

Appendix 4a: BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY Phase 2 Development Project

Strategic Environmental Assessment Plan (SEAP) - 2020

Introduction

This document sets out the purpose and advantages of reviewing how frontline environmental services can be better delivered in terms of setting out the visionary benefits of further integration of staff, services and resources against a backdrop of local and regional agendas.

The purpose of this project is to explore the potential benefits to the residents of Blackpool in terms of improved environmental outcomes as a result of a fully integrated company, completely focused on delivering a lean and agile StreetScene function. Currently, a wide range of co-related and interdependent services are delivered out of Layton Depot.

The creation of BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY as a standalone delivery arm of the Council has paved the way for assessing how the broader range of services could be delivered in better way, with the ability to flex to local demands and challenges. Consideration of this matter has suggested that integration of services in to BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY will deliver the comprehensive service package that helps continue to drive efficiencies and service improvement and by reducing overall costs by streamlined management and improved recycling and waste minimisation activities.

In addition, the following documentation will also provide context for the strategic environmental targets for an enlarged BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY structure and is in line with National, Regional and Local priorities for the future direction of Blackpool and its environs. The responses tackle the challenges set at the strategic level with operational and service delivery responses which support the Council's and resident aspirations for the future shape and delivery arrangements of the broader range of environmental services to be entrusted to BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY. This provides a unique opportunity in terms of the bigger picture in Blackpool with the aim of setting a new agenda for waste through transforming staff and services to deliver improvements and efficiencies across all StreetScene services. By spreading management and support service overheads across a larger workforce there is potential to realise savings and deliver service re-investment. The value of synergies leads to the requirement of broadening the scope of the BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY service portfolio to include all the traditional depot-based environmental services, except for the Highways function as this is the delivery arm of the Technical Engineering Team. The broadened scope of services would enable integration of cross-function operations and a skills mobility within the workforce creating a multi-skilled team which can be empowered to ensure that they work seamlessly across functions rather than in service silos.

BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY has successfully established a very experienced Board of Directors following a national advertising campaign. Board members bring a wealth of waste industry experience, including legal and environmental law, operational, commercial, financial and recycling to name but a few, with the enthusiasm to deliver real change to Blackpool. There is a desire from Board members to make significant impacts on recycling rates across the town and ensure BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY is at the forefront of implementing the national and regional agendas whilst delivering a local delivery model that is flexible, responsive and high performing. It would not make sense to not use this wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise in a company where all waste and cleansing related services are located.

The following paragraphs outline how an extended and integrated service company may contribute to national, regional and local priorities. However, the ability to deliver these changes is based on the upscaling and integration of existing Blackpool Council services into BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY with some fundamental reviews of operating models, including:

- Consideration of zonal/geographical operating areas allowing supervisors/managers to target a range of services within 'their' area as required rather than priorities at current Town level;
- Operational staff to work alongside each other on the ground rather than in functional sections e.g. Streetscene/grounds maintenance staff working alongside domestic waste collection vehicles on reducing need for separate vehicles to collect waste, provide a mobile working base for equipment/support and reduce tip runs;
- Review of operational hours to ensure tasks can be completed at times that suit residents but encourage greater efficiency e.g. earlier starts may prevent operational teams contributing to 'peak' traffic periods thus reducing carbon emissions and staff downtime whilst in peak-hour traffic congestion;
- Redesign workstreams to get greater use from existing fleet e.g. consideration of double shifting and flexible approach for staff working. Increasing use of vehicles by double shifting/flexible working may allow the overall fleet size to be reduced. This could potentially create headroom in the vehicle replacement fund to invest in multi-functional vehicles/electric vehicles/charging infrastructure;
- Consultation with staff regarding innovative ways to be flexible in delivering services through greater use of technology. Reporting to and from site rather than travelling to depot can be achieved with app-based technology providing appropriate record keeping;
- Whilst many traditionally office-based staff have embraced home working/flexi-time, operational staff have still maintained a depot-based clocking in/out approach. For example, many tasks are either dependant on, or impacted by, weather conditions so agreeing an approach to get tasks completed at the right time with flexible working could create a win-win with operational staff having access to flexible working hours allowing a better home-work-life balance; and
- Benefits around integrated engagement initiatives on the ground, making optimal use of the combined efforts of the many foot soldiers at the disposal of the

company, enabling a single, co-ordinated focus on the resident and visitor experience.

