

Notes from the meeting of Community Liaison Group on Tuesday, 9 August 2022, at 6pm at the Manvers site.

Attendance

Non-members

Apologies

Written updates from Renewi, BDR, the CELO and JWSMedia had been circulated previously. Brief summaries and further updates were given verbally at the meeting and CLG members had the opportunity to ask questions.

1. Welcome and introductions. The acting Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the new Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling at Barnsley Council.

2. Notes from the last meeting on 10 May 2022. These were agreed as a true record.

3. Issues arising. There were none.

4. Renewi BDR Ltd update

The Renewi BDR Contract Director summarised and updated his written report. Covid cases remained moderately high through May and into June peaking at six positive infections. This number has now fallen to two active cases at the time of writing. Operations were unaffected during peak absences periods.

Contract waste inputs have remained lower than forecast in the quarter with a total of 52,328 tonnes received. This is 1070 tonnes lower than the previous quarter. The overall annual forecast has been reduced from 217,000 tonnes to 214,000 tonnes. Total waste handled in the quarter, including non-contract waste was 55,547 tonnes.

Recycling dipped slightly in the quarter to 15.38%. The performance was affected by lower fines recovery and limitation placed on recovered plastic off take. Moisture loss has continued to perform well with the 3-month average at 30.64%. Moisture loss is assisted by weather conditions during the warmer months.

The silencer section of the de-dusting stack was installed in July following damage incurred in January. The de-dusting system is now fully functional.

The second of our new apprentices started work at BDR in July. Both apprentices will commence their studies at Sheffield college in September.

Further to an appraisal of shutdown frequency at the Ferrybridge EFW facilities, the previously reported October shutdown at FM1 has been cancelled. The outage at FM2 planned for May 2023 remains on plan.

A CLG member asked about the reduction in black bin waste collected and whether the decline in tonnage affected the BDR waste contract. It was explained the plant was operating well above minimum levels and that contingency plans were in place to address any shortfalls should they occur.

A CLG member reported comments on Social Media regarding flies in the area but said it was not certain they were coming from the Manvers site. The member asked if a door at the plant had recently failed but was informed this was not the case.

CLG members raised concerns about unpleasant smells in the area which were felt to be coming from the plant. There was a long discussion on the issue. It was explained the change to woodchip bio-filters had led to a reduction in complaints about odours and the plant now received very few. The Environment Agency had been on site and was satisfied with how it was run.

CLG members accepted there was little the plant could do about odours given the nature of the operation. They felt the plant had been sited in the wrong location and that it was the responsibility of the Local Authorities to address the issue.

It was agreed to look at the odour complaints raised at the meeting.

A CLG member raised concerns about waste falling out of inadequately sheeted waggons delivering to the plant. It was agreed to raise this with the company concerned and to monitor for litter on approach roads to the site.

Action: Quarterly figures on waste received and amount recycled to be reported at each CLG meeting.

Action: Look into the odour issues raised at the meeting.

Action: Liaise with companies regarding adequate sheeting of waggons.

5. The Councils' BDR Team

The BDR Manager summarised and updated his written report. The BDR Councils continue to successfully deliver waste services and collect waste streams as scheduled. The exception was during the unprecedented heatwave experienced a few weeks ago. To ensure collection crews' safety against heat exhaustion during the height of the heat experienced, some later in the day collections had to be postponed to the following days. All collections were completed within the week they were due.

There still remains significant pressure on maintaining collections across the three Councils due to a national reduced availability of HGV drivers. Plans remain in place to look to maintain staffing levels but there are long waiting times for new drivers to take their HGV driving tests. In addition, there is a heightened risk (as with all services and workplaces) of possible industrial action over rates of pay, especially with inflation being over 10% and the increased cost of living. Unions are in negotiations with employees at this current time.

The councils continue to see a lowering of household waste tonnages collected and it is anticipated that the trend will reduce back down to pre-Covid levels. This could be an effect of more residents returning to the workplace and less home working, but it is also believed the current cost of living crisis is seeing less waste produced as we all tighten our belts, make do and mend, and look to ensure we only buy what we need and throw away less unused food or fast fashion and cut back on luxuries.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) continue delivering a full normal service, and from April through to the end of September are on longer summer opening hours. The Councils are currently reviewing what HWRC provisions can be delivered in anticipation of when the current contract to run the service is renewed in October 2023. A public consultation was launched and widely publicised and runs across June and July. It is anticipated that by consultation close we will have received circa 4,000 responses. We have also undertaken Soft Market Testing with service providers, to help understand the current market. Analysis of both Consultations and Soft Market Testing, as well as input from each council's Political Leadership and Senior Management Team will help shape the future service offer. It is anticipated that Invites to Tender will be issued September 2022, evaluation of Tenders will occur December to February, Contract Award due in March or April, and mobilisation of the new contract April to October (go-live of the new contract).

The Environment Bill entered into UK law in November 2021 and secondary legislation from the Act is anticipated to be laid in Autumn/Winter 2022. It will be this secondary legislation that will drive policy and legislation changes which will have a major impact on Councils and how they have to deliver their waste collection and disposal services. After four major consultations around the Resource and Waste Strategy, the Government has still only published one set of findings and recommendations. The BDR Councils have lobbied the Government directly, highlighting that the delay in publishing responses to the consultation and any new or changed legislation requirements is seriously impacting the Councils' ability to plan, budget and maintain a continued high standard of service delivery in the future. It is hoped the remaining reports will be published in Summer/Autumn 2022.

