

# Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Wednesday 13 March 2024

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### **Warwickshire County Council**

Councillor Heather Timms (Chair)

Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne

Councillor Tim Sinclair

Andrew Pau, Head of Waste and Country Parks

Ruth Dixon, Lead Commissioner - Waste Strategy and Contracts

Tamalyn Goodwin, Project Manager (Waste Strategy and Commissioning)

Nicole Conway, Democratic Services Officer

#### **North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC)**

Councillor Margaret Bell

Rob Bellamy, Interim Head of Streetscape

#### **Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC)**

Councillor Sue Markham

Jonathan Snell, Waste Management Supervisor

Alastair Blunkett, Assistant Director for Environment and Enforcement

#### **Rugby Borough Council (RBC)**

Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret

#### **Stratford District Council (SDC)**

Councillor Lorraine Grincott

Angela Lloyd – Streetscene Lead Contracts Officer

#### **Warwick District Council (WDC)**

Councillor Will Roberts

Zoe Court, Contract Services Manager

Steve Partner, Head of Neighbourhood and Assets.

#### **Others Present**

Sherbourne Recycling Centre:

- Richard Dobbs, Managing Director
- Anthony Hornsby, Education, Communications and Social Values Officer

## **1. General**

### **(1) Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cath James (NWBC) And Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher (WCC)

Anton Cuscito and Claire Preston from Rugby Borough Council sent apologies due to technical difficulties.

### **(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 meeting held on 6 December 2023 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

## **2. Waste Management Performance Data (up to Q3) 2023-24 and national statistics for 2022/23**

Andrew Pau (Head of Waste and Country Parks) shared a presentation of the waste management performance data.

Andrew Pau discussed the provisional performance data, covering quarters 1 to 3 from the current financial year compared to the previous year. Overall tonnage of reuse and recycled waste remained the same with a very slight percentage decline (0.6%). There was an increase in the composting rate of 5.1% which equates to an increase of around 11,000 tonnes compared to the previous year. The increase is most likely due to the fact that the previous year was dry, so green waste was lower than usual and also the extra food waste arising from the new collection service in Stratford and Warwick, which is counted in this category. Landfill and Energy from Waste were both down which is positive in terms of performance. In addition, the overall residual waste declined by 4.5% which indicated that more recycling and composting had taken place. The total household waste increased by 2.8%, however, this was explained by the extra tonnage in the composting category.

Andrew Pau discussed the estimated household waste performance for the year 2023/24 (which includes actual data from quarter 1 to quarter 3, along with quarter 4 data from the previous year), along with the actual data from the previous three years. The performance table includes a breakdown of each Borough and District, the HWRC data and overall totals for Warwickshire. The data for the whole of Warwickshire show an estimated increase in reuse recycling and composting

from 48.5% to 52.7% and a steady decrease of total kilograms of residual waste per household to 418 kg for the year 2023/24.

In the final part of the report, Andrew Pau discussed the performance of each Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) for quarters 1 to 3 in 2023/24. Overall, the recycling percentage remained steady, however, this section lacked comparison data for the previous year, and this would be included on the next report.

Andrew presented benchmarking data for 2022/23, the data compared Warwickshire County Council against 29 other waste disposal authorities. The County ranked 11th in the country for recycling, reuse, and composting rate and ranked 9th in the country for tonnage of residual waste per household. These figures were positive as it represented an improvement year on year.

Andrew Pau shared a table for the benchmarking of waste collection authorities annually. The data was interesting and showed some positive movement in terms of positionings. Stratford Upon Avon District Council was fifth best in the Country, with all Boroughs and Districts showing improvement.

Action: The benchmarking tables will be provided with the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Markham commented on Warwick and Stratford being higher on the list than other Boroughs and Districts and asked if this was because those councils had moved to the 123+ system. In response, those councils confirmed that this was the case and was followed by a discussion between members as to the large jump in placings between 21/22 to 22/23.

### **3. Sherbourne Recycling**

The item was introduced by Richard Dobbs from Sherbourne Recycling along with Anthony Hornsby. A presentation was shared on Sherbourne Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Coventry. The presentation detailed the history of the plant from the feasibility study that commenced in 2016, through to accepting the first recycling loads in August 2023. The facility was developed in partnership with eight local authorities including all of the Warwickshire waste collection authorities. The commissioning stage is due to end after final testing, in April 2024.

Richard Dobbs outlined:

- The vision and sustainability of the facility including expansion, investment, future adaptability.
- Capability of the MRF (approx. 50 tonnes per hour).
- The UK outlets for all material streams.
- The artificial intelligence (AI) used at each stage.
- The technology within the facility including advanced robotics and optical sorters these are key to the functioning of the plant.
- The mini MRF used for sampling and investigating potential new materials.

Councillor Margaret Bell raised a question regarding when the facility would be able to make accurate predictions on returns, so that District and Borough Councils could build that into their budgets. Richard Dobbs acknowledged the delay and advised that the current timeline was about six months behind. He continued to explain the process of producing and selling the product and

the delays in payment. He mentioned that as the facility matured, this would be smoothed out and figures would be visible in the next financial year, along with other benefits coming through such as onboarding of commercial contracts.

