

Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Wednesday 29 September 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Heather Timms (Chair)

Ruth Dixon, Lead Commissioner: Waste Strategy and Contracts

Tamalyn Goodwin, Project Manager (Waste Strategy and Commissioning)

Isabelle Moorhouse, 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 Kyle Evans

Glen McGrandle, Head of Waste and Transport

Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Kathryn Lawrence

Dan Green (Head of Environmental and Public Realm Senior Management Team)

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Councillor Ian Shenton

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

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Andy Wright

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Chair's Announcement

None.

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

Councillor Ian Shenton noted that on page four of the minutes it should say 'windrow' compost

not 'window'.

Pending the amendments to be made, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

2. Waste Management Performance Data

Andrew Pau (Service & Commissioning Manager – Waste & Environment) informed the partnership that the data in the first report compared the first three months of the current financial year to the last three months of the previous financial year. The report data stated:

- Recycling and reuse increased by approx. 1000 tonnes
- Composting decreased slightly – most likely due to seasonal changes
- Household waste increased by approx. 3000 tonnes or 4.5%
- The data in the HWRC performance table has some incorrect data - Wellesbourne had a 56% recycling rate during the Q1 period not 44.2% as specified
- There was more residual waste per person per household (1030 kilos per household in 21/22 up from 993 kilos in 19/20)
- The tonnage comparison on page 4 of the report shows that overall, there was a 3% reduction in composting, 7% increase in recycling, 9% increase in residual waste (approx. 2700 tonnes) giving a total increase of 5% in total waste
- Officers discussed the changes to waste across Warwickshire and the impact it had on their budget and services. Warwickshire County Council has flagged that more money would be needed to dispose of the extra waste and for the additional recycling (recycling credits are paid to the boroughs and districts for each tonne of waste recycled)
- It was unknown how long the extra money from central government to manage the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic waste would last
- All councils had a negative financial impact caused by the changes to waste across Warwickshire

Councillor Shenton queried the recycling tonnages going down in Rugby Borough and composting reducing county-wide (except Warwick District). Dan Green (Head of Environmental and Public Realm Senior Management Team) noted that behaviour changes had not altered since the previous quarter. Andrew Pau stated that the table was complex, and errors could happen when collating/calculating the data. He agreed to review Rugby Borough's data and requested the partnership for any up-to-date data they personally had. Green composting waste likely decreased because of the weather affecting growing conditions; charging for green waste collections likely had a small impact too. Andrew Pau concluded that every tonne of residual waste costs approx. £100 to dispose of.

The Chair queried if the residual waste was being looked at to see if there was an increase of something specific e.g., takeaway boxes and whether this increase would be permeant with more people staying at home. Andrew Pau stated that the partnership does carry out analysis of residual waste and more work could be done on recycling campaigns. Andrew Pau was bidding for more money to deal with the increase in waste and suggested that the other councils might need to do the same.

In response to Councillor Shenton, Andrew Pau stated that the food in residual waste figure was around 1/4 - 1/3 in the last composition in 2018 this figure was likely similar during the pandemic. Central government were focusing on food waste in their new waste strategy.

In response to Councillor Kathryn Lawrence, the Chair suggested that behaviour changes be monitored closely so campaigns and education practices could be changed to meet the demand. Ruth Dixon (Lead Commissioner - Waste Strategy & Contracts) added that home composting had increased over the years which was good as this was more environmentally friendly and meant people were buying less compost from garden centres which could contain peat. More people were buying the expensive food composters which composted all food waste.

In response to Councillor Margaret Bell, Andrew Pau stated that there was not much of a financial difference between the cost of waste collected kerbside and the cost of waste taken to the household waste recycling centres. However, most residual waste collected kerbside went for energy recovery and residual waste from the household waste recycling centres went to landfill which did cost more. Green waste from the household waste recycling centres could be sent for windrow composting which was cheaper than in-vessel composting which was where the kerbside bio-waste (food mixed with green) was sent. Andrew Pau concluded that some things could only be dealt with at recycling centres like wood.

Following a supplementary query from Councillor Bell, Andrew Pau stated that kerbside dry recycling is mixed in one container whereas household waste recycling centres want everything separated for recycling. Ruth Dixon requested that any inconsistencies from customers visiting the recycling centres be reported to them so they could review this. She added that in North Warwickshire, all residual waste (kerbside and Lower House Farm household waste recycling centre) goes to the same energy from waste facility.

