

PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday 11 September 2023.

Present: Cllr Richard Eglington (Chair), Cllr John Coulson (Sub for Cllr Andrew Sherris), Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (Sub for Cllr Ray Godwin) and Cllr Alan Watson.

Officers: Dale Rowbotham, Paul Steele, Edward Tannahill, Craig Willows (CS,E&C) and Rebecca Saunders-Thompson (CS).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Katie Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Michelle Bendelow, Cllr Ray Godwin and Cllr Andrew Sherris.

PLA/7/23 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

PLA/8/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PLA/9/23 Minutes

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PLA/10/23 Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste

Consideration was given to the Scope and Project Plan of the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste.

The overall aim of the review was to analyse the Council's approach to waste reduction to determine how it could be improved to reduce the financial and carbon cost. The review would consider the potential public resistance but also the importance of the environment, the costs of service delivery, and the direction of national policy over food waste.

The key lines of enquiry were:

- What is the current waste management strategy for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) and how does this align with the joint waste management strategy for the Tees Valley?
- What financial and strategic challenges does the authority face regarding waste management in the short, medium and long term?
- How do the key issues surrounding domestic waste, recycling and green waste vary across the Borough?
- How do SBC's recycling rates compare with other local authorities in the Tees Valley/ the North East/ nationally?

- What actions need to be taken following the Government's introduction of mandatory food waste collection?
- How will the introduction of the (Deposit Return Scheme DRS) and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) impact on kerbside waste and recycling collections?
- How can the anticipated rise in gate fees be managed to ease additional financial pressures?
- What are the viable options to alter the current system of kerbside waste and recycling collections?

Key contributors would be Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Officers, and a representative from Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

The Select Committee received a background presentation from the review's link officer, Service Manager, Community Services, Environment and Culture.

The presentation covered:

- Timeline of changes in the Council's recycling and waste collection service
- Collection
- Receptacles
- Waste Disposal
- Kerbside Recycling
- Recycling Rates and Targets
- How do we compare
- North East Comparison
- Top Performers
- Stakeholders
- Future National Strategy
- Challenges and Risks

The Committee requested the following further information as part of the review and key issues discussed included:

- Officers highlighted that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council currently has the highest kg's of residual waste per household in the country and are one of the only councils to collect weekly residual waste in a 240ltr wheeled bin.
- Discussions were held on the allocation of income generated from the collection of clean recycling. Officers explained that this income was included in the annual budget for waste collection and disposal and fluctuated depending on market prices for materials. Income generated in the previous financial year amounted to around £190,000.
- Concerns over the additional pressures on waste and recycling collection services arising from new housing developments currently under construction across the borough were raised.
- The significant increase in gate fees and the implications of this were discussed but figures were not disclosed in the public meeting. It was agreed that figures would be presented to Members (outside of the public meeting) in future.
- The need to increase recycling rates was discussed at length. Members suggested that recycling could be collected weekly and residual waste could be collected fortnightly.
- Members questioned if providing residents with smaller bins (as opposed to the current 240l bin) was a viable option to improve recycling rates. Officers responded that there was a significant initial cost to replacing all bins and other authorities tended to alter the frequency of collection before changing the size of bins. However, this option could be explored as part of the review.

- Members highlighted that the introduction of weekly mandatory food waste collections, and the requirement for separate food receptacles, could decrease the need for weekly residual waste collections.
- Concerns about additional bin/receptacle storage for residents in multi-occupancy properties were raised and officers explained that they were working with DEFRA on this issue and this would be considered as part of the review.
- It was agreed that sufficient communication plans to inform residents of changes to services and to encourage higher recycling rates were essential.
- Officers explained that forecasting and modelling on future options for the Council's waste and recycling service was ongoing and would be shared with Members during this review.

AGREED that:

- 1) the draft scope and project plan of the review be approved.
- 2) the further information be provided as requested.

PLA/11/23 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

The next meeting would be held on Monday 9 October 2023.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.