

**WASTE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
2ND FEBRUARY 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Ward)

Councillors Boldrin, Forrest, Howe and Needham

Councillor Harper-Davies (Cabinet Lead Member
for Community Support and Equalities)

Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
Democratic Services Officer (SW)
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: None

The Chair stated that the meeting would be livestreamed and recorded, and the recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

8. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

9. DECLARATIONS - THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

11. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

12. LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONSIDERED TO BE LEADERS IN WASTE MANAGEMENT

In accordance with the scrutiny scope document (key tasks), considered and discussed, other local authorities considered to be leaders in waste management and ways to apply to Charnwood, taking into account demographics, via a presentation of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces.

Key points of discussion:

- (i) Presentation set out top 5 performing authorities 2020-21 (England), percentage recycled, collection methods, whether weekly food waste collection, whether

garden waste collection and any charge. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces proposed to provide further information to next meeting on performance of audit family of authorities like Charnwood.

- (ii) Noted, none of top 5 were hitting 65% recycling target proposed by Environment Bill, although some close. Authorities ranked 2 and 4 had shared service element, and authorities ranked 1 and 3 located next to each other.
- (iii) Noted, all top 5 had weekly food waste collection, all had charged for garden waste collection, all had comingled collection (top performer separated paper/card). Environment Bill was proposing separate not comingled collection of recyclables. Expected that top performers might provide free garden waste collection, not the case, all charging at approximately median price. Would be interesting to know if lowest performing authorities were more likely to require separation/sorting of recycling by residents, noted that authorities with lower recycling tended to be urban, city.
- (iv) Noted, authority ranked 3 collected recycling weekly, residual waste fortnightly, gave an importance to the recycling element. Size of that district (area/population) not known, would need to investigate.
- (v) View that Charnwood garden waste collection service excellent, good value. Also, collection of food waste might reduce contamination of recycling.
- (vi) What was preventing Charnwood from achieving performance at this level? Multiple factors. No food waste collection (approximately 40% of residual waste was food). Top 5 all appeared to be more affluent, leafy, larger properties, bigger gardens, therefore more garden waste. Charnwood not super urban, but also not very green/affluent.
- (vii) Reason Environment Bill proposed separate collection of recyclables, prevention of fragments of glass causing problems for paper mills. Charnwood's current fleet single compartment so difficult to separate, cost of changing diminished as fleet got older.
- (viii) More specific information would be useful, characteristics of areas concerned, percentage of recycling total that was food waste. Latter might illustrate how much Charnwood could improve recycling performance by collecting food waste. In response, thought that data available was material sent for composting/anaerobic digestion combined (garden and food waste). Development of draft Leicestershire Waste and Recycling Strategy had involved high level modelling of options, all included food waste collection as Government likely to mandate in 2024 or 2025, provided prediction of recycling rates likely to be achieved. Strategy programmed for consideration by Panel at next meeting.
- (ix) Potential cost of implementing food waste collection, or a trial of? In response, had been cost analysis done with other Leicestershire authorities approximately 5 years ago, now old information. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces estimated the cost of food waste collection with residual waste collection continuing fortnightly at in excess of £1m per annum. Top 5 performing authorities were doing so, how? In response, residual waste most expensive for County Council (waste disposal authority) to dispose of, food waste approximately a quarter of that cost. Some waste collection authorities may have arrangements with their waste disposal authority to share the benefit of increasing food waste disposal and reducing residual waste, affected a subsidy of the cost of collection. There was no such arrangement in Leicestershire, so all costs would fall to the waste collection authority. Reference intention of Government to make food waste collection mandatory, had indicated it would

fund any new commitment, certainty that this would be at 100% of cost and ongoing would be welcomed. Concern if funding subsequently withdrawn, particularly given position of local authority finances. Suggestion that Jane Hunt, MP be asked to put that request to Government, confirmed that those representations had been made.

