

Somerset Waste Board meeting
27th September 2019
Report for information

Paper
Item No.

New Collection Contract Mobilisation Update
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Forward Plan Reference:	
Summary:	This report summarises progress in mobilising our new collection contractor (SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK) and hence delivery of Recycle More. It updates the board on what has happened since the last Board meeting in June 2019, and what will be happening next. It has a particular focus on our communications planning.
Recommendations:	<p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the progress made in mobilising a new collection contract. 2. Endorses the high-level approach to communications as outlined in the report
Reasons for recommendations:	<p>To ensure that progress with the procurement and mobilisation of our new collection contractor (SUEZ) is transparent.</p> <p>It will be crucial going forward that all Board members (and indeed the wider membership in each partner authority) are engaged as we mobilise the new collection contract and roll out Recycle More in phases across the county.</p>
Links to Priorities and Impact on Annual Business Plan:	Task 1.1 within the SWB Approved Business Plan 2019-24 concerns the transition to a new collection contractor and new service model.
Financial, Legal and	Revenue: In addition to delivering the significant environmental

<p>HR Implications:</p>	<p>benefits of Recycle More, a new collection contract will deliver significant savings to all partners - total forecast savings are over £2m once Recycle More is rolled out. This does not mean that year 1 costs will be lower by this amount, as SWP will incur roll-out costs before savings can be realised, and savings are not realised until Recycle More is fully rolled out in 2022.</p> <p>Capital: The capital requirements remain unchanged from our last report and are £24.6m, with £17.8 on vehicles and £6.8m on depot works. Consultation with partner s151 officers has confirmed that the business case for Local Authority borrowing is compelling – saving partners around £1.8m per annum in addition to the return on borrowing received by individual borrowing partners. S151 Officers have also confirmed a broadly equal split of borrowing between all partner authorities.</p> <p>Legal: The contract with SUEZ will be for a period of 10 years (from 28 March 2020 to 29 March 2030) with the option to extend for a further 10 years in increments to be agreed (i.e. potentially to 30 March 2040). SWP and SUEZ have signed a Letter of Intent to ensure that mobilisation progresses ahead of contract signature – and this has allowed orders for key parts of the new fleet of vehicles to be placed. There are still some outstanding legal issues to be finalised before contract signature can take place. The Letter of Intent has been extended to ensure the continued progress of the mobilisation is maintained whilst the outstanding legal issues are resolved. We are aiming to have our contract signed before the end of October.</p> <p>HR: Collection Contractor staff will TUPE transfer to the new contractor on 28 March 2020. An updated FAQ's is maintained at each collection depot to give staff an opportunity to ask questions and keep them informed of progress. In addition, a series of face to face and one to one meetings with staff are planned to take place at regular intervals during mobilisation. Training events will also be undertaken during this period to familiarise staff with new vehicles, IT, and a programme of upskilling of loaders to drivers identified pre-contract commencement.</p>
<p>Equalities Implications:</p>	<p>An Equalities Impact Assessment was attached to the 29 March Board report. This impact assessment has been updated at key milestones throughout the procurement project and will continue to be updated as we progress through to service commencement and Recycle More roll-out.</p>

<p>Risk Assessment:</p>	<p>The risks related to the mobilisation of a new collection contractor and Recycle More are maintained in SWP’s risk register and a specific project risk register. The procurement implications of potential Brexit scenarios have been considered and are reflected in SWP’s ‘no deal Brexit’ risk register.</p>
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1. Background

1.1. Recycle More will enable the public to recycle even more at the kerbside, adding in the following materials to the weekly collection:

- Plastic pots, tubs and trays (including black plastic)
- Food and beverage cartons (e.g. tetrapaks)
- Small electrical equipment (e.g. a kettle or toaster)
- Household batteries

This is in addition to what can already be recycled every week – food, paper, glass, cans, aerosols, plastic bottles, cardboard, foil, textiles and shoes. A 60litre weighted reusable sack will ensure residents have space for all their extra recycling.

