

Report of Director of Environment and Housing

Report to Environment & Housing Scrutiny Board

Date: 26th April 2016

Subject: Waste Strategy Theme - Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report provides an update on a series of waste issues that were presented to the Board in November 2015.

- The City's Waste Strategy;
- Recycling (including addressing low participation rates in existing AWC areas and viable options for non-AWC areas across the city);
- Managing waste in high rise properties.

Subsequently Members have also requested an update on the following:

- The bulky item collection service;
- Addressing fly-tipping across the city.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Board is requested to note the content of this report and identify areas for further investigation.

1. Purpose of this report

The report covers areas of waste and recycling activity highlighted by the Board and sets out the current position and the key challenges or next steps.

2. Main Issues

Appendix 1 to this report provides summaries in the following main areas:

- The City's Waste Strategy;
- Recycling (including addressing low participation rates in existing AWC areas and viable options for non-AWC areas across the city);
- Managing waste in high rise properties;
- The bulky item collection service;
- Addressing fly-tipping across the city.

3. Corporate Considerations

Consultation and Engagement

Consultation and engagement is embedded within the individual areas of activity.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage as this report is primarily an information report.

Council policies and City Priorities

Waste and recycling activities contribute to making *Leeds the best city to Live*. The waste strategy and waste collection policies referred to in this report have been consulted on previously and have previously been approved by Executive Board.

Resources and value for money

The proposed medium-term strategy clearly takes account of the current financial pressures, and focuses on maximising the value from existing capacity and infrastructure.

Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

Risk Management

Risk management is embedded within the individual areas of activity.

4. Conclusions

The report covers a range of areas demonstrating the breadth and complexity of activity.

5. Recommendations

Scrutiny Board is requested to note the contents of this report, and highlight any areas for further investigation.

6. Background documents¹

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

The City's Waste Strategy

Executive Board approved, in November 2015, the medium-term strategy of 50% recycling by 2020 by focussing on maximising existing capacity and infrastructure, supported by an effective programme of communications, engagement, enforcement and service improvement, but acknowledging the requirement for residents to participate fully if the revised target is to be achieved.

The most notable update relates to the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF) being delivered by Veolia ES (Leeds) Ltd under the Council's PFI contract. The construction and the commissioning of the RERF have been completed successfully, with the Independent Certifier having issued the Acceptance Certificate on 31st March 2016. This triggers Full Service Commencement under the Contract with resulting significant environmental and financial benefits to the Council and the City.

In total savings expected to be £7.0m in 2016/17 have been realised by achieving Full Service Commencement on 31st March 2016. Overall, it is estimated that the PFI contract with Veolia will save the Council an estimated £270m over its 25 year life when compared to the projected cost of a continued reliance on landfill

The Refuse Collection service has been directly delivering all of the City's kerbside black bin waste to the RERF since the end of November 2015 through the commissioning period. This involved some minor adjustments to collection routes in the west of the City, but was achieved with minimal disruption, resulting in collection day changes to only 1,500 properties.

The mechanical pre-treatment element of the RERF is now extracting materials for recycling from the domestic black bin waste. It is expected that the RERF will capture, through pre-treatment, a minimum of 10% of the materials processed, and will generate around 11MW electricity, equivalent to the power consumption of around 20,000 homes. The process will provide an estimated carbon saving of around 62,000 tonnes per annum, equating to the removal of approximately 29,000 cars off the road. The Council is also working to develop a district heating network linked to the RERF, which will further improve its environmental performance and provide the opportunity to provide reduced cost, sustainable heating to social housing.

The 2015/16 recycling rate for city is projected to be 40.3%, slightly less than the previous year's performance of 42.9% due to a reduction in the level of recycling being achieved from the processing of the City's residual or black bin waste by our former disposal contractors and outlets. Due to economic factors, legislative requirements and reprocessing market requirements for higher quality recyclables, former contractors were driven to send a greater fraction of the residual waste for incineration with energy recovery rather than recycling.

These arrangements have now been superseded through the transition to the new PFI contract with Veolia, which will arrest this decline and safeguard recycling from black bin waste at an appropriate level through the mechanical pre-treatment element of the process. However, the emphasis of the Council's recycling strategy needs to be increasingly on securing higher quality and less contaminated recyclable materials separated at source by residents.

Key Challenges and next steps

- Develop and implement a communications strategy to ensure continued recycling increases by maximising existing capacity and infrastructure
- In partnership with Veolia, review the composition of the incoming waste on a regular basis in order to explore opportunities for additional recycling beyond that guaranteed within the contract.

Recycling (including addressing low participation rates in existing AWC areas and viable options for non-AWC areas across the city);

The proposed strategy for achieving the 50% target referred to in the previous section can only be achieved through the engagement of residents with the recycling agenda and through a significant behavioural change in this area.

Communication, Engagement and Enforcement Update

Distribution of recycling stickers on green bins:

The stickering of 95,000 green bins, targeted at more poorly performing areas of the city has been completed. These pictorial stickers aim to inform residents of what goes in the green bin, to try and increase the quality and quantity of materials collected (see appendix 2). We are presently within a six months monitoring period to assess the level of improvement.

