

**Report of the Director of Communities and Environment**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities)**

**Date: 11 July 2019**

**Subject: The Directors' response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Inquiry into Waste Management Services**

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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**

1. The Scrutiny inquiry into waste management services in 2018 considered the performance of kerbside collections of domestic waste, service standards and engagement with customers and the recycling of household waste in Leeds.
2. This report provides the formal response of the Director of Communities and Environment, Director of City Development and Director Housing and Resources to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Inquiry into waste management services. All the recommendations made are accepted.
3. In addition, the report takes opportunity to provide updates on each recommendation; in particular those the Scrutiny Board specifically asked for progress to be reported in July 2019. The proposed wording of the city's waste strategy is appended to this report for consideration and comment by Scrutiny Board members.

**Recommendations**

Scrutiny Board Members are asked to approve the responses to the inquiry recommendations as detailed in the report and note the progress provided for each recommendation.

Members of Scrutiny Board are asked to read the wording of the proposed city waste strategy at appendix 1 and provide comment at the meeting, to be reported verbally to Executive Board on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report provides the response of the Director of Communities and Environment, Director of City Development and Director Housing and Resources to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Inquiry into Waste Management services. This includes an update on progress made against each recommendation where appropriate.
- 1.2 As required by the constitution, this report has been prepared in consultation with the Executive Member Environment and Sustainability.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Kerbside collections in Leeds comprise mixed dry recyclable waste (green bin), garden waste (brown bin), food waste (to a limited area) and residual waste (black bin). There are some exceptions to this where a bagged service is provided due to practical problems for customers using wheely bins. The brown bin/garden waste service operates 9 months a year (March-November).
- 2.2 Glass is not accepted in the green bins, mainly because it breaks and “contaminates” the other recyclable material such as paper/cardboard, but is instead collected via around 700 glass recycling banks across the city.
- 2.3 The collection frequency for each waste type varies across the city, dependent on whether households are in an alternate weekly collection (AWC) or non-AWC area, the property type and whether included in any trial projects such as food waste collection.
- 2.4 Areas receiving alternate weekly collections make up approximately 76% of the city and the service here is alternating fortnightly collections of residual (black bins) and mixed dry recyclable waste (green bins). Most households in these areas therefore have their black, green and brown bins emptied twice every four weeks. In addition, food waste is collected weekly from 12.5k households in and around Rothwell.

The remainder of the city not on AWC are provided with a more varied service of different containers and frequencies of collection. Households here broadly have their black bin emptied four times, green bin once and brown bin twice (where provided) every four weeks.

- 2.5 For the majority of the year, there is typically around 70,000 collections from kerbside made every day in Leeds.
- 2.6 The inquiry carried out in 2018 reviewed the provision of household waste collections in Leeds and considered improvements to service standards and customer engagement on the kerbside collection service described.

- 2.7 A key focus of the inquiry was the rate of recycling of household waste in Leeds. Members of the Scrutiny Board acknowledged the inquiry was taking place as a waste strategy for the city was under development, which would of course cover this area of waste management performance. The draft city strategy for waste will be presented to the Council's Executive Board in July 2019 and is provided in this report for consideration and comment, at appendix 1.

### 3. Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

- 3.1 All the recommendations are welcomed and supported and require no further comment.

- 3.2 **Recommendation 1:** that the Director of Communities and Environment, before the July 2019 meeting, explores the creation of a framework contract arrangement to facilitate the expansion of metroSTOR facilities, in situations where funding can be secured.

- 3.2.1 Recommendation accepted

- 3.2.2 *Progress update:*

*The service will look to explore the availability and suitability of other bin storage solutions similar to the MetroStor (brand name) product which has already been trialled.*

*There are other commercial providers of this type of bin containment system and we would use learning obtained through the MetroStor product trial to develop a specification for a product which will be fit for purpose and meet the needs of all relevant stakeholders, and to identify the appropriate route for its procurement.*

*However, the trial, as well as other use of other "communal bin" options show that such solutions are dependent on ongoing engagement with local residents/tenants and still often result in additional side-waste/fly-tipping. This work will help provide options for localised solutions, but is not in itself the answer to reducing waste and fly-tipping. It is more likely to help with increasing recycling/reducing contamination.*

- 3.3 **Recommendation 2:** that the Director of Communities and Environment in response to DEFRA's waste strategy identifies:
- a) what funding streams will be made available and how they can be utilised in order to make a positive difference to waste management and recycling rates in Leeds;
  - b) Identifies how current Council resources can be better utilised to support the various relevant requirements outlined.
- A progress update will be required by the Scrutiny Board in July 2019 with a full overview in January 2020.

- 3.3.1 Recommendation accepted.