An enlarged BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY structure, with a wider range of Cleansing related services will be better placed to adopt and contribute to the Circular Economy Package, which is a set of measures to reduce waste and keep resources in use for longer. All resources could be focused and aligned to moving towards a more circular economy which will see the company keeping resources in use as long as possible, extracting maximum value from them, eliminating waste and promoting all-round resource efficiency.

Underpinning the vast majority of the actions identified in this document is the need to engage effectively with staff, stakeholders and residents through an effective marketing and communications approach. An enlarged BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY model enables a 'single message' approach which will avoid duplication and ensure a co-ordinated calendar of events, messages and information in partnership with Blackpool Council. The ability to develop flexible web and social media platforms gives opportunities for more creativity and freedom locally but also to link with national campaigns.

There are four over-arching national priorities identified in the upcoming Environmental Bill of which an integrated service is better placed to impact upon, they are; 1) air quality, 2) resource efficiency and waste reduction, 3) biodiversity and 4) improving water quality and availability. Each area can be addressed through a range of interventions and approaches to service delivery and overlap into the Councils Climate Emergency agenda work streams which provides a good multi-platform for delivering against the wider environmental objectives set out below.

1. Air Quality

In its daily operations BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY and Blackpool Council through the nature of their respective fleets will be significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY already manage 15 of the Councils biggest and most expensive refuse collection vehicles. As a larger entity, BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY would be better placed to focus on managing the wider fleet and to potentially contribute to how reducing emissions could be achieved. The current commercial vehicle technology is based on diesel engine solutions due to the lack of a financially viable alternative. This is changing as manufacturers of even the most energy demanding vehicles are adopting alternatively fuelled options. In the short-term, electric vehicles (EV) could be considered the default for future fleet acquisitions with the Board deciding if non-electric options are the only alternative for specialist equipment (large mechanical sweepers, tractors and some powered hand tools). BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY are well placed to lead the way adopting electric vehicle technology. In the longer term there is the potential for hydrogen fuelled technologies which will be even cleaner potentially (until the country's energy supply is delivered by 100% clean renewables).

The issue in relation to EV charging infrastructure needs to be addressed in relation to the depot and across the town. There is an opportunity to pursue this approach, whilst grant funding may be available, the expertise of the Board could also be drawn upon, to advise on the installation of electric charging facilities for fleet vehicles and potentially employee and public vehicles (chargeable service).

As an integrated company responsible for managing the depot, the installation of solar panels across roof areas in the depot, with battery storage facility to utilise power to supplement night-time energy usage (depot security lighting, etc.), could be considered. This would result in a reduction in dependence on the grid and is a fully renewable energy source.

Centralised fleet management could also make it easier to roll-out other vehicle improvements, such as facilities to auto cut-off idling engines as crews sit in standing vehicles. There are regular occurrences of vehicles standing idle with engines running. This is economically unsound and contributes to poorer air quality. The only time that vehicles need to be run whilst not moving or otherwise operating is when the windscreens are being cleared of frost or fogging moisture to ensure safe operating visibility.

2. Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction

This is a particularly significant area of focus for an integrated BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY structure and one where the knowledge and expertise of the Board, and wider company, would be invaluable in supporting the development and implementation of education programmes for residents to continue to push for increased recycling and re-use. Blackpool Council already has a detailed programme of resident inclusion schemes in its recycling and waste minimisation arrangements but BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY have a significant part to play whether simply by advertisements on the sides of vehicles but also by joint interaction with target audiences and partnership working. By integrating services BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY would have access to large pool of multi-disciplined foot soldiers and be able to react in a co-ordinated manner to situations as they arise.

Comparison with the best performing authorities around the country have shown that reducing general waste collections and/or capacity to be pivotal in achieving higher recycling rates. Thus, the consideration of a reduction in capacity of residual waste receptacles by extending collection frequency could be assessed, with BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY central to implementation. This would require extensive political buy-in and support of the Board's wide-ranging expertise to deliver. The simplest way of ensuring that residents consider waste recycling as they dispose of used items is to reduce capacity of their general waste storage. By extending collection periods there is no need to replace expensive bins and replace them with smaller units thus saving expense and the capital costs of changing individual bins. This would logically be implemented when the Government legislate for universal food waste collections and funding is made available, again BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY would be the delivery arm of this activity which would

require significant interrelation with the Cleansing service. A timeline setting out the government waste strategy targets and milestones is included below.