It will maintain the kerbside sort system that is so crucial to the excellent environmental performance that SWP already achieves, with over 90% of our materials reprocessed in the UK each week. With so much more recycled each week, the frequency of residual waste will be reduced to every three weeks. This change is crucial to us being able to respond to public demand to recycle more, to nudge those that aren’t recycling fully at the moment, to support our aim to see rubbish treated as a resource rather than wasted, to tackle the climate emergency, and to support the national policy ambition to eliminate avoidable waste by 2050.

For communal properties (e.g. flats) additional materials that residents will be able to recycle each week will be cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic pots, tubs and trays. This is in addition to the paper, glass, cans and aerosols they can already recycle. Over time we will work in partnership with our new contractor to enable residents of communal properties to use the full range of kerbside services for recycling.

1.2. On 29 March 2019 in confidential session the Board decided upon SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK as the preferred bidder, informed by the feedback and support from the Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel. The public announcement of SUEZ as the preferred bidder was made on 13 May 2019. All current staff were informed of these changes at a special briefing with SWP, Kier and members of SUEZ’s senior leadership team early in the morning, which took place at each of

the five depot locations in Somerset. A press release attracted good local and national coverage, and a member briefing was sent to every member of our partner authorities. The new collection contract will commence on 28 March 2020, with roll-out undertaken in phases between June 2020 and Spring 2022.

2. Progress to date

2.1. SWP, SUEZ and Kier continue to work well together to progress the significant amount of work involved in terminating the current contract and mobilising the SUEZ contract. This includes joint work planning communications (including a major workstream around staff engagement), implementing the new in-cab hardware and software and associated systems, procuring fleet and other plant (such as new baling and sorting equipment to deal with extra materials, including plastic pots, tubs and trays), health and safety, HR and training, materials outlets, depot works (planning, permitting, construction tenders) and route optimisation. Steve Holgate, Director of Municipal Services for SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK, will attend the 27th September Board meeting to give an overview of SUEZ and their approach to Somerset.

2.2. The Managing Director supported by other members of the SWP management team have visited all partner authorities to update members on SWP's role and the changes coming up with Recycle More. Workshops have been held for new members of the Board and Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel to brief them fully on Recycle More. SWP has a comprehensive programme of attendance at Parish Cluster meetings and other forums to ensure that key stakeholders are aware of the changes coming up. SWP also hosted a visit to the Avonmouth Resource Recovery Centre for members of the Board and Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel, as our move away from landfill from Spring 2020 is an important part of our overall transformation and improving environmental outcomes whilst reducing costs.

2.3. Vehicles

Orders have now been placed for all parts of the vehicle fleet (144 vehicles) other than supervisor vans – this ensures that prices are fixed and build slots booked. Vehicles will be delivered between the end of November 2019 and February 2020. Whilst we looked carefully at electric vehicles and alternative fuels, the reality is that the technology of electric trucks is not at a sufficiently advanced point to enable it to be viable for a large rural county like Somerset. We are still working with SUEZ to explore the potential for some parts of the fleet to be electric (e.g. supervisor's vans – which SUEZ are trialling in another contract), but the limited range of most vans on the market may mean that this is not viable. There will be a need to procure some replacement refuse vehicles in 2024/25 and SUEZ and SWP are committed to procuring the most environmentally friendly vehicles possible, and we expect that the technology will have matured by then. Continuing to reduce the service's environmental

impact will be a core part of the Annual Service Improvement Plan that SUEZ have to provide.

