

**Blaby District Council
Council**

Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Title of Report	Adoption of the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Nigel Grundy - Neighbourhood Services & Assets
Report Author	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager
Corporate Priority	All Priorities: A Place to Live; A Place to Work; A Place to Visit; People Strategy; Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 To seek Council approval and adoption of the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2022 (LRWS). The Strategy sets out how the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP) intends to manage municipal waste up until 2050.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy (Appendix A) and Action Plan (Appendix B) are adopted by the Council subject to section 5.1 of this report.
- 2.2 To approve the continuation of the waste partnership with a requirement for it to be developed and enhanced to ensure appropriate political, strategic, and organisational engagement.
- 2.3 To request that the partnership explores collaborative opportunities which have the potential to deliver environmental improvements, whilst helping to reduce costs across the waste-system, such that cost shunting is avoided and mutual benefits are shared across all partners.
- 2.4 That delegated authority is given to the Portfolio Holder in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Services and Assets Group Manager to make minor changes and updates to the Strategy and Action plan as necessary.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 The Strategy provides a policy framework to enable a sustainable system of waste management to be implemented.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.2 To ensure that the relevant authorities in Leicestershire have effective collaborative working arrangements at all levels.3.3 To ensure that resources are used effectively across all partners within the partnership. |
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4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

Leicestershire position

- 4.1.1 Under the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, all two-tier authorities are required to have in place a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for the management of municipal waste within their areas. There is therefore a legal requirement for all seven District Councils and Leicestershire County Council to have a joint waste strategy in place and this is delivered through the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP) of which all 8 councils are members.
- 4.1.2 The first Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy (LMWMS) was adopted in 2002. It has since been updated twice. In 2019 the LWP commissioned consultants Frith Resource Management develop the new 2022 – 2050 strategy. All 8 councils in the partnership are in the process of adopting this final strategy and this should be completed by April 2023.
- 4.1.3 The Strategy highlights that significant legislative changes are on the horizon. In responding to these, the waste partnership will need to be maintained and enhanced to ensure appropriate political, strategic and organisational engagement. As government policy evolves, the partnership will need to explore collaborative opportunities which are most effectively able to deliver the changes required and ensure the balance of risk and reward is shared across both the waste disposal and collection authorities. Innovative collaborative opportunities should be considered which have the potential to deliver environmental improvements, whilst helping to reduce costs across the waste-system, such that cost shunting is avoided and mutual benefits are shared across all partners.

National policy

- 4.1.4 The National Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) was published by DEFRA in 2018. It focuses on the circular economy, sets a recycling target of 65% recycling of municipal solid waste by 2035 and focuses on solutions to reduce single use plastics, reduce confusion over household recycling, tackling the problems of packaging and ending food waste.
- 4.1.5 Defra has subsequently held two rounds of consultations which included proposals that are expected to affect local waste services including mandatory weekly food waste collections, free garden waste collections, the introduction of a deposit return scheme for single use drinks containers, extended producer responsibility for packaging (where the full cost of collection, recycling and disposing of packaging is met by the producers of the packaging), and a move towards consistent waste collections by all local authorities. These three policies are known collectively as the 'Collection and Packaging Reforms'. To date, the results of the second round of consultations have only been published for two policies (extended producer responsibility for packaging, and 'deposit return scheme'). The consultation on 'consistency in household and business recycling collections' is due imminently. Legislation to enable the policy changes within the RWS are contained within the Environment Act which received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021.

Strategy development

- 4.1.6 The review of the Leicestershire Resource and Waste Strategy has considered the potential forthcoming legislative changes and these are reflected accordingly and, in some instances, caveats have been made due to the continued delay of confirmation of Government policy. It is important to note the Strategy is high-level and therefore non-site or council specific.
- 4.1.7 The new strategy identifies the baseline position, outlines where partners want to be and by when and articulates how this will be achieved
- 4.1.8 In the period during the public consultation the Government released its response to its extended producer responsibility for packaging consultation and has confirmed that glass which was originally to be included in the proposed deposit return scheme will now be part of extended producer responsibility for packaging. No further modelling was undertaken within the options appraisal due to the continued uncertainty around the Government's preferred approach, however

the future waste and recycling projections were updated to take account of this amendment.

- 4.1.9 Due to the continued uncertainty in regard to Government policies a Local Government finance position statement also been added to the Strategy. This includes a statement about each partner requiring full funding to implement service changes.

Action Plan

- 4.1.10 The Action Plan (Appendix B) is a route map for delivering the vision, objectives and pledges set out in the Strategy and will be subject to regular review and monitoring to respond to changing circumstances such as changes in government policy, accelerated or delayed implementation of actions and variance in performance.
- 4.1.11 The Action Plan is high level and builds on the objectives and pledges in the strategy identifying who and by when actions will be completed. It has been divided into the following themes:

Reuse/Circular Economy
Recycling (performance & collections)
Residual Waste Reduction
Partnership Working
Leading by example
Communication
Carbon

A timeline for the action plan is given in Appendix B.

