

## Contracts and operations update

### SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Authority's various waste treatment arrangements and procurements.

### RECOMMENDATION(S) The Authority is asked to:

- 1) Note the information within this report.

## 1. Introduction

This report provides an update on WLWA's existing contracts and operations for managing west London's waste. This conforms to key strategic outcomes in the new draft joint strategy (JMWMS) 'Effective and efficient operations focused on where we want to be in the future', 'better transport', 'carbon neutral by 2030', and 'collaborative models in the sub-region and pan-London'.

## 2. West London Residual Waste Services contract

The contract is performing well. Performance against the contract targets is excellent, with landfill diversion for 2019/20 at 99.8% (target 96.1%) and recycling of residual waste at 5.7% (target 2.1%).

Despite the additional pressures of Coronavirus the contract services have been delivered well, due to effective infection prevention measures put in place by the contractor and careful management of staff absence (due to self-isolation) across the organisation. Wasteflows had been lower than forecast due to the closure of HRRCs, but have now increased to slightly above forecast since the HRRCs have re-opened. The contract sites are coping well with this increase.

Planned outages at Severnside Energy Recovery Facility (SERC) have been amended, with the major outage pushed back from June 2020 to March 2021.

WLWA and Suez are continuing to develop a programme of projects for improving the efficiency of the sites, including upgrades to waste loading and lifting equipment and improved fire suppression.

## 3. Viridor residual waste contract (Lakeside)

Lakeside ERF went through some short-notice maintenance at the start of lockdown, but this was managed well with waste being diverted to Viridor's Ardley ERF in Oxfordshire.

Deliveries to Lakeside are lower than forecast due to lower than expected direct deliveries from Boroughs. The annual schedule will be re-worked in the next two weeks following confirmation of the new outage dates for SERC. During lockdown, Townmead Road HRRC was able to separate black bag waste from bulky waste as they had more space (with the site being closed to the public). This black bag waste was sent to Lakeside to increase the tonnage. WLWA continues to work with Boroughs to identify opportunities to separate black bag waste at HRRCs.

## 4. Food waste contract

The contract covers the collection and treatment of kerbside collected food waste from Transport Avenue, Southall Lane and Alperton Lane transfer stations to Bio Collectors (in Mitcham) for

treatment by anaerobic digestion. We are currently in the second year of this 10 year contract (with an option for a five year extension) and the contractor is providing an excellent service.

Food waste has increased by 6% since the start of coronavirus lockdown compared to the same time last year. This is partly due to changes in resident behaviour as a result of the lockdown and has been facilitated by food waste communications projects which have increased residents' awareness of food waste services and increased their ability to participate in them.

Vehicles powered by the biogas from the anaerobic digestion plant are now being used for all collections from west London sites as of 01 May 2020.

## **5. Green waste and mixed organics contracts**

CountryStyle Recycling Ltd contract (Lot 1) – This contract covers the collection and treatment of green waste. The current contractor provides a very good level of service and WLWA and partners are happy with the service provided by CountryStyle Recycling. The initial term of this contract expired on 30 April 2020 and it has been extended for the maximum period of two years (expiring on 30/04/22).

West London Composting Ltd contract (Lot 1 and Lot 2) – This contractor provides an excellent service for the collection and treatment of green waste and mixed organic waste. The Lot 1 contract is for the treatment of green waste and the Lot 2 contract is specific to mixed organic waste. The initial term of both West London Composting Ltd contracts expired on 30 April 2020 and both contracts have been extended for the maximum period of two years (expiring on 30/04/22).

WLWA's green waste contractors have seen their tonnages impacted by coronavirus due to the temporary suspension of green waste collections in Richmond and Harrow and the temporary closure of HRRCs, however service delivery was not affected and tonnages have now returned to normal levels.

## **6. Transport contracts**

The contract for transporting non-recyclable waste from HRRCs, provided by J Shorten & Sons Ltd, was been extended by two years from 1 May 2020 following agreement at the January Authority meeting.

The Suez Transport contract is for the removal of segregated materials from the HRRC sites in roll-on roll-off containers. This was been extended by two years from 1 June 2020 following agreement at the January Authority meeting.

Both contracts experienced a decrease in collections when HRRCs were temporarily closed but these have now returned to normal levels and the contractors have managing pick-ups effectively in order to avoid the busiest times at the HRRCs.

## **7. Dry Recyclables**

This new contract covers the collection of Ealing Council's dry mixed recyclables from Greenford depot (Ealing) for processing at Viridor's MRF at Crayford. Procurement was competed in January 2020 and the contract was awarded to Viridor.

The contract commenced on 6 June 2020 and will run for five years with 12 month rolling break clauses (to enable new arrangements to be sought if necessary, as a result of legislative changes or other market changes. The contract itself will be between WLWA and Viridor, with all operational costs charged through to Ealing on a monthly basis. Any revenue earned from the sale of materials is paid to Ealing, also on a monthly basis. The procurement of this contract allows more Boroughs to join at a later date under the same terms and conditions. Haulage of the dry recyclables to Viridor's MRF is done through the existing transport contract with J Shorten & Sons.