The Government has launched several further consultations to shape resource management in the future. The BDR Team and Councils have, and will, respond accordingly to ensure the appropriate responses from the Councils and that the service delivery for residents is made clear. More consultations are expected as reports from previous consultations are published in the future.

Members of the CLG reiterated their wish that in awarding the new HWRC contract there should be consistency across the Councils so that BDR residents could use HWRCs in all three areas.

BMBC's representative said the Councils were in discussion on this issue and he was keen to get a cross-border agreement in place.

6. Community Education Liaison Officer

The CELO summarised and updated her report. The team recently ran the annual home composting campaign to encourage residents to consider composting their garden and food waste. Regular social media posts were made on the Waste Less South Yorkshire accounts, blogs on the website and a press release about the campaign. There was also a giveaway to win a HotBin composter. This year the number of prizes was increased from three to seven (2 each for Barnsley, Doncaster, and Rotherham and 1 for Sheffield). Almost 600 entries were received to the competition. Because of the success of this campaign, and, at the request of the Councils who suspend garden waste collections over the winter months, there will be another composting push and competition later in the year

(October/November) and will continuously post seasonal composting content throughout the year. Home Composting continues to be one of the most popular topics in terms of blogs and engagement through social channels.

Further to this, reusable items for our community to test have been given away. So far, beeswax wraps (an alternative to cling film) and LastTissues (a reusable pack of facial tissues) have been given away. The campaign received honest feedback from the community on these items, which has been posted on social media pages. The next two items to be tested are Ocean Saver refillable cleaning products and Cheeky Wipes reusable baby wipes. Regular content has been posted on our social media pages about reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. This can be followed on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

As food waste is one of the biggest contributors to climate change and with the rising costs of food, we are currently in the process of piloting a major food waste reduction campaign in selected areas in Barnsley, Doncaster, and Rotherham. WRAP have agreed to help with one of the interventions and surveys. As part of this campaign food waste sampling has been undertaken in four areas followed by a survey of people's fruit and vegetable storage habits and three of these will be receiving a food storage intervention by post in August. The interventions are designed to get people to store fruit and vegetables correctly so that this lasts longer. We will then repeat the sampling and surveys at 3.5 month and 7-month intervals to see the effects of the interventions and the natural effect of the cost-of-living crisis over this time. We will share the results of this once the project has completed at the end of March 2023. This is the first phase of a planned three-year food waste prevention campaign.

Our public site tours are back and are already proving popular. Since April we have had 22 members of the public join our site tours and our September tours are nearly fully booked. For more information about the site tours, including dates and how to book on, please visit <https://www.bdronline.co.uk/get-involved/take-tour-bdr-waste-treatment-facility> .

We have also taken part in some education sessions including a careers 'speed dating' event at Wath Academy to talk to the year 8 students about working in waste and are due to have a visit from the Rotherham Youth Cabinet at the beginning of August to have a bespoke session about the facility, climate change and the circular economy. If you want more information about the school workshops, please contact Rebecca.

7. Communications update

Contact detail information for CLG members has been reviewed as requested at the May CLG meeting. There was notification of a change to the Waste and Recycling Portfolio holder at Barnsley Council from Cllr Lamb to Cllr James Higginbottom.

Press releases on the winners of the CSR Fund, Mexborough Food Bank's use of its CSR funding, the safe disposal of disposable BBQs and the winners of the Hotbin composter competition have been issued to local, regional, and broadcast media. They have been posted on the BDR website and circulated to the three local authorities. There was a focus on Mexborough Foodbank's use of the CSR funding which will help to promote greater awareness around food labelling and best before and sell by dates to help reduce food

waste – something the waste campaign group Wrap are keen to promote. We have continued to liaise closely with local authority comms and waste teams.

8. Any other business

A CLG member criticised the amount of community funding offered annually through the CSR Fund and said the £6,000 figure was insufficient and should be increased. The member said some funding applicants had complained to him they had not been contacted after submitting their application.

In response it was pointed out the commitment to donate to charity was part of the BDR/Renewi contract – which was currently making a loss, but that any contribution to local charities should be welcomed. In addition to the CSR funding, staff at BDR/Renewi also volunteered their time to work with local community organisations.

A check will be made on the responses given to all 31 of the CSR Fund applicants. It was pointed out that many of the applications did not meet the funding criteria but that unsuccessful applications had been notified by email.

Action – check on the responses given to the unsuccessful CSR Fund applicants.

The acting Chair said the CLG Chair was normally a group member and asked if any member of the CLG wished to take on the role. No CLG member expressed an interest. The acting Chair said the BDR Managers were happy to Chair the meetings but asked for the issue to be discussed again at the next CLG meeting.

Action – Appointment of CLG Chair to be discussed at the next CLG meeting.

9. Date, time and venue for next meeting this will be at the Visitor Centre at Manvers on Tuesday 22 November 2022 at 6pm.