



## **SOUTH LONDON WASTE PARTNERSHIP**

**Report to:** South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee

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**Report of:** South London Waste Partnership Management Group

**Author(s):**

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**Chair of the Meeting:**

Councillor Mike Brunt, Chair of the South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee

**Report Title:**

**Communications and Engagement  
South London Waste Partnership - Phase A and Phase B contracts**

**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 June and August 2018.

**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. PLASTIC PLANET CAMPAIGN**

1.1 The 'Plastic Planet' public awareness campaign will use targeted paid-for social media advertising to:

- Highlight the fact that 79% of the plastic waste ever created is still in the environment – encouraging residents to reduce their use of single-use plastics and to recycle as much of their

unavoidable plastic waste as possible.

- Utilise a series of short (15-second), eye-catching videos created by WRAP, focusing on the effects that plastic waste has on wildlife (sea life in particular) and the environment.
- Be delivered via Facebook and Instagram platforms to residents who live in the four SLWP boroughs (16-34 year olds in particular).
- Be delivered over a 6-week period.
- Achieve (targets) 1.09 million impressions; 11,760 10-second views; and 1,000 click-throughs to supporting information on the SLWP website.
- Focus on high quality engagement – residents who watch the video for 10 seconds+ or who click on the link will be re-targetted 24 hours later with a second post inviting them to make a simple pledge to recycle more plastic – ‘Click share to care’. Target = 1,500 pledges.
- The total spend will be £7,500 (met from the SLWP Communications Budget). £5,450 of this will be advertising spend.

- 1.2 At the June 2018 meeting of the SLWP Joint Committee, Members of the Committee were updated on the Plastic Planet campaign and informed that it would be delivered over the summer months.
- 1.3 In July 2018, the National Audit Office (NAO) published a report in which it criticised the Environment Agency for not carrying out adequate checks to ensure that all plastic packaging sent overseas for recycling is actually being recycled. The NAO report focused on the ‘packaging obligation system’, a government-led packaging industry initiative which aims to ensure that more plastics are recycled. But it attracted widespread media coverage and led to understandable concerns amongst members of the public that the materials they diligently sort out for recycling every week are not being handled in a responsible way.
- 1.4 In light of the NAO report and resulting press coverage, the decision was taken that implementation of the Plastic Planet campaign should be delayed to allow the scope of the campaign to be widened and provide local residents in the SLWP region with additional reassurance that their plastic recycling is handled responsibly and that their recycling efforts are worthwhile. The supporting campaign information on the SLWP website will be expanded to include information on where recycling (and plastics in particular) are taken after they’ve been collected from the doorstep, who handles them and what they are turned into.

- 1.5 The Plastic Planet campaign is now due to launch in September 2018. The SLWP Communications Advisor will report back on the success of the campaign at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

## **2. PHASE A BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Phase A contracts encompass transport & residual waste management, HRRC services and marketing of recyclates.
- 2.2 From a communications and stakeholder engagement perspective, the elements of the Phase A contracts that are of most significance are:
- the management of the six Household Reuse, and Recycling Centres (HRRCs), and
  - the landfill operations at Beddington.

## **3. HOUSEHOLD REUSE AND RECYCLING CENTRES (HRRCs)**

- 3.1 This contract is operated by Veolia on behalf of the Partnership.
- 3.2 Veolia continues to conduct customer satisfaction surveys with users of the six HRRC sites. The findings of the latest round of surveys were reported at the last Joint Committee meeting.
- 3.3 Material information signs are being produced for the six HRRC sites. These signs will be in the shape of the recognised WRAP 'good to know hearts' and will provide site users with information on what their waste materials are recycled into.
- 3.4 The initial phase will focus on the following materials: household appliances, scrap metal, small electrical items and wood waste. The signs will be installed across the HRRC sites in the coming weeks.

## **4. BEDDINGTON LANDFILL OPERATIONS**

- 4.1 This contract is operated by Viridor on behalf of the Partnership.
- 4.2 The focus of communications and engagement activities has been two-fold:
- Educating local residents and key stakeholders about the landfill operations at Beddington – i.e. how it is providing vital waste disposal capacity for hundreds of thousands of local households and businesses and how the site is being managed in order to minimise any negative environmental impacts;
  - Providing information on how the 120-hectare Beddington Farmlands site (which incorporates the landfill) is being restored

into a rich patchwork of habitats for wildlife with public access.

- 4.3 Viridor held an Open Day at the Beddington site on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018, which was attended by 24 members of the community. This was the first open day this year and followed successful events in 2016 and 2017. The event was aimed at members of the community (visits for councillors and other stakeholders can be arranged on request).
- 4.4 Places at the Open Day were allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis with all but one available spaces taken (capacity = 25). Members of the Joint Committee felt the event could have been publicised more widely, and the SLWP Communications Advisor will work with Viridor and the borough communication teams to ensure there is greater awareness of future Open Day events.
- 4.5 The SLWP Communications Advisor was in attendance at the Beddington Community Liaison Group meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Members of the Group were provided with updates on the landfill restoration project and a presentation from Eneteq Service, the company installing the district heating network pipeline between the Beddington ERF and the New Mill Quarter development in Hackbridge, on behalf of the Sutton Decentralised Energy Network (SDEN). No significant issues or concerns were raised by community representatives at the meeting.

