



Report to: South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) Joint Committee
Date: 7th December 2023
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Summary

This report provides the Joint Committee with an update on the performance of the transfer, treatment, recycling and disposal services that are procured and managed by the South London Waste Partnership on behalf of the four Partner Boroughs; the London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton. The services covered in this report are as follows:

- I. Food and green waste treatment services
- II. Household Reuse and Recycling Centre (HRRC) services, and
- III. Residual waste treatment services.

This report provides performance data for the quarter one and quarter two periods 2023/24: 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023.

Recommendations

The Joint Committee is asked to;

- Note and comment on the progress with the HRRC extension in points 3.13 to 3.15, and
- Comment on any aspects of the performance of the Partnership's six transfer, treatment, recycling and disposal contracts

Background Documents

Contract Performance Monitoring Reports have been presented to the SLWP Joint Committee since 22nd July 2010. The most recent report was presented at the meeting in June 2023 by the Partnership Director, Andrea Keys.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. **Food and green** – The SLWP manages four green and food waste contracts on behalf of the Partner Boroughs. These contracts have been in operation since 1st September 2022 and will continue until no later than the 30th March 2030. The food and green services are delivered via the following four contracts:
 - I. Bio Collectors Ltd – receipt and treatment of food waste
 - II. Olleco – collection and treatment of food waste
 - III. Countrystyle Recycling – collection and treatment of green waste
 - IV. SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK (SUEZ) – receipt, bulking, transportation and treatment of green and food waste
- 1.2. **Household Reuse and Recycling Centre (HRRC) services** - the HRRC service is operated by Veolia (ES) (UK) Ltd. The contract commenced on the 1st October 2015 and includes; the management of the six HRRC sites in the SLWP region, the operation of the waste transfer station at Villiers Road, and the marketing of the recyclates collected at each of the HRRC sites. The contract has an expiry date of the 31st March 2025 and includes the option to extend these services up to the 15th September 2030.
- 1.3. **Residual waste treatment contract** - Viridor South London Limited ('Viridor SL') was awarded a contract for the treatment and disposal of residual waste in November 2012. To deliver the contract, Viridor designed, built and now operates an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at the Beddington Lane site in Sutton. Following the construction and commissioning period, the ERF became fully operational in March 2019. The Contract has an initial term of 25 years providing waste treatment services until the 3rd March 2044, with the potential to extend the Contract until a Long Stop Date of 5th November 2047.

2. PERFORMANCE DETAIL – FOOD AND GREEN WASTE

- 2.1. **Food and green waste receipt** - Under the SUEZ food and green waste contracts, the London Boroughs of Croydon, Merton and Sutton deliver kerbside-collected green waste and food waste into the SUEZ-owned and operated waste transfer station located in Merton where it is bulked into larger vehicles for haulage to a number of treatment facilities outside of the SLWP area.
- 2.2. There is also the option for kerbside collection vehicles to deliver food waste directly to an Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility located in the London Borough of Merton up to an agreed limit of 5,000 tonnes per year through the Bio Collectors contract.
- 2.3. The Royal Borough of Kingston collection vehicles deliver green and food waste into the Kingston Council-owned Villiers Road waste transfer station which is operated by Veolia under the HRRC Contract.

- 2.4. **Food and green waste treatment** - Food waste collected by the boroughs is currently treated at three separate Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facilities. Up to 5,000 tonnes of food waste is treated via a direct delivery contract with Bio Collectors Ltd at their Anaerobic Digestion (AD) site in Merton, as detailed above. The food waste bulked at the SUEZ waste transfer station is hauled to and treated at the Severn Trent AD facility located in Surrey, and the food waste bulked at the Villiers Road waste transfer station is hauled to the Olleco AD facility that is located in Aylesbury.
- 2.5. Green waste delivered to the SUEZ Mitcham and the Villiers Road transfer station is hauled to and treated at either Laverstoke Park Farm, located at Overton in Basingstoke, or the Veolia-operated green waste treatment facility located in Basildon, Essex.
- 2.6. **Food and Green waste volumes** – During the reporting period 1st April 2023 until the 30th September 2023 the boroughs collected 12,101 tonnes of food waste and 21,005 tonnes of green waste.
- 2.7. There continues to be a reduction in food waste tonnes across all four boroughs, with a 5% reduction on the combined partnership tonnes collected when compared to the same period last year. We have seen a 25% growth in green waste this year compared with the previous quarter one period. Spring and summer in 2022 was exceptionally hot with very little rain and so produced unusually low green waste tonnes.
- 2.8. The following table presents a summary of the total green and food waste collected at both the kerbside and the HRRC sites in the reporting period and the tonnes collected in the same period during the previous year.

