



PART A REPORT

Report to: South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) Joint Committee

Date: 28th September 2022

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Report title: **Communications and engagement update**

Summary

This paper provides an update to Members of the South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee on communications and stakeholder engagement activities relating to the Partnership's Phase A (transport & residual waste management, HRRC services and marketing of recyclates) and Phase B (residual waste treatment) contracts.

This report focuses on activity that has taken place between July and September 2022.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and comment on any aspects of communications and engagement activities relating to the Phase A and Phase B contracts.

1. Triennial SLWP resident survey

- 1.1 Following a competitive tender process (through RB Kingston), DJS Research was appointed on 13 June to conduct the 2022 triennial resident survey on behalf of the Partnership.
- 1.2 1,000 computer-aided telephone interviews (CATI) were conducted with a demographically representative sample of residents from across the SLWP region during July and August 2022. This robust approach provides findings with a maximum margin of error of +/-3% (at the 95% confidence level). This means that 19 times out of 20, the figures in the opinion poll will be within 3% of the 'true' answer you'd get if you interviewed the entire population. The survey period was extended by two weeks as DJS struggled to fill quotas amongst younger residents.

- 1.3 This survey used the same methodology as previous surveys conducted in 2010, 2013, 2016 and 2019, to ensure direct comparisons can be made and long-term trends identified. In addition to the core 'tracker' questions, some new topics were explored for the first time this year including:
- Covid-19 and how this has changed household waste and recycling habits
 - Levels of carbon literacy amongst local residents and awareness of the initiatives the councils are working on to reduce the carbon impact of their environmental services
 - Opinion of the online booking systems that have been introduced at three of the six local tip sites within the SLWP region.
- 1.4 Alongside the core telephone survey, an additional 350 face-to-face surveys were conducted with residents who live in the six Wards closest to the Beddington Lane site (where the SLWP's waste management and treatment activities are focused):
- Beddington (Sutton)
 - Hackbridge (Sutton)
 - Broad Green Ward (Croydon)
 - West Thornton Ward (Croydon)
 - Cricket Green Ward (Merton)
 - Pollards Hill Ward (Merton)
- 1.5 This allows us to see whether the views of people who live close to the Beddington site differ from those who live further afield. The findings from these face-to-face 'booster' surveys will be subject to a maximum margin of error of +/-5% (at the 95% confidence level).
- 1.6 The results from the triennial resident survey are currently being analysed by DJS Research. A presentation of the key findings will be provided at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.
- 1.7 The findings from the survey will inform the Partnership's Joint Waste Strategy, Communications Strategy (2023-2025) and wider decision-making, service design and policy setting.

2. The South London Waste Partnership website

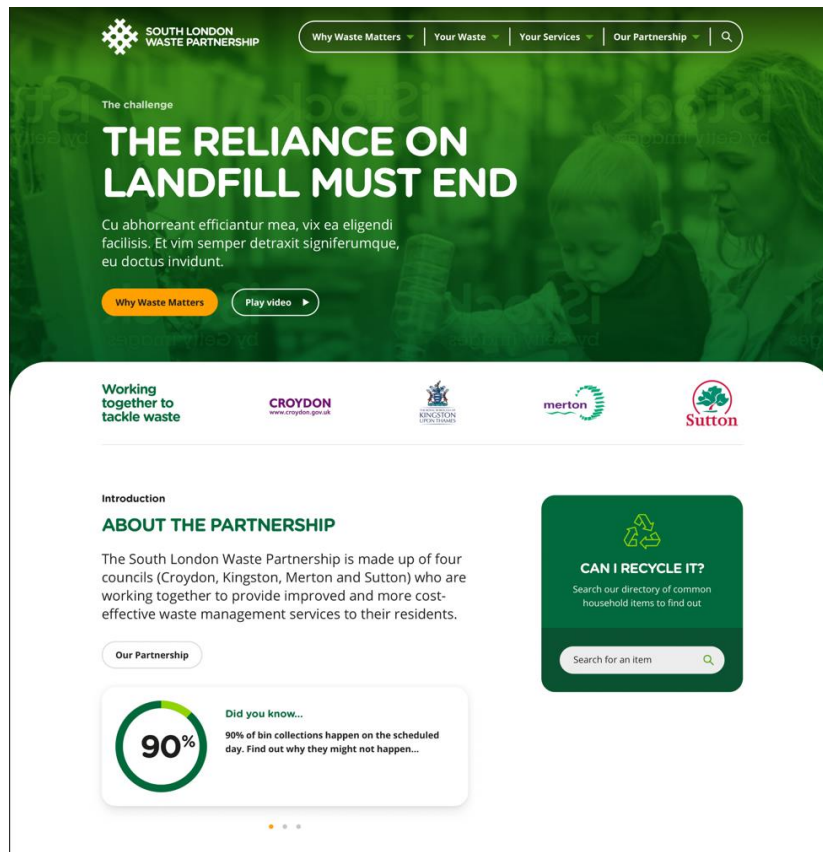
- 2.1 A new website for the SLWP is in development. The new site will:
- Meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards
 - Be built on a responsive design, so the site works equally well on mobile and held-held devices
 - Hosted on a secure platform (<https://>)

