

<b>Report to</b>	Sustainable development panel	<b>Item</b>
	13 January 2016	
<b>Report of</b>	Environmental services development manager	<b>5</b>
<b>Subject</b>	Integrated waste management strategic objectives: Progress report	

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### **Purpose**

This is an update for members on progress against the service Action Plan for waste prevention and recycling and the integrated waste management strategic objectives.

### **Recommendation**

To note the contents of this report.

### **Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priority 'a safe and clean city' and the service plan priority 'to deliver an efficient and effective waste service whilst increasing landfill diversion rates'.

### **Financial implications**

**Ward/s:** All wards

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Bremner – Environment and sustainable development

### **Contact officers**

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### **Background documents**

None

# Report

## Introduction

1. This report provides headline details on progress against the integrated waste management strategic objectives in 2015 and precedes a detailed analysis of the major current issues, which will be provided to the sustainable development panel (SDP) in the spring.
2. The strategic objectives for waste and recycling were endorsed by the SDP in December 2013 and approved by cabinet in February 2014. The six objectives are -
  - a) **To reduce the level of residual household waste per household to 90% of the 2013-14 level by 2016 and to 80% of the 2013 level by 2020**
  - b) **To promote waste prevention and recycling through public engagement campaigns**
  - c) **To develop and improve the quality and range of recycling services available to Norwich residents**
  - d) **To achieve a recycling rate of 50% by 2016 and to seek to achieve a recycling rate of 60% by 2020**
  - e) **To improve participation, set-out rates and collected tonnages for recycling services, particularly the weekly food waste service**
  - f) **Through objectives A to E, seek to increase landfill diversion rates year-on-year and reduce landfill tonnage to 80% of the 2013 level by 2020**
- 3 The council seeks to achieve these objectives through a combination of projects and initiatives in accordance with the agreed Service Action Plan (SAP).

## Service Action Plan

4 Table 1

Objective	RAG status	Direction of travel	Comments
a) <b>To reduce the level of residual household waste per household to 90% of the 2013-14 level by 2016 and to 80% of the 2013 level by 2020</b>	Red	↓	<p>Household waste levels continue to increase throughout the county and throughout the country. In part this is due to with low inflation and the continued fall in the prices of oil and raw materials. As a result of these factors consumer spending has increased.</p> <p>In Norwich, household waste levels for 2014/15 show that Norwich remains the best performing authority in Norfolk.</p> <p>Residual waste per household per week</p>

Objective	RAG status	Direction of travel	Comments
			<p>2014/15 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breckland 10.26kg</li> <li>• Broadland 8.96</li> <li>• Great Yarmouth 10.95</li> <li>• Kings Lynn 8.66</li> <li>• North Norfolk 8.91</li> <li>• Norwich 8.57</li> <li>• South Norfolk 9.64</li> </ul> <p>Detailed ‘before and after’ waste audits were carried-out in 2014/15 to assess the effects of the new recycling service which commenced in October 2014. Results were variable across the county, but clearly highlighted that easily/conveniently recyclable material was still being discarded as waste in all areas and in disappointingly large quantities - see para a).</p>
<b>b) To promote waste prevention and recycling through public engagement campaigns</b>	Amber	↑	<p>Public engagement activities continued during 2015 with the student engagement programme, door-knocking programme, red card follow-ups, recycling events and the ‘Recycling Revolution’ (Phase 2) campaign. These activities reached many thousands of residents during the year.</p> <p>In response to the requirements of the Transformation Programme, the dedicated door-knocking team ceased activities in September 2015 at the end of their temporary funding. Remaining officers in the environmental services team are currently part of a restructure process which includes for these SAP objectives to be included as specific elements of the new Team Plan. These will then be effectively delivered by the new team alongside their multi-disciplinary duties in other environmental services.</p>
<b>c) To develop and improve the quality and</b>	Green	↑	<p>The new MRF service in 2014 has successfully provided a convenient, kerbside opportunity to recycle a greater</p>