### 3.3.2 Progress update:

- a) *The outcome of specific DEFRA consultations on elements of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England will have a critical bearing on the availability of funding for changes to or expansion of recycling services. Consultation responses were submitted by Leeds to DEFRA in May 2019. Further consultations are now anticipated with more detailed information on funding streams and timescales later this year. There is no further detail as yet about when funding streams will be made available other than the indication in the Strategy that it will be 2023.*
- b) *The Waste Strategy for Leeds will set out aims for maximising the contribution to reuse and recycling by existing services and infrastructure through service improvement and behaviour change. This will inform and be informed by:*
- the current Refuse Service Review, due to be completed summer 2019, and desired outcomes in it around improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the currently configured service to move it into a better position to absorb future city growth and to take opportunities/meet requirements that may come from the national and local waste strategies.*
  - The City Conversation on waste has begun with the people of Leeds to gauge their appetite for making changes to the way we all manage waste.*
  - The Climate Change agenda, and in particular a move towards carbon based measures of performance, away from weight based recycling targets. So, not simply how much we recycle by weight, but what we recycle and reducing the amount of waste produced in the first place.*

### 3.4 Recommendation 3: that the Director of Communities and Environment:

- a) outlines a plan to the Scrutiny Board at the July 2019 meeting which identifies the approach to meeting the 2020 recycling rate of 50%; **or**,
- b) provides a revised recycling programme proposal to the Executive Board for agreement during 2019 if it is anticipated that the targets as referenced in paragraph 25 and 33 will not be met, explaining the reasons for this.

#### 3.4.1 Recommendation accepted

#### 3.4.2 Progress Update:

*The current performance in Leeds has been maintained over recent years in the face of progressive Government funding reductions. Although Leeds is unlikely to meet the 50% target in 2020, this is reflective of the national picture in relation to recycling performance and the position in which the majority of local authorities therefore find themselves.*

*The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy 2018 and outcome of the current consultations/availability of funding will inevitably shape future service changes. The consultations cover separate weekly collections of food waste, garden waste, deposit return schemes and producer responsibility and plastic tax. The Strategy talks about a 2023 implementation timescale. It states that net costs will be met by Government for new recycling services provided by a Council as a result of requirements that emerge. Any changes will need to be phased in line with this.*

*It is important to note that the national waste strategy and other related discussions around climate change talk increasingly about a move away from weight-based recycling targets to measuring the impact of changes/performance through a carbon based methodology. In the meantime, the Refuse Service review is looking at how more can be gained from the existing infrastructure in Leeds. This may mean doing things differently in our more challenging locations, as well as working with residents to make better use of the green bin and local recycling sites/facilities/banks.*

- 3.5 Recommendation 4:** that the Director of Communities and Environment:
- a) considers the requirements of the DEFRA strategy and the areas of focus outlined in paragraph 38 by this Scrutiny Board and ensures that the service review and development of the local waste strategy is expedited without further delay.
  - b) ensures that the Scrutiny Board is fully informed of progress and reports back at key intervals to ensure the Scrutiny Board continues to support the development of the local strategy before it is agreed and adopted.

3.5.1 Recommendation accepted

3.5.2 Progress Update:

*The Waste Strategy for Leeds is to be presented to the Executive Board on 24th July 2019, and will cover issues raised by Scrutiny through the inquiry, and will take account of the DEFRA Resources and Waste Strategy for England. The wording of the strategy is provided at appendix 1 for consideration and comment by Scrutiny at the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July. These comments will be fed back verbally at the meeting when the local strategy will be considered by Executive Board, on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Production of the local strategy had been delayed to the summer to allow for initiation of a city conversation on waste and progress on the Refuse Service Review. The conversation is already telling us that there is an appetite for change in the way that we all manage waste and that the city as a whole is keen to play its part. The Waste Strategy Advisory Board has been kept updated on the development of the strategy.*

- 3.6 Recommendation 5:** that the Director of Communities and Environment presents an analysis of waste collection systems that could be utilised in the longer term to accelerate improved recycling rates, which also considers suitability, financial viability, sustainability and expected benefits. The analysis is to be presented to the Scrutiny Board in January 2020, or before if practicable.

3.6.1 Recommendation accepted

3.6.2 Progress update:

*Scrutiny Board has received information in early 2019 on alternative kerbside recycling collection systems operated by other high performing authorities.*

*Waste management from a producer, retailer and consumer perspective is at a pivotal point and our view is it would be unwise to propose changes to collections*

*systems/ regimes until the outcome of the Governments consultations on weekly collections of food waste, garden waste, deposit return schemes and producer responsibility and plastic tax is released.*

*Further updates will be provided to the Board, including how more can be gained from the existing infrastructure in Leeds, and the anticipated move away from weight based recycling measure to reducing waste in the first place and judging recycling success through carbon based measures.*

- 3.7 Recommendation 6:** that the Director of Communities and Environment,
- a) reviews the current missed bin definition and considers whether performance benefits could be delivered should it be aligned to customer expectation.
  - b) explores the different methods of communication and proactively puts measures in place to inform Leeds residents of the current missed bin policy and what they need to do should their bin not be collected on the established collection day.
- An update on progress is to be reported back to the Scrutiny Board in July 2019.