'Invest to Save' marketing campaign:

Targeted campaigns are progressing to encourage people to change their behaviours and routines at home, promote the recycling opportunities and set the social norm that recycling is the right thing to do. Most recently, the Spring campaign has promoted the new "What goes where" interactive infographic. Complementary, recycling awareness postcards have been distributed along with Council Tax bills and during March there were 9 roadshows at key locations across the city all aimed at reminding residents of what can and cannot go in green recycling bins.

Digital media:

The "whatgoeswhere.com" link uses smart phone or tablet technology to provide 1 click quick referencing to what can be recycled and where. To further enable citizens to engage through digital channels, work has progressed to finalise the 'Leeds Bins App' and ensure that data sources are correctly aligned with those of the popular "My Bin Day" web pages. It is expected that this will be launched during the summer.

Christmas 2015 collection changes were communicated via digital channels and through posters/ leaflets distributed through community contacts and venues. Evaluation showed a 96% increase in traffic compared to 2014 to the My Bin Day web page (186,700 hits), the highest on the LCC website.

Maximising the impact of Council officers:

Over the summer training is being provided to Housing staff who have regular contact with residents, so they are better able to relay recycling messages and encourage good waste habits as part of their daily role within their communities.

Social contract:

Work is progressing to strengthen the link through Community Committees to establish 'contracts' with targeted groups. Aiming to nudge currently lower level recyclers to a higher level, the identification of appropriate discrete routes will enable the impact of targeted communications through community, tenant and third sector groups to be measured.

Incentive schemes:

Noting that the evidence is not conclusive in terms of the benefits of incentive schemes employed by other councils, it is still felt that there could be merit in this approach. A limited number of tower blocks are to be identified to work up a pilot incentive scheme. It is hoped that a pilot will commence during the summer and be closely monitored over an initial 6 month period to assess its effectiveness in improving recycling.

Education programmes:

The RERF features a dedicated Visitor Centre for use by the Council, enabling educational visits, presentations and tours of the facility. With the facility now complete, the Council's contract management team are starting to organise visits, and have been working with Veolia and other partners to develop their format and content. It is intended that these visits will be made available to schools, and will provide an important opportunity, not just to explain what happens at the RERF, but also to communicate wider environmental messages, such as the importance of recycling at home, through interactive games and activities.

The schools waste recycling advisors programme was launched over the summer and is being offered to all schools in Leeds. Currently ten schools are actively engaging with this project.

A learning package outlining the benefits of recycling has been developed with the Council's training partner QA, and is available to Council staff through PALs.

Retailer partnerships:

Having been an active participant in the national "Love Food Hate Waste" Campaign, voluntary commitment to the next version of the Courtauld Agreement (C2025), offers better opportunities for closer and sustained working with the other retail partners, such as Asda to have our waste and recycling messages amplified across different channels.

Enforcement of waste collection policies:

To reduce the environmental impact of poor waste habits, assist with provision of efficient collection and maximise the amount of quality recycling, the role and responsibility of the householder is paramount.

In those circumstances where an educational approach has not been successful, a clear understanding is needed of the potential use of enforcement powers by authorised officers to tackle waste related issues. Work is ongoing to understand and document the principles guiding the approach to enforcement and the sanctions that may be applied.

Key Challenges and Next Steps

- To progress the above strategy for communications, engagement and enforcement set out above, using an evidence-based approach to target activities.

Viable options for non-AWC areas

AWC is now in place across 75% of the city. The decision to exclude areas from AWC was taken in consultation with ward members and on the basis of historical recycling performance, issues with collection and presentation, and the physical nature of the particular localities.

The final phase of AWC was delivered in May 2015 and has, in general, been a success with recycling levels increasing, residual waste levels falling and the quality of service increasing.

Some Non-AWC areas have good quality recycling, but many are heavily contaminated. Bins on streets are exacerbated by the lack of space for bins in small yards, and a lack of ownership and understanding from residents of collection arrangements. This is further added to by the level of transience in these communities.

The physical nature of many of the Non-AWC areas means that collections are complex from a planning and delivery point of view. Many properties are difficult to access due to parked cars, and narrow back streets, and 'natural' cut-off points for routes are often difficult to identify. This has led to a mixture of route types and collection days in the very localities where, due to the challenging nature of communication and engagement in these areas, collections need to be at their simplest.

In line with Executive board approval, plans are progressing to expand slightly the Ash Road pilot area, over the July/August 2016 period, to cover further properties. This will change the existing pilot route so that it no longer cuts the locality in half.

Secondly, to test the regime in a more inner city and ethnically diverse area, a second pilot area in Harehills will be rolled out in Autumn 2016

In order to deliver the overall objectives a more fundamental programme of work is required. This programme will

- review routes aiming to simplify arrangements;
- undertake a full and detailed street by street assessment, in consultation with frontline crews and Elected Members, of Non-AWC areas to decide which should go on to AWC and which should be part of revised opt-in recycling arrangements;
- Redesign the Non-AWC area routes based on these principles;

It is intended to implement the new arrangements in 2017.