Objective	RAG status	Direction of travel	Comments
<p><b>range of recycling services available to Norwich residents</b></p>			<p>range of materials, including many of the items that residents have been asking for over the last few years.</p> <p>New recycling opportunities will also be available after the replacement of the existing recycling collection vehicles during 2016/17 - please see para p) for details.</p> <p>The WEEE events will continue to be operated as part of the environmental services team plan. These are popular events, they raise money for the British Heart Foundation and they provide a valuable opportunity for the recycling and re-use of electrical items, particularly large electrical items.</p>
<p><b>d) To achieve a recycling rate of 50% by 2016 and to seek to achieve a recycling rate of 60% by 2020</b></p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>The results of the waste audit (which will be the subject of a detailed analysis and report to the Spring SDP) provide the greatest opportunity to achieve the council's ambitious targets for recycling. The audits show that recyclable material sufficient to meet and exceed these targets is being regularly disposed as waste across the city. Communications messages and direct interventions will target this issue during 2016 (and beyond).</p> <p>The collected tonnage of co-mingled recycling in the first half of 2015/16 shows an encouraging 5% increase on the same period in each of the previous two years. However, achieving the council's ambitious recycling targets will also depend on a reduction in residual waste levels per household.</p> <p>The recycling rate for the first six months of 2015/16 is 39.18%, which is up on the same period last year (37.72%). Due to improvements in the processes for treating street sweepings, more than 50% of this material is now recycled. At present waste data flow have yet to confirm the method by which these amounts will be recorded for recycling</p>

Objective	RAG status	Direction of travel	Comments
			purposes, however there is an expectation that this will be added to the 15/16 recycling percentage and that this will be back-dated to April 2015. This additional recycling tonnage will increase the rate beyond 40%.
<b>e) To improve participation, set-out rates and collected tonnages for recycling services, particularly the weekly food waste service</b>	Amber	↔	<p>A co-ordinated response to food waste issues will be developed following analysis of the waste audit data.</p> <p>Communications can be targeted at both areas and social groups where excessive quantities of food waste are identified. Actions need to balance the promotion of the weekly food waste service with the lifestyle choices available to help reduce excessive food waste in both the purchase and preparation of meals.</p> <p>See also para e).</p>
<b>f) Through objectives a) to e), seek to increase landfill diversion rates year-on-year and reduce landfill tonnage to 80% of the 2013 level by 2020</b>	Green	↑	As a result of policies determined by the county council, from April 2016 all residual waste will be baled and shipped to Holland to produce refuse derived fuel (RDF), therefore landfill diversion will be 100%. This objective is now obsolete as the county council decision currently means that there is zero waste to landfill. It is proposed that Objective a) be used to measure the 'spirit' of this objective.
<b>g) To continue to work with the other local authorities in Norfolk to achieve the objectives set-out in the <i>Joint municipal waste management strategy for Norfolk (JMWMS)</i></b>	Green	↑	The inter-authority working which commenced with the letting of the new MRF contract has developed significantly over the last two years. The Norfolk Waste Partnership now includes a formal structure from officer level through to senior management and member groups. The officer groups plan, prioritise and manage a wide range of projects contributing to the delivery of the objectives of both the NWP and the county council's Waste Advisory Group (WAG).

## Projects and Initiatives

### 4 Progress, outcomes and actions 2015/16.

- a) *Carrying-out a 'before and after' waste analysis to record the levels of recyclables in the current residual waste stream and to assess this again after the introduction of the new MRF recycling service in October 2014.*

The analysis was completed during 2014 and 2015 and a detailed response and action plan will be provided to SDP in the Spring.

The levels of residual recyclable material in residual waste are disappointing and in some cases quite shocking. One area of private, rented accommodation showed levels of food waste in residual bins at 42% and recyclable material in total at 70%. This specific area is currently being targeted by a pilot project to improve recycling facilities, improve recycling communications and provide a pilot communal food waste service. The pilot project is necessary in order to assess both the level of intervention that is possible in private rented areas and the options and opportunities available.