3.7.1 Recommendation accepted

3.7.2 *Progress update:*

*Work is taking place between the Refuse Service and Customer Access to introduce a live update page on the council's website that would allow residents to view that day's bin collection issues – for example to see if there was a particular issue affecting their street that day and what the advice is to do in the meantime. Further work will then take place to make better use of social media and potentially phone apps etc to improve communications. This work is dependent on improvements to how the service records missed bin incidents and in particular the effective use of in-cab technologies. The introduction of a new Crew Chargehand post for every refuse vehicle is seen to be key to this. Proposals for this new role/post have been developed and agreed with unions and the post will be recruited to in due course.*

*A further update will be provided in January 2020, by when the above actions will be in place.*

- 3.8 Recommendation 7:** that the Director of Communities and Environment considers if the existing missed bin policy should be adapted, working with stakeholder groups to explore the:
- a) negative impact of leaving bins on pedestrian walkways for 48 hours
  - b) identification of any innovative solutions or compromise that will prevent access issues for those who are mobility or sight impaired.
  - c) cost, benefit and viability implications of any solution or compromise identified
- The outcome of these considerations is to be reported back to the Scrutiny Board in January 2020.

3.8.1 Recommendation accepted

### 3.8.2 *Progress update:*

*A work stream has been established to address this and will include conversations with other Councils on their approaches and consultation with stakeholders (including representatives of those most affected). The initial thoughts of the service are that any fundamental changes to a service designed and resourced on the requirement for residents to present and take back their bins from the kerbside will not be possible.*

*The focus will therefore be on reducing the occasions when bins are not collected on the scheduled day, particularly where the implications are greater with regards to the issues raised in this recommendation, and how residents and refuse staff can do more to ensure bins are more considerately “parked” on the kerbside.*

*The service review currently being undertaken includes objectives related to this as well as scope to change council-led behaviour change and enforcement provision. Good progress is being made in service redesigns that will help improve collections on scheduled days. The outcome will be reported to Scrutiny Board in January 2020.*

- 3.9 Recommendation 8:** that the Director of Communities and Environment explores and resolves the technical in-cab technology issues and
- a) ensures that all waste personnel are appropriately trained to utilise the technology effectively, with clear lines of accountability and responsibility for its use.
  - b) prepares an action plan which clearly outlines existing problems with the technology, how these will be overcome and target dates for resolving the problem areas outlined.
- A progress update will be required by the Scrutiny Board in July 2019 with a more detailed overview in January 2020.

#### 3.9.1 Recommendation accepted

#### 3.9.2 *Progress update:*

*The issues raised in this recommendation are being covered as part of the Refuse Service Review. Although the review is not due to be completed in full until August 2019, sufficient progress has been made on a number of key issues which has allowed proposals to introduce a new role/post of Crew Chargehand to be brought forward in June. As part of this work and discussion with staff and unions, work has begun by relevant crew staff to help identify where there are problems and to get the technology working, with the new Crew Chargehands suitably trained. A more detailed report/update will be provided in January 2020.*

- 3.10 Recommendation 9 –** That the Director of Communities and Environment works in collaboration with the Director of City Development to ensure, through national and local planning policy, that Housing Developers are meeting all requirements for the provision of waste storage and collection, at planning and development stages.

The outcome of this collaborative work to be reported to the Scrutiny Board in July 2019.

### 3.10.1 Recommendation accepted.

### 3.10.2 Progress update:

*It has now been agreed that Communities and Environment will produce a technical specification for Housing Developers to use to ensure that provision of waste storage and collection of waste/recycling from properties is fully considered at the planning and development stages. This will be facilitated initially via a technical specification guidance document which will be published on the Councils website as 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' within the Planning and Waste areas of the website. Officers from Planning and Waste will also direct developers to the guidance and provide advice and further information as required. The technical specification will be a living document capable of being updated and amended to ensure it remains valid and relevant.*

*Officers from Planning and Waste will work together to explore the most appropriate mechanism for the inclusion of the guidance in the planning process. This will include exploring whether the guidance can be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accord with policy EN6 of the existing Core Strategy. The wording of Policy EN6 may need some minor modification to ensure that it forms a suitable parent policy for the SPD and this modification would need to be carried out through the Local Plan Review.*

### 3.11 **Recommendation 10** – That the Director of Communities and Environment works collaboratively with the Director of Resources and Housing to advance fleet upgrade without delay. With an update to be provided to Scrutiny Board in July 2019.

