

**6 December 2018****Agenda Item:4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES****DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE WASTE SERVICES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To approve a new county-wide sustainable waste project, based upon three key initiatives outlined in this report. The aim is to improve recycling and composting performance and reduce contamination and residual waste, through an invest to save project during 2019/20 and 2020/21.
2. To approve £100,000 initial investment funding for the project, and any subsequent savings, being met from/accrued to the waste PFI budget and reserve.

**Information**Background information

3. The County Council is the statutory Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) responsible for managing all local authority collected waste within Nottinghamshire. The majority of this waste is managed through a long-term Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with Veolia. In 2017/18 43.7% of this waste was recycled and composted, and the County Council is working towards increasing this to 52% by 2020 in order to meet EU and PFI Contract targets.
4. The 7 district and borough councils in Nottinghamshire are the statutory Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) responsible for the collection of waste at the kerbside. The County Council's recycling performance is largely dependent upon the quantity and quality of recyclable waste that is collected by the district and borough councils or taken by residents to one of the County Council's twelve recycling centres.
5. The quality of the materials that are collected for recycling is critical to the County Council's recycling performance and achieving the 52% recycling target. The Council's waste contractor and subsequent material re-processors will not accept low grade plastics or items that are contaminated with food waste, grease or liquids for example.
6. The PFI contract specifies a limit of no more than 5% contamination of the mixed recyclable material that is received at the Mansfield Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). Contamination rates have increased in recent years and the County Council is facing additional recovery and disposal costs for the rejected material.

## Outline of the project

7. The County Council, working in partnership with the district and borough councils and Veolia is proposing to undertake waste minimisation and targeted education campaigns throughout county wide promotions and education programmes in 2019/20 and 2020/21. This work will be supported by targeted enforcement at district level to address specific contamination issues. The proposals are predicated on an investment of £100,000 per annum for two years (2019/20 and 2020/21) with a payback of £150,000 p.a. for three years. This would generate, a net saving to the County Council of £250,000 over a 3 year period.
8. Investing in communications and educational activities can deliver substantial savings by reducing waste tonnages or diverting waste to recycling and composting from residual waste. For example, in Nottinghamshire 1,000 tonnes of residual waste not collected saves over £100,000 pa and 1,000 tonnes of residual waste recycled or composted saves approximately £65,000pa against the cost of disposal.
9. On current recycling rates approximately 220,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) of residual waste is sent for energy recovery (200,000 tpa) and landfill disposal (20,000 tpa). Reducing this residual waste by just 1% - 2,200 tpa - would save the Council around £240,000 pa.
10. Working with Veolia and the WCA is imperative to ensuring success and achieving the assumed savings. Work has already been taking place and at the request of the Joint Waste Management Committee (JWMC) a Contamination Working Group has been established, however currently activities are constrained by limited resource and funding.
11. Through the Contamination Working Group, the WCA and Veolia have drafted (and JWMC members are in the process of signing) a 'Nottinghamshire Principles for the Reduction of Contamination'. This document outlines key principles all collection authorities should endeavour to undertake, including the checking of bins at the kerbside and the crews not collecting recycling side waste in plastic bags. The purpose of the guidance is to demonstrate a commitment from all partners to reduce contamination and improve the quality of recycling.
12. It is important to note that the national Resources and Waste Strategy is due to be published by Defra by the end of 2018. Contents of the strategy are not yet known however the content will focus/inform the initiatives to take forward by the County Council through this proposal.
13. The three initiatives, including examples of activities which can be undertaken, are outlined below, although a final decision on the specific activities that will be progressed will not be made until after the publication of the national Resources and Waste Strategy to ensure the best possible fit with any new initiatives or legislative drivers proposed.

## Initiative 1 - Communications

14. The Council does not currently spend any money on waste awareness programmes and marketing, but relies on a small-scale programme of schools waste education, and through the waste PFI supports the Borough and District Councils to deliver limited information and kerbside enforcement via available officer time.

15. The decrease in funding for communication activities both locally and nationally during austerity has played a part in the increasing levels of contamination in the dry recycling and the plateauing recycling and composting performance across Nottinghamshire and the rest of the UK.
16. Evidence from the Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) in 2013 calculated that for every £1 spent on a “Love Food Hate Waste” communications programme savings of up to £8 in waste disposal costs could be generated.
17. Therefore, the County Council intends to support the WCA with communications by investing in countywide marketing and promotional material to educate residents on what can be recycled in Nottinghamshire. Material could include educational leaflets, bin stickers, adverts and web-based promotion.
18. Furthermore, investment in roadshow events across the County will be considered, which would allow direct engagement with residents.