Members will know that areas of private rented accommodation can be challenging due to factors including multiple landlords, managing agents, language issues and often transient populations. In considering the council's response to the waste analysis these particular areas are likely to require individual consideration and innovative responses. This may mean that many localised projects would be necessary to address these areas and that proposed actions and solutions could require significant resources. Detailed consideration of the options will be necessary in order to establish effective and practicable solutions.

Full details will be provided in the next report, alongside the county-wide assessment of common issues and the opportunities for common, county-wide responses.

- b) *Increased emphasis on waste prevention education and waste prevention initiatives, through communications material and doorstep campaigns.*

During 2016 the new environmental services team will be considering the options for a waste prevention programme to involve all stakeholders, aimed at increasing awareness of waste prevention and ensuring that this message is effectively promoted wherever and whenever possible. This work will draw on already available material, projects and programmes and adapt them (where necessary) to suit our local requirements.

Further developments in this area are also included under item p).

- c) *Continuing to promote recycling door-to-door, via all available media outlets and through public engagement campaigns and promoting other relevant schemes where these are of benefit to residents (e.g. opportunities to recycle other items through other outlets, such as carrier bags and batteries at some major supermarkets).*

One of the most effective doorstep campaigns was the engagement programme targeting properties where red cards have been issued on recycling bins. In this way officers were able to directly assist residents who were having difficulties with managing their waste and utilising their recycling options. This campaign forms part of the environmental services team plan and officers will be continuing this work in 2016.

Further developments in this area are also included under item p).

- d) *Preparing for and delivering the improved recycling service available through the new joint venture with Norse Environmental Waste Services Limited (NEWS), commencing October 2014.*

Through the formal NWP structure all the Norfolk councils continue to work closely with NEWS to ensure that the process for the recovery of recyclable material is as efficient as possible. To this end an entirely new process for sampling the quality of incoming loads will be trialled for three months from January 2016. This sampling will firmly establish the levels of reject material in the loads collected by the councils – that is the level (by weight) of collected material which cannot be recycled. This will allow for a more equitable allocation of costs for the disposal of reject material. It will also establish the levels of process waste (which NEWS must seek to reduce) and will provide the councils with detailed information on which rounds are delivering unacceptable quantities of reject material. Using this information the councils will be able to more accurately target their communications.

It should be noted that the collapse in world commodity prices has adversely affected the financial performance of the joint venture with NEWS. The income for materials sold has drastically reduced and in some areas (glass and plastics) income is negative – i.e. it is necessary to pay re-processors to take the material away. Whilst the councils are insulated against any losses, the severe down-turn does mean that there will be no income or profit share from the joint venture in 2015/16 and the prospects for 2016/17 do not appear to be any more encouraging.

- e) *Improving the weekly food waste recycling service, including increasing the participation, set-out rates and collected tonnages.*

Communal food waste collections are now an established part of the improved recycling facilities available in council-owned and managed areas and these are being used and appreciated by residents.

As noted under item a), food waste is still a significant component of residual household waste and specific, targeted efforts will begin to address this during 2016.

There is another potentially positive development for the kerbside food-waste service which officers are currently investigating and which will be reported verbally at the meeting.

- f) *Increasing the number of schools participating in the food waste recycling service*

There are currently 26 schools using this service. Due to other priorities during 2015 no further actions have been taken on this matter. Officers will liaise with

NWP colleagues during 2016 to re-assess the effectiveness of, and priorities for, school-based recycling.

- g) *Continuing the city-wide doorstep engagement work, including direct interventions to resolve individual and communal waste and recycling issues, informing residents about new services and ensuring that existing services are delivered efficiently and effectively.*

Doorstep engagement was most recently focussed on communal areas and red carded household bins. The work in communal housing areas involves a co-ordinated approach with neighbourhood officers, neighbourhood housing officers and officers in environmental services. This work is aimed at resolving a number of issues including fly-tipping in communal areas, misuse of bins, recycling/waste capacity issues and a lack of knowledge of how to make the best use of the services available. Such initiatives will continue in 2016.