3. Development of the Warwickshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy

Ruth Dixon presented a PowerPoint on the strategy refresh. The following points were raised:

- The strategy is for the waste authorities in Warwickshire to plan on how all waste is managed
- The strategy provides information on future objectives, progress and communication with stakeholders
- The next strategy will be influenced by the National Waste Strategy (extended producer responsibility (EPR), deposit return scheme (DRS) and consistency in collections)
- The circular economy will feature in the new strategy development. Local authorities are the statutory undertakers of waste (collected at either kerbside or at household waste recycling centres and fly tipping waste) until the waste is disposed/recycled. This must be as environmentally friendly as possible
- Local authorities need to protect their environment, local authorities do not have influence over what they receive or where it goes, but can influence the way that householders and businesses manage their waste, how much they reduce/recycle/compost
- With the new strategy, industry must make sure that their packaging is easily recyclable, as small and lightweight as possible, reduce single use waste
- The new regulations will come in with the Environment Act. The draft regulations should be released before April 2022
- It was proposed that an officer TFG (task and finish group) be set up to look at past and projected data, present events, work towards future legislation and produce a scoping document and what the strategy should be

In response to Councillor Shenton, Ruth Dixon stated that they will not know how other local authorities responded to the consultations, but the government first responded to them in August

2021 where they stated how each model would work. Andrew Pau added that he was under the impression that most local authorities responded similarly to Warwickshire's joint response. It was believed that the House of Lords will send the Environment Bill back to the House of Commons which would delay the implementation of the bill. Andrew Pau concluded that both the waste industry and local authorities were consulted with for the new strategy; businesses were lobbying against some elements of the strategy. The Chair added that she had been contacted by the glass industry over the government consultation.

In response to several points raised by Councillor Bell, Ruth Dixon stated that different environmental agencies pushed for the contents of the Environmental Bill; the government were in favour for this. Other countries who already do EPR and DRS did not have the comprehensive recycling kerbside collection that the UK had; for local authorities this would be moving waste to a different place. Local authorities would not get money from the DRS and shops who operate the DRS have the responsibility to return the money to the consumer; any leftover could be given to local authorities and Warwickshire would have the MRF. Following a supplementary from Councillor Bell, Ruth Dixon stated the DRS will work by scanning the container's barcode and each country in the UK may want to do it differently. Andrew added that some details may change between now and implementation.

Richard Dobbs (Corporate Director – Streetscape) confirmed that the new MRF would be sophisticated enough to tell what materials are from barcodes. Due to material from smaller outlets, the industry will grow around collecting and cleaning material from the DRS and waste from other commercial outlets. The MRF industry will take a role in sorting new materials used in the DRS but this new role will not be known until the strategy becomes law.

In response to Councillor Shenton, Ruth Dixon stated that the government would want to remain aligned with the EU's directives with waste; Wales already had ambitious targets and England would not want to fall behind them.

4. Multi Recycling Facility (MRF) update

Richard Dobbs provided the following verbal update:

- In 2016, Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull had several failed procurements and were struggling to find anything affordable with obtaining sustainable outlets for their materials collected kerbside. The market for this was charging £70-£75 per tonne
- A feasibility study in 2016 was undertaken and they agreed to build their own MRF in Coventry, there was engagement with the market and a business case put forward in 2019
- There was a detailed procurement process, bidders were shortlisted in 2020 with the contract awarded in December 2020
- Planning permission was granted in January 2021 and the financial closing contract awarded in April 2021 to Sherbourne Recycling Ltd
- Officers felt that risk was in the wrong place and that they were not getting value for money for material management
- The engineering contract was awarded to MachineX after three contractors were engaged. There will be high capital costs but low operational costs
- Building the MRF will be cheaper than continuing to use the private sector
- It will be AI based as it gets through material quicker
- There will be 90-95% quality standards with MachineX compared to 75% with other ones

- The MRF will handle plastic film and tetra pack and grade different kinds of metals
- PALM (who manufacture high quality fibre) was being consulted with as they were interested in the material going through them
- The MRF will be flexible with a built in-capacity so it could adapt
- The MRF will be built bigger than needed to fulfil requirements that emerge from the new emerging municipal waste management structure
- The project board included officer and members and a stakeholder panel
- The MRF should open in July 2023 and start the waste commission phase in March 2023
- Joint working agreements were being set up
- A 25-year long agreement will be in place and redundancy will be built into the plan so the MRF will last longer (40 years as a minimum)
- The MRF will be 12,000 meters squared in size and manage 250,00-300,000 tonnes of waste a week from the current 75,000-100,000 annually
- It will hold a weeks' worth on input and two weeks' worth of output
- At the time of the meeting the MRF was in the construction phase and groundworks were nearly finished
- The private wire connection turning waste to energy design was being finalised and companies were working on the MRFs utilities
- Work was ongoing in terms of bulking and haulage with getting material in and out of the MRF.
- Potential partners were being consulted to make sure that 175,000 tonnes of material can go out and 125,000 tonnes in
- Other local authorities were interested in the MRF (either to be used for their waste or to do something similar to it) including from Northern Ireland

In response to Councillor Bell, Richard Dobbs confirmed that materials would be recycled quicker with this MRF and the recycled material would be a high enough quality for a bottle to become a bottle again instead of a lower quality material item. The local authorities would also get more money back from this process.

