

Report to:

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer:

John-Paul Lovie, Head of Waste (Policy and Partnership's)

Date of Meeting:

7 February 2024

STRATEGIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide the committee with an update in relation to the strategic waste challenges facing Blackpool Council as a result of the implementation of the Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS) 2018 and associated Environment Act 2021.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the report.

2.2 To receive feedback from the Committee and identify any areas for further scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure effective scrutiny of the Council's plans for the effective delivery and implementation of the RAWS 2018, in particular the introduction of a separate weekly collection of food waste from non-household properties by April 2025.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 Referral to internal or external audit.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is both:

- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

6.0 Background information

6.1 There is currently no officially approved Local Municipal Waste Strategy in Lancashire.

The previous strategy expired on 2020 and a number of factors have contributed to the delay in producing a new strategy - Brexit, Covid-19 and lack of clarity from central government being some of the main contributors.

Other issues relating to post-pandemic changes to waste arising's, compositional variations in waste, emerging policy and legislation, the future utilisation of our major assets (Waste Treatment Facilities) and the end of our landfill contract in 2025 have all come together to create a perfect storm fostering a climate of uncertainty and unease both locally and nationally.

In response, Blackpool Council is actively working alongside Lancashire County Council to ensure that we are best placed to meet the future challenges of this ever changing landscape. The key challenge being to identify a non-landfill solution for the treatment of circa 220,000 tons of residual waste post- 2025 and the implementation of a separate weekly collection of non-household organic (food) waste from April 2026.

As a result Blackpool and LCC have produced an Outline Waste Processing Strategy 2022 – 2027 which offers clarity and certainty as to how we will operate our waste collection and disposal services over the medium term.

The overarching aim of which is: *“To achieve the best environmental and social outcomes possible from the wastes we manage, within the realistic processing, financial and carbon options available.”*

Central government published its Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS) in 2018 setting out its strategic aims for the management of wastes across the UK along with a timeframe for the achievement of key milestones. This was then followed up by the enactment of Environment Bill in 2020, the legislative means by which the RAWS would be achieved – both documents are in support of the government's 25 year Environment Plan.

Key policies relating to environmental impact/climate change, circularity and resource sustainability, increasing recycling and minimising waste arising are focused themes of the strategy.

Although the delivery on these themes has been severely delayed due to Brexit, the pandemic, and more recently the cost of living and inflation crisis, the government has already undertaken wholesale public consultations on initiatives such as:

- Separate food waste collections
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- Deposit Return Schemes (DRS)
- Consistency of recyclable materials
- Universal free garden waste collections.

The main barrier to implementation of the strategic aims are a lack of information from government on how these objectives will be funded. This has led to slippages in timeframes and strategic creep in terms of delivery.

This, in-turn, fuels a culture of uncertainty and instability in markets and sectors, resultant in a lack of investment and unwillingness to commit.

Furthermore, it is hard to see how this is going to be resolved in the short term given the current economic state of affairs.

6.2 Recent announcements by government around 'Simpler Recycling' have, however, clarified the following key points:

- Non-household food waste/recycling collections (including municipal, schools and hospitals) has been brought forward and is to be implemented from April 2025, excluding micro businesses (less than 10 FTE's).
- Domestic household food waste collections have been delayed another year and are to be implemented from April 2026.
- A sum of just over £1.1m has been allocated to Blackpool Council as initial capital transitional funding with further revenue funding to be announced in due course.

The Council, as part of the Lancashire Waste Partnership, along with ENVECO are now focused on the delivery of this milestone with the formation of 2 project working groups. One to focus on delivery of the above aims and another to focus on climate adaptation.

In support of this the Council has developed a robust Strategic Waste Governance framework which includes the creation of a Strategic Waste Steering Group, which the project working groups report to.

6.3 Blackpool Council has also secured the support of WRAP – Waste and Resources Action Programme, who work on behalf of UK government to support, advise and assist in large scale transformational waste programmes.

Through this support we have commissioned (foc) expert waste consultants, Circulogic, to work alongside our own project teams to assist in the smooth implementation of food waste collections next year.

The project is still in the early phases, however an outline project plan can be viewed at

Appendix 7(a).

In addition, we will be undertaking an options modelling exercise to understand the benefits, risks and costs associated with various waste collection configurations and methodologies which will be in a position to the present to the Committee in approximately 3 months' time.

It's also worth noting the Blackpool Council is engaging regularly with the Lancashire Waste Strategy Group which has been assembled by LCC and the waste partnership. The purpose of the group is to ensure a coordinated approach across the county and has Chief Officer, Director and Head of Service representation.

6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 7(a): WRAP Project Plan/Gantt chart

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 £1,115,005 funding has been granted to Blackpool Council to implement food waste collections. Further revenue funding is to be announced in due course.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 Environment Act 2021, RAWS 2018 are the key pieces of legislation driving this forward.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 After funding, vehicle procurement is the biggest risk at this stage in the project due to increased demand in the market on a national scale coupled with specialist vehicle lead times of 12+ months. Opportunities to for joint procurement with the LWP is being explored as a mitigation to this.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 In the course of developing this report, consideration was given as to whether there could be any unintended adverse impacts on people because of shared characteristics protected by the Equality Act. The Council believes this report will not have any indirectly discriminatory effects.

As part of the introduction of any new services or significant changes to existing services, it is accepted that an Equality Impact Assessment will need to be conducted in due course. This will be factored in the project plan.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 While Blackpool Council has adopted a target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, in order to help mitigate the effects of climate change, the council also recognises the importance of adopting adaptation measures and sustainable alternatives in the delivery of its services and to minimise its impact on the environment in doing so. Blackpool Council and ENVECO are aligned and focused in ensuring that sustainability, circularity and resource optimisation are at the heart of its operations.

The strategic ambitions of the overarching project directly support sustainability and climate/environment aims and objectives of both central government and Blackpool Council.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 A number of consultations have taken place both locally and nationally and can be found on DEFRA's gov.uk website. Further local consultations will likely also need to be undertaken.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 RAWS 2018, Environment Act 2021.