

**Environment and
Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



6 October 2022

**Strategic Overview and
Update of Resources &
Waste Management Services
in County Durham**

**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update to some of the key areas of their recently expressed interest:
 - Waste tonnages and levels of recycling and contamination and the effects of the covid-19 pandemic, within County Durham, regionally and nationally,
 - What we are doing to reduce contamination of recycling,
 - Environment Act and Resource and Waste Strategy;
 - An update on the Tees Valley Energy from Waste project

Executive summary

- 2 Durham County Council as a unitary authority has a statutory duty for both the collection and treatment of household waste. It fulfils its responsibilities through direct “in house” provision of collection services including refuse, recycling and garden waste. It fulfils its disposal obligations through a range of contracts, for example residual waste treatment, household waste recycling centres and materials reprocessing facilities (recycling).
- 3 A presentation will be provided by the Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Directorate outlining the Council’s overall approach to waste management, reflected in a simple priority hierarchy of waste avoidance/reduction where possible, encouraging reuse, promoting

recycling and as a last resort waste treatment/disposal. The presentation will illustrate what the Council and partners have been doing against the themes in the waste hierarchy, some of which has gained national recognition.

- 4 The presentation will provide a strategic overview and update to that provided in November 2021 to the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The presentation will highlight the background to the waste management service provide by the council, update on work undertaken within the past year in relation to the Strategic Waste Management Service with particular reference to waste contracts, waste and recycling trends pre and post the covid-19 pandemic and how contamination levels within kerbside recycling are being tackled and update on the potential statutory requirement for food waste collection signalled in the Resources and Waste Strategy for England 2018.

Appendix 3 attached provides the Waste Management PowerPoint presentation which will be delivered by the Neighbourhoods & Climate Change Directorate.

It is also the intention of the Strategic Waste Management Service to provide an electronic information leaflet for Members within the near future. This will require initial sign off by the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee before wider circulation to all Members. The leaflet will detail key facts and figures regarding the waste management service provided by the council.

Recommendations

- 5 That Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive the report and comment on it accordingly.

Background

- 6 The Council has statutory responsibility for collection and disposal of household waste. It discharges these functions through a mixture of “in-house” provision (for collection) and through a range of contracts. There is also a statutory duty to make arrangements for the collection of commercial waste if requested by the occupier of the premises in the area.
- 7 A summary of the services provided include:
 - Refuse and recycling collections (in house, free at point of delivery)
 - Clinical waste collection (in house, free at point of delivery)

- Bring sites (in house, supplemented by third parties, free a point of delivery)
- Garden waste collection and treatment (in house except in Teesdale, charged scheme)
- Bulky waste collection (in house, charged scheme)
- Trade waste collection (in house, on request, charged scheme)
- Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)(contract, HW Martins)
- Materials Reprocessing (Recyclates) (contract, Biffa)
- Waste Treatment (Energy from Waste) (contract Suez).
- Haulage (contract Suez)

Waste Hierarchy

- 8 The European Waste Framework Directive (2008) first set out the waste hierarchy, enshrining the important principles of avoiding waste where possible, and a descending order of priorities, from reuse to recycling to waste treatment and disposal, with a requirement that Member states adopt these in their waste strategies. Many of these principles remain just as valid today, indeed the latest national Resources and Waste Strategy 2018 sets out how material resources will be preserved by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy in England.
- 9 The presentation provided will outline the Councils work in fulfilling the principles of the waste hierarchy, making reference with County Durham examples of the benefits of a circular economy. The presentation will include several examples of waste reduction/avoidance together with reuse.
- 10 An overview of the range of external contracts will be provided in the presentation, ranging from household waste recycling centres through to the energy from waste contract.

Challenges and Opportunities

- 11 The council's reuse, recycling and composting performance was 41.2% (2019/20) which subsequently decreased due to the pandemic to 37.3% (20/21). Contamination levels found within kerbside recycling have started to recover post pandemic and improved to the rate to 38.1% (21/22). It is intended the newly introduced countywide contamination campaign will make further improvements to recycling performance.
- 12 The waste management service operated robustly throughout the Covid-19 and the next decade will bring further challenges. The next decade will be guided by the Resources and Waste Strategy for England, and although provisions and timings may change due to Covid -19 and

national political delays the Strategy does signal mandatory food waste collections and the potential of free garden waste collection services through the 'Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England' agenda, as well as wider impacting on recycling for instance through the introduction of an 'Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Scheme' where producers and manufactures of products will be required to provide full net cost recovery of materials placed on the market and a 'Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for England.

- 13 In addition to this, locally for County Durham, a range of waste contracts have been procured, the largest of which would be a collaboration between 7 North East Councils, for an Energy from Waste (EFW) treatment facility in order to meet future waste treatment needs following achievement of recycling targets for at least the next 25 years.

Conclusions

- 14 The Council follows the principles of the waste hierarchy which offer the lowest cost and most sustainable solutions to waste management.

Background papers

Waste Management Overview Report, Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, November 2021

Defra Resources and Waste Strategy (2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england>

Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (Waste Framework Directive)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eudr/2008/98/contents>

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Council has a range of duties and powers for waste management, including those within (but not restricted to) Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Finance

This will be covered in the presentation.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Climate Change

Waste avoidance, minimisation, reuse and recycling are important ways we can all help in reducing carbon emissions.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

This will be covered in the presentation.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Not applicable.

Procurement

An outline of contracts and new procurement will be provided in the presentation.