#### Initiative 2 - Training and Support

19. Long term funding constraints have impacted on Nottinghamshire’s WCAs, which have no statutory recycling targets.
20. This decrease in resources and lack of statutory incentives means many of the WCA waste advisor (and recycling officer) roles no longer exist, resulting in limited resources available to check and reject bins at the kerbside, which consequently means reliance is placed solely on frontline crews to check and reject the bins.
21. It is proposed therefore that the Council supports districts and boroughs by offering frontline crews additional training.
22. Training packages could include activities such as a reminder of the targeted materials that should be present in the kerbside recycling bin, a tour of the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to showcase how the materials are sorted, a demonstration of the effect contamination has on the process, plus information on why the targeted materials have been chosen and how best to engage with the public.
23. This training will help with identifying contaminated recycling bins, and thus increasing confidence with rejecting those bins.
24. All existing crews could take part in the training package. Furthermore, the training could be part of crew induction for new staff members and could also be carried out as part of quarterly refresher training.
25. As well as frontline staff, senior officers and managers and elected members could also undergo training sessions or workshops to ensure a consistent message within each WCA.

### Initiative 3 - Kerbside Support

- 26. In addition to training it is proposed that funding be used to support districts and boroughs with additional resources to assist collection crews by providing waste inspectors to help with activities such as checking of the bins, labelling contaminated bins and engaging with members of the public.
- 27. This additional support would help WCAs with rejecting contaminated bins at the kerbside.
- 28. By way of example, in 2017, as part of a contamination working group project, Veolia temporarily seconded two employees from the Mansfield MRF to become recycling waste inspectors in Ashfield and Mansfield.
- 29. Both districts involved were welcoming of the additional support, and there was a measurable decrease in contamination, and reduction in black bags present in the dry recycling during the project.

### Next Steps

- 30. As mentioned above, for the County Council to gain the benefit from any invest to save initiative undertaken it is important that WCAs (and Veolia) are fully engaged and committed.
- 31. Engagement with the districts and boroughs at Member and Senior Officer Level will continue through the Joint Waste Management Committee (JWMC) and Joint Officer Board (JOB) meetings and projects will continue to be delivered through the Contamination Working Group.
- 32. Once the national Resource and Waste Strategy has been published the initiative(s) noted above will be reviewed to establish which are still the most appropriate to deliver the predicted savings.
- 33. It is likely that a mixture of the initiatives outlined above will form the basis of the invest to save project for 2019/20 and 2020/21. The final project will be developed and progressed in consultation with the relevant members and partners, including Veolia.
- 34. Any significant changes will be brought back to Committee for approval.

### **Other Options Considered**

- 35. As noted above limited resources have in part resulted in an increase in contamination within the dry recycling collections, so do nothing is not considered an option at this point.
- 36. One off initiatives such as the support for green waste collections in Ashfield and Bassetlaw will continue to be progressed outside of this proposal where a robust business case exists.
- 37. Funding a recycling incentive scheme, whereby residents are rewarded for recycling correctly, is an option often raised by partners. However, this option would not be deliverable given the limited funding available and furthermore the actual benefits of such schemes have not yet been proven.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

38. Within a two tier local government structure it is essential that the WDA and WCA (and any contractors supporting those bodies such as Veolia) work together effectively to deliver a suitable waste collection, treatment and disposal service for the public.
39. This proposal will help WCAs to improve the quality of the recyclable material collected at the kerbside, helping to improve their individual recycling rates at no cost to them, whilst the County Council will benefit from reduced waste disposal costs alongside improved recycling and landfill diversion performance.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

40. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

41. The £100,000 per annum investment will be met from existing PFI contract budgets, either directly through any underspends, or from the existing PFI reserve.
42. It is anticipated that the proposal will result in longer-term cost savings through a reduction in waste disposal costs and therefore there are no net additional costs arising from this report. Any longer-term cost savings will be used to adjust the contribution to/from the Waste PFI Reserve in future years.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That Committee:

43. Approves the new county-wide sustainable waste project, based upon three key initiatives outlined in this report, with the aim of improving recycling and composting performance and reducing contamination and residual waste, through an invest to save project during 2019/20 and 2020/21.
44. Approves £100,000 initial investment funding for the proposals, and any subsequent savings, being met from/accrued to the waste PFI budget and reserve.

**Derek Higton**  
**Service Director, Place and Communities**

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**Constitutional Comments [SLB 02/11/2018]**

45. Communities and Place Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

#### **Financial Comments [RWK 05/11/2018]**

46. The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 41 and 42 of the report.

#### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

#### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All