



**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting via Zoom Thursday 11/2/2021**

MINUTES

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Gruff Edwards	Chair DEF
Steve Wilson	Vice Chair DEF
Duncan Jones	HWP Partnership Development Manager
Mike Ridley	DEF and Friends of Halsey Field
Chris Ridley	DEF and Friends of Halsey Field
Sherief Hassan	Hemel Resident
Cllr Brian Patterson	Tring Town Council
Paul de Hoest	Berkhamsted Town Council
Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Cllr William Wyatt-Lowe	HCC
Sheron Wilkie	Tring Town Council
Mary Arnott-Gee	DEF
Katie Tyssen	DEF

Meeting started at 7:30pm

1. Apologies etc.

Cllr Alan Anderson Environmental Services Portfolio Holder DBC
Cllr Ron Tindall DBC and HCC
Cllr Rob Beauchamp DBC

Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters arising

Updates on Halsey Field, LA3 Master Plan and Hemel Garden Communities/New Local had been sent out with the agenda E-mail.

GE said that he hoped to send the draft DEF response to the New Local Plan to interested parties the following day, allowing a fortnight for further amendments and additions before it was submitted by E-mail and the consultation portal by the closing date of Feb. 28th.

2. Presentation of Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP) Annual Report.

GE welcomed and introduced **DJ** who had previously presented to the Forum in February 2018, saying that besides being HWP's Development Manager Duncan held posts in several waste-related specialist groups including chairmanship of the Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group which won Keep Britain Tidy's

Best Partnership award and a President's Award from the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT).

DJ shared a screen in order to talk through the 48 page HWP Annual Report, a link to which was sent out with the Agenda, using a fifteen-screen version that he had tailored from it for DEF. The presentation version will be put on the DEF Website alongside these minutes.

He highlighted the game-changing importance of the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy of December 2018 which included three key elements:

- A Deposit Return Scheme which will apply to beverage containers - implementation by 2023.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (financial disincentives to producing non-recyclables including packaging and requirements for better recycling symbols on products) – implementation by 2023
- Consistency, meaning that Local Authorities will be required to collect a core set of materials. By 2023 all Waste Collection Authorities will be required to provide separate weekly food waste collections

Despite the ambitious target dates for policies, he estimated that it would take a decade for the effects to filter down to all levels of the waste management system.

He pointed to the downward trend over the past ten years in Hertfordshire's per household Total Waste and Residual Waste by weight (decreasing by roughly 10% and 20% respectively) while pointing out that amongst other factors the rate of waste production is related to the state of the economy. When we are better off we buy more which results in more waste.

Most of Hertfordshire's residual (not recycled) waste goes to Energy Recovery Facilities (ERFs) outside the County or to landfill sites. However, contracts with the ERF sites will expire soon, and the sites are reaching the ends of their lives. Hertfordshire should have its own site, which would also save on transport costs and emissions. HCC approval for sites at New Barnfield and then Broxbourne were overturned by the Government.

Most organic waste is composted at sites within the County.

86 percent of recycling Hertfordshire's waste is done at sites in the UK. HCC has no control over where in the world the remainder goes after it has been collected by UK-based contractors.

During last September and October the HWP undertook an extensive exercise in Waste Compositional Analysis. This produced figures separately for the four categories "Kerbside" (Wheelie bins) "Flats" (Ditto and/or skips) Household Waste Recycling Centres and Litter, and showed weight percentages according to type of material and local authority area. One bar chart compared "capture rates" (i.e. the percentage of the recyclable material that was put into the recycling bins) for individual materials, comparing these with a similar analysis undertaken in 2015. Of these glass did best (92%) and metals (foil etc.) worst (70% although this had improved markedly from 46% in 2015). 73% of kerbside recycling and 27% of litter was packaging waste. A "league table" showing overall recycling rates for the different districts showed Dacorum in fourth position with 52.8% for the year 2019/20 within a range from 64.1% (Three Rivers) down to 39.5% (Stevenage).

3. Questions and Comments

SW took the chair for this, opening the discussion by remarking that there was a danger that there would be nowhere to send our wastes once current contracts expire.

MR said that even for people with an education in science there were problems in determining which items could go in the recycling bins. An example was plastic bottles. Should the caps go in general waste?

DJ said that implementation of the Resources and Waste Strategy would address this problem.

CR suggested dialogue between bodies such as HWP and producers.