- Feature an updated look and feel and refreshed content, to reflect current brands and priorities

2.2 Following a competitive procurement process (through RB Kingston), Huxley Digital was appointed as the agency to design and build the Partnership’s new website. Huxley Digital is a specialist in developing accessible websites for public sector clients and is a certified Crown Commercial Service Supplier.

2.3 Work on the visual elements for the new site is progressing well: User experience (UX) planning, research and mapping has been completed, wireframes (for desktop and mobile) and style-tiles developed. A selection of screengrabs (below) offer a preview of what the new website will look like (please note that these screengrabs feature ‘dummy’ text and images):

2.4





CAN I RECYCLE IT?

Search our directory of common household items to see if they are recyclable

- Carrier bags
- Chemicals
- Christmas tree (plastic)
- Clear plastic packaging

The South London Waste Partnership is made up of four councils (Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton) who are working together to provide improved and more cost-effective waste management services to their residents.

Working together to tackle waste



Useful links

- [Why This Matters](#)
- [Your Waste](#)
- [Your Services](#)
- [Our Partnership](#)
- [Example link](#)
- [Example link](#)
- [Example link](#)

Contact us

Let us help you find what you are looking for on the link, below.



Breadcrumb 1 / Breadcrumb 2

Who we are

JOINT WASTE COMMITTEE



Overseeing the work of the South London Waste Partnership is a formally constituted Joint Waste Committee made up of Cabinet and Executive Members from the four boroughs.

The Joint Waste Committee meets on a regular basis and is responsible for all of the key decisions made on behalf of the Partnership. Members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings. Minutes of previous meetings and details of future meetings can be viewed here.



The Joint Waste Committee is responsible for all of the key decisions.

INTRODUCING MEMBERS OF THE JOINT WASTE COMMITTEE:



Councillor Barry Lewis
(Chair of the Joint Committee)
Sutton Council
Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee



Councillor Christopher Woolmer
Sutton Council
Vice-Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee



Councillor Jason Cummings
Croydon Council
Cabinet Member for Finance

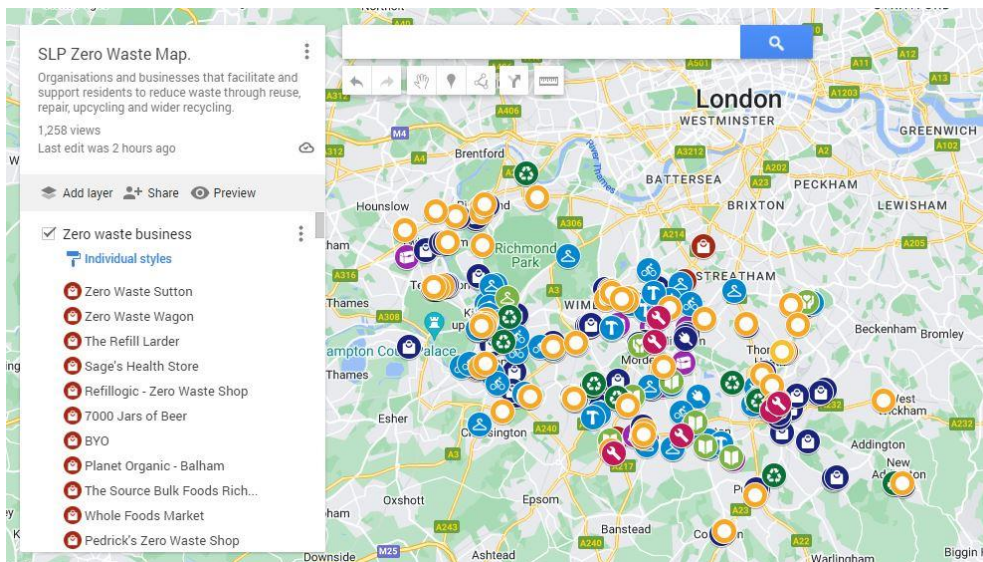


Councillor Scott Roche
Croydon Council
Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment

- 2.5 The next phases in the project are to: write and upload copy, source images and videos and final user acceptance testing prior to launch. The new site will launch in winter 2022 (a slight delay from the summer/autumn launch forecast at the last Joint Committee meeting in July).

3. Zero Waste Map

- 3.1 The SLWP Communications Advisor has been supporting colleagues at the South London Partnership (a sub-regional partnership between five London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton) to develop a Zero Waste Map.
- 3.2 The Zero Waste Map provides a convenient way for residents to locate their nearest refill businesses, repair services, second-hand shops, recycling centres and drop-off points, and mending workshops. The map can be accessed via:
www.southlondonpartnership.co.uk/slp-zero-waste-map/



- 3.3 A promotional toolkit has been sent to all the SLP boroughs and the hope is that residents across the SLP region will start using the map in the months to come to help reduce waste. Users are also invited to suggest businesses for inclusion in the map.

4. Waste Composition Analysis Study

- 4.1 Working with specialist environmental consultancy, Resource Futures, phase one of a two-phase waste composition analysis was completed over the summer months.
- 4.2 Waste and recycling (including food waste) was taken for detailed analysis from a demographically representative sample of 1,200 kerbside and flatted properties. Resource Futures followed best practice and used the Office for National Statistics (ONS) London

Output Area Classification (LOAC) tool to identify a representative sample of households in each of the four boroughs.

- 4.3 A summary of the findings from Phase 1 of the waste composition analysis project will be presented to Members at the Joint Committee meeting on 28th September 2022.
- 4.4 Phase 2 of the analysis will take place in October / November 2022. Taking samples at different times of year is important due to the seasonal nature of household waste.
- 4.5 Across both phases, waste will be analysed from 2,400 properties, providing robust findings that have a maximum standard error of +/- 2.9% at 95% confidence level when viewed at SLWP level and +/- 5.7% at 95% confidence level when viewed at borough level.
- 4.6 The findings from the waste composition analysis will:
 - Help the SLWP boroughs further improve their recycling rates by gaining a better understanding of what residents are putting in their residual waste bins and using this knowledge to tailor and target behaviour change campaigns accordingly.
 - Calculate capture rates per commodity, enabling the boroughs to understand where the improvement areas are so that we can target our communications and operational efforts in the areas where the most impact can be achieved.
 - Enable the SLWP boroughs to more accurately measure the carbon impact of their residual waste treatment activities and monitor progress against reduction targets.
 - Support waste minimisation by identifying which items are currently going to the ERF which could be rehomed, reused or upcycled.
 - Model the impacts of possible future national legislation changes such as a Deposit Return Scheme and free garden waste collections.

5. HOUSEHOLD REUSE AND RECYCLING CENTRES (HRRCs)

- 5.1 This contract is operated by Veolia on behalf of the Partnership boroughs.
- 5.2 Site user satisfaction surveys continue to be conducted at the six HRRC sites on a rolling basis. The surveys now include questions relating to the booking systems and fair use policies in place at some of the sites.
- 5.3 A summary of the findings from these surveys is reported to this Committee in the Contract Management Reports, and uploaded to the SLWP website.

