

Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Wednesday 28 September 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Heather Timms (Chair)

Councillor Tim Sinclair

Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher

Councillor Andrew Wright

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 Sue Markham

Jamie Lewis, Waste Management Contract Support Officer

Glen McCrandle, Head of Waste and Transport

Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Kathryn Lawrence

Claire Preston, Chief Officer – Operations and Traded Services

Stratford District Council

Councillor Bill Flemming

Julie Lewis, Head of Environmental and Operational Services

Warwick District Council

Councillor Moira-Ann Grainger

Jamie Wicks, Contract Development and Project Officer

1. General

(1) Apologies

None.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Chair's Announcement

The Chair welcomed Councillor Bill Flemming to the group as the new Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change at Stratford District Council.

(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 Quarter 1 2022-2023

Andrew Pau summarised that:

- The report showed the tonnage data from quarter one (April to June 2022) compared to the same period last year
- There was an increase of waste arisings in the first year of Covid-19 (2020-21) which reduced in 2021-22 and 2022-23
- There was less recycling tonnage being collected in 2022/23 so the percentage dropped in quarter 1. The composting rate decreased too; combined they were down by approx. 3500 tonnes (1.3%)
- The landfill rate and energy recovery rates were down in terms of tonnage but for energy recovery the percentage was up
- The last year in the estimated performance table on page 2 was a projection based on last year's tonnages updated with the actual monthly tonnages from this year
- Household numbers for 22/23 will be updated when the new figure is provided by Waste Data Flow
- The report showed positive progress with the reduction of residual and landfill waste

In response to the Chair, Andrew Pau stated that the previous performance report projected high tonnages of waste in line with the national projection post-Covid-19, however, the report was reissued with the most up to date information following the meeting and this data showed waste reduction. There was a switch between energy recovery and landfill in 2021-2022, this was because the Coventry Energy from Waste facility shutdown temporarily for almost 4 weeks. WCC's aim is to only landfill 10% or less of our household waste.

In response to Councillor Moira-Anne Grainger, Ruth Dixon said that household numbers were adjusted to match the numbers used in Waste Data Flow as it is these figures that are used by Defra to produce the published waste statistics.

3. Waste Management Performance Data - Five years comparison for all WCAs and Warwickshire

Andrew Pau presented a PowerPoint and summarised that:

- The last national data available was for 2020/21, data from 2021/22 was unavailable because central government has not published it yet
- Warwickshire's recycling rate was higher than the national average, but the trend line mirrors the national data

- The HWRCs were expected to have a higher recycling rate than the individual waste collection authorities due to heavy items and materials being recycled like wood and inert waste
- All of Warwickshire's local authorities composting rates varied. It changed most with HWRCs because the HWRCs closed due to Covid-19. Seasonal weather affected this too.
- Warwickshire was below the national average in terms of residual waste, however, the trend line mirrors the national data
- The total waste (including recycled and composted) peaked in 2020/21

In response to Councillor Margaret Bell, Richard Dobbs noted that charging for garden waste affected North Warwickshire's composting rate. The NWBC recycling rate dropped in 2021/22 because there was a fire at the Pure MRF at Ettington which was where the recycling was processed. The current provider does not take all the material Pure MRF did, so they were classifying a lot of previously recyclable waste as residual, which also impacted the tonnages. The new MRF should resolve these issues.

In response to Councillor Tim Sinclair, Andrew Pau stated that Covid-19 did create a big impact and deteriorated rates, but things were stabilising now. Service impacts like charging for green waste did impact numbers too. Councillor Sinclair suggested an annotated version of the graphs showing all the causes that impacted these rates. WCC officers will produce a timeline of significant impacts and circulate to officers.

Richard Dobbs noted that Covid-19 and Brexit put huge pressure on the waste service because there was a lack of HGV drivers.

Ruth Dixon noted that Rugby Borough had the most stable recycling and composting rates because their only impact was Covid-19 rather than service changes.

