

**Title:** Aligning Communications and Engagement  
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**Date:** 20 September 2018



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 11 July 2018 the Surrey Waste Partnership (SWP) members group agreed to the principles of a report setting out the future governance arrangements for partnership working in waste. Under the proposals, a new joint committee would be established to reduce duplication and ensure greater integration and co-ordination of waste services across Surrey. The report set out the joint functions which would be delivered by the joint committee, with all other functions to be retained by the individual authorities. The proposed terms of reference of the joint committee were outlined and the members were advised that it would operate as a commissioning body for joint work.
- 1.2 Members were given a brief overview of the proposed staffing arrangements, noting that partner authorities had previously indicated a preference of joint functions to be undertaken by a single team. It was therefore intended that the functions previously carried out by employees seconded to Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) from Surrey County Council (SCC) and staff who worked directly for SWP would be undertaken by a single team at JWS.
- 1.3 The functions to be delivered include joint communications, so this paper reviews current branding, digital media presence and governance arrangements and proposes how they could be aligned for efficient delivery by a single team in the future.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Since April 2015 the SWP has employed two full time communications staff who are hosted within the SCC central communications service and managed by an SCC communications manager. These three staff members, supported by members of the SCC waste development team (now part of JWS), are currently responsible for delivering the communications work programme which is agreed annually by the SWP member group.
- 2.2 This team also managed the communications activity for the joint contract during the procurement stage and it was agreed that the communications for the contract mobilisation period would be delivered by adding additional capacity to the team (0.8 FTE). This would ensure maximum alignment and benefit from the work being undertaken by the SWP communications team.

## 3. Current arrangements

### 3.1 Branding

- 3.1.1 There are currently three brands that are used in addition to those of the individual partner authorities – SWP, JWS and Recycle for Surrey (RfS), the local version of the WRAP recycling mark.



3.1.2 The current branding agreement for SWP joint communications is as follows:

- SWP is used for internal and industry communications.
- RfS is used on all resident facing communications alongside the brand of the authority funding the work. For countywide campaigns this is SCC, for local collection communications this is the district or borough council/JWS.
- RfS is used on work wholly funded by SWP alongside the SWP strapline 'Your councils working together'.

Note: WRAP recently announced a change to its local recycling mark so it was agreed by SWP members in July to change RfS to the new version, Surrey Recycles, as and when assets and materials need to be updated.

3.1.3 For joint contract mobilisation communications it was agreed to use the local partner authority brand alongside the JWS brand for the first communication advising residents of the contract change. Then the JWS brand alongside RfS for future communications.

## **3.2 Websites**

3.2.1 In line with the three brands currently in use there are also three websites:

- SWP – hosts the joint strategy and information about SWP projects and partners.
- JWS – primary site for residents in the joint contract areas with information and reporting tools.
- RfS – resident facing SWP site, used for joint campaigns and contains extensive information about recycling, waste reduction and fly-tipping.

## **3.3 Social media**

3.3.1 There is also a range of social media accounts in use for partnership communications and engagement activity:

- SWP Twitter – updates and profile raising with the waste industry.
- JWS Twitter – mobilisation comms and recycling information for residents.
- RfS Twitter – recycling information for residents with a particular interest in the topic.
- Surrey Matters Twitter, Facebook and Instagram – as the SWP comms team is currently hosted and managed within the SCC communications service these SCC owned channels are the primary channels used for joint campaign messaging and information for residents including both organic and promoted (paid) posts.

## **3.4 Governance**

3.4.1 For SWP joint communications the governance arrangements were agreed by the members group in October 2015. This involves the direction being set by the member and officer groups; involvement from the Waste Operations and Recycling Group (WORG) in developing campaigns and materials; and review and input of campaign plans and creatives from one representative each from the officers group and the Surrey Communications Group.

3.4.2 For the joint contract mobilisation a communications protocol was developed and agreed by the Contract Partnering Board (CPB). This involves how the relevant

people within the authorities input into the direction and messaging as well as handling of proactive media relations and reactive media enquiries.

## **4. Future Proposals**

### **4.1 Branding**

4.1.1 With the new governance arrangements for partnership working in waste due to come into effect from 1 April 2019 there is an opportunity to simplify the current branding. As the intention is for a single team at JWS to be commissioned to carry out joint work on behalf of the whole partnership, the new branding arrangement could work as follows:

- From 1 April 2019 replace SWP and JWS with a new single brand name - potentially an evolution of the two current brands.
- Choose a name that reflects a wider environmental remit than waste, in line with the current JWS vision.
- Use this new single brand on any waste communications and materials which currently use SWP, JWS or SCC branding, for all audiences.
- Use Surrey Recycles alongside this new brand where the topic being communicated is recycling.
- Authorities that are not part of the joint entity continue to use their own branding for any waste and recycling communications they produce, alongside Surrey Recycles.

#### Benefits

4.1.2 Potential benefits to this new branding approach include:

- It would signal a new era in joint working in waste in Surrey and demonstrate a combining of the two current partnerships.
- The focus to date has been on the contract mobilisation. We have not been proactive in trying to building the JWS brand, so don't believe it is widely recognised by residents yet.
- There is currently some confusion in the relationship between JWS and Amey. A change of branding would be an opportunity to bring greater clarity to the relative roles and responsibilities of the two organisations.
- We could launch the new brand with a strong narrative for residents, staff, stakeholders, Government and industry about the new governance arrangements and the successful evolution of waste partnership working in Surrey.
- The change can be achieved without great expense, e.g.:
  - The branding design could be an update of the existing JWS brand rather than creating something new.
  - Printed items can just be updated as they run out.
  - Vehicle livery can be patched rather than replaced.

### **4.2 Websites**

4.2.1 A significant amount of resource is involved in maintaining the three sites, so alongside the simplification of branding it proposed to rationalise the web presence. This could be achieved by combining the three existing websites into one website.

4.2.2 There would be some cost involved in combining the websites, but this would be a one off investment that would result in cost and time savings in the future.

### **4.3 Social media**

- 4.3.1 The proposal for social media is to combine the existing SWP, JWS and RfS Twitter accounts into a single account under the new brand name and create new Facebook and Instagram accounts under the new brand name.
- 4.3.2 These would then become the primary channels used by the team delivering joint waste communications work. The SCC communications team would share waste communications content on its Surrey Matters channels in the same way that the district and borough council communications teams do currently.

### **4.4 Governance**

- 4.4.1 It is proposed that a new single communications and engagement protocol is developed to take effect alongside the new governance arrangements for partnership working in waste. This would incorporate all of the aspects included in the current agreements and additionally cover websites, social media and brand guidelines. It would be developed in consultation with representatives from communications and engagement teams in partner authorities and customer service representatives where appropriate.
- 4.4.2 Alongside this the communications protocol between JWS and Amey would also be reviewed and updated where appropriate.

## **5. Potential considerations**

- 5.1 Whilst there are significant benefits to the proposals there are a few points that the committee may also want to consider:
- Have members in the partner authorities and residents now got used to Joint Waste Solutions? Would it confuse them to change it?
  - The agreed vision covers a wider environmental remit than waste, but is April 2019 too soon for the branding to reflect this?
  - Whilst it would be kept to the minimum, there would be a financial cost to implementing the proposals.

## **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the committee considers the proposals and agrees a way forward, with a view to taking them to next round of SWP officer and member meetings for wider discussion.
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