6. BEDDINGTON ERF

- 6.1 The Residual Waste Treatment Contract was awarded to Viridor in 2012. In order to fulfil the contract, Viridor has constructed a £205m state-of-the-art Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) in Beddington, Sutton. Household waste from the four Partner boroughs that either cannot be recycled or has been sorted for recycling is treated at the facility and used to generate electricity.
- 6.2 The SLWP Communications Advisor continues to work closely with Viridor to:
- Ensure Viridor are meeting their contractual requirements with regards to communications and stakeholder engagement around the operation of the Beddington ERF
 - Ensure local people understand why it is we need an ERF and provide reassurance around the safety of modern, well-run facilities such as this
 - Ensure the Partnership understands the views of local people with regards to waste treatment and ERF technologies in particular.
- 6.3 Permit variation application – On 10 January 2022, the SLWP was formally notified by Viridor that it had (on 23 December 2021) submitted an application to the Environment Agency (EA) to vary the permit for the Beddington ERF. If approved by the EA, the variation will allow the facility to treat 10% more waste. The SLWP boroughs issued a joint statement expressing disappointment that Viridor was making this application.
- 6.4 The EA is expected to consider this as a ‘substantial variation’ and conduct a consultation on the application. Despite correspondence between LB Sutton Officers and the EA Permitting Team, details around the consultation (e.g. when it will happen, how long it will last for, how residents and stakeholders will be able to take part) have not been forthcoming from the EA.
- 6.5 At the July 2022 meeting of the SLWP Joint Committee, Members agreed that the Chair of the Committee should write to the EA on behalf of the Committee seeking answers to these questions.
- 6.6 On the 18th July 2022, the Chair of the Joint Committee wrote to the Head of the EA’s Permitting Team seeking further details on the consultation, including the material issues that will be taken into consideration. At the time of writing this report, the EA had not responded to this letter. On 22nd August 2022 the Leaders of the London Boroughs of Croydon, Kingston and Merton and the Mayor of the London Borough of Croydon wrote a joint letter to the EA’s Chief Executive raising concerns that despite correspondence from council officers and the Chair of the SLWP Joint Committee, the details and assurances required had not yet been received. At the time of writing this report, a response had not been received from the EA.

- 6.7 Once the answers to these questions are known, the SLWP boroughs will be in a position to support residents and local stakeholders in engaging in the consultation process and sharing their views on the application to treat more waste at the site.
- 6.8 Site visits – the following group visits (including a tour of the facility) to the Beddington ERF have been hosted in recent months:
- 7th September 2022 – Sutton Liberal Democrat Group Members
 - 14th September – Sutton Labour Group Members
 - 20th September – SLWP Joint Committee Members

The SLWP and Viridor will continue to facilitate groups tours whenever possible. These can be arranged by emailing **beddingtonERFEducation@viridor.co.uk**

- 6.9 In addition to organised group tours (including resident associations, environmental groups and schools), the SLWP is keen for individual residents who have an interest in the Beddington ERF to be able to book a visit to the site and benefit from a tour of the facility. The SLWP Communications Advisor is working with Viridor to put in place a regular cycle of quarterly ‘open days’ that individuals can sign up to, with the dates of forthcoming events publicised on the virtual visitor centre (**www.beddingtonerf.info**).
- 6.10 Viridor hosted three tours of the Beddington ERF on 9th and 10th September as part of the national Heritage Open Days event.
- 6.11 Emissions – the environmental performance of the Beddington ERF is reported to Committee in the Contract Management Report. Viridor continues to upload Emissions Monitoring Reports to the Beddington ERF Virtual Visitor Centre (**www.beddingtonerf.info**) twice per month.
- 6.12 The SLWP Communications Advisor will continue to work with Viridor to ensure local residents have access to timely and comprehensive information about the environmental performance of the facility via the Virtual Visitor Centre.
- 6.13 In July 2022, the SLWP published a statement on its website about the relatively high number of emissions exceedances at the plant during May and June 2022. This followed a 12-month period where there were no exceedances at all. The statement explained that the Partnership had formally requested Viridor to provide a Rectification Plan setting out how performance of the plant will be brought back to 100% compliance.
- 6.14 In that Rectification Plan, Viridor explained that a number of the exceedances had been caused by gas bottles passing through the treatment process (the gas bottles can explode in the intense heat, resulting in a sudden change in oxygen levels within the furnace,

which in turn leads to a short-term spike in combustion-related emissions such as Volatile Organic Compounds and Carbon Monoxide). Of particular concern is a recent increase in the number of large (c.600g) nitrous oxide gas bottles being received in the residual waste stream.