The primary environmental benefit of our new fleet of vehicles is through the 27,000 tonnes of additional recycling they will carry. We expect our new fleet to contribute to reducing carbon emissions through:

- Euro 6 high-efficiency engines delivering a 30% CO2 equivalent saving compared to our current fleet
- Driver training, monitoring and changed maintenance arrangements potentially delivering 8-24% CO2 equivalent saving compared to our current fleet.
- All refuse and garden waste will be fitted with electric bin lifts (rather than running directly off the diesel engine)
- The frontline fleet of vehicles will reduce from 170 currently to 144 – due to requiring around one-third fewer refuse vehicles, more efficient routing of vehicles, and because our new recycling vehicles will be higher capacity on broadly the same footprint.
- Exploring the viability of electric supervisor's vans (if these are viable for our large and rural county this may have additional upfront costs).

2.4. Depot development and phasing of Recycle More rollout

SWP are finalising lease arrangements for a new area of land adjacent to the existing depot at Evercreech Junction. Suez intend to start construction of new facilities on this site in late 2019, and are on track to receive planning permission in November 2019. Significant works will be required at all depots before we are able to roll out the new Recycle More service – ensuring that the depots can handle the volume of additional materials and have the right sorting and baling equipment to deliver the high environmental standards that our new contract requires. It is also important that welfare facilities for staff are improved. As Evercreech will be the first depot ready to roll out Recycle More, Mendip will be the first phase of the Recycle More roll-out in June 2020. The final roll-out programme beyond Mendip will be confirmed to the board in December, once the construction works programme is finalised.

3. Approach to communications

- 3.1.** Mobilisation work has already begun to inform staff; procure new equipment; develop the necessary IT solutions and prepare for advance communications activity. This work will continue apace up to the formal handover from Kier to SUEZ at the end of March 2020, at which point some minor service adjustments (particularly for garden waste subscribers) will occur – which will be communicated in advance. The new *Recycle More* collection service transition period will then begin in June 2020. This will be rolled out across Somerset in a

phased approach over approximately two years, owing to the scale of the change. A comprehensive communications strategy will be undertaken to prepare residents for this change prior to their area adopting the new service, while taking care not to confuse residents who will receive the new service in later phases. The communications approach adopted for Phase One will be replicated for subsequent phases, subject to feedback, analysis and adjustments.

3.2. All communications activity will be undertaken in consultation and collaboration with SUEZ and the local authorities it serves. Communications collateral will be subject to a review and sign-off process with SWP, SUEZ and representatives from each local authority, though regular email and face-to-face contact between the SWP communications team and representative members of the district councils' communications teams. SWP will keep Somerset Waste Board, Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel and the Senior Management Group fully updated of progress and developments in the communications and engagement planning via a monthly email briefing.

3.3. The key objectives for communications activity to support the mobilisation of this contract, by broad primary audience group. Underpinning this is a more detailed break-down of the audience to ensure that key messaging relevant to audience sub-groups is appropriately planned – for example garden waste service subscribers, residents in future Recycle More phases (where our messages will differ from those in the upcoming phase), residents living in flats and communal properties, residents with special waste collection needs (e.g. clinical and assisted collections, and those concerned about nappy/Adult Hygiene Products). Broad primary audience groups are and our objectives for each are:

Residents

- Residents to be aware of the Recycle More service; to understand the benefits and rationale; and to feel excited about the changes prior to mobilisation.
- Residents to understand when they will receive their new service (i.e. which phase of the transition they are part of), or changes to their service (i.e. garden waste) and to be prepared for this change – knowing what to do and when to do it.
- Residents to be able to access comprehensive, bespoke, information about their services via a range of channels – both digital and conventional (i.e. printed literature).

Stakeholders (democratic and third party) and media

- Stakeholders to understand the phasing and detail of the service changes to be able to help residents with the transition – particularly at a district authority level
- Stakeholders to feel able to champion and support the new services, and to understand the benefits, rationale and scale of the changes
- Members to feel confident that the residents they represent know what to expect and how to play their part in making the service a success

Contract employees

- Employees to feel engaged and excited about working for SUEZ
- Employees to feel supported through this change
- Employees to understand, in detail, the change of services and to be able to act as ambassadors for the new service

