
WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

14 November 2023

**Cabinet Member for Climate, Transport, Highways and Waste Services:
Councillor Phil Larratt**

Report Title	Resources and Waste Strategy for West Northamptonshire
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Resources and Waste Strategy

Appendix B – Resources and Waste Strategy Consultation – Summary and Key Findings

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:

- 1.1.1. secure agreement of the new Resources and Waste Strategy for West Northamptonshire, and
- 1.1.2. to note the associated action plan which will facilitate the implementation of the Strategy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 A Resources and Waste Strategy for West Northamptonshire has been developed. The Strategy is a set of 10 principles, which will be used to guide the development of the Council's waste services over the next 15 years.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a sustainable vision for waste services and street cleansing services, to inform decision making related to them. The result will see services becoming harmonised over the West Northamptonshire area as current arrangements end, and to provide a sustainable vision for waste and recycling services.
- 2.3 By prioritising waste reduction, reuse and recycling, the environmental impact of waste can be minimised. The increased emphasis on education and awareness will empower West Northamptonshire's residents to be 'responsible consumers' helping the Council to achieve its recycling targets and reduce the cost of waste services.
- 2.4 Improving street cleansing services by working with partners, also forms part of the Strategy.
- 2.5 It is recognised that waste and street cleansing services should also be efficient and value for money and these are included as principles within the Strategy, alongside investing in waste infrastructure, where there is a business case to do so.
- 2.6 The Strategy will be implemented through the actions set out in the action plan, with progress monitored annually and the action plan reviewed and updated.
- 2.7 The development of the Strategy and associated action plan has been steered by a Waste Members Working Group, developed with independent advice from technical experts and it has been informed and tailored by considering more than 3000 responses to a public consultation.
- 2.8 The Strategy aligns with our communities' priorities and West Northamptonshire's values and other strategies. For example, it will help the Council to achieve its sustainability and anti-poverty strategies.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Resources and Waste Strategy.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 It is essential for the Council to have a 'vision for waste services' which will ensure that as existing arrangements for West Northamptonshire's waste and street cleansing expire, the new arrangements are consistent with the vision. The Strategy will provide a set of principles to guide decisions regarding replacement arrangements which will help facilitate sustainable and efficient waste services.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has a variety of statutory duties related to the collection and disposal of waste and recycling and also street cleansing, including to:
- 5.1.1 collect waste and recycling from households; and
 - 5.1.2 arrange for the disposal of municipal waste collected in its area; and
 - 5.1.3 arrange for places to be provided for residents to deposit their household waste; and
 - 5.1.4 keep relevant land clear of litter and refuse as far as practicable.
- 5.2 Under the structural change order, West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) inherited a number of contracts from the predecessor authorities, which enable the Council's statutory duties to be fulfilled. These contracts expire on different dates (up to June 2028) and replacement arrangements must be made.
- 5.3 Since vesting day, contracts which have expired have generally been replaced on a like for like basis, taking advantage of economies of scale where arrangements in more than one of the geographic areas is also due to end. For example, a new contract for the processing of Dry Mixed Recyclables is being procured for the material collected in the Daventry and South areas, combining what was previously two separate contracts.
- 5.4 Some of the Council's waste contracts make arrangements for the treatment of waste and recyclables 'behind the scenes' and residents do not use them directly. However, West Northamptonshire residents interact directly with other arrangements, such as the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) services, or the kerbside waste collection arrangements. It is important that these waste services align over time so that eventually the residents of West Northamptonshire receive and have access to equivalent, or harmonised services.
- 5.5 In order to achieve consistent, harmonised and sustainable services, it is essential for the Council to have a 'vision' for waste services, which will also help the Council achieve its ambitions and objectives set out in separate strategies. For example, waste services have a role in helping the Council become more sustainable, enable residents to live their best lives by having clean and green space, and contribute towards delivery of the anti-poverty strategy.

Resources and Waste Strategy

- 5.6 To provide the Council with a 'vision' for waste services, a Resources and Waste Strategy has been developed over the past year, in association with a Waste Members Working Group and independent consultants (Appendix A).
- 5.7 The Strategy is a set of 10 principles, which will be used to guide the development of waste services in West Northamptonshire as they evolve and harmonise, and to ensure waste services are delivered in accordance with the wider ambitions and objectives of the Council.
- 5.8 The 10 principles, which are described in more detail within the Strategy are:
- 5.8.1 To provide appropriate, harmonised waste services;
 - 5.8.2 To move waste up the waste hierarchy;
 - 5.8.3 To support local prevention initiatives and increase waste education;