Material Treated	Tonnes Treated In Q1 & Q2 of 22/23	Tonnes Treated In Q1 & Q2 of 23/24
Kerbside Green waste	12,750	15,511
HRRC Green waste	4,019	5,494
Kerbside Food Waste	12,685	12,101

3. **Performance detail - Household Reuse and Recycling Centres (HRRCs)**

- 3.1. **HRRC Contract Performance Review:** The scope of the HRRC services can be summarised in three parts: the general management of the sites (including staffing, plant, equipment and site layouts); the transportation of materials; and the recycling, treatment and/or disposal of waste collected at the HRRC sites (excluding green and residual waste).
- 3.2. The contract specification focuses on three key performance categories; site user experience, health and safety, and material recycling.
- 3.3. **Site user experience** - Veolia started customer satisfaction surveys in July 2016 in order to monitor site user experience. Customer satisfaction questionnaires are undertaken at the six HRRC sites for two weeks in turn for each round. Surveys have continued since that date, with only a brief suspension and some

precautionary measures adopted during the COVID pandemic. The Contract continues to achieve a high customer satisfaction rate. A summary dashboard is available to download from the SLWP website.

- 3.4. **Recycling Performance** – Each month the SLWP looks at materials recycled, recycling markets and the impact of the wider SLWP recycling services in order to better understand HRRC recycling rates and assess the Contractor’s performance. During the quarter two reporting period, the combined performance at the SLWP HRRC sites was 66%. Table 2a in Appendix A details the recycling performance by site and by month (please note the year end performance figure is based on the raw tonnage data, not an average of the recycling performance per month).
- 3.5. **Recycling Performance analysis** – There has been an increase in the majority of materials collected at the HRRC sites in this reporting period when compared to last year, with the exception of card waste. The following table provides some examples of tonnage changes by material type compared to the Q2 period last year.

Table 3.5 – Tonnes Collected April to September 2023/24

HRRC Material	Tonnes Collected Up to Q2 2023	Variance against Up to Q2 2022	Variance In Tonnes
Green Waste	5,470	36%	1,451.3
Residual	6,582	5%	304.5
Wood	5,397	5%	262.3
Soil	1,320	5%	59.6
WEEE	1,089	10%	100.0
Ferrous - Scrap	1,082	4%	38.5
Mattresses	545	104%	277.6
Glass - Mixed	53	16%	7.5
Paper - Mixed	335	360%	262.5
Cardboard	453	-35%	-243.0
Total	27,054	13%	3,153.4

- 3.6. There has been a notable increase in the amount of mattresses brought to site this year with a 104% increase when compared to the same quarter two position last year. From a tonnage perspective, the greatest increase is from green waste, which, as discussed above, is largely due to the exceptionally low tonnages produced in 2022/23. There has also been a notable 35% drop in card waste being brought to the site by residents.
- 3.7. The table below shows how each material contributes to the HRRC recycling rate and highlights the top five key materials which are the largest contributors to the HRRC recycling rates.

3.8. Table 3.8 – Tonnes Recycled or Reused in Quarter 1 2023/24

HRRC Material	Tonnes Collected for Recycling	Contribution to the Recycling Rate
Green	5,470	35%
Wood	5,397	34%
Soil	1,320	8%
WEEE	1,089	7%
Ferrous scrap metal	1,082	7%
Books	88	0.56%
Glass	53	0.34%
Paper	335	2.12%
Card	453	2.86%
Bric-a-brac	166	1.05%
Textiles	103	0.65%
OTHER RECYCLED	285	1.80%
Total Recycled	15,842	100%

3.9. Table 2b in Appendix A uses data from the last three years in order to compare performance year to date with the same period from the previous two years. The yellow bars show the recycling performance to date for this reporting period. The blue and green bars show recycling performance for the same period in the previous two years.

