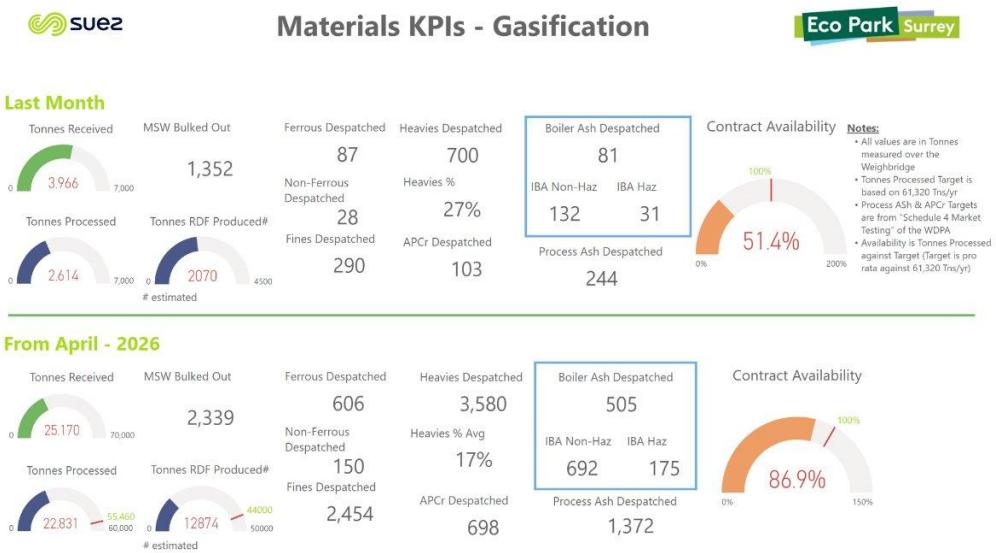
Meeting record

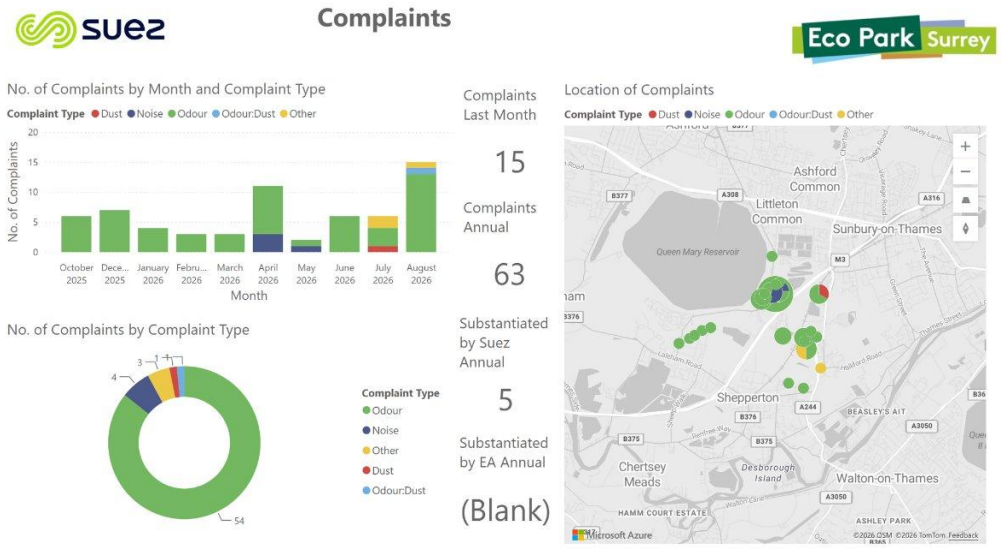
Subject	Eco Park Community Liaison Group
Date	Monday 19 October 2026
Location	Eco Park, 3rd floor
Recorder	Eleanor Cottrill

