



Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Contract

6-months update.

To:

Overview and scrutiny Committee 2nd December.

Report by: Rebecca Weymouth-Wood

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Wards affected: All

Director Approval: Director James Elms and Head of Service Bode Esan confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Executive Councillor for decision.

REPORT AUTHORS MUST CONSIDER THE EQUALITIES IMPACT OF THE DECISION. REPORT AUTHORS TO ENSURE REPORT FOLLOWS THE COUNCIL'S ACCESSIBILITY RULES.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 1. Note and accept the update given by the briefing.
2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service began the contract for sorting of recycling with Re-Gen in March 2025. This briefing note provides an update to contract performance and observations from the officer visit on 22nd September 2025. This report does not require a decision to be made and is intended to bring a factual update on contract progress.

3.	Alternative options considered
3.1	<p><i>List here alternative options considered and rejected and reasons for rejection.</i></p> <p>Options</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To not present an update to councillors. <p>This was rejected due to the need to bring clarity and consistency of information regarding the contract. Members also requested this update to be done.</p>
4.	Background and key issues
4.1	<p>Following discussion at a previous committee in January 2025, regarding the budget implications for the new MRF contract, councillors requested an update later in the year on how the contract was performing.</p> <p>A full briefing is contained in Appendix A.</p> <p>A summary is included below.</p> <p>In March this year the waste service began a new contract with ReGEN for the sorting of recycling at a Materials Recycling Facility or MRF in Newry. This paper brings an update on how the contract has performed over the first 6 months and a summary of the observation from the visit to the facility.</p> <p>Both the collection of the recycling from the Waterbeach transfer station and the processing of recycling at the MRF is taking place as per expectations of the contract.</p> <p>Points to note relevant to contract performance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly reports from the contractor showing the amounts collected and composition information are being provided on time for us to meet our national data reporting deadlines. • Material is being sorted and recovered to a high standard, and the plant continues to extract and send for sale 96% of the material it sorts as required under the contract. • The commodity prices being reached over the last 6 months are largely above the typical values of the market indices which is testament to the high standard of sorting achieved and quality of the products.

- Recycling is being sent to UK and European destinations for recycling.
- Operations continue to be compliant with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency requirements.
- There have been no health and safety or welfare related issues including any RIDDOR reportable incidents. (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.)
- We now have the ability to recycle additional items, these being cardboard Pringles TM tubes (with inner foil lining) and toothpaste tubes.
- Re-Gen have reported they are pleased with the quality of the materials we are presenting to them. Our contamination rates (9-11%) represents the amount of incorrect items resident place into the bins. Our percentages put us in the best performing range of authorities nationally.

The site visit to Newry allowed officers to see how well the plant was being run and maintained plus the level of investment made by ReGen to maintain the quality of the sorting process which leads to high quality material at the end.

The report also confirms that officers visited another location in Northern Ireland called Warren Point. The operations of ReGen at Warren Point harbour are completely unrelated to our MRF contract and none of our waste is stored on this site. We wanted to visit due to concerns raised by residents' community groups in Northern Ireland about how the waste was stored and the odour from the site. Officers were satisfied with what they saw on site, how ReGen is handling the concerns, and the Environment Agency in Northern Ireland has confirmed that operations are compliant.

Finally, it remains Re-Gen's intention to build another MRF on the mainland, but we have no further information to share on this point currently. An alteration of location of facility would trigger formal contract change procedures and an Officer and Member approvals process.

5.	Corporate plan
5.1	Ensuring our recycling is processed at a well-run facility meets the following aims: Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030

6.	Consultation, engagement and communication
6.1	This briefing has been discussed by GCSWS Steering Group comprising of both Executive Councillors Rosy Moore and Natalie Warren Green (SCDC) and senior officers, Bode Esan Head of GCSWS and James Elms City Services Director are informed also.
7.	Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact
7.1	The intended outcome of this report is to ensure Councillors feel fully informed on the operation of the contract and have confidence that performance is as per contract expectations.
8.	Implications
8.1	Relevant risks
	There is no risk with the noting of this briefing. It is intended that it will help councillors address any queries relating to how the recycling is processed.
	Financial Implications
8.2	The briefing confirms that ReGen are getting good prices from the sale of our recycling and under the contact 100% of that income is passed to us to offset our gate fee.
	Legal Implications
8.3	None
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
8.4	The contract ensure we offer a comprehensive recycling service to all our residents.
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
8.5	The Climate change rating is medium positive. There is a positive impact on energy use (all be it 3 rd party) as the contractor uses renewable energy in the facility and also a high

	positive impact on reduction of waste and recovery of more materials for recycling; this is offset by some transport impact, leading to medium positive rating over all.
	Procurement Implications
8.6	<i>None</i>
	Community Safety Implications
8.7	<i>none.</i>
	<i>[Insert Any Other Relevant Implications]</i>
8.8	N/A
9.	Background documents Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
9.1	N/A
10.	Appendices
10.1	Appendix A -Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Contract 6-months update. October 2025
	To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact, Rebecca Weymouth-Wood Waste Policy Manager Rebecca.weymouthwood@scambs.gov.uk 07968 343096

