

**WASTE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
31ST MARCH 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Ward)

Councillors Boldrin, Forrest, Howe and Needham

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

APOLOGIES: None

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound 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.

15. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

16. DECLARATIONS - THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

18. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

19. 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.

Consideration of this key task had been commenced at Panel meeting on 2nd February 2022 (top 5 performing authorities 2020-21 (England) considered). To be completed at this meeting via 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) 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.

Key points of discussion:

- (i) Noted, presentation set out top 5 and bottom 5 performing authorities for recycling 2021 (East Midlands) because Government database no longer enabled audit family comparison. Had looked at collection authorities only, ie. borough/district. Top performer recycled 63.5%, bottom 25.4%. Charnwood at 43.5%. Top performer (South Northamptonshire) close to hitting proposed Government target 65% by 2035. Had food waste collection, co-mingled recycling and free garden waste collection. Planned to charge for latter from April 2022, would be interesting to see how affected performance next year. Performance of other authorities listed was briefly outlined against what collected and how, whether charged for (garden waste, food waste, co-mingled).
- (ii) Noted, top performer 63.5%, second top 57.6%, difference could be due to garden waste collection being charged for by latter. Also, glass not being collected seemed to be significant factor when looking at bottom performers.
- (iii) Question, advantage to collecting garden and food waste together? Advantage was one mixed collection, one vehicle, although likely fortnightly as per garden waste, separate food waste collection usually weekly. Mixed garden and food waste required different treatment to just garden waste, briefly outlined. Estimated cost of treating just garden waste approximately £22 a tonne, mixed garden and food waste (most of which would be garden waste) approximately £35 a tonne. Both provided compost, anaerobic digestion treatment could also provide energy via biogas. Noted, mixed collection did mean fewer collections, lower carbon emissions. However, Government was proposing separate food waste collection. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces would not advocate, but mixed garden and food waste collection was a choice available to Charnwood.
- (iv) Briefly outlined, previous arrangement whereby this Council had made own arrangements for processing of recycling and was paid by waste disposal authority for doing so (recycling credits). County Council stopped permitting around 5 years ago, had resulted in loss of income to Charnwood of approximately £880k per annum. Garden waste collection charges introduced to try to balance that loss.
- (v) In response to question, Government likely to mandate food waste collection, asking for that to be weekly. Council had choice as to how to collect, examples and challenges of options briefly outlined. Advice was separate collection, separate vehicle, weekly. Re: separation of paper/glass, Environment Bill proposed separate collection for prevention of fragments of glass causing problems for paper mills, but exemption available. Previously noted data suggested that comingled collections achieved higher recycling performance, easier for residents, higher participation.

AGREED the further presentation and discussion be noted.

20. 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.

Consideration of this key task had been commenced at Panel meeting on 2nd February 2022 (suggestions from members of the Panel discussed). To be completed at this meeting via the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces and members of the Panel reporting back on agreed investigations/enquiries (see Waste Management Scrutiny Panel Minute 13 – 2nd February 2022).

Key points of discussion:

- (i) Councillor Ward had spoken with Men in Sheds and Transitions re: whether they would be willing to engage with Council on repair/reuse activities, both had been keen to have conversation with Council on that. Contact details had been passed to Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces.
- (ii) Councillor Forrest had spoken with John Storer House re: possible scheme to enable borrowing of items used occasionally (library of things), unfortunately centre did not have space, particularly now it operated community shop. Possibility of hiring room upstairs for purpose, would need to fund that, find volunteer staff to run.
- (iii) Suggested that Sofa (Nottingham Road) might be a possibility for the above, already did furniture upcycling, had space upstairs, might be worth contacting them.
- (iv) Councillor Needham's contact at Leicester Fixers no longer active, it had had a network of groups across County but activities affected by pandemic. Harborough branch still operating, partly due to person leading and it was well supported by local council, might be useful to look into further, Councillor Needham would do so.
- (v) Noted, any of the initiatives discussed likely to need financial support to be successful.
- (vi) Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces reported that plans re: end of year student waste still being finalised, would share those by email in due course. Proactive, partnership approach. Re: promotion reusable nappies on sides refuse vehicles, could do so, budget available, initial outlay in changing image expensive. Could use same method to promote various waste minimisation and recycling messages, perhaps on 2 or 3 vehicles to start. View that a useful message would be information on what could go in recycling bins, residents not always aware, recognised that continual messaging in that respect. Noted, sides refuse vehicles already used to promote various other Council activities and messages.
- (vii) Discussion re: use of bin stickers to inform of materials that could go in green bins for recycling that residents might not be aware of, how that might be best worded, communicated, perhaps highlight a particular item such as soft plastic, rather than a long list of all items. Operatives did not have time on rounds to apply stickers, had used agency staff in past to do so, message aimed at reducing contamination. Could consider repeating with different message. Reference to previous market place event to educate on this, successful, useful to repeat, incorporate competitive element/challenge.
- (viii) Noted, when Panel made recommendations it would have lots of ideas to put forward.
- (ix) Noted, Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces still working via County Council to secure visit to Casepak, hoped that would be possible end April.