- 6.15 In August, the Chair of the SLWP Joint Committee wrote to the Chief Executive of the British Compressed Gas Association (BCGA) raising awareness of the significant increase in nitrous oxide bottles being placed in rubbish bins in recent months and the challenge this is causing to waste treatment facilities. The letter also asked the BCGA for an update on their campaign for the Government to ban consumer sales of nitrous oxide; details of the industry key players (manufacturers, distributors and retailers) so the SLWP can contact them directly and support for a public-facing awareness campaign. We await a response from the BCGA.
- 6.16 The SLWP is working with Viridor to explore ways that the identification and isolation of gas bottles can be improved. The SLWP is also in discussion with Viridor about them funding a public-facing campaign to raise awareness of the importance of disposing of used gas bottles responsibly.

7. Collections and street cleansing

- 7.1 Communication and engagement activities relating to recycling & waste collections and street cleansing are not formally under the remit of this Joint Committee. Nevertheless, this short summary of recent activity is provided to Members in order to provide a more complete picture of SLWP communication and engagement efforts.
- 7.2 Garden waste collection service promotion - At the July 2022 meeting of the SLWP Joint Committee, details were provided of the spring garden waste collection service promotion campaign. The campaign included a direct mail to targeted properties and a social media advertising campaign.
- 7.3 The promotional campaign has now ended in Croydon, Merton and Sutton with the following results:
- Letters sent = 83,042
 - Sign-ups = 2,778
 - Conversion rate = 3.35%
 - Cost = £47,920
 - Income = £154,823
 - Return on investment = £3.23 for every £1 spent
- 7.4 Properties in Kingston were targeted in July and August, following the launch of the Council's new IT system that manages garden waste

subscriptions. The results from the Kingston campaign will be provided at the next Committee meeting.

7.5 Food waste minimisation and recycling – a major food waste minimisation and recycling participation campaign is underway. The campaign will be delivered in two phases over the autumn months:

7.6 Phase 1 (minimisation) September – a sticker containing food storage tips and signposting residents to the ‘Love Food Hate Waste’ website (see below) will be applied to the lids of the outdoor food waste caddies of 15,000 households. All of these properties have been targeted over the last two years as part of the highly successful recycling participation campaign. This minimisation campaign will encourage them to take another step up the waste hierarchy and start wasting less food in the first place.

The target is to achieve a reduction of half a tonne of food waste collected per week per collection round (measured by collection round tonnage data).



7.7 Phase 2 (recycling participation) October – 50,000 properties on collection rounds that produce relatively low food tonnages will be targeted with the following interventions:

- ‘No food waste’ sticker on the lid of the general waste bin
- Leaflet put through the door with information on how to recycle food waste and the environmental benefit of doing so
- A free roll of 12 food waste caddy lines

The target is to achieve an increase in participation of 10% (measured through participation monitoring).

- 7.8 Site tours - In August, Veolia hosted a tour of their Southwark Material Recycling Facility (MRF) for Sarah Jones MP (Member of Parliament for Croydon Central) and a group of Croydon residents with an interest in environmental issues.



8. Legal impacts and implications

- 8.1 None

9. Communications

- 9.1 This report has been drafted by the Partnership's Communications Advisor, who works closely with the four SLWP boroughs and the partnership's commercial partners to ensure communications and engagements activities support the themes agreed in the SLWP Communications Strategy 2020-2022.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to:
- Note the contents of this report and comment on any aspects of communications and engagement activities relating to the Phase A and Phase B contracts.

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