4. Waste composition

Ruth Dixon presented a PowerPoint and summarised:

- The information was a follow up to further support the previous waste composition data reported to the partnership in June
- Residual waste bins should only contain non-recyclable materials like nappies, pet waste, certain plastics etc. In 2018 and 2022 non-recyclable waste made up 30% of the residual waste bin and the rest could have been recycled using the other bins, the HWRCs or the plastic film recycling at supermarkets
- The new separate food waste in Stratford and Warwick Districts should help reduce the amount of food waste in residual bins
- There was a decrease in garden waste going into residual bins
- Paper, cardboard and plastics were the most common kerbside recyclables that were in residual bins.
- Rubble, textiles and wood were the most common HWRC recyclables that were in residual bins. People needed to be educated to not put these materials in residual bins where possible
- Another composition survey will be done in 2023 to see if the service changes had an impact e.g. with food in residual waste

- Regarding garden waste bins, a couple of them in 2018 were primarily soil/turf which affected the results
- There was a lot less soil/turf in 2022.
- There was more food waste. This is better than food waste going into the general waste, but indicated an increase of food waste overall. Communication work was planned to get people to reduce their food waste
- Herbivorous pet bedding increased in garden waste bins
- Newspaper liners were expected in green bins because this was how some people wrapped their food waste
- There was less contamination in the 2022 green waste composition than in 2018

Richard Dobbs stated that the new MRF would be able to recycle plastic film when it opens in 12 months. Ruth Dixon added that plastic film should be recyclable everywhere in five to seven years.

In response to Councillor Bell, Ruth Dixon stated that since they installed the booking system, they better understood the capacity of the HWRCs. It costs less to send general waste collected at the kerbside to waste to energy than it does to landfill the HWRC general waste, and it is also potentially less environmentally harmful.

Councillor Katheryn Lawrence noted that more people were ordering home delivery since Covid-19 and less people had cars to take waste to HWRCs. Ruth Dixon noted that cardboard was always collected kerbside, and more companies were moving away from non-recyclable materials. HWRCs do not require someone to book a slot if they are cycling there, but they did need to be notified if someone was arriving on foot.

Following a supplementary from Councillor Grainger, Ruth Dixon clarified that if someone arrived at a HWRC on foot then the staff would take their waste from them but they need to be notified in advance. Princes Drive is the busiest site, with the approach road shared with HGVs and food waste lorries.

In response to Claire Preston, Andrew Pau stated that the booking system was kept following surveys which showed that HWRC customers liked it. It was good at stopping residents queuing. DEFRA requested evidence of booking systems successes and they should make a final decision on them by the next financial years at the latest. The Chair noted that it needed to be monitored in case there were any financial implications.

In response to Councillor Sue Markham, the Chair confirmed that residents can book to go to the HWRCs as many times as they wanted.

5. Early feedback from implementing new collection services in Stratford and Warwick

Julie Lewis summarised that:

- The new waste collection service started on the 1st August after 18 months of preparation
- It was a new joint service across Warwick and Stratford. The changes were greater for Warwick District residents than Stratford's
- The residual waste collection went to three weekly (180l bins in Warwick)
- Warwick residents now had a charge for the garden waste service
- Comingled recycling was brought in for Warwick District residents with 240l bins provided

- Both districts had new food caddies and these were collected weekly
- BIFFA were awarded the collection contract
- One of the biggest issues was the nationwide HGV driver shortage
- There was a problem with vehicle parts as these were made in Ukraine, so three weeks before the new collection started there were no food fleet vehicles
- A fire at Pure meant that they needed somewhere else for their dry recycling to go
- By the end of July most of these issues were resolved
- Since the launch and by the time of the meeting, over 287,000 bins per week had been collected
- Residents on social media complained that their bins had been missed but the success rate of collection was 99.39%
- Most issues were caused by the introduction of food waste collection
- Subscriptions for garden waste collection at Warwick were a lot higher than anticipated, Stratford's remained stable. Both were above the national average
- A new app was launched to communicate how bins were put out and 17,000 residents in both districts have signed up for it
- One contact centre (at Stratford) dealt with queries
- 1200 tonnes of food had been collected after eight weeks which was expected
- There was a lot more residents taking up the food waste collection offer than expected, especially in new housing estates. This was good and bad because it stopped food waste going in the general waste, but it showed that there was a lot of food waste
- There were not many complaints about the three weekly residual waste collection.
- Social media did not show the positive that people were thinking about where their waste was going
- Not a lot that would/could have been done differently
- A lot of crews did not want to do the food waste collection, so Biffa offered a pay increase to staff who would do this
- Permitting was brought in for people entitled to additional bins

