

# Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Wednesday 16 June 2021

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

#### Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Heather Timms (Chair)

Councillor John Horner

Councillor Sarah Millar

Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher

Councillor Daren Pemberton

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

#### Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council

Councillor Kyle Evans

Glen McGrandle, Head of Waste and Transport

#### Rugby Borough Council

Councillor Kathryn Lawrence

Anton Cuscito (Interim Transport & Waste Manager)

#### Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Councillor Ian Shenton

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

### 1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Councillor Daren Pemberton nominated Councillor Heather Timms to be Chair of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership for the election term. This was seconded by Councillor Ian Shenton.

Councillor Timms nominated Councillor Ian Shenton to be Vice-Chair of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership for the election term. This was seconded by Councillor Pemberton

## **Resolved**

That Councillor Heather Timms be Chair and Councillor Ian Shenton be Vice-Chair of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership for the election term.

## **2. General**

### **(1) Apologies**

Dan Green (Rugby Borough Council) was substituted by Anton Cuscito (Interim Transport & Waste Manager)

### **(2) 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 14 March 2021 were approved as true and correct record.

## **3. Waste Management Performance Data**

Andrew Pau (Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Waste & Environment)) stated that the 2020/21 household waste data was provisional until accepted by the Environment Agency. The reuse and recycling rate increased by 4500 tonnes, but the percentage increase was only 0.8%; composting rates were static and decreased by 1.2% which led to the overall recycling, composting and reuse rate to fall by 0.4%. Residual waste (the waste left after recycling and composting) increased by 11,000 tonnes/4.3% but more people were at home during the Covid-19 pandemic. Warwickshire's increases were modest compared to some neighbouring authorities. Over 100,000 tonnes of waste was sent to Energy From Waste facilities in 2020/21 which was 9,500 tonnes more than 2019/20, 27,000 tonnes of waste was landfilled which was 3000 tonnes less than the previous year. Dry recycling tonnage had increased for all boroughs and districts but there was a slight reduction in the recycling and composting percentage with 50.7% of waste being re-used/recycled/composted; on average each household is producing over a tonne of waste was produced which had increased this year. Normally, the recycling centre targets are 58% with a 60% average for recycled materials at the centres but the average had decreased due to the closure of the HWRCs and the booking system, more kerbside collection of recycling and green waste had taken place. In 2020/21, boroughs and districts collected 20,000 tonnes more waste at the kerbside when compared with the previous year. Over the last two years, there had been on average a 5% increase in recycled/composted/reused waste or an 11,000 increase in tonnes. The HWRCs collected 7000 tonnes less waste in 2020/21.

In response to Councillor Margaret Bell, Andrew Pau stated that the decrease in waste at recycling centres was not good or bad if waste was separated and reused, recycled and composted where appropriate. Waste at recycling centres decreased by 1/3 and traffic decreased by 2/3 which meant that people were bringing more recyclable material to the centres in one journey than making multiple journeys. It was predicted that more people will take waste to recycling centres when lockdown ends.

Councillor Bell suggested some booking free days for recycling centres as she had received pushback from her residents. The Chair noted that as social distancing was enforced until July 2021, the booking system would stay in place until then.

Councillors Pemberton, Sarah Millar and Kathryn Lawrence all praised the booking system at their local recycling centres. Councillor Pemberton noted that every area has different experiences but not having cars' engines running while queuing up benefited the environment. He added that a consultation could be done with the public and centres to improve the booking system. The Chair agreed with this and added that ongoing consultations were taking place with neighbouring authorities.

Councillor Millar agreed with Councillor Pemberton and suggested a strategic approach with the staff at recycling centres.

Councillor Lawrence noted how quickly booking slots went at recycling centres and suggested keeping recycling centres open longer during the summer.

The Chair noted that Hunters Lane in Rugby was Warwickshire's busiest recycling centre and that they recently extended their hours but booking slots were still busy.

Councillor Shenton praised the 50.7% recycling rate, landfill decrease and energy recovery increase and suggested lowering recycling targets to be more realistic and queried how comparable some of the data was. Andrew Pau stated that the recycling targets were aspirational and set five years ago but this was due for a review; he continued that there were contracts in place which had minimum tonnages but there was scope in increase energy recovery and decrease landfill tonnage to 20,000 tonnes (which was low compared to some local authorities). Andrew Pau concluded that not all data was directly comparable as some focused-on household recycling centre numbers and others on kerbside collection.

Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher suggested an incentive for home composting like food waste bins.

#### **4. National Waste Strategy Update**

Ruth Dixon (Lead Commissioner - Waste Strategy & Contracts) informed the partnership that the National Resources and Waste Strategy was launched in December 2018 followed by three consultations which ran over 12 weeks in Spring 2019. The second round of consultations was delayed because of Brexit and Covid-19 and was launched in March 2021. The Environment Bill is currently going through House of Lords and had its second reading in June 2021. The partnership responded to the government's plans on the deposit return scheme and extended producer responsibility on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021.