DJ said that producers would be directed by the Environment Bill currently making its way through Parliament. It would specify what materials must be collectable by Waste Authorities and would set out a rationalisation of the recycling labelling system to match. Everything would be recyclable either via kerbside collection or in stores, and producers would be liable for a levy on the production of single-use materials.

ShW asked where the "Out of County" ERF sites were.

DJ said they were at Ardley in Oxfordshire, Greatmoor in Bucks. and Edmonton in Greater London.

ShW asked what was meant by the category "Other Household Waste" in the analysis of fly-tipping.

DJ said this was mainly black bags filled with unidentified materials

BP drew attention to the problem of fly-tipping within the Chilterns AONB, some of it on private property where it was up to the landowner to clear up at their own expense.

DJ said that up to the COVID era fly tipping had fallen to its lowest level in ten years, but that it had for some reason increased since the onset of COVID.

GE suggested that it was because the Household Waste Recycling Centres had been closed.

DJ said that the data did not support this theory. He thought it more likely that it was to do with a proliferation of illegal bogus private waste disposal services.

GS asked about Anaerobic Digesters that provided one method of progressing organic waste. He had seen one near Royston.

DJ said that most of the County's organic waste (kerbside food and garden waste) went to organic waste treatment sites in South Mimms and Hoddesdon. The treatment process could include more conventional composting as well as anaerobic digestion. *According to the displayed "Organic Waste Arrangements" map, garden waste from the Household Waste Recycling Centres goes to Enfield.*

PdeH pointed out that according to the displayed charts the improvements achieved in recycling rates appeared to have stalled during the last four years. Did that mean that all the "low-hanging fruit" had now been picked?

DJ acknowledged PdeH's analogy, but said that improvements were still achievable, for instance with food waste and by improvements in product design to facilitate recyclability.

MAG highlighted the amount of packaging that comes with deliveries from Amazon. Other distributors make more use of paper bags.

DJ said that the forthcoming Producer Responsibility rules would mean Amazon being charged for this and therefore being steered further in the direction of generating less and more recyclable packaging waste. Tesco for instance were already in dialogue with their suppliers over the matter.

WW-L asked how one could reduce the carbon footprint of waste collection and transport.

DJ said that if other waste-reduction policies were successful less household waste would be generated and the frequency of collections could be reduced, even down to monthly. As a society we needed to move to consuming less, although he realised that politically this was difficult. A changeover to electric collection vehicles would also help.

SW said that the Government target to recycle 65% of municipal waste by 2035 was unambitious, given that most districts in Hertfordshire were already approaching this. Why was there such a range of achieved percentages (39% to 64%) between these districts?

DJ said that the variation corresponded to that in the character, housing stock, and population type etc. of different districts. For instance he thought that Tower Hamlets would currently find achieving even 25% a challenge.

SH asked whether there were proposals to fine individuals for not recycling correctly. This had worked well in Germany.

DJ said that he did not think this would be effective in the UK where attitudes towards rules were different. There used to be a prosecutable offence of contaminating a waste stream, known as a Section 46 prosecution, but this was removed five years ago. He also thought that routine charging for all household waste would be politically difficult. He again stressed the responsibility of those in the supply chain, in particular regarding the phenomenon of "planned obsolescence" which has been known about for decades and which should be countered by the establishment of a "Right to Mend".

GE asked about the relationship between the HWP Report and the Waste Local Plan which HCC are currently consulting on. (*Details sent out with the agenda for the Nov. 17th meeting.*) Was it that the first summarised what had been or was being achieved and the second looked more to the future?

DJ said yes, and also that the Waste Local Plan had more emphasis on land use and planning implications. As far as planning waste management for the future was concerned, the COVID pandemic had "wrecked" the models used. For instance a large proportion of what used to be commercial waste had become domestic waste, as people were cooking at home rather than going out for meals, and more home deliveries often meant more or different types of packaging. In some cases COVID had served to accelerate changes that would have occurred in time anyway.

GE pointed out the opposition to ERFs from Herts Without Waste and others because it involved the incineration of largely plastic wastes that could have been recycled.

DJ said that he would like to think of a world where all but inert wastes (which cannot be incinerated) were recycled, but that this was a long way off, and there were some categories, e.g. sanitary waste, that realistically could never be recycled.

SW spoke of the frustration experienced by non-domestic waste-generating establishments such as cricket clubs in that they could not find waste contractors who would deal with recyclables separately.

DJ said that separate collection would become obligatory when the current Environment Bill was enacted.

Any Other Business None