AGREED the reporting back and discussion be noted.

21. DRAFT LEICESTERSHIRE RESOURCES AND WASTE STRATEGY

In accordance with the scrutiny scope document (key tasks), considered and discussed, the draft Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2022-2050, via a presentation of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces.

In accordance with the Panel's request, the presentation had been emailed to panel members following the last meeting on 2nd February 2022, so that they could consider in advance of this meeting. Panel had been advised to look at 11 pledges in the Strategy and the collection options appraisal.

Key points of discussion:

- (i) Noted, over 3,000 responses to the consultation from members of the public to date. Panel may wish to submit a response following its discussion.
- (ii) Pledge 1 - purchasing and internal waste management. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (iii) Pledge 2 – support and encourage waste prevention activity. Confirmed authorities already worked together, strategy would galvanise, have action plan, implement strategy. View that campaigns needed to be continuous to be most effective. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (iv) Pledge 3 – continue delivering reuse services and expand where practicable and signpost. Reference to County Council looking to put reuse provision at some recycling and household waste sites and whether any currently existed. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (v) Pledge 4 - implement and promote separate food waste collections subject to confirmation Government policy, legislation, funding and procure anaerobic digestion capacity. In response to question, how likely to operate outlined, not yet known where anaerobic digestion facility would be. Noted, likely to be much increased demand for such facilities, gap in market. Government had recognised new burden on local authorities and that it would fund. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (vi) Pledge 5 – explore use alternative fuels for collection/transportation waste, reduce carbon/improve air quality. This Council's collection vehicles currently all diesel, when purchased viable alternatives had not been available (were looked at, considerable difference in cost outlined), pledge would mean looking to better options as replaced. View that unfortunate that the fleet needed renewing when it did. Question re: whether purchasing together with other councils would reduce cost? In response, procurement framework used to assist competitive price. Noted, fleet replaced only couple of years ago, depreciate over 8 years, view to running for up to 10, 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan would require different option, fleet significant proportion of Council emissions. Trial was planned in next year or two and working with Energy Saving Trust to undertake green fleet audit. Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces not aware of any waste collection authority operating fully electric fleet, some trialling 1 or 2. Hoped that better, viable options available from manufacturers as soon as possible, also that Council would be able to benefit from others' experiences. Reference to some councils using hydrogenated vegetable oil in lieu of diesel, zero carbon, but adverse environmental impact, deforestation. More expensive. Energy Saving Trust did

not support use. Likely hydrogen would be preferred fuel in future. Panel agreed with pledge.

- (vii) Pledge 6 – continue garden waste collection system as Government guidelines subject to legislation and total Government funding, procure composting capacity. Currently unclear whether Government funding would just be to extend provision to all or would also offset loss of income if Council had to provide for free, Council's income from garden waste service £1.4m in current year (overall Council budget around £20). Noted, significant cost to Government if all local authorities required compensating for loss. Question, what happened to compost created? Used for agricultural purposes and land restoration, not thought to still be available for public to purchase as in the past. No income for this Council, net cost to County Council to process. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (viii) Pledge 7 – full range of recyclables collected as specified by Government and subject to funding. Noted, Charnwood already collected full range. Question, trade waste collections, all other Leicestershire local authorities collected mixed recyclables from businesses, plans to start doing so here? Would it count towards recycling performance? In response, currently surveying residual waste business clients to establish appetite for, if wanted and viable/could cover costs, would introduce. Already collecting recycling from Loughborough town centre businesses that were part of BID, BID was funding. Hoped to complete survey within next few months, did not count towards recycling performance, but correct to provide if able to do so. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (ix) Pledge 8 – explore viability of adding extra materials to recycling collections. If collection authority decided to collect, County Council would need to make disposal arrangements. View that examples given in pledge, batteries, small electricals, clothing all items which were relatively easy to recycle elsewhere, such as in supermarkets, other retailers, charities, clothing banks, although this recycling would not count towards Council's performance. More welcome/useful would be including items that were more difficult for residents to recycle, such as items processed by Terracycle, coffee pods, crisp packets. Noted, some such items may no longer be produced under Extended Producer Responsibility proposals in Environment Bill. Panel agreed with pledge, but would like to see items that were more difficult to recycle included in it.
- (x) Pledge 9 – collection systems to contribute to national 65% recycling target, may include restricting residual waste capacity. Noted, restricting residual waste capacity meant smaller black bin or less frequent collection. Reference to changes in packaging that should result from Extended Producer Responsibility proposals, should mean more could be recycled, less capacity needed in residual waste bin. Noted, no restriction on volume of recycling or food waste that would be collected. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (xi) Pledge 10 – continue to allocate a communications budget. View that joint communications strategy needed across authorities, sharing of message. View that strategy in general ambitious, huge undertaking, not wish to duplicate existing recycling provision, not wish to over promise, under deliver. In response, strategy was for period up to 2050, many targets part of national strategy that Government had promised funding for. Was significant change. With sufficient resourcing, could be delivered. Charnwood not doing alone. Panel agreed with pledge.
- (xii) Pledge 11 – County Council reduce waste sent to landfill to less than 5% by 2025 in advance of 10% national target by 2030. Collection authorities'