3.10. Projects and Activities at the HRRCs

3.11. The following provides a summary of some of the additional projects that are on-going at the HRRC sites. The projects aim to either; maximize on reuse and recycling; improve the accessibility of the sites; deter the misuse of the sites by traders; and/or to ensure that the HRRCs are reserved for use by residents disposing of household waste only.

3.11.1. **Soil separation** - In the reporting period 1,320 tonnes of soil were separated by staff and customers for reuse.

3.11.2. **Reuse shops** – Since 2015, all six HRRC sites have been involved in the identification and separation of reusable items that are brought to the HRRC sites by residents. Collected items are checked and safety tested and suitable items are transferred to one of two reuse shops for resale. The first reuse shop opened in 2015 and is located at the HRRC site in Sutton and a second shop is located at the Fishers Farm HRRC site in Croydon. In the reporting period 16,381 items were separated by staff and customers for reuse.

3.11.3. **Bag splitting** – A bag splitting exercise at the Merton and Sutton HRRC sites is on-going. **Aim** - The aim of the project is to build an understanding of how much recycling is left in black bags of residual waste brought to the site. The data gathered develops our understanding of which are the common materials not being segregated for recycling.

This information will enable the boroughs to use data to drive communications and service improvements. To note – this manual segregation project will separate modest kilograms of recycle by weight and so will not in itself impact the recycling rate.

- 3.11.4. **Rubble Charging** – There is currently a rubble charging scheme in place at Sutton’s Kimpton Park Way site. The charge covers the cost of recycling this material. **Aim** - The aim of this project is to deter potential site abuse from trade and commercial businesses using the site as a free-of-charge disposal route. Since its introduction in July 2021 rubble tonnages in Sutton have fallen by 68%, and the avoided cost is estimated to be just over £110k (up to Q2 2023-24). **Update** - A DEFRA announcement in June of this year signaled that changes may need to be made to the SLWP rubble charging system to allow a specified amount of free rubble disposal in certain circumstances. The SLWP rubble charging scheme will be reviewed as and when further clarity around the changes are provided.
- 3.11.5. **Assisted tipping** - The site parking arrangements at all six sites now include a larger bay to accommodate assisted tipping so that anyone needing help from site staff or a carer has sufficient room. These spaces can also be pre-booked through the online booking forms.
- 3.11.6. **Booking Forms** – Booking forms have been in place at the Merton, Sutton and Kingston HRRC sites since the 13th May 2020. The forms even-out the use of the service, which has in turn reduced queuing and waiting times for site users. The reduction in queuing has significantly reduced the impact of the service on the surrounding highways and residential areas in close proximity to the HRRC sites. Spaces booked and visits completed are recorded and utilisation of spaces from April - September 2023 are detailed below. **Aim** – the purpose of recording, reporting, and monitoring site usage data is to assess current site capacity, usage trends, and how it meets resident demand.
- Kingston: 57% utilisation of spaces for car bookings and Vans 72%
Merton: 76% utilisation of spaces for car bookings and Vans 73%
Sutton: 43% utilisation of spaces for car bookings and Vans 74%
- 3.11.7. **Fair Use** - Fair use policies have been introduced at the Kingston and Sutton HRRCs, with Kingston residents permitted 20 visits per year and Sutton residents permitted 24 visits per year. **Aim** - The aim of this policy is to ensure that the HRRC sites are reserved for household waste from residents only and to deter improper disposal of commercial waste.
- 3.11.8. **Site usage questionnaire** –This project aims to help us develop an understanding as to why residents use the HRRC sites rather than their kerbside collection service, a local charity shop, a ‘free-cycle’ website, or other outlet for their recyclates and or waste. This project is scheduled to start in spring next year and will initially target the most frequent users

at each site. **Aim** - The output of the project will help to identify if there are any key materials that are universal to most HRRC site visits.

3.12. **Social Value** - The following is a summary of some of the projects the Contractor is operating that look to support local community groups as well as reduce waste through local repair and reuse schemes.