#### 3.11.1 Recommendation accepted

#### 3.11.2 Progress update:

*The fleet upgrade for Waste Collection Services has been given priority and as such will now see the replacement of 52% of the fleet (45 vehicles) by mid December 2019.*

*An analysis has been undertaken of the specific requirements of the service, identifying priority vehicles to be procured, furthermore a training programme is established to ensure drivers are pre-trained in the use of the vehicles before they arrive causing minimum disruption to the service. Four vehicles which are suitable for a trial electric retro fit have now been identified meaning 49 of the 86 will be operating as new. The new vehicles are ordered and are on a delivery program which starts in June 2019 for completion in mid-December 2019.*

*Fleet Services have a number of measures in place to support the Waste Collection Service in their daily operations and a Transport Logistics Officer has been established who works directly with the service. This is to continually provide vehicle*

*support to the current operation, identify future needs and make sure the service has the fleet in place which it needs to deliver the required service each day.*

*The remaining 37 refuse vehicles are scheduled to be replaced over the next three years 17 of which are planned for 2020/21, 16 in 2021/22 and the remaining 4 in 2023/24 as part of a scheduled fleet replacement programme based on a number of factors including reliability, age and intelligence from regular monitoring of the vehicles performance.*

*In addition to the work already completed fleet are working in collaboration with waste operations to provide advice and guidance around future fleet configuration and vehicle management issues to support any service changes arising from the Refuse Service review and as implications/opportunities from the national waste strategy become clearer.*

- 3.12 **Recommendation 11** – That the Director of Communities and Environment works in collaboration with the Director of City Development to explore practical solutions, that are palatable to local residents, to resolve access problems through the implementation and enforcement of Traffic Regulation Orders.  
The outcome of this collaborative work to be reported to Scrutiny Board in July 2019.

3.12.1 Recommendation accepted

3.12.2 Progress update:

*Consultation and discussions have taken place with all ward members over March/April 2019 on those locations where it is known or felt that access issues regularly cause delays to bin collections. A ward analysis of reported “misses” was provided as part of that consultation. The information gathered has now been collated, together with views from crews (aided by work of union stewards as part of the Refuse Service review). Highways staff are now in the process of working through the many locations identified citywide. Once this work is completed, an Emergency TRO will be submitted, with approval likely to be required through Executive Board in due course.*

- 3.13 **Recommendation 12:** that the Director of Communities and Environment considers if the existing side waste policy should be adapted, including the positive and negative implications of adopting a consistent city wide approach. The outcome of this consideration is to be reported back to the Scrutiny Board in July 2019.

3.13.1 Recommendation accepted

3.13.2 Progress update:

*The outcome of this consideration is linked to the refuse service review currently taking place and due to be completed late summer 2019. The service view is that there cannot be a one size fits all approach to this issue and there needs to be*

*bespoke solutions in those areas where this issue actually causes a problem (either by implementing the policy, or not implementing it).*

*Currently, the policy is that there should be no side waste in streets where alternate week collection takes place, but it is allowed in streets where monthly green bin/weekly black still takes place (the “excluded” AWC areas). Examples of how this does not work locally though are Headingley and Harehills – where allowing side waste has a detrimental effect on the environment of the streets, often contributing towards litter and fly-tipping problems.*

*Environmental Services is looking at how this issue is looked at in the round in the way the whole environment (service) is managed/delivered in areas such as this. Proposals will be brought forward as part of the refuse service review and reported to Scrutiny Board.*

- 3.14 **Recommendation 13** – That the Director of Communities and Environment:
- a) updates alert procedures to ensure that Ward Members are included in Customer Access staff updates, where their ward is affected.
  - b) improves the quality of information provided to Elected Members in the ‘end of day reports’ ensuring that they are accurate, provide an explanation of the reason for the missed collection and detail the action to be taken to resolve the issue, including longer term solutions that may be necessary.
- A progress update is to be reported to the Scrutiny Board in July 2019.

3.14.1 Recommendation accepted

- 3.14.2 *The updates provided for Recommendations 6, 7 and 8 to a large degree cover this recommendation. The information available to Customer Access staff is that which is also made available to Ward Members. Customer Access and Waste Management Services are now looking at how the end of day reports can be improved to be more meaningful to Members, Customer Service Officers and customers.*

- 3.15 **Recommendation 14** – That the Director of Communities and Environment fully explores and implements the provision of customer access information, either web based or app, which enables both residents and Elected Members to identify accurately reported missed bin collections, which is updated in an efficient and timely manner.
- A progress update will be required by the Scrutiny Board in July 2019 with a more detailed overview in January 2020.

3.15.1 Recommendation accepted

3.15.2 *Progress update:*

*As with the previous recommendation, the updates provided for recommendations 6, 7 and 8 to a large degree cover this recommendation. In line with the recommendation a more detailed update/overview will be provided in January 2020.*

- 3.16 **Recommendation 15** – That the Director of Communities and Environment reviews
- a) how information is consistently provided when problems arise
  - b) that information sharing processes are being followed, particularly information which advises residents how to present waste for collection, so that they are clear about their responsibilities. (e.g. when contamination is evident, in areas with a transient population and where side waste is an issue)
- A progress update is to be reported to the Scrutiny Board in July 2019.