3.4. Key channels of communication will include:

- **Digital/online:** District and County Council websites, SWP's website, social media, the new My Waste Services mobile app
- **Direct communication to residents:** Letters, engaging leaflets, email updates (e.g. Sorted), piggy-backing on other planned communications (e.g. Slim my Waste, Feed my Face leaflets to all residents in January/February 2020), new recycling bag and stickers on existing recycling boxes, possibly Council Tax notice letters
- **Face to face engagement:** Council meeting (town, parish, district and county level), MP briefings, roadshows/school assemblies and other community engagement, depot drop in-sessions for staff pre-contract, briefings with District contact centres.
- **Media:** press releases, media briefings and engagement opportunities, Your Somerset, advertising,
- **Other:** Vehicle branding/liveries, Recycling Centre signage, through elected members and other advocates for the service

3.5. The broad phasing of communications activity is set out in Appendix A. This covers the period up to the first phases of Recycle More roll-out (Mendip). Following this we will reflect on the learning points from Phase one and adjust our approach as necessary. The campaign for each phase will begin three months prior to the change – with direct communications occurring 3 months, 2 months, 1 month and two weeks out from the first new collection. SWP has a budget of £480k for communications, though many costs associated with this campaign will also be borne by SUEZ through the contract (e.g. the cost of branding vehicles and distributing marketing material).

3.6. SW:EEP fund and engagement

SWP currently fund a Schools Against Waste programme (using social value contributions from Viridor) and undertaken community engagement through attendance at community events, parish council meetings, other local group meetings, support for food waste champions and compost champions. We also have a small team of officers who are dedicated to resolving operational issues in different parts of the County and supporting customers. However, we are area that to deliver our vision and successfully support the roll-out of recycle More we need to enhance our community engagement offer.

To this end we have established the 'Somerset Waste: Enhanced Environmental Performance' (SW:EEP) fund which will be jointly funded by SWP and our future

collection contractor through a top-slice of 2% of the recycling income due to partners and 2% due to the contractor. The amount of income this generates will depend upon our recycling revenue, but is estimated to be around £140,000 each year. Additionally SWP have ear-marked £340,000 to support engagement as part of the roll-out of Recycle More, including direct engagement (door-knocking) with residents who are putting waste out on their old collection day. The SW:EEP fund will enable us to expand our Schools Against Waste programme (working with Carymoor Environment Trust), and we are developing a detailed calendar of community events and parish council meetings covering the roll-out period, identifying which events SUEZ should attend in addition to SWP, and targeting our efforts. This aims to not only more effectively support the roll-out of Recycle More, but enable us to drive behaviour change on an ongoing basis. Whilst SW:EEP funds will not be available until we start to receive recycling revenue, we are identifying where up-front funding will be required in order to ensure that we are well prepared for phase one of the Recycle More roll-out programme.

3.7. Nappies and Adult Hygiene Products (AHP)

With the introduction of Recycle More and three-weekly refuse collections, there are likely to be some concerns from residents with children in nappies, and those who use sanitary protection or incontinence pads. Using birth rate data from the Somerset Intelligence Network (SINE), we estimate that there are around 15,000 children under 3 years old in Somerset along with older children and adults who use continence products and sanitary products. The average child in disposable nappies produces around 1 tonne of nappy waste until they are toilet trained. This means that each year we spend an estimated £500,000 on nappy disposal to landfill.

There are at least 15 councils who currently offer 3-weekly refuse collections, and two who offer 4-weekly. In all areas, nappies and AHP are accepted in with the refuse and just 5 offer a separate nappy collection – with extremely low take-up. Most councils offer extra capacity on request. Powys have provided their 3-weekly service since November 2015 and it is reported that their residents are coping well with the arrangements, with just a small number raising issues about nappies or AHP collection. The Chartered Institute of Waste Management undertook a review of all authorities with 3 or 4 weekly refuse collections (at the request of SWP) and used this to inform guidance they have developed. SWP's proposed approach follows this guidance and the experience of other authorities who have successfully implemented lower frequency refuse collection.