- 5.8.4 To deliver high performing services, recycle more and achieve other targets (section 5);
 - 5.8.5 To ensure waste services are value for money;
 - 5.8.6 To invest in West Northamptonshire's waste infrastructure to support performance and value for money;
 - 5.8.7 To consider future changes when designing services;
 - 5.8.8 To work with partners to improve street cleansing;
 - 5.8.9 To consider carbon emissions and sustainability in our decisions regarding waste services;
 - 5.8.10 To align waste services with West Northamptonshire's wider values and strategies.
- 5.9 As noted earlier, there is a general principle to harmonise waste services across West Northamptonshire. The principles also prioritise waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, so that the environmental impact of waste can be minimised. An increased emphasis on education and awareness will empower West Northamptonshire's residents to be 'responsible consumers' and 'waste champions', helping the Council to achieve its recycling and waste reduction targets and reduce the cost of waste services.
- 5.10 The Council's contracts to treat recyclable materials and residual waste that have been collected will also be informed by the 10 principles. For example, maximising the treatment of waste that can't be recycled by ensuring that energy is recovered will be included in contract specifications. Value for money will be achieved by awarding contracts via competitive procurements and also by awarding contracts for the whole West Northamptonshire geographic area.
- 5.11 Investing in infrastructure, where there is a business case to do so, will support improved performance and value for money and the principles also 'build in' flexibility to allow for future changes in legislation or improvements in technology. By looking wider than waste services alone, the Council can work with partners to improve street cleansing, reduce carbon emissions and enable infrastructure development to help deliver the Council's wider objectives.
- 5.12 The Strategy includes an action plan which includes projects that will implement various aspects of the Strategy. Any proposals to make significant changes to service delivery will be the subject of future consultations with formal decisions taken by Cabinet where required.
- 5.13 A public consultation to gather residents and stakeholder's opinions on the vision for waste management in West Northamptonshire has been completed and the results have been analysed and taken into account in the development of the Strategy (Appendix B). Generally, respondents supported the vision and 10 principles that were proposed.
- 5.14 The Strategy, with its 10 principles, provides a flexible approach to guide West Northamptonshire's waste services over the next 15 years and can take account of factors that are outside of the Council's direct control, such as legislation changes.

Procurement of Contracts for the Treatment of Residual Waste and Household Waste Recycling Centre Services

- 5.15 At its October meeting, Cabinet were asked to consider proposals to commence procurement of replacement contracts for the treatment of residual waste and for HWRC services in advance of agreeing the Strategy, because of the long procurement timescales required for these contracts.
- 5.16 The existing contractual arrangements which enable the Council to fulfil its duties to treat and dispose of residual waste, to provide Household Waste Recycling Centre services, and to bulk dry mixed recyclables collected in the South area are due to end 31 March 2025. Therefore, to ensure continuity of waste services, it was necessary to seek authority to secure new arrangements, otherwise there was an increased risk that the Council will not have the necessary arrangements prior to the end of existing contracts.
- 5.17 The Waste Members Working Group will continue to be involved in the development of the specification for the proposed contracts, which will ensure that the contract specifications align with the principles of the Resources and Waste Strategy.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Council could have decided not to develop a Resources and Waste Strategy at this time, especially given the continued uncertainty about national requirements for waste services. However, without the Strategy, the Council may not have been able to take consistent decisions about replacement arrangements as current contracts expire.
- 6.2 The Council may have decided to take a different approach to developing the Resources and Waste Strategy, and attempted to include solutions for all waste related issues within the document. For example, whether the waste fleet of vehicles should switch to an alternate fuel, or whether 3 weekly collections should be implemented across West Northamptonshire. However, taking this approach would have taken much longer to develop the Strategy, which is required as soon as possible to inform decisions about replacement arrangements.
- 6.3 The approach that has been taken, to develop a vision for waste services and a set of 10 principles allows the Council to make service decisions about, which will help implement the vision in a gradual way as existing arrangements end. As noted earlier, where significant changes are proposed, these will be the subject of a separate Cabinet paper.

Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Form

- 6.4 An equalities impact assessment screening form has been completed. The screening assessment has identified a neutral impact for the majority of protected characteristic groups.
- 6.5 There will be a positive impact on the environment and residents with lower income, because the Strategy includes additional emphasis on waste prevention activities, such as:
- the recovery of items suitable for reuse and resale, and
 - the reduction of food waste.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a vision and a set of principles to guide the development of waste services and these include to ensure waste services are efficient and value for money.

