

## Overview and Scrutiny – Waste update

Overview and Scrutiny have previously considered updates on the Governments Resources and Waste Paper which set out a series of ambitions in relation to environmental issues.

Following consultations, the Environment Bill is currently in its third reading in the House of Lords in its passage through the legislative process and is nearing the final stages before Royal Assent. It will make provision about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment. This includes creation of a new Office for Environmental Protection; but the Bill also covers waste and resource efficiency, air quality, environmental standards for products, water efficiency, nature and biodiversity, conservation, regulation of chemicals amongst a number of other areas.

Once enacted, the Environment Act will have significant impacts on the design and implementation of local authority waste and recycling services.

The Bill stipulates a consistent set of recyclable waste streams that must be separately collected from all households, including a weekly separate food waste collection. This will make it easier for households across the country to recycle.

In relation to the Waste and Recycling elements the Environment Act is effectively an enabling act, in that it does not necessarily detail the specific requirements but allows the making of further Regulations in order to introduce the specific changes, at this time there is no further detail on these Regulations.

For North Norfolk, the Act introduces a number of new burdens on the Council however it should be noted that for some elements relating to the separate collection of recyclable materials the current collection system is likely to be compliant until the current contract period comes to an end.

Separate food waste collections will need to be introduced, based on current indications, during 2023. Food waste will be collected in North Norfolk through an entirely separate collection stream. Each household will be provided with a food caddy which will be collected weekly through a small collection vehicle.

Collection of Food Waste was included in the recent Waste and Resources Contract procurement as a costed option. This means that the contractor has already provided a solution and cost for delivering these services.

Government have stated that they will fully fund all new burdens on local authorities arising from the Bill, recognising the financial pressures local authorities face and will ensure that costs arising from new statutory duties such as those proposed in the Bill are covered.

Businesses and other organisations that produce municipal waste will have a duty to separate the same recyclable waste streams (except for garden waste) and to arrange for their separate collection. The Council will be looking at the Trade Waste offering to

ensure that we are able to effectively meet the needs of our current customer base and any potential new customers.

Provisions contained in the Act relating to extended producer responsibility, deposit return scheme for drinks containers and those relating to clearer labelling of products so consumers can easily identify whether products and packaging are recyclable or not, are likely to impact on the processing and resale of the material collected from Residents recycling bins.

There is at this stage little clarity on whether there will be an impact on the Council or when, however it is likely that such schemes will reduce the value within the recycle and therefore represent an additional cost to the Council in the future.

The measures in the Bill will grant greater enforcement powers and the ability to increase penalties for fly-tipping in the future, building on previous work such as the introduction of powers to issue fixed penalty notices and to stop and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers.

Government have stated that they expect all local authorities to exercise their power to investigate fly-tipping incidents, prosecuting the fly-tippers and recovering clearance costs where possible.

#### Serco Contract

Whilst the core Services within the Waste and Resource Contract are being delivered there are a number of areas where these are not in accordance with the Method Statement which Serco submitted as part of their bid submission. Whilst some of this is undoubtedly attributable to Covid19 it is increasingly apparent that there are other reasons for the delays. These issues have not led to an increase in residents' complaints however the Council needs to be assured that it is getting full value from the services it is paying for.

Officers are working to obtain information from Serco on timelines to deliver the contract in accordance with the Method Statement.

Overview and Scrutiny may wish to consider a report and investigate these issues with representatives of the Serco Management at a future meeting.