The data returned from the new sampling regime for loads delivered to the MRF (see item d)) will also help to deliver improvements in this area.

Further developments in this area are also included under item p).

- h) *Continuing to develop and expand the annual student engagement programme, including student-specific door-knocking, working with student groups and working with private sector landlords and letting agents.*

The student engagement programme is now an effective and regular part of the academic year. Officers have attended numerous events at the UEA and spoken to many students about waste and recycling services. Added to this, 2,000 letters detailing the new recycling service were posted to all known student properties in 2014 and 2015. The focus on properties where red cards have been issued on recycling bins means that officers are also continually engaging with student households, where knowledge of our services is often weakest.

These targeted efforts will be incorporated into the team plan for the environmental services team.

- i) *Working with third parties, other districts and the county council to identify opportunities for the recycling of WEEE.*

WEEE recycling events will continue to be organised alongside the British Heart Foundation and details will be provided in due course.

Further developments in relation to collecting small items of WEEE are included under item p).

- j) *Working with third parties, other districts and the county council to establish a service for the recycling of items of bulky waste.*

Officers from the county council are currently developing a project to allow reuse organisations 'first-and-free refusal' on bulky waste items with a county target to reduce household waste by 1kg per household per week. Further details are awaited and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting if these details are forthcoming.



- k) *Working with third parties to establish a service for recycling waste cooking oil and cooking fat.*

This service continues to operate and is well used. Detailed figures are not available due to a poor response from the service provider. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting if the requested information is forthcoming.

- l) *Continuing to provide support for the roll-out of communal waste and recycling facilities through to the conclusion of the Housing waste project.*

This project was completed in 2015 when the funds available to Housing were exhausted. In total, new waste and recycling facilities have been provided to 137 sites across the city with provision of nearly 1900 recycling bins including over 400 new, communal food waste bins.

- m) *Extending the cleaning service for communal waste and recycling bins and ensuring that this service achieves value for money.*

There is a dedicated bin cleaning vehicle to provide the service to all the communal waste and recycling sites. This is an ongoing service that will now be monitored by the new environmental services team.

- n) *Reviewing the current policy for providing replacement waste and recycling containers and reporting to members on future options*

The service manager is preparing a detailed report on the future options for managing waste and recycling containers and this will be set before members in the summer of 2016.

- o) *Reviewing the garden waste service and reporting to members on future options including a more efficient invoicing system, on-line payments, smaller bins for those with smaller gardens and pricing incentives for multiple bins.*

A project to improve the efficiency of the subscription service commenced in 2015. This project will support the channel shift programme by giving customers the ability to request, pay for and renew annual subscriptions online and will extend the payment methods to include direct debit. (Currently there are 8,700 garden waste bins in service and only 392 pay by direct debit which represents 4.5% of the customer base.) The aim is to increase payment by direct debit, which is significantly cheaper than other payment methods, and also to reduce unnecessary contact around renewal time. This will result in a two-tier charging policy (common practice in other authorities) whereby there is a financial incentive to pay by direct debit.

- p) *Reviewing the waste and recycling collection service options after the expiry of the existing collection contract (March 2017) and reporting on the best-value approach to future service provision*

An options appraisal on the future provision of the collection services was considered by cabinet in January 2014 and this resulted in an extension of the current contract with Biffa until the end of March 2024. This provides a significant financial saving circa £250k p.a. Further negotiations have improved on the original offer and also provided substantive long-term improvements to the provision of the service.

A new service manager role will be created by Biffa with a focus on improving service standards, customer care, recycling performance and the introduction of new services. This new post will be funded 50/50 by Biffa and the council and will help to tie-in crew behaviour, the required service standards and the customer, all of which will ultimately improve recycling performance.

Biffa will deliver a new marketing campaign aimed at improving both food and co-mingled recycling performance, which will help to replace some of the capacity lost by the reduction in staff with the end of the door-knocking campaign work.

