

**Notes of a meeting of the Waste Service Review Working Party
held on Tuesday 21 November 2023 at 9:30am.**

PRESENT

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

OFFICERS

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

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for the Working Party agreed by Operational Services Committee at its meeting were received.

4. THE NATIONAL PICTURE – LEGISLATION UPDATE

Catherine Sutherland, Waste Development & Support Manager, provided a legislative update to Members on the reforms to the recycling collections in England.

The Council will retain their local discretion to choose how to collect a core set of recyclables, which are already collected in the blue bin plus a requirement to collect plastic film, which has been included in the new contract.

All Councils will be required to provide a food waste collection by 2026, except where transitional arrangements were in place. Once these transition arrangements came to an end ECDC would then have to provide a separate weekly food waste collection; the Council were currently awaiting an update from DEFRA to see if they qualified for funding.

5. BEST PRACTICE IN THE SECTOR

The Waste Development & Support Manager presented a table which reflected the top five authorities in England ECDC was rated in the top 25% on the league table although there were key differences in the types of service ECDC provided compared to those in the top 5: including frequency of collection, bin capacity, food recycling and separate garden waste services.

The Director Operations detailed the comparative performance for 2021-22 compiled by Oflog. ECDC were in the in top 10% of local authorities and ranked 4th out of 16 of the CIPFA nearest neighbours on certain measures. Public engagement with recycling services was high, although food waste recycling was very low and around 30% of the residual waste was food waste.

6. CONSIDERATIONS, CHALLENGES, ISSUES

The Director Operations explained the context of the considerations, constraints, and challenges to the waste collection service.

The Director Operations clarified the following queries:

- More data was needed to provide participation rates to indicate how many people used the different waste services. However, this would not be available until the full roll out of the new waste management system.
- Waste vehicles bought in 2018 would require replacement or upgrading if service changes to residual waste were made.
- Feedback from residents should be sought to establish how best to transition and embed any changes to the waste service.
- There could be constraints on tipping points as ECDC did not have a waste transfer station.

Members discussed the importance of providing value for money and a cost-effective waste service, they emphasised the need to keep the service performance consistently good and recognised the benefit of providing a food waste service. Street scene visibility and the Council's carbon footprint was recognised as an important factor to consider.

The Director Finance confirmed that the current 2018 fleet had a 9-year depreciation, but new vehicles would have a 7-year depreciation.

Members discussed how funding for the service needed to be managed and options such as charging for the garden waste service were discussed if statutory changes had to be made. Members raised the importance of communicating with residents about the reasons for any changes to the service Nappy waste disposal was also discussed as a problem for some households, although many local authorities had already dealt with these types of issues.

The Director Operations stated that the waste service required a suite of policies and service standards to address these different issues.

- Nappy waste.
- Larger bins for larger households or households that produced additional waste.
- Management of contaminated recycling.
- Charging regimes and the impact on low-income families.
- Assisted collections and health care waste.

7. SCOPE FOR EXPLORATION

The Waste Development & Support Manager explained the scope for exploration, the baseline of the existing service and service delivery options. Members were asked to consider what the schedules and standards would be in terms of size, frequency, the resources, and infrastructure involved. She also mentioned that there was capacity to collect commercial waste for small businesses. Members agreed that the core waste services should be prioritised.

The Director Operations concluded the next steps, she explained that quotes were already being prepared from three consultants. It was noted that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for ECSS was March 2025, and therefore options around delivery mechanisms needed to be understood and agreed quickly to hit that date. It was also noted that there was also a mechanism in the MOA to extend this deadline if the Council required more time to consider its options.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed the next meeting will be held on the first week of January 2024.

The meeting closed at 10:45am.