3.12.1. **Toy giveaway schemes** – All six HRRC sites collect used toys which are safety tested and then offered free of charge to residents across the partnership. To date the contractor has operated a successful Christmas event and a summer club giveaway scheme which residents can access directly, as well as supporting a number of local charities including the Rotary Club and the Golden Hearted Charity. These schemes have donated over 200 toys and games to residents.

3.12.2. **Upcycle, repair and reuse** – the contractor has been working with local businesses, charities and social enterprises in order to provide good quality items in need of some repair and / or upcycling. To date the contractor has donated items such as bikes, toys, furniture and electrical items.

3.13. **HRRC Extension** - An officer appraisal and an independent peer review have considered the options around the continued delivery of the HRRC Services contract. The result of that piece of work is an officer recommendation to continue the services with the incumbent via an extension with variation up to the contract 'long-stop' date of 15th September 2030. The variation will see the waste transfer station operation extend to the Garth Road Waste transfer station in Merton.

3.14. As well as offering value for money and a competitive risk and reward share mechanism, some additional benefits of extending the current HRRC services include the following options:

- The opportunity for any one or more borough to accept kerbside collected bulky waste at their respective HRRC site with the aim of increasing recycling,
- The option to offer a trade waste receipt service at the HRRC site/s that will support small local traders with competitively priced local recycling points, and
- The potential to share sites in the future between two, three or all four Partner Boroughs in order to enable residents to use their closest site, with the aim of increasing satisfaction and reducing journey times.

3.15. The recommendation to extend the HRRC services contract is progressing through the governance processes in each of the four partner boroughs and is anticipated to be concluded by spring 2024.

4. **Residual Waste treatment Contract (Viridor South London Limited)**

4.1. Viridor South London has been delivering the services under the Residual Waste Treatment contract since 4th March 2019.

- 4.2. In the reporting period, 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023, the SLWP boroughs delivered 101,509 tonnes of residual waste to the Viridor residual waste treatment contract. This is an increase of just over 3% when compared with the same reporting period last year. Please see Appendix A table 1a for further details on residual waste tonnes.
- 4.3. **Landfill Diversion** - In the reporting period, 0.41% of the residual waste collected by SLWP partner boroughs was sent to landfill, largely due to a planned maintenance shutdown of the Beddington ERF which took place during April and May 2023. Please see Appendix A table 1b for further diversion data.
- 4.4. **Emissions** – The emissions from the Beddington ERF are sampled every 10 seconds, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The results are fed back to the ERF Control Room, so any potential issues are known about immediately and appropriate action can be taken. The results from the continuous emissions monitoring systems (CEMS) are reported to the Environment Agency (EA - the regulator for the facility) and uploaded by Viridor to a publicly-accessible website (www.beddingtonerf.info). The EA sets limits (based on 10-minute, 30-minute, and daily averages) for different types of emissions. The Beddington ERF has been designed to operate at the very highest international standards and, during normal operating conditions, emissions are well below the limits set by the EA.
- 4.5. On the 21st and 22nd October 2023, the equipment recording VOC data on Line 2 was found to be in calibration mode and not recording correctly through the continuous emissions monitoring system. A Schedule 5 Part A was submitted by Viridor to the Environment Agency (EA). In the Schedule 5 notice Viridor highlighted that ‘VOC data tracks CO Data emissions’. According to the information submitted to the EA, a review of the CO emissions data shows that it is highly unlikely that any exceedances of VOC emissions limits occurred while the monitoring system was not recording correctly. The response from the EA will consider the impact of the fault.
- 4.6. **Power outage** - A UK Power Networks fault at 11pm on Monday 16th October 2023 caused the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) to come offline. Viridor (operator of the facility) immediately stopped feeding waste into the treatment process and started work to shut the plant down safely. A fault with the ERF’s turbine and back-up generator meant that it took longer than it should to shut the plant down. Some waste that was already part-way through the treatment process continued to smolder in the furnace, resulting in a plume being visible from the two flue stacks (chimneys) on Tuesday 17th October.
- 4.7. The SLWP has written to Viridor formally requesting full and detailed updates on the report being prepared by Viridor for submission to the EA in relation to the incident and details of the immediate action that has been undertaken to mitigate the risk of a repeat incident.
- 4.8. UK Power Networks repaired the faulty cable on Wednesday evening (18th October) and power was restored to the ERF. Waste processing resumed on line 1 on Thursday and line 2 on Friday. While the facility was offline, waste was

safely stored in the facility's bunker, ensuring local waste collection services were not impacted.

