

APPENDIX 12. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28
SEPTEMBER 2022

At the Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on the 28 September it was:

RESOLVED: That the comments from Overview and Scrutiny, as outlined in detail in the minutes of the meeting, be added to Appendix 12 of the Cabinet report, to be noted and considered by Cabinet before making the substantive decision.

Extract of draft minutes from the Extraordinary Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 28 September 2022:

Audio Recording: 2:08:00

N.B. Councillor Val Bryant returned to the meeting following the conclusion of Agenda Item 10. Councillor Alistair Willoughby noted that, as he was part of the waste arrangement workshops, he would be recusing himself from this item.

Councillor Amy Allen, as Executive Member for Recycling and Waste, presented the report entitled 'Future Service Design of Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services' and advised of the following:

- The report seeks authority to proceed with a dialogue to agree a new waste service arrangement from 2025.
- The report is based on outcomes from the joint working group between East and North Herts Council, and the details of changes to both services are included.
- The key drivers for the changes are the impending national Resources and Waste Strategy and the financial pressures on Councils.
- The proposed changes are to make the service more financially and environmentally sustainable.
- The particular changes Members are asked to endorse are the reduction of residual waste, supported by weekly food waste collection and two weekly recycling. The textiles and battery collection service will be stopped.
- These changes will be supported by communications and funding for additional staff.

The Shared Waste Service Manager noted that in the report, point 8.31 should read 122 tonnes, not 122k tonnes as written.

Councillor Adam Compton noted that Members at the workshops did come up with consensus on proposals but that this was based on the options provided.

N.B. Following his comment, Councillor Adam Compton advised that he had also taken part in the waste workshop and would recuse himself from this item.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Carol Stanier
- Councillor George Davies
- Councillor David Levett

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Raj Bhakar

In response to questions, the Shared Waste Service Manager advised:

- In terms of items like pet litter and faeces it is accepted that the smell is not pleasant, but it is in a bin with a lid and there are alternative options available for this.
- In terms of nappy waste provision for this will be made and full details of this policy will be provided in spring 2023 to allow for conversations with providers.
- Confusion over the new cycle will rely on the digital side of the services, with options for communication regarding this to be explored.
- The Council is unable to charge for items other than garden waste, and therefore animal bedding cannot be included in the current garden waste bin.
- Previously Parishes had been offered the chance to buy litter picking kits at cost and would look to do this again.
- When North Herts introduced the 180 litre residual bin, there was a reduction in general waste, as habits changed to adapt to the new provisions. It was expected that a similar response would happen with these proposed changes.
- The new Officer role was expected to be in place 6 months before the change, dependent on budgets.
- Despite current comms, it was apparent from survey responses that residents did not fully understand what can be recycled, and more comms would be required around this, which would be supported by the new Officer role.
- It was hoped that people would not be increasing their residual waste by 50% each cycle, but would change their habits and behaviour. It was proposed that soft plastics would be recycled, which would reduce residual waste.
- Participation in the food waste scheme, whilst on par with national trends, could be better.
- Continuation of the current scheme was a proposal put to Members at the joint workshops. However one of the priorities was to address the financial and environmental sustainability of the scheme and this would not be achieved with the status quo.
- It was felt that bin side waste collection would be taken advantage of by those not wanting to change their behaviour. A full review of the Extra Waste Capacity Policy would take place and be presented to this Committee in spring 2023 for consideration.
- Most Councils running a three week cycle did have a 240 litre bin, but Stratford and Warwick have entered into a shared service with alignment on 180 litre bins. This scheme is in action and is performing well.
- The report did identify fortnightly collections for those with large amount of residual waste, for example nappies, and a full report on this would be provided in spring.
- Consultant support for this was funded through existing waste service budget.

In response to questions, the Service Director – Place advised:

- Due to the death of The Queen and the period of mourning, the Council had been unable to be proactive in communicating on these proposals.
- The consultation did take place over the school summer holidays, but it did run for a 6 week period and families are not usually away for this entire period. Adequate time was given and publicity was given to the survey throughout.
- Some residents may be surprised and unhappy by these changes, but this was the case when garden charges were introduced. These proposals are based on the results of the consultation, as well as agreed principles with East Herts Councils, and Cabinet will decide whether to proceed.

- There was no time to return to formal consultation and the 2000 responses received initially was a good sample.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Recycling and Waste advised:

- There was capacity in residual waste bins at the moment and with the changes some of the current residual waste will be recycled.
- There are also expected to be government changes to packaging, which will further reduce residual waste.
- 43% of residual waste checked at the depot could have been recycled.

In response to questions, the Deputy Executive Member for Recycling and Waste, Councillor Tom Tyson, noted that nearly a quarter of residual waste is currently food waste which can be dealt with separately. More communication was needed over this to ensure that this does not continue to end up in residual waste.

Councillor Val Bryant noted that she, and her neighbours, were proud of recycling and it was important to develop this change in ethos towards waste minimalisation and more recycling.

The Chair confirmed that the only recommendation being voted on was 2.2 in the report.

Following the conclusion of questions, the Chair summarised that the following points should be noted and presented to Cabinet:

- Concerns over the capacity of 180 litre residual waste bins to move to three week collections.
- Concerns regarding those with a large amount of waste, for example families with nappies.
- Whether enough public consultation had taken place and a need to ensure residents were aware of changes through communication.

Councillor David Levett proposed and Councillor Sean Nolan seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the comments from Overview and Scrutiny, as outlined in detail in the minutes of the meeting, be added to Appendix 12 of the Cabinet report, to be noted and considered by Cabinet before making the substantive decision.

Agenda for this meeting can be found here [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 28th September, 2022, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)