Councillor Tim Sinclair asked if there was any insight into the particular materials that residents should or should not recycle and commented that some communications around this would be helpful. Richard Dobbs advised that they were working with partners on communications. The delay in communications was so that observations could be made about what material was coming into the plant but, now that had occurred, communications would be launched in the new financial year.

Zoe Court, Contract Services Manager (Warwick District Council) agreed that communications would be appreciated, to ensure that the right message was being sent out at the right time, to the right people.

After a general discussion, it was agreed that communications needed to be organised and disseminated quickly. In the meantime, if Borough and District Councils wanted to run a communication campaign, information and tools could be sourced from the company.

Councillor Sue Markham commented on gas canisters, advising that additional information needed to be circulated about them. Although the bottles stated that they were recyclable, they were not suitable for putting into the kerbside household waste bins. An explanation about fire and explosion risk of canisters and fire protection of the plant would be helpful.

A discussion took place around visiting the Sherbourne Recycling centre with an offer from Richard Dobbs to host a future meeting at the site, including a tour. Further discussions were held around education and visits by schools, colleges, and other groups.

#### **4. Update on the development of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England**

This item was presented by Ruth Dixon who updated the group with the following points.

- Food Waste: Each of the waste collection authorities had received a letter from DEFRA, regarding funding for food waste collections that needed to be in place by March 2025.

Ruth invited the Councils to share updates with the partnership.

Alastair Blunkett, Assistant Director for Environment and Enforcement Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) stated that they had received information on capital funding, but nothing on revenue funding and felt DEFRA had underestimated the amount required, so had written to them. The council was not asking for more than needed but was short, for example there was not enough to fund the required kitchen caddies to implement. There was also no element for communication / promotion of the service or delivery of containers. Alistair advised that they were working with WRAP to understand what would need to be organised to move this work forward.

Zoe Court, Contract Services Manager, Warwick District Council (WDC) commented that they had already implemented the food waste collection and confirmed that the funding provided did not cover their actual costs. WDC had completed and submitted forms and paperwork to claim the

spent money back. As the council had already gone through the process of delivering caddies, Zoe offered to discuss with others who were about to embark on the project.

Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret, (RBC) confirmed that they also had not been offered enough funding to cover costs. The Council had contacted the local MP to discuss the issue and to put their concerns in writing.

Andrew Pau advised that the Severn Trent Green Power (STGP) contract for processing separately collected food waste was open to all boroughs and districts in the county with Stratford District and Warwick District already using the facility.

Andrew thanked Alastair Blunkett (NWBC) who had organised joint meetings with NBBC, NWBC and RBC to work together on this. He was encouraged that Boroughs and District Councils had been offered capital funding, however, he was disappointed that there was no clarity on revenue funding. Central government had stipulated that the scheme should be up and running by 1 April 2026. Andrew Pau addressed Councillor Bell's previous comment about the availability of food waste caddies and agreed that there would be pressure to have enough of these supplied to all authorities, however, Warwickshire County Council was well positioned as an authority to get this done as opposed to other authorities as the processing facility is already in place. WCC was happy to support waste collection authorities where possible.

In response to Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret (RBC), Andrew Pau advised that collection of food waste from areas across the County to STGP AD Facility was being worked on. Bulk and transport haulage had been set up for SDC and WDC and they were eager to work with other District and Borough Councils to make this work. Some would be able to manage direct delivery to the facility whilst others would be able to make use of bulking and haulage. Andrew continued, advising that capital funding would not be able to build facilities to store and transport waste, but the County Council wanted to work with each authority to come up with the best solution for each.

Ruth Dixon continued the update with the following points from DEFRA.

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme – new administrator steering group with three senior officer appointments.
- Ruth encouraged the group to sign up for the DEFRA newsletter by visiting the web address <https://tinyurl.com/2zhyh4fn> as well as signing up for monthly forums.
- Extended producer responsibility payments – this was still on schedule to be announced in November 2024.
- Ban on disposable vapes – draft legislation which could be commented on until 25 March 2024. A stakeholder engagement session would be held on 19 March 2024.
- Digital Waste Tracking – Scheduled to commence by April 2025. This would have an impact on all authorities transporting waste around the county and country and on the relevant digital paperwork that would need to be in place.
- DIY waste changes to Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC), commenced in January 2024 and gave households a more generous quota of DIY waste that they could bring into a HWRC.
- Litter and fly-tipping statutory guidance – A consultation would be held in the near future but will only be for a four-week period. Authorities would need to be ready to engage quickly.

## 5. Waste Partners Update

### Warwickshire County Council

Ruth Dixon updated the partnership on the Household Waste and Recycling Centres customer satisfaction online survey which was conducted from 20 December 2023 to 4 February 2024. A draft report was received and was being reviewed. A higher response rate was noted than previous years with around 1500 responses. Overall satisfaction was 83% which was the same percentage as the previous survey, two years ago. Overall support for the booking system was 58%, an increase from 46% in the previous survey. Further work would take place on the review of the draft report as well as looking at the data for the HWRC's and what information to action. An additional question had been added to the survey in relation to the reuse shops. Tenders were due out in May 2024 as new contract(s) would be needed for all reuse by 5 November 2024.