- (x) Home composting should be encouraged, noted that this would not assist Council's recycling rates, but was more environmentally friendly than collecting food waste. County Council scheme for reduced cost composters referenced, this could be promoted. Home composting would reduce weight of residual waste. Disappointing that Government targets did not reward reducing waste in such ways, prevention better for environment/correct focus.
- (xi) Reference to a key task not yet considered/scheduled "identify barriers and looking at ways to overcome them". Challenges posed by flats/communal bins. Stated that recycling rates not available by ward but were available by collection round listing streets covered. Noted, useful to receive that breakdown when panel considered that key task, also to incorporate engagement of residents as part of that.
- (xii) Noted, indication of composition of residual waste had been provided at last meeting.

AGREED

1. The presentation and discussion be noted.
2. Further consideration of this key task be scheduled for the next Panel meeting on 15th March 2022, via a further presentation of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces to provide information on performance of audit family of authorities like Charnwood, noting also (i) above query as to whether lowest performing authorities were more likely to require separation/sorting of recycling by residents and (ii) useful to know characteristics of areas.
3. Note paragraph (xi) above for when Panel considers key task "identify barriers and looking at ways to overcome them".

13. NEW RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND METHODS THAT COULD HELP IMPROVE RECYCLING RATES

In accordance with the scrutiny scope document (key tasks), considered and discussed, new research, technology and methods that could help improve recycling rates, via proposals/suggestions from members of the Panel (item 7 on the agenda details these).

Key points of discussion:

- (i) Suggestion - take part in/promote campaign to prevent contamination of recycling by nappies. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces noted, could get more involved/look into that (also County Council work to promote reusable nappies, waste minimisation campaigns). Possibility of promoting campaign on side of fleet and via social media. Nappies could be large proportion of residual waste for some families, also significant contaminant in recycling bins.

- (ii) Suggestion – visual display of waste items and what bin they go in. View that good visual, easy to understand, no language barrier. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces suggested good for street bins in key locations, could look at cost. Currently looking at trial of compaction street bins, less frequent emptying, indicated when needed to be, positive carbon impact. Noted, panel may wish to recommend trial of suggested visual display bin, prevention of contamination of recycling in street bins. Noted, anticipated less recycling in street bins once deposit return schemes introduced, also less littering. Visual display could be more useful to educate/inform than a paper leaflet, help use of correct bin both out and at home. Also, increase awareness of what could be recycled in Borough.
- (iii) Suggestion – publicity. Importance recognised. Key messages, effective methods. Did not wish to add to waste in doing so. Understanding psychology of what persuaded different people to participate. Possible use of fleet lorries and social media channels already highlighted. Information events, videos, competitions, work with schools particularly important. Suggested that a recommendation of the panel could be that resources were committed to produce effective strategy around increasing recycling and reducing residual waste. Contract with Serco provided £10k per annum for communications and some staff time could be allocated from Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces team. Noted, had been in business continuity mode over past couple of years, hoped to focus more on communications moving forward. Recognised, challenging environment over past couple of years, how hard Council and Serco staff had worked in that time. Suggested, Borough wide schools recycling challenge. Example given of zero residual waste challenge. Developing communications was supported.
- (iv) Suggestion – scrap store and library of things. Reduced residual waste and consumption, could also be more affordable. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces advised both would require partnership with suitable organisation in social/voluntary sector to progress. Possible partners discussed, initial enquires could be made, Councillor Ward could do so with Transitions and Men/Women in Sheds, Councillor Forrest could do so with John Storer House. Noted, investigating only at this stage, to assist the panel with any recommendations it might wish to include in its report. Reference to repair shops (previously run by Transitions, Fearon Hall, similar group in Leicester City referenced by Councillor Needham, Leicester Hackspace, she could pass details to the Chair).
- (v) Suggestion – items not collected in household recycling. Small electricals, paint, printer cartridges, batteries, terracycle items. Was there scope for household recycling sites to accept such items? Only 2 currently accepted paint, Hamilton and Whetstone, distance to travel. Donated nearly new paint could be purchased at Exaireo paint shop in Loughborough, but nowhere to donate if had surplus paint. In response, Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces, paint longstanding issue for residents, raised with County Council over many years, hazardous waste, special storage arrangements, therefore at limited sites, issue would be raised again. Some paint offered for reuse. Small electricals were already accepted at household recycling sites. As part of draft Leicestershire Waste and Recycling Strategy work, considering whether batteries, small electricals and textiles could be added to household collections. Regarding terracycle items, Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces would investigate whether facilities might be provided at County Council's household recycling sites and

was therefore viable recommendation for Panel to make? Noted, harder to recycle packaging should reduce with Government's proposed Extended Producer Responsibility, outlined at last meeting.