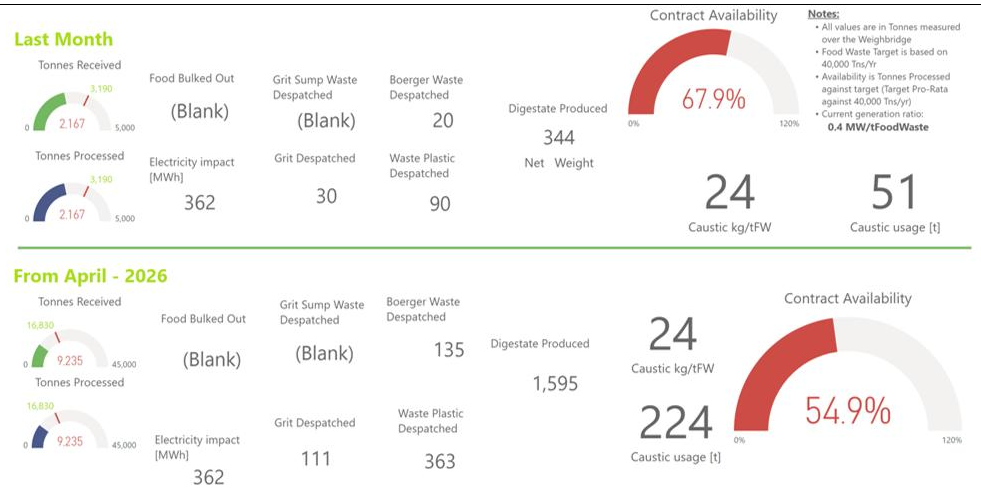
Present

Name	Initials	Organisation	Title / Role
Ken Snaith	KS		Resident, CLG Chair
Malcolm Robertson	MR		Resident
Gareth Swain	GS	SUEZ	Regional Manager
Carl Phillips	CP	Shepperton RA	Resident
Andrea Koskela	AK		Resident
Jodi Johnston	JJ	Surrey County Council	Contract Performance Manager
Sandra Dunn	SD	Spelthorne Borough Council	Mayor of Spelthorne
Karen Howkins	KH	Spelthorne Borough Council	Cllr. - Laleham and Shepperton Green
Jason Benfield	JBe	SUEZ	Plant Manager
Neil Huntingford	NH	LOSRA	Committee Member
Jasmine Bressler	JBr	SUEZ	Environment and Industrial Risk Advisor
Eleanor Cottrill	EC	SUEZ	External Affairs Executive
Emma Smyth	ES	SUEZ	Senior Planning Manager