In response to Glen McGrandle (Head of Waste and Transport), Richard Dobbs stated that there had been no issues with the environmental permit. The Environmental Agency were concerned with fire suppression, noise, pollution, and water drainage but bespoke plans were in place for everything.

In response to Councillor Shenton, Richard Dobbs confirmed that they were on target with timescale plans but there were some unforeseen circumstances with the machinery in Canada, but this will be resolved. Following a supplementary from Councillor Shenton, Richard Dobbs confirmed that fire safety protocols were in place, but this would be designed in multiple ways.

5. Waste Partners Update

North Warwickshire

Richard Dobbs informed the partnership that North Warwickshire was dealing with more waste and increased contamination in their red bins, although this contamination was non-target material due to a new reprocessor; work was being done to improve this. North Warwickshire were also having fuel issues and had a HGV driver shortage including issues with hiring new drivers and retaining their current drivers.

Nuneaton & Bedworth

Glen McGrandle informed the partnership that Nuneaton & Bedworth also had a HGV driver shortage so they had to restrict their garden waste service. Nuneaton and Bedworth were in the final stages of their round reconfiguration and looked at the impacts of increased waste and planning developments. Glen McGrandle stated they were costing and analysing for their future waste collections for the next four years. The waste enforcement contract ends in January 2022 so it was being reviewed to improve how fly tippers were prosecuted. They were looking at potentially moving to a commingled recycling service, a quick survey was done with residents who preferred this approach. Glen McGrandle concluded that they were still looking at acquiring hybrid and electric dust carts.

Rugby

Dan Green stated that Rugby was having the same issues as Nuneaton and Bedworth with HGV drivers and green waste but they were additionally struggling with agency staff loading waste onto their vehicles; therefore their resources were being scrutinised as there were new housing developments that needed to be accommodated too. Rugby had enough fuel for their vehicles but there were issues with fly tipping and litter which Councillor Lawrence was prioritising. There was a recent resident climate survey with 500 responses, most people were concerned about carbon, heating, and home energy but waste was a high priority too. An online climate summit was held on the 18th September and there were actions to pursue following this with their climate emergency working groups.

Stratford & Warwick

Julie Lewis (Head of Environmental and Operational Services) informed the partnership that in both districts there were issues with overflowing bins and litter, but they responded that people's behaviours should change, and they should stop fly tipping. Julie Lewis stated that the districts new strategy was not formalised because some things were deliberately changed in the contracts and it was going to be complicated to turn it into a formal strategy. The new waste contract had been agreed and at the time of the meeting there were no HGV driver issues, they were within budget but due to the decrease in competition, contract prices were rising. Stratford and Warwick were receiving reports that their fly tipping rates dropped slightly, and the recycling and residual levels were beginning to drop to pre-COVID levels. Julie Lewis concluded that that there will be a lot of work mobilising the new contractor.

Warwickshire

Ruth Dixon informed the partnership that waste campaigns (including food) for the autumn were being planned and they were thinking towards the Christmas campaign. The procurement papers were completed for road sweeping and Ruth Dixon thanked the borough and district colleagues for their help with the specification. Warwickshire did a soft marketing campaign for food waste which gained interest from local organisations; this will provide work to go into the specification for August 2022.

6. Action on Climate change

Andrew Pau stated that he wanted to put the carbon data into a report and raised the following points:

- Warwickshire County Council used the Zero Waste Scotland model which was a public model

- They looked at the carbon impact of the bio waste processed, the residual landfill and the residual energy recovery
- Recycling is seen as a carbon benefit even though something had to be produced for it to be recycled, and this model only looked at their disposal element in terms of carbon emissions and kerbside recycling
- Recycling kerbside is something that is paid for through a recycling credit system
- Together, the total carbon impact of Warwickshire County Council and the recycling benefit of the kerbside recycling comes to -2500 tonnes of carbon annually
- However, the county's waste disposal has a carbon output of 50,000 tonnes and the recycling represents a carbon sink of about 50,000 tonnes. The disposal carbon output is about 5 times higher than WCC's total scope 1 and 2 carbon output from council buildings and transport of less than 10,000 tonnes per year. We manage 250,000 tonnes of household waste annually
- Information was requested from the district and boroughs regarding carbon impacts of waste collection. There were variances in the ways that data was submitted, and this showed peculiarities. The carbon emissions from waste collections were from the fuel that waste collection vehicles used. This carbon impact was between 5000-10,000 tonnes annually. This information would be presented at the next meeting

In response to Councillor Shenton, Andrew Pau confirmed that with carbon, a negative number is good as it implied carbon was being taken out. He confirmed that 'e' meant equivalent (included the impact of methane and equated that to the equivalent carbon dioxide impact).