The potential for street cleansing waste to be handled at the depot in a small 'dirty MRF' (material recovery process from a mixed general waste stream, i.e. litter bins) to separate metals, papers and plastics – there will be a cost but could significantly enhance recycling performance. Attempts at ensuring that the public stream their litter waste in separate bins have largely been unsuccessful due to confusion and a reluctance by some to take part. This has resulted in streamed waste being compromised and contaminated. With its significant tourist influx many potential bin users will be unfamiliar with separated litter so it is worth considering a small dirty MRF to separate the various recyclable fractions of litter to pull out metals, plastics and clean paper and card.

Another area where BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY could make a significant impact through a joined-up workforce, would be opportunities to do things differently at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC or tip). Targets for recycling at the HWRC should be stretched to a minimum base of 82% of material by weight. The HWRC operational management can ensure that separation and recycling of materials reduce the element of waste that ends up being dealt with as residual. Some local authorities are achieving towards 90% recycling levels. This is assisted by good site design, clear signage and staff training but assisting customers to sort their waste at the site can have significant positive effects on behavioural change for users, which would be easier to achieve through the holistic approach of one company with one focus.

Trade waste services represent an opportunity area, not only for increased recycling but also income generation, which must be approached in a manner consistent with the other priorities associated to service delivery. This is an area with direct Board experience in terms of commerciality. Contracts can be designed to encourage recycling, particularly of clean cardboard which has a strong commercial value. Likewise, the hospitality sector still produces significant weights of glass which, if processed as residual waste is expensive, but as a separate stream is economically viable to collect. BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY should be targeting 10% year on year trade recycling contracts growth and assisting schools to improve their recycling rates through learning activities, classroom interventions and the co-ordinated efforts of an integrated waste minimisation team.

Assessment of the workforce working from non-depot based locations reducing travel and congestion caused by employees. The on-going Covid 19 epidemic has resulted in many office-based workers operating from their homes reducing their carbon footprint through reduced travel to and from their workplace. This has not applied to those who are undertaking many of the Environmental services, but the opportunity does arise for employees to be picked up nearer their home or to start work from there. This will reduce travel and pollution and free up parking space and congestion within the depot and surrounding area.

Encourage the growth of community composting schemes with areas set aside in parks and large open spaces as well as allotment sites to deliver composting facilities which can then

be fed back to residents and allotment users, which fits in with the Councils recently adopted ***Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy*** (GBI).

Consider recycling and processing of mechanical street sweepings. In some areas of the country the waste collected by mechanical sweepers is being processed to harvest the rare metals from vehicle emissions and other reusable elements. This would require a regional approach from the waste disposal authorities and would be well supported by a large environmental organisation such as BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY to deliver. This approach would also support the need to improve water quality and availability requirement as potentially valuable but toxic heavy metals are taken out of the wastewater streams.

3. Biodiversity

An enlarged BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY structure would support the opportunity to re-design services to work better together across functional areas, for example Cleansing and Parks, to reconsider grass cutting of all rural verges to sight line only. This would support road user safety with annual cut back in winter to encourage wildlife and wildflower growth. This is potentially contentious but allows green lungs to develop on the verges of more rural roads and reduces costs of maintenance. Blackpool Council has a recently adopted GBI Strategy which is already making headway in to promoting biodiversity across the town.

Further examples, for instance, consideration of cutting cycles for urban grass verges and parts of parks and open spaces - balancing visitor offer / resident satisfaction with environmental impact, are more effectively delivered through a coordinated focus. This again is politically contentious and as a visitor / town a balance will need to be struck to allow further enhanced greening with usability of open areas, all of which is made easier through an integrated approach. Another example of supporting initiatives would be the Councils ***Tree Strategy*** which links to the GBI and ***Climate Emergency*** work stream.

4. Improving Water Quality and Availability

As an integrated unit, BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY could explore the potential to reduce water spray rates for mechanical sweepers and consider vehicles with wastewater recycling systems. The technology for water recycling has improved significantly and a large mechanical sweeper will put down several hundred gallons of water per day as a dust suppressant so if water is then collected and recycled for secondary use this will reduce overall water consumption.