3.16.1 Recommendation accepted

3.16.2 *Progress update:*

*As with the previous recommendation, the updates provided for recommendations 6, 7 and 8 to a large degree cover this recommendation. In addition, the update provided in recommendation 12 provides information on work being done as part of the wider Refuse Service Review to focus on the most significant areas of the city where a transient population presents a particular challenge to how household waste is presented and collected/managed.*

## **4.0 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The responses to the recommendations make regular reference to the importance of two ongoing pieces of work which will help deliver most of the recommendations made by Scrutiny Board. These are of course the development of a new Waste Strategy for the city and the ongoing Refuse Service Review which primarily covers household waste collection operations. Both pieces of work include significant elements of consultation and engagement with residents, business, education, third sector partners and for the latter in particular, staff and Trade Union representatives. The outcome of consultation will fundamentally shape these pieces of work and good engagement is a strong principle contained in both.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 The implementation of the recommendations will lead to greater consideration of a number of aspects of equality and diversity in the provision of waste management services by the Council. In particular, these include further consideration of avoiding problems caused by bins being left on pavements etc for longer than is absolutely necessary, thus creating a challenging walking route for pedestrians who are mobility or sight impaired. Also, a review of how the service communicates with residents on the correct presentation of their waste will incorporate approaches reflective of the challenges some communities face in understanding English.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 The activities described in this report contribute to our Best Council Plan ambitions in reducing consumption and increasing recycling in the city. The city's waste

strategy, which was a feature of the Scrutiny Inquiry, has significant potential to promoting a less wasteful, more resource efficient, low carbon economy.

- 4.3.2 The recent declaration of a Climate Change Emergency in Leeds and our commitment to achieve 'net zero carbon' by 2030 has set out starkly the need for radical action at every level, from international to individual, to avoid irreparable damage to the world's eco systems. The earth's resources are precious and finite, and our current rate of consumption and our throwaway culture cannot be sustained. The city's waste strategy shows we are committed as a city to doing our part and leading the way in redressing the balance in favour of the natural world so that it is safeguarded and left it in a healthier state for future generations.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The implementation of the recommendations form Scrutiny Board will be delivered within the Council's existing resources.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 The implementation of the recommendations in themselves do not pose any particular additional risk. This will be considered further in practice as each element is implemented in coming months.

### **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The recommendations made by Scrutiny Board following the inquiry into waste management services are accepted unchanged.
- 5.2 As reported, positive progress is already being made on most of the recommendations, with the majority linked to the ongoing Refuse Service Review and development of both national and local waste strategies.

### **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are asked to approve the responses to the inquiry recommendations and to note the progress reported.
- 6.2 Members of Scrutiny Board are asked to read the wording of the proposed city waste strategy at appendix 1 and provide comment at the meeting, to be reported verbally to Executive Board on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

## **Background documents**

7 There are no background documents.

Appendix 1. Wording of the draft city waste strategy, to be presented to Executive Board on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

Appendix 1.

## **The Waste Strategy for Leeds**

### **Our Vision**

Our vision for Leeds is to become the best city in the UK and a world leader in eliminating unnecessary waste and its environmental impact, and in maximising the value in our resources for the benefit of our local economy and communities.

### **Why do we need a Waste Strategy for Leeds?**

The environmental issue of waste is a huge challenge both locally in Leeds and globally. In Leeds alone we still produce over 600,000 tonnes a year of domestic and business waste. However, public awareness of its impacts has never been higher, and this presents an opportunity for change.

The recent declaration of a Climate Change Emergency in Leeds and our commitment to achieve 'net zero carbon' by 2030 has set out starkly the need for radical action at every level, from international to individual, to avoid irreparable damage to the world's eco systems.

The earth's resources are precious and finite, and our current rate of consumption and our throwaway culture cannot be sustained. And so in Leeds we are committed to doing our part and leading the way in redressing the balance in favour of the natural world so that it is safeguarded and left in a healthier state for future generations.

Our recent conversations with the people of Leeds have demonstrated a real desire for this significant change. As part of our own commitment to be the best city in the UK, we are seeking to harness this new public appetite to both influence and deliver take forward positive developments locally and to use our collective voice to influence at both the national and international levels wherever possible.

However, we recognise that this is not an issue that the Council can solve alone, and we need commitment, leadership and action from all sectors, communities and individuals across the city. We therefore see this genuinely as a strategy for Leeds as a whole, which depends on everyone playing their part if we are to realise our ambitions.

