



15 March 2023

Agenda Item: 6

**REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE ON JOINT WORKING TO IMPROVE RECYCLING RATES ACROSS NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

Purpose of the Report

1. At the meeting of the Place Select Committee held on 11 January 2023 it was resolved:

“That the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, in consultation with officers, gives consideration to how the Council can work further with the District and Borough Councils to increase recycling rates across Nottinghamshire.”
2. This report provides a response to that resolution and advises the Place Select Committee on the current position on supporting the Borough and District Councils in undertaking their statutory roles as Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) for Nottinghamshire.

Information

3. The statutory two tier structure for management of municipal waste in Nottinghamshire is governed by the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990. Under the EPA the WCA are responsible for collecting waste at the kerbside from households and businesses who request the service, and the delivering that waste to the County Council as Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) for Nottinghamshire for recycling, composting, treatment and disposal as appropriate.
4. The WDA delivers it's statutory obligations through contractual arrangements with various waste companies, but mainly the long term Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangements with Veolia and the historic contract with FCC for the Eastcroft Energy from Waste plant.
5. The Statutory responsibility between the WDA and WCA is supplemented by a Waste Partnership Agreement which acts as a framework for joint working, and is managed through a Joint Waste Management Board (JWMB) comprising the responsible Members and and lead officers from the 7 WCA, the WDA, Nottingham City Council and senior management from Veolia.
6. The JWMB is currently chaired by the member representative from Bassetlaw District Council and meets quarterly, also supported by quarterly meetings of the Joint Officer Board (JOB), and individual task and finish groups comprising technical experts to deal with specific initiatives as required.

7. The JWMB and JOB has recently been focussing on the delivery of the requirements of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England.

Resources and Waste Strategy for England 2018

8. The Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) for England in December 2018 with a proposal that any statutory requirements were subsequently brought into legislation through the Environment Bill (Act). The strategy sets out a roadmap towards increasing recycling rates to 65% by 2035 by improving consistency of collection services across England, requiring weekly kerbside collections of food waste, and supporting the circular economy by using “polluter pays” principles.
9. Consultations on the proposals within the strategy took place in Spring 2019 and in early 2021 however due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and changes in Government leadership the responses to these consultations have been delayed. The Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has indicated that the outcomes are expected to be published very soon. These responses will confirm further detail and expected timelines around the introduction of these key proposals, including any available funding.
10. DEFRA has indicated the calculation of funding support for new net burdens for WCA will be done on a standard formula basis meaning pooling of costs and resources at a county level may be more equitable. There is however no funding identified to support WDA costs.

Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) modelling work

11. Despite the lack of policy and funding clarity, work has already commenced to ensure that Nottinghamshire is at the forefront of the new Government requirements.
12. WRAP has provided free consultancy support to look at options for implementing the changes proposed in the RWS including modelling weekly food waste collections, and enhanced dry recycling services across Nottinghamshire to identify costs effective ways of ensuring compliance with Government requirements.
13. The County Council Commissioned WRAP and their consultants Resource Futures to develop the proposals, but Bassetlaw District Council (BDC) has lead the project on behalf of the partners.
14. The final report from Resource Futures recommending the most efficient and cost-effective way of collecting food and dry recycling was considered and agreed as preferred solution by JWMB on 8 February 2023. The chosen options ensure a continued consistent approach to recycling and waste collections across the County, but would drive enhanced performance.
15. These service changes are subject to detailed development once the timescales and funding available from central government are clarified, and would require changes to collection arrangements, and renegotiation of the PFI contract. At the moment it seems likely no changes will be implemented until 2025 at the earliest, and potentially later.

16. Any service charges would be subject to approvals at individual WCA level, as well as at the WDA and where they affect the PFI Waste contract also through DEFRA and His Majesty's Treasury (HMT).
17. The County Council will continue to work collaboratively and proactively with the 7 WCA, Nottingham City Council, Veolia and other contractors to develop these proposals and seek to ensure services continue to be delivered efficiently and effectively and at the minimum overall cost to the residents of Nottinghamshire.

Previous Initiatives

18. The County Council has a long history of supporting the WCA to improve kerbside recycling performance by providing financial assistance to implement new and enhanced services where a sound business case exists and delivers a saving to the WDA by moving waste up the hierarchy from disposal towards recycling and reduction.
19. Over the last 10 years the WDA has provided significant funding to support free garden waste collection services in Ashfield, chargeable green waste services in Newark and Sherwood, and free kerbside glass collections in Mansfield.
20. This is alongside ongoing financial support for communications and enforcement across the whole Council both directly and in partnership with Veolia.
21. The Council provides a range of shared communication assets and resources and hosts strategic communications meetings with all of the WCA to ensure annual communications plans and projects are aligned and deliver more impactful outcomes.
22. Veolia continue to support community groups through visits to the Mansfield Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and through their Reduce, Reuse, Recycling funding for community groups and schools.

Recycling Centre Strategic Review

23. In 2022 Transport and Environment Committee approved a strategic review of the recycling centre provision in Nottinghamshire to ensure individual facilities and the wider network is fit for the future.
24. The scope of the review considered:
 - The level of RC provision in Nottinghamshire and the accessibility of the site locations
 - Opportunities for improvement of the RC network
 - Implications of the proposals contained within the RWS and Environment Act as noted above
 - Population and household growth and the gaps in coverage due to new communities emerging
 - Management processes on the sites.
25. A report by the external consultant appointed, AECOM, containing detailed operational and strategic recommendations is currently being finalised and will be used to inform future decisions around the RC network and its integration with kerbside services.

Future Opportunities

26. The RWS, the East Midlands Combined Mayoral Authority devolution plans, and the County Councils aspiration to be Carbon Neutral in all its operations by 2030 provide a range of new and exciting opportunities to find ways to work together with partners both within Nottinghamshire and across the wider D2N2 area to enhance and regularise waste recycling at a local and regional level.
27. The Council will continue to explore these opportunities and work closely through the JWMB, JOB and appropriate regional and national bodies and networks to identify cost effective enhancements to services provided directly by the Council, or by partners, where a suitably robust and viable business case for investment exists.

Financial Implications

28. Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this report the County Council currently spends circa £35m per annum on waste recycling, treatment and disposal, and is always seeking opportunities for invest to save projects which deliver improved and enhanced public services whilst also reducing operational costs.

Implications for Service Users

29. None at this point although implementation of the RWS will lead to changes in kerside services provided by the WCA in due course.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

30. The current contractual arrangements for waste management in the County provide a sustainable and affordable service with high levels of landfill diversion performance, average recycling performance and localised provision of facilities.
31. These factors combine to minimise the environmental impact of the service and provide a robust contractual and commercial basis for delivery of the requirements of the RWS and Environment Act to enhance recycling performance in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Place Select Committee notes the response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment, and the plans to improve recycling rates as part of the work to deliver the requirements of the Resources and Waste Strategy.

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE
Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Mick Allen

Group Manager Place Commissioning
T: 0115 9774684
E: mick.allen@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (EH 03/03/2023)

32. The report falls within the remit of what the Place Select Committee can consider.

Finance Comments (KP 03/03/2023)

33. There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents 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.