## **8. Abbey Road WTS**

A number of improvement works at the site have now been completed, with several being fast-tracked during the time when the site was unavailable to the public. All repairs identified as part of the 'fire damage project' (from the WLWA Health and Safety Action Plan 2019/20) are now complete with the steelwork repairs and new netting fixed to the steelwork. In addition areas of fencing around the WTS have been repaired or replaced, 2 large areas of cracked concrete have been replaced and new signage has been positioned to improve the user journey around site.

## **9. Abbey Road HRRC**

Residents returning to the HRRC after 18 May have noticed a number of differences in the look and feel of the site. There are new clearer signs to help residents sort their recyclables from their non-recyclables, bins have been freshly painted, a new wildflower meadow is being grown and items thought to be rubbish have been upcycled to help inspire reuse. Visitors are talking to site staff about how and why they use the service and many have taken to Google to leave 5 star reviews complimenting helpful and friendly staff and an efficiently run service.

As with all HRRCs there have been significant queues as the items generated during lockdown clear outs and tidy ups are brought in and the number of people on the site is restricted to help with social distancing requirements to keep both visitors and staff safe. A van booking system has been introduced to help manage the queues, all residents using a van to transport items are asked to book a timeslot.

Social distancing and infection prevention measures for site staff have been put in place since the start of the pandemic and are being constantly reviewed and improved.

## **10. Other West London HRRCs**

All sites re-opened on 18 May (11 May for Hillingdon) with a number of measures in place to encourage social distancing. With reduced numbers of vehicles able to access the sites at any one time there has been significant queueing at all sites with disruption on surrounding roads.

WLWA and the Boroughs are collaborating at a new level in order to support the running of HRRCs. As part of this WLWA officers have been helping site staff at Ealing, Hounslow and Richmond deliver surveys of customers while they queue. Initial data shows a significant increase in garden waste across most sites, probably as a result of people being at home and having time to do more gardening. Data is also being collected on where users are travelling from and how they use the sites in order to better understand service requirements. Tonnage data is also being collected and analysed weekly to look at the change in material types and quantities,.

## **11. Health and Safety**

Contractors have taken major steps to reduce the risk of Coronavirus infection across their operations. Measures include social distancing on sites, routine cleaning and decontamination of plant and equipment and adjustment of shift patterns to keep groups of staff separate.

At WLWA's Abbey Road site, Coronavirus prevention measures designed to protect staff and customers have been introduced, with toolbox talks used to help communicate the information. The measures include:

- Social distancing rules for driving vehicles, managing the site, using communal areas and offices and interface with the public
- Rules for the cleaning of touch-points on vehicles and plant and enhanced cleaning of offices and communal areas
- Restrictions on the physical handling of wastes
- Shielding of staff who are at enhanced risk
- Provision of PPE including face mask and guidance on its usage
- Restrictions on the number of site users at any one time

- Clear signage and markings on site for staff and customers
- Weekly review of all standards and safe systems of work

## 12. Financial Implications

The impacts of coronavirus have led to changes in waste flows, notably a 6% increase in all kerbside collected waste and a decrease during lockdown of waste from Borough HRRCs. Calculations are currently taking place to estimate the budget impact of these changes and it is anticipated that costs will be higher than forecast. Tonnages are being monitored closely each week in order to inform the budget forecasts which will be communicated to Boroughs in the coming weeks.

The textiles offtake market is currently risky due to a lack of outlets (closed charity shops and reduced international material flows). Cost and carbon emissions will increase significantly if textiles need to be managed via the residual waste stream. The situation is being managed directly with Government who are being lobbied to introduce Extended Producer Responsibility for textiles.

Social distancing is increasing health and safety and cost risks at HRRCs. WLWA is working with the Boroughs to mitigate this up-front by capturing waste through collection systems rather than HRRCs (as described in the Projects Update).

## 13. Staffing Implications

More staff are being utilised to manage the Abbey Road HRRC and provide support at Borough HRRCs. As part of this change, Waste Minimisation Officers have been re-purposed to support the HRRCs in order to help hold back the growth of waste and make sure recycling is maximised.

## 14. Legal Implications

WLERL (the residual waste services contractor) has given notification of a Force Majeure event in relation to the Coronavirus crisis, but has not requested any specific relief at this stage. WLWA has received legal advice on the matter and is working closely with the contractor to minimise the impacts of Coronavirus.

The Coronavirus situation continues to evolve rapidly and WLWA is keeping up to date on the latest Government guidance and legislation, continuously adapting operations and seeking legal advice where necessary.

## 15. Joint Waste Management Strategy Implication - The contracts mentioned in this report meet the Authority's Joint Waste Management Strategy policies, as described in Section 1.

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