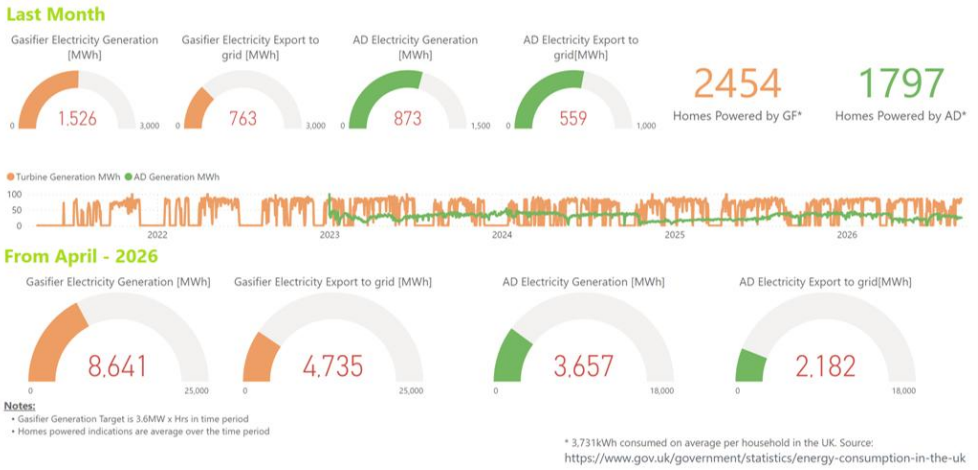
1.0	**Welcome and apologies**	

	KS welcomed members. Apologies for absence were received from Nigel Spooner with NH (fellow LOSRA committee member) attending in his place. Apologies also received from Natalie Saenz, SUEZ, and Buddhi Weerasinghe	
2.0	**Approval of minutes from previous meeting and matters arising**	
	Previous meeting minutes approved.	
3.0	**Operational Update**	
3.1	**Gasificatione**  JBe explained some operational challenges were experienced on the gasifier discharge conveyor and that this did cause outages. However, this was repaired during the major annual shutdown in September alongside normal scheduled annual works. AK queried if these issues were because of the fire earlier in the year JBe advised that the discharge conveyor was not the one effected in the fire MR queried whether 22,831 tonnes was the volume through the gasifier. JBe advised 12,874 tonnes were processed through the gasifier as this is shown as the amount of RDF produced, 25,170 tonnes is the amount of black bag waste received on site, 22,831 tonnes is the amount processed through the mechanical pre-treatment (MPT) with 12,874 the amount of RDF produced from that. The remaining 9,957 tonnes recyclable material (organic, metal, plastic, etc). GS suggested amending the slide in future to read 'Amount of material processed by the MPT' rather than 'Tonnes processed' to avoid confusion. AK queried how much the tonnage was down in comparison to previous years JBe confirmed the plant is on target despite the issues experienced in July and August KS inquired if these issues were due to heat from the hot summer JBe explained that there were some effects from the heat but that the conveyor issue was a mechanical one that is not linked. **Emissions** GS highlighted and queried peak in CO and explained the previous issue with raising particulate readings and that this led to a proactive replacement of bag filters. Suggested CO could be similarly providing an early indication of an issue to be rectified JBr explained that is a minor change considering the scale of analysis and how small the figures are (milligrams) and that changes of this scale could be due to something as simple as changes in material composition, it could be due to numerous factors. AK queried the link between bag filters and CO monitoring	JBe

	GS explained this was just a good previous example and due to the positive outcome warranted discussion. AK queried spike in ammonia JBe confirmed this was due to emissions treatment dosing changes and highlighted that the levels are still well within control limits and could also be feedstock dependent. KH queried if the only way this is monitored is via emissions JBe confirmed that emissions are continually monitored and reported to the control room SCADA (plant management software) which automatically sets abatement chemical dosing levels to control emissions **Complaints**  JBr advised: • 5 odour complaints in June which were unsubstantiated • 8 odour complaints in July which were unsubstantiated. • 2 fly related complaints in July. These were unsubstantiated and regular counts alongside weekly fogging still occur on site. JBr did reiterate the particularly hot summer and the potential increase in flies due to heat • 1 dust complaint in July which was unsubstantiated • 8 odour complaints in August These could be due to the periods offline to complete repairs on the discharge conveyor which lead to slightly higher levels of waste on site than normal and some material being sent out by road to reduce stockpiles. However, we cannot confirm exactly if any odour was due to our operations considering other potential sources in the area.KH queried why some complaints are unsubstantiated. GS explained that site conditions and wind direction are assessed and considered at the time of the alleged issue which allows simple disregard of some complaints, for example if the wind is blowing in the opposite direction to the complaint and there are no unusual operations and no detection of issue on site however sometimes we cannot be confident that odours are not caused by site if we are experiencing operational issues and the wind is blowing towards the complainants proximity. KS also raised that there have been some noise complaints relating to alarms on local Facebook groups. KS also explained that work on a local farm, during the same period as some of the odour complaints, took place. This was communicated on local social media pages, and it was stated that a large, old muck heap was being removed containing waste at least 3 years old. GS linked this to an odour walk performed by JBe in response to one of the complaints and the lack of odour on site versus a clear odour in the area of this agricultural work.	
3.2	**Anaerobic digestion (AD)**	



JBe advised that the degritting works on one of the digesters finished as planned and that the AD process was fully back up and running as normal with no issues reported with good availability.
GS advised that the tonnages reported may be lower than previously observed due to the degritting works.
KS enquired if the digestor bugs were back up and working
JBe confirmed that they are and working well



JBe advised a drop in electricity export due to the issues with the discharge conveyor on the gasifier.
JBe also highlighted two recent electricity power cuts (June and July) that had a significant operational impact
KS queried the impact as was under the impression that site ran off its own separate cables and transformers
JBe explained that as we still come off the main supply that we are affected by downstream issues. We were offline for approximately 5 hours which caused issues to the gasification bed. As it is comprised of sand when super-heated it can agglomerate forming larger clumps and causes operational issues.
KS enquired about the presence of two electricity supplies into site
JBe confirmed there are two but one for each activity (gasifier and AD) and that the 11Kv network in the area is known to be unstable
KS queried if this was a vulnerability for site and if it could occur again
JBe confirmed
GS also added that we haven't had many power outages since opening the site, but when they do occur, they do have a negative impact.
AK queried if there were backup generators on site
JBe confirmed they are to power emergency and critical equipment and to allow staff to safely take the plant offline, but that damage can still occur.
KS queried instability if there are back-up generators
JBe advised that the drop in power as supply changes causes the turbine to trip
AK queried if future developments in the area will have any impact
JBe confirmed that it may have an impact due to further strain on the system
AK queried if the site was self-sufficient

	JBe advised that although the site is self-sufficient that our production of energy requires connection to the network as an exporter and makes us vulnerable to wider network issues	

