000 residents signed up to 'slim your bin' and were engaging the community with the scheme.

Lateral flow tests were mass-rolled out cross-country to secondary school children which affected 60,000 households in Warwickshire; therefore, a picture leaflet will be sent out to families via schools which will show them how lateral-flow test packaging should be disposed of e.g. what can be recycled.

The social media campaigns included the national WRAP campaigns (including food waste action week) and focused on things that everyone can recycle e.g. metal, foil, cardboard, glass etc. Glass is most constantly recycled material. For seasonal days like Valentine's Day and Easter, gift ideas were given as well as leftover food suggestions.

As Stratford and North Warwickshire will charge for green waste collection from April 2021, a campaign was launched to make people aware that they could do home composting with a 'green Johanna' or cold compost bin which sold very well. Information videos on home composting were put on YouTube and members of the public could put up a cold compost bin for £5 if they did the quiz at the end.

In response to Councillor Sheppard, Ruth Dixon stated that the compost bins cannot be picked up from Judkins because it's run by a contractor, it was difficult to get them to make space for the bins and recompense the money when sold. However, they will plan to sell them at Bedworth Civic Hall and Nuneaton Town Hall when they have been reopened.

6. Waste Partners Update

North Warwickshire

Richard Dobbs informed the partnership that Covid-19 was causing issues, but staff were still tested regularly at the local lateral-flow test centres. Paying for green bin collections will start on 1st April 2021 and they had sold 11,303 subscriptions to this service which was 40% of households and they should sell more in the following weeks.

Nuneaton & Bedworth

Glen McGrandle (Head of Waste and Transport) stated that they were operating under Covid-19 restrictions and introduced lateral-flow tests at their Gresham Road depot. They were working with isolated staff and all waste services were operating as normal. They had a positive sign up rate response for their garden waste collection with 76% of households for 2021-22. Staff were being trained on waste recovery within areas that either are not collected from or contractors charge a lot to collect from. There was an increase in fly-tipping, so smart-cameras were deployed in 'hot-spot' areas which were being a successful deterrent. The cameras are portable so they could be moved around if needed. An officer from 3GS was brought in to help with fly-tipping and he had issued 40 fixed penalties, any penalties which are not paid will be taken to court. Glen McGrandle concluded that they were planning to obtain alternative fuel vehicles, work was underway to see if it was viable to host these vehicles at Gresham Road and obtain electric vehicles in 12-18 months.

Rugby

Dan Green (Head of Environmental and Public Realm Senior Management Team) concurred that Covid-19 was causing issues in Rugby, but the measures implemented were working. They received complaints regarding fly-tipping and litter, therefore a campaign was underway to deal with this issue and mitigate any issues that would occur post-lockdown. The campaign will have a targeted approach and 'nudge theory' to promote behavioural change and they were hoping to work with neighbouring authorities to share ideas. Dan Green concluded that they will take part in national campaigns like 'Britain's Spring Clean', provide more support for community litter pickers, make reporting litter easier through the Rugby app, and provide more bins in litter 'hot-spot' areas.

The Chair noted the Maidstone pilot cameras would be good for the A46 and 45 and if they could get Highways England engaged with this then the council would not need to pick the litter on these roads up. Dan Green added that they were hoping to get a camera implemented for Coventry-City of Culture 2021.

A discussion followed about the issue of fly-tipping and litter in Rugby and the rest of Warwickshire. Glen McGrandle agreed to set up a meeting with officers on law-enforcement with fly-tipping in mid-late April.

Warwick

Julie Lewis (Head of Community and Operational Services) informed the partnership that they extended their Suez contract, the new contract was out for tender and will start in August 2022. They were having similar issues as the other districts, more residual waste and recycling which was costing the district money. Fly-tipping had recently rapidly increased, so Stratford and Warwick were consulting each other on this. The street litter bins were filling up quickly and overflowing so the public were asked to take litter home, as hourly-bin empties were impossible. Due to these issues, Julie Lewis suggested a campaign to get members of the public to take their litter home with them if public bins were full. The Chair agreed with this.

Stratford

Craig Bourne (Contracts Manager-Streetscene) stated that 31,500 subscriptions had been received for the paid green-waste collection service which was over 50% of households with the 'early bird' discount proving popular; like North Warwickshire they are expecting this to increase in the summer. Fly-tipping was a corporate priority for Stratford as it had increased a lot and work was done with parish councils to instigate a policy in 'hot-spot' areas. Craig Bourne concluded that they teamed up with 'Material Focus' which is a non-profit company which promotes the recycling of electricals with 'hypno-cat' radio adverts.

7. Action on Climate change

Andrew Pau stated that he was hoping to present new figures, but the carbon figures were not ready for the meeting. Andrew Pau wanted Action on Climate change to be a standing item kept everyone engaged on climate change action.

8. Agenda item suggestions for next meeting

Fly-Tipping & Environmental Crime – including working with Environment Agency and Trading Standards.

Development of local JMWMS and public consultation – September

9. Dates of future meetings

16th June 2021

29th September 2021

The meeting rose at 15:35

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Chair