



20 September 2023

Agenda Item: 5

**REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT
PROGRESS REPORT ON WORK WITH THE JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD TO INCREASE RECYCLING RATES**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a progress report as required by the Place Select Committee resolution of 15 March 2023, *“That the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, in consultation with officers, gives further consideration to what further activities could be carried out through the Joint Waste Management Board to increase recycling rates across Nottinghamshire.”*

Information

Background and context

2. 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 Waste Collection Authority (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.
3. The WDA delivers its statutory obligations through contractual arrangements with various waste companies, but mainly the long-term Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangements with Veolia and the historical contract with FCC for the Eastcroft Energy from Waste plant.
4. 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 lead officers from the 7 WCA, the WDA, Nottingham City Council, and senior management from Veolia.
5. The JWMB is currently chaired by the member representative from Mansfield District Council and is supported by meetings of the Joint Officer Board (JOB), and individual task and finish groups comprising technical experts to deal with specific initiatives as required.

Role of JWMB in improving recycling rates across Nottinghamshire

6. To improve recycling rates across the county all the JWMB partners need to work together to provide a consistent and cohesive service offer to the public and address any current operational concerns, whilst planning how to adapt to the requirements proposed under the Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) and the Environment Act.
7. The JWMB meets on a quarterly basis with the last meeting having been held on 12 July 2023.
8. To allow for appropriate discussions and partnership input into a response to the Place Select Committee, an item was tabled for that meeting asking, *“What further activities could be carried out through the Joint Waste Management Board to increase recycling rates across Nottinghamshire.”*
9. Discussions at the meeting have been captured in detail at Appendix A, and Members were also asked to provide any additional written representations back to the County Council by the end of August so that a full response could be brought back to the Place Select Committee at this meeting.
10. No Further Representations yet have been received in response to that request.

Summary of Issues and Opportunities Identified by JWMB

11. The discussions at JWMB on 12th July 2023 centred on 4 key areas:
 - a) Consistency – primarily regarding the range of material collected.
 - b) Communications with residents with a particular focus on joint messaging.
 - c) Funding – through the RWS/EA and through project specific business cases.
 - d) Evidence – what best practice looks like elsewhere, and why performance varies so significantly across the country and within the county.
12. The consistency issue will be best resolved by the RWS/EA as it progresses, and this will also require a refresh of communications to advise residents of what any changed services look like and how to maximise the benefits of the new collection regimes.
13. Communications are already managed in a joined-up way with a range of resources available to the WCA’s through the Veolia website, most of which are coordinated through the national Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP), and a joint communications plan which is prepared every year to link activity into key national campaigns such as Recycle week, Compost week and Net Zero week. It is true to say that local political priorities do not always make a consistent approach easy to achieve.
14. Funding will flow from central government to support new statutory collection requirements however the County Council representatives reiterated that if a standalone business case exists for the introduction of new services which provide either betterment at no cost, or with a financial saving, then the County Council would consider provision of some funding support. The Council has previously provided financial support for the introduction of kerbside green waste collection services in Ashfield and Newark and Sherwood, and kerbside glass collections in Mansfield.

15. Much work has previously been done to assess the performance and cost of waste services in Nottinghamshire against both statistical and geographic neighbours, and several former BVPI's and NI covering waste are still routinely monitored by most WCA and WDA.
16. Nottinghamshire overall is slightly below average on recycling performance but has very high levels of landfill diversion performance, with over 95% of waste diverted from landfill in recent years. We also spend significantly less on waste treatment and disposal than most of our neighbouring WDA.
17. The 19% variance in recycling and composting performance between the lowest (Bassetlaw 26.5%) and highest (Rushcliffe 45.5%) across the county in 2022/23 is harder to understand despite wider demographic differences since all the WCA have the same mix of dry recycling through the Veolia contract. They all offer chargeable kerbside green waste collections with limited cost differences, and the majority of WCA offer kerbside glass and those that don't achieve high capture rates through good bring site coverage, as shown in Table 1.

District/Borough	Recycling	Composting	Combined
Ashfield	21.3%	12.5%	33.8%
Bassetlaw	15.4%	11.1%	26.5%
Broxtowe	18.4%	14.0%	32.4%
Gedling	19.5%	13.2%	32.7%
Mansfield	19.5%	10.8%	30.3%
Newark and Sherwood	18.9%	15.4%	34.3%
Rushcliffe	20.8%	24.7%	45.5%

Table 1: Recycling and composting rates across the County

18. Newark and Sherwood members have also independently approached Veolia asking for further research on this issue to be considered, and it is proposed therefore that subject to this work being jointly funded by the JWMB partners, independent research is commissioned to look at these performance inconsistencies and identify best practice in waste collection and recycling across England and how that could be applied to the current contractual framework.

Other ongoing actions

19. The Council will continue to explore ongoing further opportunities and work closely through 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.
20. The Devolution programme should also offer significant opportunities for funding and resources post 2024, given that all partners will be experiencing the same legislative drivers and change at a similar time.
21. An analysis of waste composition has recently been commissioned to identify the range and quantity of recyclable materials currently being placed in the residual bin by residents. This work will help inform both communications activities and support the research project noted above should it proceed.

Reason for Recommendation

22. To ensure Place Select Committee receives a comprehensive partnership response to the resolution of 15 March 2023.

Other Options Considered

23. Regarding providing an update on the resolution of Select Committee of 15th March, none.

24. Consideration was given to County Council officers and the Cabinet Member Transport and Environment providing their perspective for the Place Select Committee Meeting on 5th July 2023, but given the importance of and the multi-agency dynamic to the matter it was felt taking the request to the JWMB on 12th July would provide the most meaningful feedback.

Financial Implications

25. 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 to 'invest to save' projects which deliver improved and enhanced public services whilst also reducing operational costs.

Implications for Service Users

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

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

27. 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.

28. 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

That the Place Select Committee:

- 1) Accepts the progress report from Joint Waste Management Board and the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment on "*what further activities could be carried out through the Joint Waste Management Board to increase recycling rates across Nottinghamshire*".

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE

Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment

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Constitutional Comments (SSR 12.09.2023)

29. The report falls within the remit of the Place Select Committee.

Finance Comments (PAA29 12/09/2023)

30. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 25 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.