

JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
13 JUNE 2024
(9.30 - 10.45 am)

Present: Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Helen Purnell (Vice-Chair)

Reading Borough Council
Councillor Karen Rowland (Chair)
Councillor Liz Terry

Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Jordan Montgomery

Officers Sarah Innes, re3 Monitoring and Performance officer
Monika Bulmer, re3 Marketing and Communications officer
Oliver Burt, Strategic Waste Manager and Project Director
Damian James, Bracknell Forest Council
Claire Pike, Bracknell Forest Council
Steve Brown, Wokingham Borough Council
Chris Wheeler, Reading Borough Council
Richard Bissett, Wokingham Borough Council
Kevin Gibbs, Bracknell Forest Council (online)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mary Temperton, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Paul Fishwick, Wokingham Borough Council

1. **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Rowland be elected Chair for the municipal year.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Helen Purnell be appointed Vice-Chair of the Board for the municipal year.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no Urgent Items of Business.

5. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Arising from the previous minutes, it was noted that work on the Reuse and Repair Strategy continued and the final draft version would be returned to this Board for comments at a future meeting. As part of this work, members were informed of a pop up Reuse shop at Longshot Lane on Saturday 15 June 2024. Any purchase would come with a QR code to invite residents to participate in the reuse survey.

6. Progress Report

Sarah Innes, Monitoring and Performance Officer for re3 presented the latest Progress report and drew members' attention to the following areas.

Following a query from a Councillor from Reading Borough Council, officers had created performance statistics over a longer period of time and shown in comparison with other Local Authorities. Members noted that recycling rates in re3 authorities had broadly increased over the past 5 years, which was not the same in other authorities.

The FlexCollect trial expansion in Reading was on track to go ahead on 24 June 2024. The trial had elicited useful data from Bracknell Forest, the data from which suggested a high participation rate. More data was needed to validate the numbers from the trial.

A trial opportunity had emerged for the reuse of large WEEE items through a local company. Officers proposed a 3-month trial period which would offer an opportunity to understand the number of items which might be suitable for reuse, and where these items may go if reused.

Members attention was also drawn to the contamination rates which had increased slightly, and it was important to understand the reasons behind this.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Members recognised the additional costs associated with an increase in hardcore and rubble and were not comfortable that the Councils would be required to meet this cost and carry the burden.
- Members welcomed the opportunity for reuse of large WEEE items.
- Members were reminded that a funding application was submitted last year for a series of WEEE banks which were intended to accept a range of electrical appliances. Officers were unable to find a supplier who would service the banks in accordance with the specification. However, officers were revisiting the idea of electrical banks as there was lots of enthusiasm for the service in principle. Research was ongoing on the options available and members would be kept updated.
- The FlexCollect survey responses had largely been submitted from participating residents. Officers were considering a survey with a prize draw for the Reading trial area to elicit more responses. The Reading trial was also being expanded to include more households.
- It was clarified that the Bracknell trial scheme was already at the maximum number of households which could be included in the trial, and there were no plans to expand this. Members also recognised that at the conclusion of the trial period in 2025, there would be a decision whether to expand and continue the service.
- The reuse trial could be undertaken in the background, as residents surrendering their items would not know whether they were going for reuse or recycling.
- Further to paragraphs 5.28 to 5.34 of the report on performance monitoring, members requested further details on the impact of performance monitoring work on the contract. It was noted that while there were no fundamental performance failures, it would benefit the Board to see the background to the contract monitoring. Sarah offered to produce a graph and report to this effect.

(Action: Sarah Innes)

Having discussed the matter, it was therefore **RESOLVED** that

- 1 Members note the contents of this report
- 2 Members approve a trial for the reuse of suitable large electrical items received at the recycling centres, as described at 5.43.

7. **Communications Report**

Monika Bulmer, re3 Marketing and Communications officer shared an update on Communications work.

The Scrapp app had been launched and was going well with over 3000 active users and positive feedback being received. Work to launch the notifications feature of the app was ongoing across the Councils' IT teams and Scrapp developers.

The foil campaign with schools had seen great engagement across Easter.

The reGrow compost continued to be distributed to community sites, with lots of good content coming from the use of the bags.

The Reuse pop up shops had been successful with another scheduled in Bracknell. Officers were conscious that there had not been a similar event in Wokingham yet and were looking into suitable locations for this.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Initial teething problems with the Scrapp app were being ironed out, with work ongoing to differentiate between different types of plastic.
- When a resident self-entered an item into the app, the information is checked and back-end admin staff could make the item a rule if it was correct. Future iterations of the app would include a threshold for a certain number of users to enter an item in the app before it automatically became a rule.
- Members reflected on and congratulated the Board members past and present on 25 years of re3 partnership. Some information would be published on the partnership's anniversary later in the year.

8. **Legislation Report**

Oliver Burt, Strategic Waste Manager and Project Director presented a report on forecast legislative changes.

The outcome of the WEEE consultation would likely be delayed due to the General Election.

The exemption under Simpler Recycling was confirmed, meaning that Councils could collect glass alongside dry recyclables. It was likely that Simpler Recycling would continue in the next administration under the Environment Act. There were potential costs to the amendments required to the recycling plant to sort glass, and each Council was establishing its own business case for collecting glass.

While it was noted that the requirement to collect residual waste no less than fortnightly remained the Government's position and would soon be statutory guidance, it was also recognised that Councils were required to have regard to statutory guidance and that this was not legally binding. This would allow Bracknell Forest time to assess their current provision of 3-weekly collection and make a decision accordingly.

Councils would be put into performance cohorts for extended producer responsibility to determine the level of funding, which was expected to be confirmed in Spring 2025 with funding available from 2026.

In response to a question, it was noted that the consultation for the UK Emissions Trading Scheme concluded on 18 July 2024 and members would be asked for their input on a consultation response after the General Election and before the consultation's closing date.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Members note the contents of this report.
- 2 Members approve the circulation of a draft response to the Emissions Trading Scheme consultation, before the next re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board, in order to meet the deadline of 18 July 2024.

9. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

That pursuant to Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2012 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 10 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

10. **Finance Report**

Members received the Annual Financial Report.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Members note the Partnerships financial position as at the end of 2023/2024 for re3 and the three Councils at detailed at 5.1 to 5.12.
- 2 Members note the Partnerships FY24/25 budget and the differences between the re3 proposed budget and Council approved budgets detailed at 5.17 to 5.19
- 3 That Members note the re3 tonnage trends detailed at 5.13 to 5.15

11. **Date of the Next Board Meeting**

19 September 2024

CHAIR