Executive Board in November also agreed to the removal of excess bins from the kerbside where households have more than the number for which they are eligible as set out within the policy agreed by Executive Board in January 2014. Consideration is being given to the methodology for delivering this.

Managing waste in high-rise properties

High-rise properties form a substantial element of council housing in Leeds, with over 7,500 households in 121 blocks across the City. Housing Leeds are working with both Waste Management and Environmental Action Service on a programme of work to address the challenges linked to high-rise flats, which includes refuse collection and recycling related issues, including a trial at the 16 Lincoln Green high-rise blocks

To reduce obstructions around bin areas that inhibit collection, clear marking of car park spaces around the blocks have been identified. Together with the ongoing general monitoring of car parking, at present, there are no issues that are preventing collections from being made.

Assessments are ongoing to review current recycling facilities to assess usage and contamination levels. More effective recycling is being promoted, with leaflets and posters explaining what waste goes into which bin.

A pictorial Leaflet showing how to deal with rubbish has been put in chute rooms and on Communal Notice Boards to promote waste disposal (see appendix 3). In addition a letter advising how to dispose of rubbish also sent to individual tenants as part of recent Roxby Close project, this also included a home visit, face to face explanation providing recycling advice. This is to be rolled out across all blocks in the trial.

Improved communications and co-ordination of activities between key service areas such as Housing Leeds, Waste Management, Environmental Action, CEL, etc. in relation to waste related issues in high-rise properties, is ongoing. Where side waste continues to be an issue following collection days, Localities have agreed to clear accumulations of waste. With active monitoring on collection, enforcement warnings have been issued.

A Bulky Waste Pilot is to be introduced in April 2016 to Lindsay Mount/Roxby Close to dispose of Bulky Items with a review in 3 months on outcomes from Pilot.

Key Challenges and Next Steps

Based on the outcome of this trial, the main challenge for Environment and Housing will be to extend these measures to further Council high-rise properties on a targeted basis.

Bulky Item Collection Service.

The Council promotes the re-use of bulky household waste by encouraging residents to use a number of charities and disposal sites which can make use of these items. Where that isn't possible, the Council will collect bulky domestic waste from households through an offer of a maximum of 3 collections of 4 items each year free of charge.

The operational response for the collection of bulky household waste changed in the autumn of 2015. The cleansing teams operating in zones now provide the bulky waste collection service alongside other routine street cleansing work. This moved the service away from the previous task and finish approach of a certain number of visits constituting a day's work regardless of whether items were successfully removed or not.

The number of requests for bulky item collections remains consistently around 33,000 requests per year.

Since the introduction of the zonal teams, the number of complaints received (vast majority about missed collections) has fallen by approximately 75%:

Year	Q3	Q4
2014/15	52	42
2015/16	8	10

For 15/16 Q3, 90% of requests for service were met (ie items removed). Of those which failed, 8% were due to the item not being there at the time of collection (probably removed by scrap merchants), 1% were wet or contaminated & 1% were inaccessible to the crew (eg behind a locked gate or parked car).

Addressing Flytipping across the city.

Flytipping incidents reported to the Council are responded to by the 3 Locality Teams and a city centre team in Environmental Action. In late summer 2015, 21 zones teams were established across the city covering enforcement and cleansing work with staff from both fields working to one manager for the first time. The smaller size of the operational areas, the common point of management and the joined-up cleansing & enforcement operations provides opportunities for greater intelligence on current hot spot areas and more chance of finding evidence to identify perpetrators rather than simply removing the flytipped material without investigation.

14/15 is the latest full year for which performance information is available on flytipping activities and this of course pre-dates the significant operational changes in introduced mid-year in 2015:

In 14/15, just under 14,000 flytipping incidents were reported to the Council, resulting in 6,269 investigations. 460 statutory notices or Fixed Penalty Notices and 3 formal cautions were issued and 2 prosecutions undertaken.

Data collected by Defra for 14/15 shows Leeds received the 12th highest number of fly tipping notifications out of 326 Local Authorities. Leeds was 7th highest in terms of carrying out investigations into flytipping and 25th highest in issuing statutory notices.

The identification of the owners of flytipped material is notoriously difficult, but can be achieved through documents with names and addresses being found, or through covert surveillance in known hot spot areas.

Some good work has been undertaken in Wetherby & Harewood as flytipping is a significant issue in the country lanes and laybys here. A two-pronged approach has included the installation of signs to warn of prosecution/fines and that CCTV may be in operation which in itself deters many potential flytippers. Secondly, 3 sets of portable, covert CCTV cameras are used at sites agreed with Members and where the data shows most flytipping to occur. The initial purchase cost of the cameras was paid for by Community Committee Wellbeing budget (approx £1,500 each). The use of the CCTV is still in its early days and there are as yet no examples where evidence of flytipping has been secured using this approach. The Committee's Env Sub Group will be evaluating the use of the cameras and signage both in terms of actual evidence gathered and measurable reductions in flytipping.