In response to a question from Councillor Tim Sinclair, Ruth Dixon advised that two press releases had been sent out with regards to the survey, alongside communications to all councillors on different committees and partnerships and social media coverage over three different platforms. There were links to the survey on the County Council website and was included on emails to anyone who had booked appointments. Ruth Dixon felt this may have naturally caused more users of the facilities to respond, however, the only way to increase coverage to non-users would have incurred higher costs which had not been in the budget.

Councillor Sinclair added that it would be useful to know what proportion of the community used the recycling centres compared to the data presented on the online survey. A discussion followed and it was agreed that this was not a statistic currently collected. Andrew Pau commented that this survey was online only.

Ruth Dixon continued with the update, covering the following points.

- eNewsletters – regular eNewsletters were sent out to subscribers and data reports showed that this was being read by 50% of those subscribed, which was comparable by industry standards.
- School visits – the teams plan included ongoing visits to schools, where they discussed composting, recycling, and reducing plastic waste. The goal set was to visit 50 unique schools in the financial year, engaging with nearly 10,000 primary school aged students and their families.
- Home composting - a series of home composting events had been planned for spring. Last year 18 events were held, engaging with 350 individuals. Currently, 12 events had been booked, with more to be confirmed. Additionally, the County Council offered discounts on cold and hot composters, with the offer to update local authority websites with the information.
- Social Media – the services presence on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) enjoyed a strong following. Notably, one post received 10,000 views due to a slight controversy.

### North Warwickshire Borough Council

Rob Bellamy, Interim Head of Streetscape commented that NWBC was working on the DEFRA food waste solutions and was hoping to have a rough idea which way to head by the end of April 2024. Garden waste was being promoted with a bigger uptake in 2024. Rob also commented on the Sherbourne MRF and discussed his recent visit. He informed the partnership that Sherbourne could advise local authorities on contamination figures which could be used to target specific areas.

### Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Alastair Blunkett, Assistant Director for Environment and Enforcement advised that there was not a lot to add to the update except that the team were working hard on a food waste solution. Some communications around vaping and nappies had been circulated with residents and Sherbourne was being asked for more information to target these areas.

### Rugby District Council

Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret advised that the education officer had engaged schools and children with a challenge to name the Council's recycling vehicles. The mayor had been involved and advertorials were being sent out. Councillor Watson-Merret agreed with Alastair from NBBC regarding the targeting of nappies and would contact Sherbourne MRF on a later date to discuss.

### Warwick District Council

Zoe Court, Contract Services Manager, updated the group, advising on taking part in Keep Britain Tidy, 'The Great British Spring Clean'. WDC was in the process of advising residents about the reduced rate on bulk collections for smaller items. The new enforcement team was actively issuing fixed fines when necessary and was campaigning on residential fly tipping.

### Stratford District Council

Angela Lloyd – Streetscene Lead Contracts Officer had nothing further to add to the written report apart from advising that the coffee pod collection services was going very well, and garden waste subscriptions were also proceeding as expected.

## **6. Action on Climate change**

The Chair, Councillor Heather Timms updated the partnership on the following areas within the Climate Change remit.

- The Sustainable Futures Strategy framework was adopted by Warwickshire County Council in November 2024. £2M was brought into the county for tree planting under various banners and accelerated the shared target of planting a tree for every resident.
- Biodiversity Net Gain, over 100 hectares of wildflower and grassland, had been secured, including some on council property as well as five large private estates that were involved and registered.
- The HVO (hydrogenated vegetable oil) trial had started in Warwickshire with three vehicles in action.
- The Energy Strategy had been adopted and had been looking at ways to support the Estates Team with decarbonisation and examining renewable energies.
- Eco-Schools - fifty school across Warwickshire had signed up for the scheme, aimed at education and school engagement. A delivery officer was now in place with the appointment of Holly Reid. The Council needed to look at how to integrate what was already being done at a Borough and District level as well as with Ruth Dixon in the Waste Management team and Holly Reid in the Education team.
- Warwickshire County Council had been awarded additional funding for EV charging which would accelerate the charging infrastructure installation and the team was looking for sites suitable for installation. There was better contractor support behind the installations which increased construction. Harbury Rural EV charging project would be able to move forward.

- The Council was constantly seeking external funding to move towards NetZero by 2030 while working with Boroughs and District Councils as well as the wider community.

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

Councillor Carolyn Watson-Merret (RBC) commented on film recycling at Sherbourne Recycling and wanted to get education on this for residents. Ruth Dixon advised that it was essential to get the right message out to residents in a clear, concise method as the information going forward would be contradictory to what was on some of the packaging that could be recycled at the kerbside.

Ruth Dixon mentioned the elections taking place in May 2024 in the north of the County. This may lead to new members attending the Warwickshire Waste Partnership and depending on this, a more detailed update to the partnership might be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

## **8. Dates of future meetings**

Next meeting 5 June 2024 in person. Location and time to be confirmed.

The meeting rose at 15:52