Conclusion

- 4.1.12 It is recognised that further clarity from Government is needed to fully understand the impact of the potential policy changes which may be the most significant seen for many years. The options modelled which support the Strategy provide a reasonable guide to the magnitude of changes that might be expected and are subject to forthcoming legislation and future funding mechanisms.
- 4.1.13 The Strategy sets the LWP in a robust policy position for an imminent period of substantial change (2023 – 2027) and longer term goals and will help deliver on Net Zero priorities.
- 4.1.14 Changes to household waste collections in Blaby District Council remain a decision for this council and any future changes will be Elected Members' decisions.

4.2 Proposal(s)

To approve the final adoption of the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy and Action Plan which sets out how the Leicestershire Waste Partnership intends to manage municipal waste up until 2050.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

The details on the 12 week public consultation are summarised in Appendix E and further detail provided in Appendix C – Results of public consultation. In addition to the public consultation the following have been consulted:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Neighbourhood Services Team
- Portfolio Holder and Cabinet
- Other stakeholders

The Portfolio Holder has been fully engaged in the process throughout including participation at a series of workshops held by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership and attended by Portfolio Holders and senior officers representing each of the district and borough councils of Leicestershire. In addition, other stakeholders also took part in a number other workshops to assist in the development of a strategic environmental assessment including but not limited to the Environment Agency, local authority planning, environmental, and climate change officers.

Any significant changes to the waste strategy and the actions within the action plan that may be required in the future will be subject to separate consultations with Blaby District Council residents.

4.4 Significant Issues

Equality and Diversity

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) was undertaken and further EHRIA's will be undertaken, where appropriate, for delivery of activities, and as specific schemes are developed. The key outcome of the EHRIA is for the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP) to ensure the new Leicestershire Waste and Resources Strategy (LWRS) promotes accessible services, accessible information and appropriate equality training where required.

In section 3 of the EHRIA (Appendix D) on page 19 is included an equality and human rights improvement plan which sets out practical actions for each partner to take to address issues identified in relation to accessibility of services, provision of accessible information, and equality training.

Any changes to Blaby District Council collections would require a new Equalities Impact Assessment to be completed.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the adoption of this Strategy. Future service changes resulting from the Strategy will be subject to a separate Cabinet or Council report detailing the financial implications for the Council.

The waste strategy includes a local government financial statement on page 3 of Appendix A which addresses the financial issues and provides clarity that the pledges contained within the strategy can only be implemented if sufficient ongoing additional funding is provided by Government to cover the costs incurred by both the waste disposal and waste collection authorities respectively. At the time of writing the following wording is to be added to the financial statement within the strategy: *'Where funding is provided which requires allocation across the Partnership, this will be calculated on a basis that is acceptable to all Partners to ensure legally compliant, cost effective, and timely distribution'*.

At the time of writing central government have yet to set out how the new burdens are to be funded. Changes arising from the Strategy may be wholly/partly covered by new funding streams. Mechanisms for distributing new funding sources are currently being considered by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Council is waiting for detailed clarification on this matter.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Failure to adopt the strategy meaning Blaby District Council is not aligned with joint Leicestershire strategic waste priorities, national policy and legislative requirements in the Environment Act 2021.	Ensure strategy adopted. Strategy pledges have been subject to public consultation and are caveated to ensure government funding is required. Each partner needs to ensure sign up for their organisation.
That there is insufficient financial resource to meet the pledges in the Strategy.	The actions and pledges in the Strategy are non-binding and subject to the required finances being made available through new funding streams and this is addressed within strategy.
Significant changes in government policy.	Pledges caveated with regard to policy changes. Strategy will be reviewed regularly to reflect changes and new modelling will be completed once clarity on DEFRA policy is achieved.

7. Other options considered

- 7.1 As previously stated in 4.1 there is a legal requirement for a joint waste strategy in a two-tier system to be in place so to do nothing is not an option.

8. Environmental impact

- 8.1 Reducing carbon emissions features prominently in the development of the strategy and if implemented certain collections changes would significantly reduce carbon emissions, notably the introduction of separate weekly food waste collections.

- 8.2 The pledge to explore alternative fuels for collection vehicles has already been achieved in Blaby District Council where the heavy fleet has fully transitioned to the use of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) which has reduced the heavy fleet's carbon emissions by 90%.

9. Other significant issues

- 9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local.
- 9.2 Significant issues relating to Human Rights and Equalities have been addressed at paragraph 4.4.

10. Appendix

- 10.1 Appendix A – Waste strategy
- 10.2 Appendix B – Action plan
- 10.3 Appendix C – Results of public consultation
- 10.4 Appendix D – Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment
- 10.5 Appendix E – Summary of public consultation responses

11. Background paper(s)

- 11.1 None

12. Report author's contact details

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