

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 has had a challenging summer with high levels of staff absence caused by annual leave and sickness. This has been compounded by three train failures and break downs of the waste crane (which is scheduled for replacement) at Victoria Road. This led to longer than usual turnaround times for Borough vehicles at both Transport Avenue and Victoria Road.

As we exit the annual leave season it is anticipated that staffing levels will improve again, although the Contractor is aware of, and actively managing, the risks associated with rising Covid-19 cases. The programme of improvement works is also progressing, with waste compactor upgrades and additional weighbridges expected to be completed this year. A new bulking building at Victoria Road is expected to be completed next Spring, which will bring additional capacity.

The contract continues to perform well against its KPIs, with landfill diversion at 99.9% (target 96.1%) and recycling of residual waste at 5.1% (target 2.1%).

3. Viridor residual waste contract (Lakeside)

The contract is operating well. Lakeside was offline for two weeks at the end of August for bi-annual planned maintenance, in addition there have been four weeks of planned reduced inputs for further turbine works. During this period the waste that would normally be treated there is being managed via the Suez transfer stations.

4. Food waste contract

The quantities of food waste managed under this contract have increased by around 14% compared to last year due in part to Hillingdon collecting food separately from garden waste since May this year. There has also been a general increase in food waste collected across most Boroughs.

New food waste tipping facilities at Victoria Road have enabled Hillingdon's service change and are also delivering collection efficiencies for Ealing and Harrow, who are now using the site for tipping food. Provision of additional trailers, to transport the food from the transfer stations to the Bio Collectors' facility in Mitcham, have been arranged to manage the additional quantities.

5. Green waste contracts

These contracts are:

- CountryStyle Recycling Ltd contract
- West London Composting Ltd contract

The contracts are operating well.

Richmond suspended its green waste kerbside collections for three weeks in August due to driver shortages, but the service is now back online.

Both green waste contracts will expire next year (on 30 April) and procurement documents are being developed.

6. Transport contracts

The transport contracts are:

- For transporting non-recyclable waste from HRRCs and Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) collected by Ealing, provided by J Shorten & Sons
- For the removal of segregated materials from the HRRC sites in roll-on roll-off containers, provided by Suez transport.

Both contracts have experienced driver shortages during the summer, but managed exceptionally well, and continue to deliver a high quality service.

On 19 August, Dry Mixed Recycling in a J Shorten & Sons articulated lorry caught fire on the M25, resulting in damage to the trailer and traffic disruption. A thorough investigation is taking place, supported by the WLWA H&S Advisor. Additional controls were put in place at Ealing's Greenford depot, where the DMR was loaded, although it will soon be partially closed for repairs to the tipping floor. WLWA is pursuing an option with Ealing to receive and transfer the DMR at its Abbey Road site with further fire prevention controls in place.

Both transport contracts will expire next year (Shorten on 30 April and Suez on 31 May) and procurement documents are being developed, to be issued in mid-December.

7. Dry Recyclables

This contract covers the sorting of Ealing Council's dry mixed recyclables from Greenford depot (Ealing) at Viridor's MRF at Crayford. The contract began in June 2020. Other Boroughs are able to join this contract at a later date. This contract is performing well.

8. Website

At the end of April a new contract for the design of WLWA website and intranet was awarded to Makermet. WLWA will have access to a test version of the new website in September.

9. Borough Transfer Stations and HRRCs

The new HRRC booking system, which is operated by Pentagull for Brent, Ealing, Hounslow and Richmond, was introduced in May and is performing to a high standard, resulting in positive user feedback. The system is providing excellent data on slot usage, e.g. percentage of slots filled each hour of the day, which is helping to allocate staffing resources efficiently and ensure the right numbers of booking slots are being provided. Further benefits include high quality data on what site users are bringing and where they are travelling from, to inform service design on site and at the kerbside, e.g. bulky waste collections. The system is also able to inform customers when the site has to close in an emergency, or when certain materials cannot be accepted, as recently used by Richmond when the site was damaged by fire in June.

All sites have increased the number of available booking slots, apart from Richmond who had to reduce slots while fire damage was repaired.

Following the fire WLWA officers and contractors have supported Richmond’s site by auditing health and safety and environmental compliance and creating an action plan and training plan. A new weighbridge system has also been introduced. Further joint improvement work is planned around increasing recycling and diversion, and site systems/processes.

Elsewhere, WLWA officers are advising Hillingdon on upgrades to their site, which are taking place in September.

10. Abbey Road HRRC and WTS

Abbey Road HRRC and WTS is managed by WLWA, and the HRRC is run on behalf of Brent.

A new method of recruitment has led to the hiring of four new starters at the site which are filling existing vacancies. The new approach involved targeted social media advertising to attract suitable applicants, followed by a phone interview and formal face-to-face interview. The approach was quick to deliver and attracted high quality applicants.

On-site workshop facilities for repairing bikes and laptops are approaching completion. Next steps will involve trialling a number of approaches to deliver the on-site repair work. Once in place, the repair services will form a pilot scheme for transitioning to a circular economy in west London, and could be up-scaled to other materials and HRRCs.

11. Health and Safety Implications

The key health and safety issues identified above relate to fires at the Richmond site and in DMR from Ealing. WLWA officers and its health and safety advisor have been working to resolve these issues as discussed above.

12. Financial Implications

The impacts of the pandemic have led to changes in waste flows, please refer to the budget monitoring report for more information.

13. Staffing Implications

None.

14. Legal Implications

Any specific legal issues are described in the body of this report.

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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