Our guidance for managing nappy and AHP waste under Recycle More is proposed to be:

- i) Households will be advised to double wrap any waste and place it into the refuse bin and to contact Customer Services Teams if they have any difficulties.

- ii) Where families find they are struggling to fit their non-recyclable waste in the refuse bin, we can offer additional capacity in the form of stickers to allow an extra sack per child in nappies. Approximately 10% of households with children in nappies currently make use of this additional capacity.
- iii) If a family continues to struggle, they can contact SWP for additional support. The nature of this support will be bespoke to reflect the individual circumstances, and we are confident that our experienced staff and the tools they have available will enable us to support all residents to cope with the change.

Our communications ahead of Recycle More rollout will encourage members of the public who are concerned to contact us, so that we can work with them to assuage their concerns and help them find a solution. This approach of tackling issues before they arise was successfully used in East Devon.

We have also reviewed the additional support that other areas provide to promote reusable nappies and met with local cloth nappy library groups. Our conclusion is that supporting these groups to provide nappy loan kits, advice and ongoing support, as well as advice on wipes and sanitary protection on our behalf would result in more long-term moves away from disposables than simply offering a discount on purchases – which evidence suggests is not an effective way of driving change. We propose setting aside a budget of £10k from the Recycle More Communications budget to allow us to progress this support, and to continue to explore options (e.g. working with Health Visitors and other potential partners – e.g. Wessex Water are keen to work with us on a joint campaign about disposable wipes).

4. Background papers

- 4.1.** Previous papers: All previous board papers on Recycle More are available on the SWP website.

Appendix A: overview of Communications phasing

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Phase	Activity/Objective	Channels	Approximate date
Mobilisation (Sept – end March)	Engage and inform new employees prior to transfer	Monthly update posters & regular “drop-in” sessions with SUEZ managers	Sept 19 – April 20
	Prepare <i>Recycle More</i> communications collateral and household data for Phase One	Leaflets, bag tags, vehicle liveries, letters etc	Sept 19 – April 20
	Media engagement (announcement of key milestones – ie direct communication publication for phase one, vehicle wrapping, phasing announcement etc)	Media briefings, video content, press releases	Dec 19 – April 2020
	Stakeholder briefings – district and parish level	Meeting attendance, briefing documents	Sept 19 – onwards
	Prepare and issue service commencement change collateral (Garden waste)	Letters, press release, online information (post code search) and app	Sept 19 – April 20 (Garden waste changes communicated from Jan 20)
	Public announcement of service phasing will be present in SWP food waste campaign	Leaflets and other media – Food Waste campaign collateral	Jan - Feb 20
	Briefings to call centres, district authority comms teams, and relevant phase one stakeholders	Briefing documents via email and face to face meetings	March – Jun 20
SUEZ contract commencement-pre-phase one start April – June 20	Begin roll-out of communications collateral for phase one <i>Recycle More</i> – this is a 3-month lead-in process starting with an initial “teaser campaign” to awareness-build, to household-specific service information (ie dates and days) to the delivery of new collection bags with household-	Social media, media engagement, online info via council and SWP websites, display advertising, roadshow	April – May 20

	specific information		
	Access to bespoke information via digital channels to go live	Online (district councils & SWP), mobile app	April 20
	<i>Recycle More</i> awareness building – communicating the detail of the new service to households in Phase One	Leaflet to households, online information, social media, roadshow	May 20
	<i>Recycle More</i> service info, providing household-specific information about change dates and collection days	Letter direct to individual households	May-June 20
	Recycle More – final reminder and call to action via stickers for existing boxes and delivery of new bags	Bag tag, online information, app	May -June 20
Recycle More Phase one start June – August 20	Direct communications and face to face support for householders in need of further interventions	Letters/postcards, door step engagement	June – August 20 (and further if required)
	Promotion of successes and thanking residents for their efforts	Social media, media engagement, online info via council and SWP websites,	June 20 onwards