7.1.2 The majority of the financial implications associated with implementing the Strategy will become clear as new arrangements are secured, which may result in lower costs for some aspects of the service, due to greater economies of scale working across the whole of West Northamptonshire.

7.1.3 The action plan includes a set of proposals and projects, some of which will require funding to implement. Some of the projects, particularly those with an objective to minimise waste, or move it up the hierarchy are 'invest to save'. However, it is difficult to quantify and demonstrate the financial impact of these projects, because waste that is prevented (or reduced) cannot be measured. As a guide, it costs more than £100 per tonne to treat residual waste and the Council manages approximately 100kt residual waste each year. Therefore, a 1% reduction in residual waste could save £100k. Business cases should be developed for each of the invest to save projects to determine the investment required and the payback period for any savings that are deliverable within each project. Funding can therefore be determined for these schemes on a case by case basis as required.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The Resources and Waste Strategy will help the Council fulfil its statutory duties. Legal advice will be taken for any procurements that are required to implement the Strategy, or where any significant service changes are proposed that will be the subject of a separate Cabinet decision.

7.2.2 The national legislation related to local authority waste management and street cleansing is subject to regular review and change. Changes will be monitored to ensure that West Northamptonshire's service remain compliant with legislation.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 The key risks are:

	Risk	Mitigation
i.	DEFRA may change national legislation which means the Strategy has to be changed.	The Strategy has been developed with the intention that it is flexible because it is a set of principles, which can accommodate changes in legislation.

		The Strategy will be reviewed annually so any changes in legislation can be taken into account as they are known.
ii.	Funding to secure the projects on the action plan will not be secured.	Discussions as part of the budget setting process are on going. Some of the projects are invest to save and may be able to proceed where there is sufficient confidence that they will not adversely impact the budget.
iii.	Funding for waste services may be reduced, which results in service changes that are not aligned to the Strategy.	Budget setting discussions occur annually as part of the Council's medium term financial planning process. One of the principles of the Strategy is to deliver value for money services, and this will be a continued objective of any service changes, alongside consideration of the other 9 principles (including to increase performance, reduce waste, etc.)
iv.	There is a risk that new contracts procured will not be consistent with the Resources and Waste Strategy.	The Strategy has been developed in consultation with a Waste Members Working Group who will be involved in the development of specifications for new contracts.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 The vision, which provides the 'headlines' of the Strategy, has recently been the subject of a public consultation (Appendix B). More than 3000 responses were received, which is a high response rate, demonstrating how important waste services are for West Northamptonshire's residents. The results of this consultation have been analysed and used to refine the Resources and Waste Strategy.

7.4.2 In general, the consultation responses were supportive of the proposed vision. Customer satisfaction was most important to respondents, followed by preventing and reducing waste and protecting the environment. Some changes to the Strategy have been made as a result of the consultation, including to increase the emphasis on waste education, and other specific projects included in the action plan.

7.4.3 If, in the future, any specific significant changes to services are proposed, these will be the subject of further consultation and a separate Cabinet paper and decision. For example, if after the development of a business case for 3 weekly collection of residual waste is developed and a separate consultation has been completed, there is a proposal to implement this change, then this decision would be the subject of a separate Cabinet paper.

7.4.4 Communication and consultation will play a key role in delivering the strategy, not just by informing decisions related to service changes, but also to help engage with West Northamptonshire residents and encourage behavioural change.

7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 A Waste Members Working Group was established in December 2022 to steer the development of the Resources and Waste Strategy. The group includes representatives from the 3 geographic areas of West Northamptonshire and all political parties. The group has regularly reported progress to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.5.2 The Waste Members Working Group have reviewed the draft strategy and the consultation outcomes and are in agreement with the final draft of the Resources and Waste Strategy that Cabinet are asked to agree.

7.5.3 The Waste Members Working group will continue to be involved in the implementation of the Strategy by steering the development of the specification for services as existing arrangements expire.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 The climate impact of managing municipal waste is minimised when it is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy. This means waste should be prevented where possible, reused, recycled, energy recovered and as a last priority landfilled. This is one of the principles of the Resources and Waste Strategy.

7.6.2 In addition, there is a principle to consider carbon emissions and improve sustainability of waste management in all decisions related to waste services.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 Waste services are a 'front line' service provided directly to all West Northamptonshire's residents. The Strategy consultation has highlighted that customer service is important to residents. Therefore, this will be a key consideration when making any changes to waste services.

7.7.2 As noted previously, if there are any significant service changes proposed, these will be the subject of a separate Cabinet report.

7.7.3 Overall there is limited community impact from the proposals. An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been completed and this has not identified a negative impact.

8. Background Papers

None.