performance in reducing residual waste could assist. Alternative to landfill likely to be energy from waste (incineration). Question, percentage currently sent to landfill? Approximately 40-50% across County. Not much of Charnwood's residual waste went to landfill, most incinerated. Therefore, pledge represented considerable reduction in less than 3 years, considered likely that County already had plans in place to achieve. Noted, incineration capacity used may not be within County. Currently, sites in Coventry and Stoke on Trent used. Panel agreed with pledge.

- (xiii) Collection options in strategy and evaluation/scoring of those against criteria briefly outlined to Panel, high level modelling for decision making purposes. Most beneficial option was 5A, followed by 5B, what those collection options would comprise set out in presentation. Noted, options 4-8 were all effectively option 3 with variables added. Question, why did option 3 score only 1 on cost, but most subsequent options scored higher for this? In response, option 3 assumed free garden waste collection with no subsidy of lost income, whereas, for example, option 4 assumed retention of the charge for the service. Noted, difference between 5A and 5B, first was residual waste smaller bin, second was residual waste 3-weekly collection. Operational flexibility higher for 5A, due to fortnightly. Importance of restricting residual waste to encourage food waste participation.
- (xiv) Question, any significant preference for particular collection option(s) in consultation responses to date? In response, no, wide variety of opinions. Would be interesting to see when all responses collated.
- (xv) For each option, annual gross collection cost, kerbside recycling rate (%), indicative collection cost increase relative to baseline and collection cost per 1% increase kerbside recycling performance outlined. Very helpful. Noted, none of options reached 65% recycling target, but offered considerable improvement from current. Noted, difference in cost between options 3 and 5A, but recycling difference greater, 3-4%, showed how restricting residual waste capacity forced behaviour change/participation in collection system. Question, were collective authorities leaning towards particular option? In response, for each authority to choose, status quo would not be an option, no requirement to collectively agree one option. No consensus expressed by Panel in terms of preferred option, but two members of Panel of view that either option 3 and 5A were preferable, did not think that 3-weekly collection of residual waste would be acceptable to residents. May be concern regarding smaller black bin, ameliorated by being able to put most waste in other bins provided. Another member of the Panel expressed a preference for option 5A in the first instance, but would like to consider further.
- (xvi) Concern regarding cost involved. Recognised that councils would need Government financial support to implement. Concern that whatever option chosen, would not be effective in all circumstances, for example, particular requirements for student households, communal bins at flats. Acknowledged that that was the case, a challenge, needed to consider those circumstances. Need also for continuous education on how system worked. Noted, Panel planned to consider barriers to recycling at next meeting, students/University should be engaged with as part of that. Reference to there being very few items that would need to go in residual waste if various proposals discussed were implemented and participated in.

(xvii) Efforts of those residents who had responded to consultation recognised. The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces was thanked for the useful and clear presentation on the matter.

AGREED

1. The presentation and discussion be noted and the presentation slides to be sent to members of the Panel following the meeting.
2. A Panel response to the consultation be drafted by the Chair based on the Panel's discussion and conclusions as summarised above, to be circulated to members of the Panel for their comment/approval before it is submitted, noting that the consultation closes 25th April 2022. In commenting on the draft response, members of the Panel could express a preference for a particular collection option, if they so wished.

22. 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.

Noted, the next meeting of the Panel had been moved from 26th April 2022 to 11th May 2022.

AGREED

1. Following key task had been covered at previous meetings and can be marked as completed:

"Research waste prevention activities and organisations both within the Borough and elsewhere that are committed to waste reduction".
2. Following key task to be considered at next Panel meeting on 11th May 2022:

"Identify barriers and look at ways to overcome them" – via report back on engagement with stakeholders on this issue, which will be undertaken informally prior to the meeting. Chair of Panel, Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces and Democratic Services Officer (LS) to meet as soon as possible to arrange that engagement, members of Panel to inform Democratic Services Officer of any stakeholder they wish to add to list in scrutiny scope document.
3. Opportunity to visit Casepak Materials Recycling Facility still to be confirmed, update provided earlier in meeting, hoped possible end April 2022.
4. Further scheduled meeting of Panel on 14th June 2022 be noted (currently proposed as final meeting to agree Panel's report, physical meeting).

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.