### **What we have done since the last strategy**

Since the last Waste Strategy was published in 2006, much has been achieved. As a city we have almost doubled our household waste recycling rate since this time, and the Council has reduced the proportion of domestic waste sent to landfill from around 78% in 2006 to less than 3% in 2019, already exceeding the Government's long-term targets for landfill. During this time we have introduced fortnightly collections of recyclables to the vast majority of households, completed a trial food waste collection service in part of the City and continue to provide the vast majority of waste collection services free of charge in a way which makes us stand out from most other Local Authorities.

We have now redeveloped our Household Waste Recycling Centres into modern facilities which allow a wide range of materials to be recycled, and have opened award winning 're-use shops' on two of these sites in partnership with a consortium of charities.

The Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF) at Cross Green became fully operational in 2016. This has enabled us to achieve the huge reduction in landfill referred to above, and has enabled enough electricity to power the equivalent of over 22,000 homes to be generated from our non-recycled waste, saving over 60,000 tonnes of carbon a year. The district heating network to be supplied by the RERF has now been installed and will soon be supplying affordable heat to some of the City's social housing, as well as to businesses, thus further improving the energy efficiency and carbon footprint of the RERF. However, there we need to do much more ...

**What will make the biggest difference:**

Waste and recycling performance is still measured primarily by weight of materials, with Government targets still expressed in these terms, and this has therefore influenced the material streams historically targeted by local authorities. However, in light of the urgency around climate change, the carbon savings that can be made from waste must become the primary driver.

Analysis of the carbon impacts of waste demonstrates the huge potential carbon savings from a reduction in the production and consumption of excess food, which is a key theme and focus of the recently published Resources and Waste Strategy for England as well as the national climate change strategy. It also shows very significant carbon savings from avoiding the production of textiles and plastics. Lesser, but nevertheless significant carbon savings also can be made through the recycling of these materials, but this evidence shows the need for a strategy for Leeds which is focused as much on waste reduction as it is on reuse and recycling.

We believe that the most significant way we can secure major environmental change is for individuals to each make small everyday changes to reduce their waste, to reuse items and to recycle more. We each need to take personal responsibility and play our part.

However, we recognise the importance of supportive policies and legislation from Government, both to ensure that manufacturers and retailers bear the costs of dealing with the products and materials that are sold to customers, and to ensure that local authorities receive the funding necessary to provide the services and infrastructure needed to support the efforts of individuals. The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy published in December 2018 left a range of key issues subject to consultation, especially relating to recycling collections and how performance is to be measured in the future, making it difficult for councils to move forward with certainty until the outcomes are known.

We also believe that collaboration and partnerships across sectors, with strong leadership from key strategic influencers will be crucial if we are to tackle problems and generate solutions for the City. We acknowledge the crucial role that business leaders in the city have in this regard and the potential commercial opportunities ripe for exploration. Opportunities to capitalise on waste management processes which produce hydrogen would be created by through the establishment of a hydrogen network in the city. The Council plays a lead role in the Northern Gas Networks H21 Hydrogen Conversion project, which envisages that Leeds could be one of the first cities to convert its gas supply to hydrogen instead of methane.

These changes need to be complemented by effective and engaging campaigns to change our current waste behaviours and resource consumption, and also services and infrastructure that are designed around local community needs and maximise environmental and economic benefits.

**Our success on this agenda will see:**

- major reductions in the carbon impacts of waste generated in Leeds;
- a reduction in waste volumes generated in Leeds;
- major increases in reuse and recycling, prioritising materials offering the greatest carbon savings;
- heightened public awareness and local community ownership of waste issues, with clear evidence of increased public action and demand for change;
- a growing body of businesses and other key organisations in Leeds becoming exemplars of waste reduction, and exercising clear influence for change through their own activities and as City leaders;
- evidence of a growing culture of reuse over disposing and buying new;
- measurable economic benefits within the City, in particular benefiting the economically disadvantaged.

**The City Conversation on waste**

We started a ‘conversation’ with the people of Leeds in the Spring of 2019 to listen to views on waste within Leeds, to stimulate debate, to identify our influencers, and ultimately to harness the growing desire for positive change. This conversation will be ongoing, and our intention is that this will develop into a city-wide ‘movement’ which will result in long-term environmental change.

The ‘conversation’ is happening via a wide range of media, for example through face-to-face conversations, social media, using surveys and physical installations to stimulate views and discussion, and through events with businesses, the universities and the Third Sector. Some of the key things that we as the people of Leeds are saying are as follows:

- we care about waste and what’s happening to the environment and in our city
- we are already doing a lot
- we want to be able to do more to reduce and recycle
- we want the people who sell things to reduce waste and packaging
- we think everyone is responsible
- by working together as a city we can make a difference

**THEME 1 – Reducing excess**

Clearly, if we consume less, less will need to be produced, and this is where the greatest environmental benefits are to be had, particularly from a carbon perspective.