The change to the new recycling service, with glass being collected co-mingled with other dry recyclables, now means that the current split-bodied recycling vehicle fleet is no longer best suited to the collection service. As a result of normal wear-and-tear the fleet will need to be replaced over the next two years and in planning for this fleet replacement, Biffa have offered the prospect of additional kerbside collection services. Replacement vehicles can be sourced with separate compartments that would allow for the collection of both small WEEE items and bagged textiles. Although evidence suggests that tonnages from such collections are small, this would still provide a welcome expansion to the kerbside collections service and helps to remove some reject material from the recycling bins.

It is estimated that all of the above changes will improve recycling performance by around 1,000 tonnes a year adding 2% to the council's recycling rate.

A further development with the replacement fleet will be the introduction of live cameras to all frontline rounds, streaming live pictures back to the depot (and available to council officers through a secure web link). This will be invaluable when investigating service failures and also helps to monitor safe working practices. Experience with other authorities has shown an improvement in crew behaviour and a reduction in complaints to councils after the introduction of live camera feeds, thereby reducing avoidable contact and improving customer satisfaction.

- q) *Working with the county council and other districts to identify opportunities for establishing a service for the exchange of surplus material between residents*

This action point has yet to be progressed.

- r) *Working with the county council and other Norfolk district councils to examine economies of scale and other joint-working opportunities to reduce costs and improve services*

Norwich is the current contract administrator for the Joint Venture with NEWS to provide the new recycling service and as such the council takes a leading role in the management of the work programme for the Operational Liaison Team (OLT) within the NWP.

Waste currently costs Norfolk council taxpayers over £50 million a year in spend by LA's in Norfolk, including waste collection, management, disposal and recycling. Waste levels are set to rise with forecast demographic growth, so the cost of dealing with waste will also rise. Reducing this cost is a priority for all local authorities in Norfolk and to address this there have been some excellent recent developments within the Norfolk Waste Partnership (NWP) that have improved

performance, including the delivery of better kerbside recycling facilities to improve recycling performance and recent contracts for disposal that will no longer mean Norfolk's waste is landfilled.

However, within the NWP it is recognised that councils need to work even more closely together on a whole system approach to improvements that will both meet customer expectations as well as reduce the growing costs of waste.

As a strategy, the NWP recognise that the best option to managing future costs is to reduce the amount of waste. Where waste is produced then we need to be able to recycle as much as possible where this leads to environmental and cost savings.

A key next step for the partnership is to develop our focus for performance improvements and system cost reductions. It is recognised that this will require a 'one public service' approach.

This process is in development but is likely to include the following strategic areas:

- Waste reduction, avoidance and reuse – developing projects that incentivise residents to change behaviours and create kerbside and communal facilities to support this
  - Better recycling – improve resident behaviour and improve the recycling rate for the waste that is generated
  - Focussed communications – broad mix of communications to drive changes with residents, communities and business
  - Whole service costs – using financial modelling tools to establish the true costs of waste and the actual cost to all Norfolk residents of changing/improving waste and recycling services on both district and county-wide levels
  - Wider public service – identifying synergies with the wider public service (e.g. the Health service) and the overall benefits of reducing waste
  - Performance measures and targets – to support the process
- s) *Reviewing the provision of mini-recycling banks and 'recycling on-the-go' to ensure that sufficient, suitable recycling opportunities exist within the city centre*

Further provision of recycling on-the-go opportunities will be considered following analysis of the quantities and material recovered from the existing facilities.

- t) *Monitoring performance and benchmarking other service providers to ensure that costs are constantly controlled and that value-for-money services are consistently achieved*

The OLT group now shares information relating to conferences, lectures and the like, thus ensuring that representatives of the group attend relevant events and feedback the content. This has reduced duplication where officers from a number of districts may have attended the same event and has allowed all councils to benefit from the shared knowledge.

As noted in item r), the OLT is developing a financial model to assess the Norfolk-wide impact of changes to waste and recycling services so as to be able to assess the impact of district changes on all Norfolk council tax payers.