Expanding on, and developing, education programmes in a coordinated manner for dog walkers to bin their dog waste would help to lower rainwater contamination levels. Despite many years of campaigning dog fouling continues to be a significant issue across the cities, towns and villages all over the country. The run-off water from dog and other animal waste is heavily polluted and therefore any reduction in dog waste would have potential health benefits and reduce costs in cleaning run off water. Blackpool Councils ***Keep Blackpool Tidy***

campaign is already well established, and with the joined-up staff resources of an enlarged BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY structure, would be better able to support the strong base of volunteers across the town. This provides a strong link for BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY to support and co-ordinate community litter picks and other green initiatives.

With all Cleansing and waste related services acting together, improved quality beach cleaning and litter removal from foreshore can be achieved. The visitor economy is significantly boosted by Blue Flag beaches and the heavy summer usage of the foreshore does cause environmental damage so enhanced cleansing, litter removal and co-ordinated public engagement will help ensure that the attraction of the beach continues fuel demand for visits to the town. Working with *Keep Britain Tidy*, the Council supports the *LoveMyBeach* campaign in ensuring beach cleaning activities with volunteers and local businesses. Other initiatives like *Waste2Tricity* which separates out beach plastics for conversion in to refuse derived fuel (RDF) are also being rolled out. These are areas that BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY are well placed to support in its daily operations and in which an integration of staff, resources and services can make a real difference.

Issues for action from Local Plan and Council targets.

The Council's local targets include measures covering regeneration and economic growth, health inequalities and learning. These are all areas that as an employer BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY can make a significant contribution to, particularly as an integrated entity by bringing a consistency of approach to the following priorities:

1. Economic Growth

As an all-encompassing front-line operation, an integrated BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY can offer a range of apprentices and work experience placements to support young job seekers. All job applicants from most deprived wards could also be guaranteed an BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY interview. This does not guarantee a job but ensures that the most deprived residents of the town have the opportunity to gain secure employment with fair and equal development prospects thus potentially breaking the cycle of unemployment.

2. Learning

In view of the above, BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY could develop or introduce a training / learning hub at Layton Depot whereby employees from across the range of StreetScene Services could have access to IT equipment (which they may not have at home) to undertake learning during lunch breaks and before/after work. This can provide support in basic education skills such as reading or writing, allow employees to use online learning tools related to their role or access employment documents such as pay slips etc.

This could then be expanded on whereby all employees of the integrated company would have an annual training appraisal and programme. This ensures that employees have a

continuous professional development programme tailored to their role and future aspirations and development.

3. Health

BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY should be working towards a fully smoke free environment for its employees across the depot and supporting smokers to quit thereby improving their health and life expectancy prospects.

Cleaner neighbourhoods have been shown equate to safer neighbourhoods and help reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY's role in maintaining cleaner neighbourhoods is therefore a significant contributor to community well-being and further initiatives in conjunction with Public Health and the Councils **Active Lives Strategy** can lead to improved health outcomes for residents.