The deposit return scheme (DRS) is likely to be for drink containers e.g. glass/plastic bottles and drink cans, but was unlikely to include plastic milk bottles, drink pouches and Tetrapak/cartons. Everything collected would go for recycling and a deposit would be paid on purchase by the consumer which would be between 10-20p per item; deposits would be paid back when packaging was returned. The partnership (in their response to the consultation) expressed their support for an 'on the go' system for drinks rather than drinks that would be consumed at home as this would help reduce litter. Officers were concerned about the potential impact of an 'all in' deposit return scheme on low income families without private transport as they would struggle to get their deposits back. The partnership's consultation response suggested the DRS should take drinks

bottles that were less than 700 millilitres and that wine bottles should be collected at kerbsides to keep space in the reverse vending machines. They did not support a digital solution to collection from kerbside as there would have been a lot of issues with it, which were listed in their response.

In response to Councillor Bell's concerns regarding local authority responsibility and uncollected deposits, Ruth Dixon clarified that anything collected by the reverse vending machines/online retailers will be the DRS' responsibility to dispose of and not the councils. The partnership asked for unclaimed deposits to be returned to local authorities as they would be disposing of these materials. This waste would likely go to the new MRF where its AI should be identify DRS items. The response asked for all cost for the handling of this to be funded: collection, recycling and disposal. Central Government may change their preferred plans depending on responses to the consultation.

Ruth Dixon continued that government's plans also included an ambitious extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging which will require the producer (and retailer) of the product to pay local authorities for the collection, sorting and disposal of their product's packaging (excluding DRS packaging). The producer would also have to pay for any of their product's packaging found in litter bins and as litter on the ground. The more recyclable and lighter the product material is, then the less the producer would pay. The partnership strongly supported this idea in their response to the consultation and stated EPR incentivises better resource management, make recycling easier and influences producers to improve their packaging. They suggested a discount for consumers bringing in their own reusable cups for drinks, stated that recycling of plastic film for businesses and households should start on the timescales and also transparent paying system for local authorities to be included.

Ruth Dixon informed the partnership that the kerbside collection consistency consultation was just for England. The proposed system would include flats and houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs). Theoretically, every authority will get new burdens payments for anything that will be set out in the regulations that they must do that they were not doing before. This will include payments to offer a weekly food waste collection to every household, free green waste collection (if the government decide to make this obligatory), potentially a minimum frequency residual waste collection, and paying businesses to segregate their waste for recycling which would affect Warwickshire's trade waste. If the proposed system goes ahead, Warwickshire County Council may move from in vessel composting to an anaerobic digestion treatment as it generates electricity or gas to the grid. Then it would be possible to open window compost garden waste collected at the kerbside which will be cheaper than using an in vessel composter. All of Warwickshire's local authorities are part of the new MRF in Coventry, so they will provide information in their response about how TEEP-style analysis could work (whether collecting material commingled in one or two bins as opposed to five/six separate bins is technically, environmentally and economically practicable so bin collections do not need to be done separately). Plastic film recycling was due to be introduced in 2026 which would be aided by EPR.

In response to Councillor Kyle Evans, Ruth Dixon confirmed that government could potentially mandate a minimum green waste collection service of a fortnightly 240 litre bin during the growing season. Councillors Evans, Pemberton, Shenton and Julie Lewis (Head of Community and Operational Services for Stratford and Warwick District Councils) expressed concerns over this suggestion as the borough and district councils would lose a large source of essential income if this was enforced and the government would not pay enough to match this loss. Following a query from Councillor Pemberton, Ruth Dixon confirmed that local authorities would be able to charge for

an enhanced service of collections and for additional bins; Richard Dobbs (Corporate Director – Streetscape) expressed concern with this as fleet would still need to be maintained and insured outside of the growing season and he noted that green waste exists all year round. Councillor Shenton noted that over 70% of councils charge for green waste collections so there will be a national push back from local authorities but that the 1/2/3+ waste system could be put at risk.

Andrew Pau reminded the partnership that this was still under government consultation and stated that some local authorities only collect residual waste every three weeks.

Richard Dobbs stated that the MRF would be able to take on plastic film when it opens in 2023 but there were concerns within the industry that similar infrastructures in the country would not be able to deal with it, so asking all local authorities to deal with film from 2026 onwards would be difficult for the market.

The Chair noted that they would need to be careful and not get too far ahead of other authorities as this could influence central government's decision and the new burden money will not last forever.

