

Notes of a meeting of the Waste Service Review Working Party held on Monday 15 April 2024 at 10:00am.

PRESENT

Cllr Julia Huffer (Chair)
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Kelli Pettitt

OFFICERS

Isabel Edgar – Director Operations
Ian Smith – Director Finance
Catherine Sutherland - Waste Development & Support Manager
Jane Webb – Senior Democratic Services Officer

25. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

27. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the meeting held on 4 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

28. TIMELINE FOR FINAL PROPOSALS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Waste Development & Support Manager presented the Timeline for Waste Proposals and Implementation and highlighted the steps necessary to achieve final approval from Council on 17 October 2024.

The Street Cleansing options will be brought to the Working Party in May, with the preferred models to be taken to Group meetings in June, and the final recommendations being made at the July WP meeting. The relevant reports will be prepared between July and September for Council and rollout will be planned with Comms support in January/December 2025. It will also be necessary to gain formal approval to extend ECSS' services for an additional year to bridge the gap between the MoA ending in March 2025 and the new service commencing in Spring 2026.

Members were happy with the timeline presented.

Director Operations explained that October 2024 would be the latest date a decision could be made. The actual roll-out date for the new services still needed to be decided, as the timing would need to avoid key events/holidays; this would be challenging as legislation dictated that the new service would

need to be implemented by 1st April after which the money would be incoming but emphasised that date would largely be driven by when the vehicles were received.

29. MODELLING OF FINAL OPTIONS

The Waste Development & Support Manager presented the Final Modelling of Options and explained that all the waste collected in black bags would fit in a 140lt bin over a two-week period; but the bin size had an effect on both the cost of the new service and the recycling rate.

Members discussed how many black bags were used by households, considered the different impact on the recycling rate, and agreed that a bin size of 180lt would be suitable for most households, however a 240lt bin be available for larger households in line with the new policies.

The Director Operations highlighted the service would be designed to a baseline, with every resident receiving a 180lt bin during the initial rollout by a contractor. Qualifying households could then apply for a larger bin, and the delivery and collection of the bins which would be managed by ECSS. Work could be completed prior to the rollout regarding presentation rates to help identify how many properties may apply for the larger bin. Receiving the 180lt bin may help households accept the bin, rather than applying for the larger bin in advance.

Members unanimously agreed to Option B3 – free garden waste with 180ltr bin for residual waste collected two weekly.

30. DELIVERY MODELS

The Waste Development & Support Manager explained that a decision needed to be made on who would deliver the service. There was a range of choices from contractors to inhouse service and a range of risk, reward, and flexibility of contracts within these.

- A typical private contractor would have the risk, but the Council would not have the control or ability to vary the contract. The Director of Operations clarified that although this was true around financial risk, the Council still held the reputational risk which can be just as damaging and challenging.
- In a partnership (e.g. South Cambs/City), economy of scales can be experienced as well as risk if the services were not aligned.
- With Trading Companies/direct services there would be the ability for influence, control and change but there would be no outside influence of experience.

The Director of Operations clarified that although operational or financial risk could be contracted out, the Council still held the reputational risk which can be just as damaging and challenging.

The Waste Development & Support Manager agreed to share the information with Members in order that the options could be considered at the Group meetings. A cover note highlighting the considerations for the Council would be included.

It was agreed that the information be taken to the relevant group meetings and a decision would be made and brought back to the next WP meeting on 13 May.

The Waste Development & Support Manager explained that East Cambs could go out to tender, the tendering process would likely cost between £100 - £150k however the market was changing with there being fewer providers bidding for direct services delivery.

It was more common, nationally, for waste companies to operate on the larger strategic side (Anaerobic Digestion: AD, Materials Recycling Facility: MRF, Waste Disposal) and for services to be direct service organisations as the margins for contractors were smaller. Contracts with external providers by their nature were more restrictive and prescriptive to provide certainty over the life of the contract, usually 7 years. The benefit of using ECSS was that the Council had more control of the contract, but there did need to be more rigor when making services changes e.g , a change request should be made, with ECSS costing the change and the decision brought back to a contract variation. This would enable the management of costs and transparency.

A Member asked if switching to a contractor at the point of rolling out new services would be risky due to them not having knowledge. The Director of Operations explained that this was not the case, as larger waste management companies had significant experience of these situations, and this could bring a benefit. However, with the significant improvement that ECSS had achieved and the new technical knowledge in place, there was no concern regarding ECSS' ability to deliver this project

Members agreed that it may be worthwhile exploring the market to ensure the Council receive the best value. There would be benefits of a larger organisation with the expertise, but Members also understood that with the geography, East Cambs was not attractive. The Director of Operations clarified that members would get a price back from the market, but this did not necessarily represent best value, and would impact on the overall timeline of implementing new services if the council decided not to go out to contract. If it was decided to utilise either ECSS or bring the service in house, then there needed to be a robust managing process in place.

Members agreed to take the information back to their respective groups and agree a way forward for the next WP in May.

31. POLICIES AND STANDARDS

The Waste Development & Support Manager highlighted that there were currently no policies in place for waste collection and suggested that East Cambs made the policy more of a charter that set out what was to be delivered, the expectations of both residents and the Council, such as how often collections were made, the criteria for smaller/larger bins and the collection/redelivery of sacks where bins could not be accommodated.

The Policy was currently being worked on, with 240ltr bins for those with two children or more in nappies or a household of 5 or more residents, or using hygiene medical waste, being provided upon request, with the criteria being reviewed every two years. It was pointed out that currently East Cambs charged for extra recycling bins and **Members were of the opinion that the bin should be free to encourage recycling. To provide a larger residual waste bin** a Recycling Officer would be required to enable this and provide guidance to households to utilise their recycling bins as much as possible before agreeing to provide larger bins.

Providing liners has been proven to increase participation in food waste collections. These did carry a cost, but this should be considered an effective way to encourage further recycling of food and use of the service. It was suggested residents should receive a roll of 52 (with a tag being provided ten liners before the end of the roll; to enable residents to request further liners). Plastic caddy liners could be used to keep costs down and these were sorted from the food waste so were acceptable to use. It was clarified that using compostable liners made no difference as these were also removed and disposed of as the composting or AD process cannot process them.

The Waste Development & Support Manager commented that there needed to be a process of dealing with problem collections (contaminated or excess waste) as crews could record these issues on the new bartec system. This would be done via educating residents, bins could be tagged, and warning/guidance letters could be sent on the third and fourth time before issuing formal notices. The issue would be passed to Environmental Services and enforcement action taken if necessary. The aim was to approach the issue in a friendly educational manner.

Sack properties could be provided with purple sacks to enable the same process and restrict the amount of waste be collected with crews able to easily identify it, to enable all residents to be treated fairly. There would be no provision for extra or 'side' waste to be collected.

Additional brown sacks were not currently chargeable and similar branded garden waste sacks could still be provided with the option to purchase extra sacks.

The question was asked as to why the Council would charge for a brown bin when the standard garden waste service was free as this was unusual. The Council currently averaged about £37k revenue for extra garden waste bins, per year and £25k for blue bin per year.

The Director Operations asked members to consider whether liners could be provided free as there would be a saving on black sacks and liners would encourage recycling food.

Officers agreed to share costings with Members.

It was agreed that

- **the Policies required fine tuning and would then be shared with Members.**
- **Members agreed that a second/larger blue bin should not be charged for as a blue bin encouraged recycling.**
- **Members would discuss the possibility of providing liners and the possibility of not charging for brown bins back to group meetings, for discussion and bring back to the next WP meeting in May.**

32. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 13 May at 10am in Committee Room 2.

The meeting closed at 11:20am