In response to Councillor Sinclair, Julie Lewis stated that they brought in food waste collection for two reasons, it will be made statutory by central government, and it removes it from the other bins. It will be easier to demonstrate the economic benefit than the environmental one; however, 106,000 miles were saved annually with this contract. The impact on both districts will be reported back to the partnership including the potential impact on tonnages (after it had been implemented for a full quarter).

In response to Councillor Bell, Julie Lewis said that they used podded vehicles when this system was implemented in Daventry, so it was the same vehicle as the one that collected the garden waste or dry recycling. There was not an issue with the drivers there. Most people used compostable bin liners, but they did not need to. The unprecedented hot weather made it more difficult for drivers to endure the food waste especially in full PPE. Some residents claimed that the separated food waste collection caused a maggot infestation, but the waste collection just made them more visible (because they were not buried under other waste). Food bins were missed if they were hidden behind the bigger ones.

Andrew Pau noted that the food waste collection tonnages should decrease in Autumn but will peak around Christmas. The planned contract for the processing of separately collected food waste did not materialise as planned, so a 12-to-18-month contract was implemented with Seven

Trent for their site at Coleshill. The food waste is put through an anaerobic digestion process. Andrew noted that so far the new service has collected less residual waste than the previous services over the same period last year.

Julie Lewis added that out of the new 16-vehicle food waste fleet they only initially had five vehicles because the rest were caught up in Ukraine. Some of the hire vehicles could not get into the HWRCs, and half the hire vehicles broke down in week one.

Councillor Grainger noted that there seemed to be a few residents who had their collections missed repeatedly and there were issues with BIFFA staff leaving. She added that some who complained about maggots on social media were told by other residents what they should have done to avoid them. Julie Lewis added that when the Queen died all complaint calls reduced.

6. Update on the development of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England

Andrew Pau stated that central government have started making provision for the budget impact of the waste strategy themes (extended producer responsibility, consistency in recycling and deposit return scheme) for local authorities. This would start in 2024-25. Ruth Dixon added that it was expected there would be a requirement to collect food waste separately because of information found in the budget. It is also expected there will be an obligated set of consistent materials, Warwickshire already collects most of the obligated material set, except for tetra pack in some areas. The MRF will cover all the materials. Clarification was needed on residual waste collection frequency and green waste charges. It was believed that extended producer responsibility and deposit return scheme would remain in the strategy; Scotland were planning to rollout their DRS in spring 2023. DEFRA should announce their plans soon and this will be fed back to the group if there is any update.

7. Waste Partners Update

North Warwickshire

Richard Dobbs informed the partnership that they had six new refuse vehicles coming imminently and this should provide better efficiency, more capacity and add resilience to the service moving forward. An in-cab system was being installed as a tool for the crews to use. NWBC were still experiencing some staffing pressures. The dry mixed recycling arrangements for the MRF off taker were being reviewed. Bin collection was moved for the bank holiday on 19th September, residents were notified by post so there were minimal complaints. There were 2-300 fewer garden collection subscriptions due to the cost of living. The MRF process contractor started their operations.