- 4.9. Members of the Beddington Community Liaison Group (CLG) were kept informed by Viridor throughout and a meeting was held at the site on 19th October where the incident was discussed.
- 4.10. A further failure of the UKPN power supply occurred on 3rd November. This time the ERF's turbine and back-up generators performed correctly and Viridor were able to shut the plant down quickly and remove part-treated waste from the furnace grate. The facility operated in 'by-pass mode' (safely treating waste but not exporting electricity) while UKPN investigated and fixed the faulty cable. As above, members of the Beddington Community Liaison Group were kept informed.
- 4.11. Viridor and the Environment Agency (who are the environmental regulators of the facility) are conducting investigations into the circumstances surrounding the incident. The four SLWP boroughs will work closely with Viridor and the EA to ensure lessons are learned and mitigation measures are put in place to minimise the chances of a similar event occurring in the future.
- 4.12. **Gas canister detection project** - A trial into the use of artificial intelligence in the bunker is on-going. Cameras were installed in the tipping hall in April 2023. These are positioned over each bay and are designed to detect gas bottles as they are tipped into the bunker, this will alert the plant operator of the presence of gas bottles in the waste. The AI is linked to an ANPR system which will allow Viridor to determine the source of these bottles and target the customers / rounds in order to improve communications and checks.
- 4.13. **Transparency of Emissions data** - Viridor publish detailed emissions reports on the Beddington ERF Virtual Visitor Centre on a regular basis (<https://www.beddingtonerf.info/>). A link to the 'emissions data' can be found in the top right corner of the site's home page. An archive of reports dating back to 2019 is available for the public to view here. This is done to ensure local residents have access to detailed information about the performance of the plant. A detailed 'Guidance Note' is provided to help residents interpret the emissions reports accurately. We are not aware of any other energy from waste facility in the country that provides this level of openness and transparency.
- 4.14. It is important to note that the facility must operate in accordance with its Environmental Permit which is issued and regulated by the Environment Agency (EA). The site cannot operate without its permit from the EA and if the site is not compliant with its permit, the EA has the power to serve both enforcement and suspension notices. The SLWP will continue to work closely with Viridor and the EA to ensure the Beddington ERF is operating safely.
- 4.15. **Environmental Permit variation** – Viridor submitted an application to the Environment Agency (EA) seeking to increase the amount of waste that can be processed at the Beddington ERF. The application was duly made by the EA on

the 10th November 2022 and a six week public consultation was launched. During the consultation period, local residents and stakeholders were able to review the technical information submitted by Viridor in support of the application (including newly modelled Air Quality Assessment and Human Health Risk Assessment), and share feedback with the EA directly. More than 500 responses to the consultation were received by the EA.

4.16. On the 21st July the EA launched a second round of consultation on the Beddington ERF permit variation which ran for 8 weeks until the 15th September 2023. Within this second round of consultation the EA have indicated that they are 'minded to issue the varied and consolidated Permit to the Applicant'. The EA published their draft decision in the form of a draft permit, together with an explanatory document.

4.17. Next Steps - The EA will review the feedback received in relation to this second round consultation and a final decision will be published.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. It is recommended that the Joint Waste Committee:

- a) Note and comment on the progress with the HRRC extension in points 3.13 to 3.15, and
- b) comment on any aspects of the performance of the Partnership's six transfer, treatment, recycling and disposal contracts

6. IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1. LEGAL -There are no legal considerations arising directly out of the recommendation in this report.

6.2. FINANCE - There are no financial considerations arising directly out of the recommendation in this report.

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A provides data on the performance of the six jointly procured treatment and disposal contracts for the reporting period 1st April 2023 to the 30th September 2023.