## **5. PHASE B BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 The Phase B contract (residual waste treatment) was awarded to Viridor in 2009. In order to fulfill the contract, Viridor are constructing a £205m state-of-the-art Energy Recovery Facility in Beddington that will become operational in autumn 2018. Household waste from the four Partner boroughs that has not been sorted by residents for recycling will be treated at the facility and turned into electricity.
- 5.2 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 construction 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. BEDDINGTON ERF COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The ERF is nearing completion and is currently in its commissioning phase – when each component and process is tested to ensure it is operating correctly and within the strict emissions limits.
- 6.2 With the ERF due to become operational in the autumn 2018, attention is now focused on how the local community and other stakeholders will be engaged with once commissioning is complete and the ERF is treating the Partnership’s residual waste.

The SLWP has been working closely with Viridor in recent months to develop the ERF visitor and community engagement offering. These discussions have been heavily influenced by the feedback received from Members at the workshop held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017, where Viridor’s initial outline proposals, along with their planning and contractual obligations, were considered.

- 6.3 Discussions with Viridor are ongoing, and some of the finer details are yet to be confirmed, but the following paragraphs provide an update on Viridor’s latest position in relation to visitor and wider community engagement post autumn 2018.

6.4 The Beddington ERF Education Centre

The Education Centre will be a purpose-built room located on the upper (1<sup>st</sup>) floor of the administration building. The room will be able to accommodate 25 visitors at any one time and will form the focal point of any visits to the site by external stakeholders and members of the public. Visits will need to be pre-arranged through Viridor’s Education and Community Benefits Officer, who has now been appointed and will be joining the Viridor team in September 2018.

The room will be furnished with chairs, tables and audio-visual equipment to deliver presentations. An explanatory video from inside the ERF will be available to help explain technical information or to provide visitors with a ‘virtual tour’ of the facility. A feed showing emissions monitoring data will also be available, along with supporting information on how emissions are controlled and independently monitored by the Environment Agency.

There will be professionally-designed and produced information panels to inform and educate visitors around:

- Waste management in the four SLWP boroughs
- Energy recovery technology
- Historic uses of the site, including landfill
- The nature conservation objectives for the site
- Restored wildlife habitats and the Wandle Valley Regional Park

The SLWP is liaising with Viridor on the production of these information boards.

The room will lead directly on to an external platform from where visitors will be able to view the restored landfill and wildlife habitats. A blackboard/noticeboard will feature updates from the Site Warden on recent significant sightings of wildlife at the site.

#### 6.5 Guided tours

12 tours of the facility will be organised each year for schools, community groups and individual local residents with an interest in activities on the site.

Groups and individuals will be able to register their interest in a guided tour of the facility via an online booking system on the Viridor website (see below), or by phoning the Education and Community Benefits Officer if they do not have computer access. Dates for forthcoming tours will be publicised by Viridor via their website, social media channels and a press release. Boroughs will be encouraged to share this information via their usual communication channels.

Tours of the facility will typically last 2 hours. Visitors will be welcomed into the Education Centre and will receive a safety induction along with an overview presentation of the ERF and the wider issues around waste management. All visitors will be issued with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Tours of the facility will follow a pre-defined tour route and will include viewing of the main stages of the waste treatment process. Around the facility will be a series of interpretation boards to help reinforce messaging and information throughout the visit.

The tours will be delivered by the Education and Community Benefits Officer.

Additional visits and tours of the site for other key stakeholders such as local councilors, Members of Parliament, GLA representatives and industry bodies will be encouraged. In addition to the Education and Community Benefits Officer, these visits will be supported by Viridor's corporate communication team.

#### 6.6 Virtual Visitor Centre

The Virtual Visitor Centre (VVC) will be a high quality website where the processes that take place at the Beddington ERF will be explained in an engaging and informative way. The VVC will be the first point of contact for members of the community interested in the facility and the Beddington site.

The website will feature professionally-produced videos of all the key stages of the waste treatment process, alongside supporting text and diagrams. Initially this video footage will be from other, similar, Viridor facilities. These will be replaced with footage from the Beddington ERF as soon as is practicably possible.

The VVC will include a prominent link to an external Viridor web page where emissions monitoring data will be published on a regular basis. This data will be presented alongside supporting text that allows members of the public without technical knowledge to understand what they are viewing.

The Viridor, SLWP and borough websites will all feature prominent links to the VVC. The SLWP is liaising with Viridor on the production of the VVC. The content of the VVC will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as and when necessary.

#### 6.7 Schools engagement

The Beddington ERF Education Centre will provide an excellent opportunity for local schools and other youth groups to visit the site and learn more about waste management, energy production and wildlife.

Viridor has an active schools engagement programme across the UK. Locally, the Beddington ERF Education and Community Benefits Officer will work to engage with local schools to promote energy recovery, energy consumption and carbon emissions awareness. Visits to the site by secondary schools will be actively encouraged. Support from relevant officers in the education teams of the four SLWP boroughs will help form and develop fruitful relationships between Viridor and local schools.

#### 6.8 Community Liaison Group and Community Newsletter

The Community Liaison Group has been meeting on a quarterly basis through the construction and commissioning phases of the ERF. Once operational, there is a contractual requirement for Viridor to continue to hold Community Liaison Group meetings on an annual basis. Viridor have indicated that initially, their intention is to continue to hold these meetings on a quarterly basis.

Viridor have published four Community Newsletters during the construction phase (July 2015, March 2016, February 2017 and November 2017). Viridor have agreed to publish a final construction newsletter once the ERF is operational. This will be distributed in the months after the facility is operational and will focus on explaining the ERF process, what members of the community may see around the site and information on the community benefits package. The cost associated with any future newsletters will need to be met by the SLWP.

## **7. IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### Legal

7.1 None

### Finance

7.2 The South London Waste Partnership's Communications Advisor post is funded through the core activities budget.

7.3 A £25,000 Communications Budget is available to support communications and engagement activities.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 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