- (vi) Suggestion – package free shops, assist provision of. Zero waste shop already existed in Loughborough (Baxter Gate). Should promote. Query as to whether work being undertaken with markets to encourage less plastic, not known at this meeting. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces had met pre-pandemic with Surfers Against Sewage regarding Plastic Free Towns, might be useful to speak to again. Understood there was a village in Charnwood that had taken up challenge, not known at this meeting, possibly Rothley.
- (vii) Suggestion – Olio app. Should promote. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces stated this had been considered before, some conflict with Council's food hygiene enforcement role. Reference to other apps and sites that could reduce waste that might be appropriate for Council to promote/share information on. Too Good To Go, Freecycle, Freecycle, Preloved.
- (viii) Suggestion – food waste recycling using fly larva. Suggested that anaerobic digestion would be more beneficial, produced compost and energy.
- (ix) Suggestion – publicity and suggestions from public. Considered under (iii) above.
- (x) Suggestion – education/publicity regarding recycling, particularly in student areas. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces outlined partnership working on this with aim of minimising problems, enforcement was undertaken where appropriate. Could be information overload for new students, first time householders, no easy solutions, ongoing effort. Local councillors would be involved in plans, particularly for end of year.

Councillors Harper-Davies and Howe left the meeting prior to the conclusion of this item.

AGREED

1. The suggestions and discussion be noted.
2. Further consideration of this key task be scheduled for the next Panel meeting on 15th March 2022, to enable the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces and councillors to report back on the investigations/enquiries agreed above, with a view to establishing suggestions that are viable as panel recommendations.

14. FURTHER PANEL MEETINGS AND KEY TASK PLANNING

Considered and discussed, the key tasks in the scrutiny scope document to be considered at the next meeting of the Panel and any work members of the Panel would undertake in advance of that meeting.

A verbal update was given on the invitation to Jane Hunt, MP to attend a meeting of the Panel. Panel had requested having been advised that she was a member of a Government Waste Management Panel, wished to discuss concerns regarding Environment Bill, particularly cost implications to Council. Jane Hunt, MP had responded, she was not a member of such a panel, but was happy to attend if that would assist. Panel asked to consider if still wished Jane Hunt, MP to attend meeting.

AGREED

1. Key tasks to be considered at next Panel meeting on 15th March 2022 (in addition to those agreed earlier in meeting):

“Draft Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy” - via presentation of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces. Presentation to be emailed to panel members as soon as possible so that they could consider in advance of meeting. Panel advised to look at 11 pledges in the Strategy and the collection options appraisal. Noted, Panel may wish to submit written response to consultation on Strategy.

2. A further meeting of the Panel be scheduled to follow the last meeting currently scheduled in April. A panel meeting in December 2021 had been cancelled and the further meeting was needed to ensure the work set out in scrutiny scope document was completed, including engagement with residents/Serco.
3. Democratic Services Officer (LS) to meet with Chair and Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces following meeting to provisionally schedule remaining key tasks and engagement work by the Panel into remaining meetings, for agreement at next meeting.
4. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces to arrange date for visit to Casepak Materials Recycling Facility as soon as possible, recommended to panel members if able to attend.
5. Engaging with Members of Parliament was best way of ensuring concerns heard by Government. This could be achieved by way of written submission setting out Panel's concerns and would enable remaining meetings to focus on other work still to be done. Therefore, no need for Jane Hunt, MP to attend panel meeting.
6. Further scheduled meetings of the Panel, as set out on the agenda, be noted.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the next available Ordinary Council meeting unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Waste Management Scrutiny Panel.