Programmes like Blue Planet II and the recent profile of the climate change agenda have raised public awareness of the environmental impacts of plastics, food and textiles. Last year alone we threw away over 49,500 tonnes of food, 23,300 tonnes of plastics and 5,200

tonnes of textiles just through domestic collections in Leeds. Add to this the amount discarded by businesses in the city and you can multiply these figures several times over.

National research estimates that for every two tonnes we eat, one is thrown away, and that ten million tonnes of food that leaves farms each year is wasted, with 70% of this being thrown away in homes. It is thought that 14% of our weekly shopping bill is spent on food that ends up in the bin. There is also a growing awareness around the environmental impacts of purchasing much more new and cheap clothing and the rise of 'fast fashion' where clothes are purchased and disposed of with little wear.

Although we will work together to recycle more of these materials, we recognise that the greatest benefits are through preventing quite so much of their use or purchase in the first place. This is of particular importance in the case of food waste, with the most significant carbon savings to be had from scaling back the huge level of intensive farming associated with producing food that then goes to waste, especially meat and dairy.

Much of this waste could be avoided through retailers or consumers changing their practices, and reducing their production would provide the most significant carbon savings relating to waste.

Through our city conversation, people and businesses of Leeds have been expressing a clear desire to do more and to change their habits. People were asked to 'Agree your three key actions', helping us to find out what the main things are that people are either already doing or are willing to pledge to do more of to reduce their waste. It is becoming clear that people in Leeds are ready to do more of the following: using reusable shopping bags, coffee cups and water bottles, buying products with less packaging, recycling unwanted clothes and giving away or composting their surplus food to avoid food waste.

Three quarters of businesses who we heard from expressed a willingness to make a public commitment around reducing, reusing and recycling their waste.

Generally, people accept that the problem of waste is their individual responsibility, but they also see a major role for manufacturers and retailers.

Based on this willingness expressed across the city, we are therefore committing to positive action.

### **The city of Leeds will work together to:**

- harness the growing public interest and exert local consumer pressure to influence manufacturers and retailers to reduce excessive and unsustainable packaging;
- engage the businesses sector to seek exemplars in the city to lead and share innovative practice within the sector which advance the city's carbon reductions.
- develop a range of commitments across businesses and public sector organisations in Leeds to eliminate avoidable plastic waste;
- change retailer marketing and promotional practices in the city to support more sustainable consumer purchasing choices;
- deliver measurable reductions in food waste through a change in retailer and food outlet marketing and practices in Leeds, and through influencing consumer behaviour;

- build communities where excess waste is considered to be socially unacceptable.

### **Key commitments from LCC:**

- we will eliminate all avoidable single-use plastics from our buildings, services and supply chain by 2020;
- we will work with and influence Government to ensure that tough producer responsibility measures are introduced for packaging;
- we will take the lead in bringing together different sectors to enter into common waste reduction commitments for the City;
- we will provide support for citywide and community led/based campaigns, initiatives and infrastructure that deliver substantial and measurable levels of waste reduction and carbon savings.

## **THEME 2 - Getting the most out of our resources**

Although the greatest gains are through reducing waste, materials will inevitably be thrown away and will need to be dealt with. In many cases these materials still have value and could be used again, possibly by someone else, or used in a different way. It is crucial that we secure this value and move away from our habits of minimal use before throwing away.

Alongside being much better at reusing items, we want the city to increase how much it recycles. The greatest environmental gains in carbon reduction terms would lead us towards a focus on recycling more textiles, metals, plastics and food waste. Our recent work to look at how high recycling rates are being achieved elsewhere shows that food waste and glass provide significant increases in recycled tonnages if collected at the kerbside.

The national landscape of Government funding and opportunity is changing and the city will need to be smart in order to move with and take advantage of this. However, we also want to determine for ourselves what is best for our city and our region, not being driven solely by historical ways of measuring performance, but by what will deliver the right environmental outcomes.

In practical terms, and given the increasing demand in the recycling markets for high quality materials, it is clear that doing more recycling means being willing to have more containers for these materials and to do more to separate out our waste, whether at home, at work or on the go.

Again, our 'city conversation' demonstrated a willingness amongst residents to do more, with many expressing a desire to be able to recycle more household waste items at the kerbside, and over half willing to separate out food waste at home for composting.

This needs to be balanced with the fact that we could get more recycling out of our existing collection regime, and the challenges faced in a city of Leeds size with a huge variation of housing types, communities and physical spaces for additional bins etc.

Around half of the businesses we listened to are willing to work together with others to understand how they can support Leeds and the local circular economy through managing resources more effectively.

There was also evidence of a growing culture of reuse, with many people giving examples of buying second hand or donating items to give them a second life.