Nuneaton & Bedworth

Glen McGrandle informed the group that they are focusing on a five-year vehicle replacement plan which has been submitted for the short-medium term financial plan. To support this an assessment on alternate vehicle fuels was carried out. The specifications needed for the current fleet meant diesel will be used with the option of building in carbon emission reduction to comply with their climate change commitment. This will be continually reviewed. The next tranche of replacement vehicles should be more technologically advanced so they would be more likely to be greener vehicles. An enforcement education day was held on Nuneaton High Street to tell residents what they needed to do with their waste. A lot of residents had questions, and these were answered by staff. The event was well received, and a similar event was planned for before Christmas. New recycling vehicle livery with a clearer message for what was on offer for residents has been

agreed. A communication plan following the boundary configuration for refuse collection was being developed to inform residents by February 2023.

Rugby

Claire Preston informed the group that green waste subscriptions were down because they could not advertise it with the strike action going on. RBC were due to have a free review done by the Energy Savings Trust in December 2022 the review looks at waste collection fleets to see whether they could be low emission vehicles. RBC were planning to replacing some vans with electric ones. A study was ongoing to help with the transition of collecting food waste separately. New software called Web Aspects was to be used for in-cab software and route optimisation. A new education position will educate residents of waste contamination in bins.

Richard Dobbs noted that the Crown Commercial Front Services Framework was going to release a price list for HVO as a more environmentally friendly fuel and suggested that some of Warwickshire's authorities could bulk buy it together; WFRS were looking at buying this too. Richard Dobbs would share this information when obtained. Claire Preston noted that engines do not need changing to use HVO, it costed 50p per litre more than other fuels and the Energy Savings Trust said it was not always as good for the environment as purported.

A discussion followed about HVO, its origins and production in terms of being environmentally friendly.

Warwickshire

Ruth Dixon informed the group that they were set to visit 18 schools in Warwickshire this term to talk about recycling, home composting/composting at school, waste free lunches, reducing single use plastic etc. The team will engage with 5000 pupils, and these will take home a sticker plus leaflet or email explaining what they have been taught. The team were planning a series of home composting workshops in communities, including in Bedworth and Kenilworth. An online workshop will be trialled too. The sales of subsidised compost bins were going well. The team attended Ecofest held in Leamington and were also planning to attend other events scheduled across the county. Lots of social media activity was taking place with a focus on reducing food waste. A new producer compliance scheme (Valpak) had been appointed since the last meeting. Further procurement updates will come to the December's meeting.

Stratford and Warwick's update was covered in item 5

8. Persistent Organic Pollutants in upholstered domestic seating

Andrew Pau stated that persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are treatments used on upholstered domestic seating and furniture as a fire retardant. It is polluting and the Environment Agency (EA) do not want them going into landfill anymore, which is where they normally end up. New guidance now states they should be incinerated, this is difficult because of the limited access to incinerators. Incinerations do not like accepting this furniture whole and it may be that the material will have to be shredded. Moving this type of waste to incinerators would be expensive and operationally difficult. The Council was going to write to the EA to state their position by the end of the year. The EA will then start to look at the position nationally next year with a view to starting inspections in summer 2023. The partnership will need to decide how to manage this situation if the Environment Agency follow through with their plan. Andrew Pau will keep the partnership updated on the issue of persistent organic pollutants in upholstered domestic seating.

In response to Glen McGrandle, Andrew Pau said he was unaware of the EA's timescales or process with this yet and there was no further information other than they planned to do inspections in 2023. Local authorities normally ask central government to pay towards any new burdens they were asked to take on by central government. However, it may be that the government would argue that this should had been done already and as such local authorities would not get any money. The LGA would fight against this argument.

9. Action on Climate change

The Chair stated that action on climate change was part of the new Council Plan and because of this the sustainable futures strategy will go to Cabinet in October 2022. It will be sent for a community engagement piece and come back through to Cabinet when adjustments are made. It will be sent out to all partners as a collaborative piece of work at the end of October.

10. Agenda item suggestions for next meeting

Update on the MRF including time lapse.

11. Dates of future meetings

7th December 2022

The meeting rose at 16:00

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Chair