

Communications and Engagement Plan 2 October 2019



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1. Background

The Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) team is responsible for waste and recycling communication and engagement activity across the joint contract area. For the contract mobilisation period limited extra resource was added to the existing Surrey Waste Partnership (SWP) comms team and work predominantly focused on communicating the service change and dealing with issues resulting from the roll out.

Following the combining and restructure of staff working for JWS and SWP there is now a JWS Communications and Engagement (C&E) Team responsible for work across both the wider partnership – now known as the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP) - and the joint contract area. Whilst there are still some issues with contract performance, the team now has the resource to undertake proactive as well as reactive activity.

To help determine what and how this should be delivered a series of individual meetings took place between JWS and each authority's Contract Partnering Board (CPB) member and communications manager, followed by a joint communications meeting.

This paper is designed to update members on the communications and engagement approach and plan that was agreed and is being undertaken in the current financial year. It also outlines the proposed approach for developing the 2020-21 plan.

2. Communications and Engagement Plan 2019-20

The communications and engagement plan for 2019-20 is included as annex 1. This provides a single page overview and timeline for all activities being undertaken on behalf of the joint contract authorities. This is broken down into a number of activity areas.

Service delivery

Communications and engagement activity is essential to support the day-to-day management and delivery of the service. This includes providing daily service updates to residents via the JWS website and Twitter account, which can be shared by each local council if there are significant service issues to make people aware of.

It also includes dealing with media enquiries and responding to customer service queries via Twitter, as well as sharing proactive messaging about recycling and waste reduction via this channel.

Communications activity is also undertaken to advise residents of any changes to the service, the impact of bank holidays or adverse weather. In addition, this area of work includes the production of a range of materials such as notification tags, bin hangers and parking notices.

Waste reduction and recycling

The approach to waste reduction and recycling communications and engagement in the joint contract area is to maximise value from the SEP activity that is undertaken countywide and build on this work.

The enclosed plan therefore includes the SEP activity which benefits the joint contract authorities and indicates where that activity will be further amplified in their areas. This includes campaign messages being shared by each authorities' own communications teams and through their own channels. Plus, additional local activity to upweight the campaigns locally and increase their impact. This will typically include direct communications to residents' homes and/or comms targeted by postcode through online channels such as social media, email marketing and web advertising.

This area of activity also includes projects to help clear up confusion about what can and can't be recycled and by doing so reduce contamination of recycling bins. A key initiative is the SEP funded service guides and calendars which will be distributed to every home in the joint contract area in November. To coincide with this there will be a campaign in the joint contract area to draw attention to the guides, educate residents about key items that are currently being put into the wrong bin and encourage them to use the online recycling search tool and app.

Another key recycling initiative for this year is the development of data driven targeted intervention trials. These are being funded by SEP and informed by research that was commissioned to look at what authorities across the country are doing successfully.

Fly-tipping

The final part of the plan captures the communications work which is being undertaken as part of the SEP fly-tipping action plan. The campaign aims to tackle prevention of fly-tipping by educating residents about their responsibilities for any waste generated by work undertaken on their homes. It also highlights the consequence of fly-tipping to potential offenders.

3. Communications and Engagement Plan 2020-21

It is proposed that a similar approach to the above is taken to developing the 2020-21 communications and engagement plan with work split between activity to support the delivery of the joint contract and projects to reduce waste, increase recycling and reduce fly-tipping. We would again seek to maximise value from the communications and engagement activity which is included in the SEP funded 2020-21 work programme and layer additional activity onto that to increase impact in the joint contract area.

The SEP work programme will be developed following a member workshop at the SEP members group in November. It is proposed that the Joint Waste Collection Services Committee meeting which immediately follows this takes a similar approach and includes an opportunity for members to feed in any additional thoughts to the communications and engagement plan for the joint contract authorities.

4. Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

1. Note the update on the current communications and engagement plan.
2. Agree to the approach for developing the 2020-21 plan.