**The city of Leeds will work together to:**

- establish a single reuse partnership for Leeds and stimulate a culture of reuse within the city, supporting this with infrastructure where appropriate;
- expand the range of materials collected in the City for recycling;
- identify and promote exemplars from the business sector to demonstrate the economic benefits of resource efficiency and sustainable waste management;
- assess the need and seek investment in Leeds for the local infrastructure necessary to support all sectors to realise greater resource efficiency and carbon based recycling outcomes.

**Key commitments from LCC:**

- we will make a strong and consistent case for us each to accept responsibility for the waste we produce and the need to make our own changes to reduce our environmental impacts;
- we will launch improved waste and recycling centres to increase the use of these sites and the proportion of items brought here which are then reused and recycled;
- we will make preparations to expand the range of materials collected for recycling at the kerbside, to include food waste;
- we will invest in and expand our district heating network, continuously improving the carbon performance of the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility and delivering wider environmental, economic and social benefits;
- we will demonstrate leadership in ensuring that our strategy is driven by the right environmental targets, completing a full life-cycle assessment of resources and waste in Leeds, and developing a carbon-based measure for waste management.

**THEME 3 – All doing our part**

Although we recognise as a city that we need to do new things and to do things differently, it is also essential that we get the basics right in supporting people to manage their waste well. This starts at individual and local community level.

The greatest gains are to be had through very many individuals making small changes to their behaviours and lifestyle so as to minimise their environmental impact. Our conversations with the people of Leeds have demonstrated a significant desire to do more and to each do their part.

Together, Leeds can do much to get the messages about recycling out effectively so that a shift occurs in our understanding of the importance of our contribution, and in the ease with which people see how they can play their part. Key influencers in the city can build a 'movement' in Leeds which will bring about fundamental change in the social norm in relation to waste and resources.

However, there are still parts of the city where people are not using the current waste collection services fully; whether due to lack of understanding, motivation or interest, or issues of limited waste storage capacity and / or vehicle access. Some areas of Leeds have large concentrations of terraced streets and dense housing with significant transient populations adding to the challenges of managing waste well which would benefit from a different service offer here.

Over 20% of the materials residents put in their recycling bins cannot be recycled because the materials are either the wrong ones or are contaminated. Dealing with this costs the city around £0.7 million a year. Also, there are still a lot of recyclables going in the black bins unnecessarily. If we were to put all of the relevant recyclables into their green bins that are currently going into the black bins, this could add an estimated 7% (percentage points) on to the city's domestic recycling rate. In this way we could significantly improve performance, whilst also reducing costs.

The incidence of waste related crime in Leeds is also still too high, and further co-ordinated action is required to tackle these issues.

Many of the views we've heard recently indicate that there is a clear willingness to do more with the opportunities for recycling that we already have if these can be made easier to use and understand.

Over half of those we listened to wanted better information on what can be recycled and where, and many expressed confusion over what should go in the green bin, particularly in relation to plastics. Businesses also wanted to have access to more information on what can be recycled and the opportunities available to them.

In light of the above, we need to become smarter in designing information and services around specific local needs so as to make things easier and simpler, and to have practical strategies for changing behaviours in key areas of the City.

#### **The city of Leeds will work together to:**

- build a waste and environmental 'movement' in Leeds using creative methods and capitalising on existing initiatives and demand for change within the City;
- develop and secure a range of high-profile pledges and commitments across businesses in Leeds, demonstrating their leadership in influencing for positive change and eliminating unnecessary waste in the City;
- exploit the potential of social media to influence for change across Leeds, showcasing examples of innovation and good practice across all sectors;
- deliver innovative and high quality facilities and services for recycling 'on the go' in the City Centre (and beyond where of proven benefit).

#### **Key commitments from LCC:**

- we will significantly reduce the amount of waste created by the Council to further the commitment to become a carbon neutral city.
- we will join the Business in the Community 'Waste to Wealth' Programme and commit to develop actions to meet the five themes of this programme.
- we will increase people's sense of ownership of and engagement with local waste and recycling issues through becoming more responsive and locally

accountable, using technology to provide more accurate and 'live' service performance data;

- we will reduce uncontained waste and green bin contamination and improve recycling rates through a range of solutions and interventions in areas of low service engagement, including investment in a dedicated, bespoke environmental service in parts of the city where the current offer does not work;
- we will simplify recycling messages to the public so as to increase the quantity and quality of materials collected from households;
- we will review planning policy and develop 'best practice' planning guidance to ensure waste management and recycling is designed into new properties, and that developers are meeting all requirements for the provision of waste storage and collection at planning and development stages;
- we will develop and agree localised waste crime action plans for Leeds to tackle all aspects of environmental crime, but prioritising fly-tipping and incorrect handling of domestic and commercial waste. Measures will include enhanced surveillance, engagement campaigns, formal enforcement action and appropriate use of Public Space Protection Orders for managing anti-social environmental behaviour in targeted areas.