The majority of the Waste Partnership expressed these views regarding the waste collection consultation:

- Local authorities should not be required to collect Tetrapak if there is still inadequate reprocessing capacity in the UK or Europe by 2023/4. Richard Dobbs informed the partnership that the MRF would be able to take Tetrapak waste but 2023/4 was very soon as there was only one facility in England that could recycle Tetrapak waste as of June 2021.
- Local authorities could collect plastic films from all households (incl. flats and HMOs) made by 2026/7 because reprocessing capacity in the UK and Europe is developing well. Richard Dobbs noted that 2026/7 was a short time scale if local authorities do not already have access to a MRF that can sort plastic film as a lot of space in the MRF will be taken up by plastic film equipment. He suggested a public education exercise to educate them about the issues/concerns with plastic film management. Ruth Dixon stated that this would be the local authority's responsibility. Andrew Pau reminded the partnership that EPR would influence producers to use more recyclable material for their products.
- In principal, local authorities should look to carry out a weekly collection of food waste by 2024/5

Richard Dobbs stated that local authorities should not be mandated to do food waste collections and a weekly collection service would be very expensive in North Warwickshire due to its rural scattered population and it would be easier to do it fortnightly with green waste collection. Glen McGrandle (Head of Waste and Transport) agreed and stated that he would like more information into this proposal to see if it will be viable contractually and see if there were any benefits.

The Chair stated the main focus should be to reduce food waste and having a weekly collection could encourage food-wasting behaviour. Julie Lewis agreed with the Chair and stated that Stratford and Warwick districts were going to move to three-weekly residual waste collection and to run a separate weekly food waste collection in these districts would need 17 separate food vehicles to make a new fleet and 35 staff members. Julie Lewis suggested having the green waste

vehicles collecting the food waste but putting it in a separate pod on the vehicle. Councillor John Horner endorsed this idea.

Andrew Pau stated that food waste makes up 1/3 of Warwickshire's residual waste but green waste only made up less than 2%; he stated that the food collection would likely be mandatory because of this but green waste would more likely be left to the local authority.

Councillor Evans noted the financial burden that weekly food waste collection would have on local authorities and 2024 would be too early without the relevant information.

- Challenges with collecting recycling/residual waste from flats/HMOs include:
  - Contamination/Waste infringements
  - Cost & Resources incl. staff/fleet/containers (caddy and bin) storage and portability
  - Access to sites
  - Communication between landlords & tenants over who has responsibility
  - Education and enforcement on doing it properly
- Local authorities should be able to choose if they want to be able to charge for garden waste
- Communicating and helping households with recycling & home composting would be best to reduce green in general waste if charging was allowed (this would include households who are not subscribed to green waste collection)
- Residual waste collection frequency should be a local decision
- Recycling that is not packaging food/garden waste should retain the requirements for waste disposal authorities to make recycling credit payments to waste collection authorities. Andrew Pau stated that new burden payments would pay for most recycling arrangements.
- Central government should pay new burdens before 2023/4 to help the transition to new systems

The Warwickshire Waste Partnership will produce a response to the consultation sharing its views. Ruth Dixon stated that new draft regulations may be published by April 2022.

## **5. Development of the Warwickshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy**

This item will be discussed in September's meeting.

## **6. Waste Partners Update**

The updates were taken as read in the report.

## **7. Update on litter and flytipping including report/letter on review of environmental sentencing**

Glen McGrandle informed the partnership that a meeting was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> May with their current partnership enforcement team where they provided the blueprints of what is being undertaken on behalf of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. Litter patrols were undertaken in Nuneaton and Bedworth hotspots and fly tipping enforcement patrols were monitoring hotspots. Action was taken against offenders as there was enough publication on not infringing waste laws and prosecutions were made.

Councillor Horner said that he carried out an online survey where 75% of people surveyed in his division said that they wanted the district to do more to improve litter and fly-tipping.

Councillor Evans queried if the partnership had any data on how many section 215 notices were issued annually (landowners legally must clear fly tipping waste on their land) under the Town and Country Planning Act.

Richard Dobbs suggested that the borough and district fly tipping enforcement teams should join together to help tackle this issue.

Glen McGrandle suggested reviewing what legislative tools could be used by councils to fight against litter like the Highways Act to deal with fly tipping and graffiti; this would bring in more people and resources to help with everyone's own service area. Richard Dobbs agreed with this and suggested parking enforcers also being litter enforcers.

A future meeting on this topic was agreed to be arranged.

### **Resolved**

The Waste Partnership agrees for the Chair to co-sign the final waste crime letter drafted by Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group which requests the Sentencing Council reviews the 2014 Sentencing guidelines in relation to waste crime.

### **8. Action on Climate change**

This item will be discussed at September's meeting.

### **9. Agenda item suggestions for next meeting**

- Development of the Warwickshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- Action on Climate change
- Update on the MRF project

### **10. Dates of future meetings**

- 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

The meeting rose at 15:55

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Chair