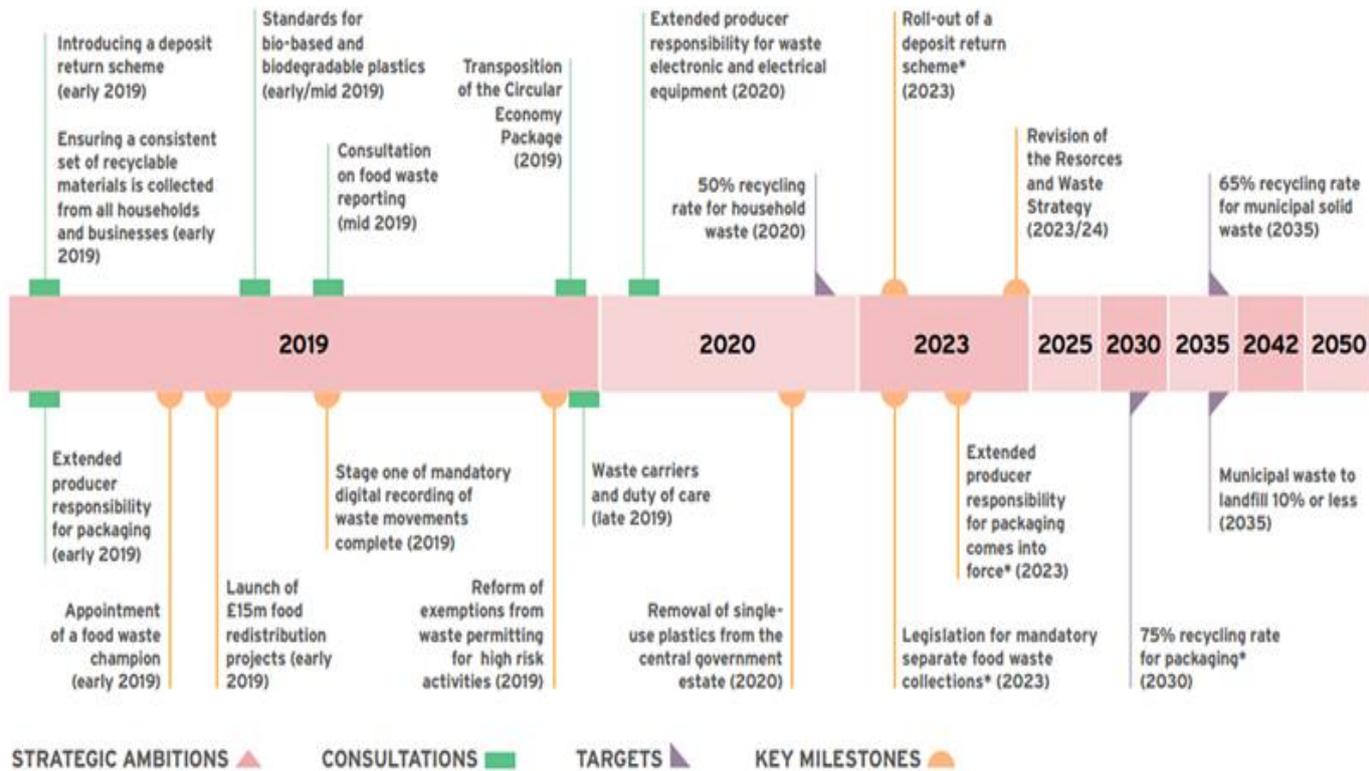
4. Regeneration

Year around cleanliness will help the visitor offer and assist in economic growth and support further regeneration. The visibility of cleaning staff also can act as a subconscious message to residents, businesses and visitors who recognise the efforts being made to ensure a welcoming and attractive environment.

BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY should be consulted in respect of StreetScene regeneration projects to ensure that waste receptacles and other elements of street furniture are functional, can be properly serviced and maintained, will not quickly age or disfigure as well as being area appropriate. The volumes of material to be collected by areas with the very high footfall that Blackpool has on the promenade are very different to other areas and the street furniture must be fit for locational purpose whilst continuing to be attractive and maintainable. BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY staff will have the experience to advise on the street furniture's suitability and robustness for the intended usage. Consideration of how this fits in with Blackpool's **Growth and Prosperity Local Plan** should be considered in any future regeneration activities.

Timeline for Central Governments Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS)

The infographic below sets out central government's timeline for its waste strategy and should be a key input in terms of planning requirements for BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY's development, i.e. food waste collections and other initiatives like Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) which is likely to lead to a reduction in the amount of co-mingled recycling collected at the kerbside.



*subject to consultation

Conclusion

Environmental preservation and sustainability have never been more in focus and more fundamental to global activities as it is for the current generation. Awareness of the impact of human activities on the planet are now at critical levels which is driving both organisations and individuals to consider the environmental impact of their activities on the finite resources and environmental quality of the planet.

The core issues addressed within this document take account of these strategic aspirations through local-level operational activities in which BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY, as an integrated company, and the Council can make a real difference, not only to residents of the town, but to the UK as a whole.

In view of the ever-changing and fast-moving landscape within which the wider climate/environment sector operates, it makes sense to integrate the Councils StreetScene Function with BLACKPOOL WASTE COMPANY so that the outcomes and benefits outlined in the document can be delivered more quickly and more cost effectively. The creation of a fully integrated, standalone company to deliver against this backdrop is a bold step in futureproofing the delivery of a cleaner, greener Blackpool for generations to come.