Andrew Pau stated that the Zero Waste Scotland model was not kind to energy recovery as it did not score it much higher than landfilling waste.

In response to Councillor Lawrence, Andrew Pau stated that clinical waste at home e.g., waste from a lateral flow test would contribute to municipal waste or household waste tonnages which counted towards the carbon model. However, a lot of the packaging from the test kits is recyclable so this should have a benefit. PPE (personal protection equipment) from hospitals counted as trade waste until collected by the local authority when it becomes municipal waste. The carbon data focused on household waste.

Following a supplementary from the Chair, Andrew Pau stated that if PPE is discarded at homes then it counted towards household waste figures.

7. Agenda item suggestions for next meeting

Booking System at Household Recycling Centres in Warwickshire

Councillor Kyle Evans informed the partnership that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council could no longer support the booking system at the Judkins recycling centre in their area. This was because they had reports of an increase in fly tipping (3146 cases) and opposition had been received from some residents. Councillor Evans requested that more flexibility be considered by Warwickshire County Council, e.g. remove the booking system for some days or times.

Andrew Pau stated that they were planning to continue using the booking system, but this was subject to change. He raised the following points:

- It allowed space for visitors and staff to isolate/distance themselves from each other to make them feel safe/comfortable
- 15,000 time slots were made available each week, some were same-day visits

- All slots were 15 minutes long
- People who arrived without a booking at a time when the site was not fully booked, were allowed to use the site where possible
- Booking slots were increased by 5000 available weekly slots in the summer
- Sites tend to be busiest in the morning
- The booking system has spread the visits over the week instead of one or two very busy days
- People were packing their cars better and making fewer car journeys to the centres which reduced traffic/congestion/carbon emissions
- Customers generally liked the booking system because they were guaranteed entry, there were reduced queues and less people there
- Complaints were received about the booking system and all complaints were logged. Complaints received by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and the other councils should be forwarded to the County Council so they could respond to complaints
- Coventry, Solihull, Birmingham and Gloucestershire were still using their booking systems. Leicestershire stopped using theirs and Oxfordshire never had one
- A customer satisfaction survey will be carried out in 2021 about the booking system

In response to the Chair, Andrew Pau stated that the link between fly tipping and the booking system was monitored; Stratford District had an increase of fly tipping in the north, but this came from Birmingham, so they did not believe there was a link between the two. The Environment Agency published a paper that stated there is no link between restrictions at the recycling centres and flytipping. The Chair stated that her division in Rugby had an issue with fly tippers but they were not local residents but were more likely to be illegally flytipped commercial waste from Coventry area.

Councillor Bell stated that the leader at North Warwickshire Borough Council wanted the booking system to stop at Lower House Farm too and the customer service survey should be extended to people who are not using the booking system to see why they will not use it. Councillor Bell noted the differing views from different areas. The Chair stated that any decisions should be evidence based, so the customer satisfaction survey should go ahead, with people who use and do not use the booking system and ask participants for improvements.

In response to Councillor Bell, Richard Dobbs confirmed that EventBrite had an app so booking could be done through that.

Councillor Shenton informed the partnership that the leader and portfolio holder at Warwick District Council wanted the booking system scrapped but this view was not evidence-based. Councillor Shenton stated that he was personally for the booking system as their recycling centres worked better with it.

Councillor Evans requested a popularity survey of the booking system per borough/district, noted that EventBrite was not a great booking system and people who booked over the phone could be waiting for 30 minutes although evidence provided by Ruth Dixon stated that there was an average 24 second waiting time for residents to book a slot over the phone and advice was given to elderly residents.

Andrew Pau agreed to carry out a survey to find this out. He stated that EventBrite was clunky but easy to use and residents could book recycling slots on behalf of someone else.

Councillor Evans requested a copy of the equality impact report that was done for the booking system.

The Chair stated there may be an issue at recycling centres during winter months as operating hours reduce. WCC committed to monitoring the number of slots available.

Items for next Agenda

Carbon data for waste collection from the Boroughs and Districts
HWRC Booking system

8. Dates of future meetings

8th December 2021

16th March 2022

The meeting rose at 16:26

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Chair