4.0	**RBF and CRC Operations**	
4.1	GS advised heavy usage of site despite the extreme temperatures. GS emphasises three main issues experienced in the summer: • High volume of fridge freezers due to a combination of unit failures because of the excessive summer heat and limited offtake options due to fires at processing facilities. However, he highlighted the close work with SCC to ensure continued acceptance of fridge freezers for residents – this was not seen elsewhere in the UK where many councils stopped accepting fridge freezers at their household waste recycling centres.GS also advised that re-processing capacity is now improving as volumes have reduced due to the change in weather and plants have come back online. CP highlighted the take back scheme offered when purchasing new appliances. GS explained Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the importance of making use of these schemes • Mattresses were also an issue due to similar issues, fires at reprocessing facilities. This has resulted in alternate off takers being secured in North Wales but advised the more local facilities are now coming back online which should improve backlog. • Gas bottle storage also became very full with CALOR reacting slowly to requests to collect their cylinders, but this is also improving GS highlighted the difficult working conditions that were experienced by the site staff working in excessive heat during the hottest summer on record and commended the excellent work of onsite staff dealing with high volumes and excessive heat. AK queried if green waste volumes had also been elevated GS advised that green waste was actually reduced due to drought conditions stunting grass growth JJ added that the sites did actually close early some days due to the red heat warnings and advised this would be used as a limit for working temperatures going forward KH enquired if staff were paid even if site was closed early GS confirmed all staff were paid and thanked SCC for their understanding and welfare actions for the site staff. SD queried why the reuse area had been rearranged and commented that the drop off sometimes limits access to certain bins GS advised that is an ongoing work in progress with an ongoing balance between optimising recycling and reuse and maximising space on site MR queried if e-waste is accepted on site GS confirmed, yes e-waste is accepted on site and that PAT testing is performed at Guildford to allow resale of suitable items. He reiterated the risk from batteries and the upcoming cross sector project with the fire service looking to tackle battery related fires.	
5.0	**Community Engagement**	
5.1	EC provided an overview of recent community engagement activity delivered across Surrey. This included community fund recipients, volunteering projects, educational outreach, employability programmes and recognition of colleague achievements. Members discussed the Revive Community Fund and recent successful applicants. GS explained that the fund supports projects across Surrey and that funding is generated through the Revive shop network. EC also provided an update on the award-winning partnership between SUEZ and HMP Feltham, which supports the refurbishment and reuse of items from Surrey's Community Recycling Centres while helping young offenders develop practical skills and work experience. SD enquired about potential press opportunities. EC confirmed that we plan to release information in line with our February event which celebrates the wider relationship between SUEZ and the prison service and the	

	10-year anniversary. EC also mentioned the current challenges surrounding early release and the potential negative press it could draw. SD requested an invite to the February event in her capacity as Mayor EC to enquire. KH queried education centre on site, where is it and how is it used? GS advised it is on the second floor of the facility used for training and by the onsite Beekeepers when required. GS advised that its development sits with SCC. JJ advised that there were insufficient funds to complete development and that it wasn't a condition of planning but that there may be funding available when the LGR occurs.	EC
6.0	**AOB**	
6.1	**Planning Update on Surrey Re-Use** ES gave an introduction and explained that she was in attendance to provide an overview of the new planning proposal for a reuse facility on behalf of Surrey County Council. ES explained that Ivydene cottage is a dilapidated building on the grounds of the Eco Park facility and that SCC have previously expressed desire for a reuse hub to be built in its place to support the network of shops around Surrey. The proposal was explained and includes workshops, storage areas, and a distribution hub to improve and expand upon the current reuse offering. ES referenced a WRAP study into reuse opportunities and the Manchester Revive Hub which includes repair pods (for re-upholstery, electrical repair, and furniture upcycling) as supporting information. ES explained the benefits of locating at Charlton Lane, such as the CRC providing access to both resale and disposal facilities on site. ES then showed the site plan. The workshops are not currently determined but some examples were provided: bicycle repair, re-upholstery, woodwork, and electrical repair. The proposal also includes an event space which could have numerous purposes such as a warm hub, men's shed, education space, or charity event area. GS added that for reuse to grow it needs a facility for both repair and storage which is currently lacking on the contract facilities. ES advised that the development will be 2 storeys with cladding to improve visuals. The current and proposed elevations were shown. The landscaping would be designed to support alignment with the existing Eco Park site. ES advised that the proposal is expecting to be submitted before Christmas with the consultation then due to follow in early 2027 with the final decision likely in Spring with the hope that it is before the planned LGR in April. KS queried responsibility for the site following LGR. JJ confirmed that the contract runs until 2029 and until then it will be run as normal as a mutual agreement between East and West Surrey. JJ also added that Ivydene Cottage is currently derelict and that there is no funding for upgrades under SCC. If planning is approved, it will move to West Surrey for final decision. She also highlighted that SCC are currently paying council tax on the building and it therefore makes commercial sense to apply for planning. KH queried why the proposal will go to SCC and not Spelthorne Borough Council and queried the sudden speed to get approval.	

	ES explained that as it counts as a waste facility it goes to SCC for approval but highlighted that Spelthorne will be included as a consultee. KH noted that the landscaping at Eco Park was never finished to the original standard. ES reminded the group that the original planting was heavily impacted by drought and advised that the topic is revisited regularly and reviewed for potential improvement. KH commented that parts of the Eco Park experience flooding and enquired about the potential impact on the new facility. ES confirmed that the new facility will have a separate access that should be unaffected. AK enquired about how much of the proposal is made up of storage.ES displayed the site overview slide again to help explain. AK enquired about the dimensions of the proposed site. ES confirmed the building size is approximately 30 X 15 X 6 m, which will be erected on the prposed plot. CP queried how close the proposed site would be to the planned neighbouring best plant. ES and KS confirmed that there is a field separating the two plots. KH queried impact on traffic and congestion on site. GS noted that there is very rarely queuing on the main road, with the bulk managed on the CRC in-roads on site. GS advised that there will be limited traffic into the proposed reuse facility and reiterated the benefit of the separate entrance. ES advised that traffic management is considered as part of the planning process, they estimate approximately 10 members of staff to be working on site with 3 vehicles delivering from the site. KH enquired about visitors ES confirmed that no direct sales facilities are planned for the new site, retail will continue as normal via the existing shops. The new site will contain workshops, an event facility, and offices. AK advised that she was involved in Remploy workshops and was open to providing advice on the project including what went wrong with Remploy. ES added that she has an "open door" for any queries or comments. The workshops will be the core of the project with key hours 9 am – 5 pm. The event space will work around that and be shaped by the local charity sector. KH expressed concerns regarding how some of the proposed community uses might be delivered in practice. ES advised that they were just examples and would not be decided without involvement of local charities and residents. GS added that we wanted to share information in advance of the Planning submission to the CLG but that it would go through the normal process with opportunity to ask questions in more detail during the consultation.	
6.2	**Terms of Reference** SD requested a discussion on the terms of reference regarding LGR. KS agreed and requested determination of a date for the next meeting with terms of reference to be discussed as an agenda point. GS suggested a meeting in February with the shadow councillors, if possible, to determine new terms of reference. JJ to confirm if they can be invited.	JJ

	SD expressed concerns about daytime meetings with many of the new councillors working in the day. KS to look into who to reach out to and asked for existing terms to be issued for review in preparation for the next meeting.	
6.2	**Request to join CLG from Councillor Michele Gibson** Request to join meeting from Cllr Michele Gibson EC shared response: “Thank you for your email and request to join the Eco Park Community Liaison Group meetings. The group membership runs in accordance with an agreed Terms of Reference, and therefore we will need to refer your request to the Chair and members. I will add your request to the agenda under ‘Any Other Business’ at the next meeting, which is scheduled for Monday 19 October, to be discussed by the members. Once the members have had an opportunity to consider your request, I will be in touch with an update.” Related section in terms of reference shared by EC: "A membership space will be offered to the representatives of Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council and the residents’ associations listed below. It will be up to the individuals representing the areas or associations named below to decide whether to participate in the group. In the case of Spelthorne Borough Council, it will be up to the ward members to decide which member will join the group to represent the ward. If these places are not filled, the place will remain vacant and offered again after each round of local elections or leadership election for residents’ associations." KH advised that Shepperton is not within Cllr Gibson's ward and that she has not been elected to the shadow authority so will not be continuing as a councillor from April. The group agreed that there is no place available for Cllr Gibson and that from April 2027 neither SCC nor Spelthorne will exist as it does currently due to the Local government reorganisation so it would not be appropriate for her to join the CLG so close to the end of her term. EC to send a response to Cllr Gibson.	EC
7.0	**Date of next meeting**	
	Tuesday 23 February 2026, 1400, hours	