

Item No	Referred from:	EXTRAORDINARY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4c	Date:	5 DECEMBER 2023
	Title of item:	WASTE, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANSING CONTRACT SERVICE DESIGN – PART 1
To be considered alongside agenda item:		Agenda item 8

The report considered by O&S Committee at the meeting held on 5 December 2023 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 5th December, 2023, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the recommendations in the report to Cabinet and requested that Cabinet takes into account the comments and questions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Part 1 and Part 2 when making their final decision.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: To ensure Cabinet reviews and considers the comments and questions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when considering the final recommendations of the Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning Contract Service Design.

Audio Recording 55 minutes 36 seconds.

The Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management presented the report entitled 'Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract Service Design' and highlighted that:

- This contract represents the largest service contract spend for the Council each year and would have a huge impact on residents.
- The contract would have a significant impact on the finances of the Council and would influence the ability of the Council to achieve their carbon reduction and sustainability aims.
- Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) bear the cost of residual waste disposal.
- Officers had worked with Members and East Herts District Council (EHDC) to meet the contract sustainability objectives, prior to taking this contract out to tender.
- There would be a change of affordability for the Council, but this report contained recommendations to limit the increase in the anticipated contract costs.
- The proposed changes gave residents more capacity to recycle and were the most financially sustainable solutions for the Council.
- There was a tight procurement timeline and any delays may result in greater cost implications.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Adam Compton

- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason

In response to questions the Shared Service Manager, Waste Management stated:

- The additional capital bin cost related to the change to the 3,3,3 bin collection model and not for the 2 weekly collection schedule, should this be required to take place.
- The pricing of the additional, new bins was competitive due the volume that would be ordered, however the Council did not have any storage available to have vast surplus stocks of bins.
- Replacing an individual bin would cost more per unit than the large scale procurement of the extra bins. Previously when bin replacements were included as a general provision in the waste contract, compared with paying on a unit basis, it cost more than it does now.
- The feedback from the public consultation showed that residents wanted to improve recycling and their ability to recycle as highlighted in 8.33 of the report.
- North Herts residents recycled about 57% of their rubbish, but the aim was to reach St Albans and Three Rivers who were the top recycling performers in the Country.
- There was a soft plastics recycling trial occurring in Knebworth, to learn about how residents would use the service. This would be district wide in 2025 and soft plastics would be collected in the containers bin.
- Any mismatch of coloured bins may confuse the collection staff, and the majority of unused brown bins had been collected or would need significant cleaning to be viable to be used for other collection purposes, which was unlikely to have any significant cost savings.
- The previous change of bin colour from grey to purple had been supported by a high level of communication.
- There would be full colour alignment throughout East and North Herts District Councils.
- Occupiers of terrace houses would have an opt in choice due to their volume and storage needs, they would have the opportunity to change this, should their situations change, work was ongoing with the client team to finalise this matter.
- A total figure for the savings achieved by the proposals in this report would not be available until after the contract was awarded.
- Social Value is weighted at 10% in the contract, and is based on themes, outcomes and measures and included consideration towards recruitment of apprenticeships, former armed service personnel, non-working mothers and the unemployed, as well as a range of other social value elements.
- There were various mechanisms in place for any disruptions of service, with a clear criteria for the minimum service level. These would be best endeavours and are currently being consulted.
- If there was a strike the Council would not get involved in negotiations however if a disruption was due to a natural disaster, then this would impact of the minimum level of service delivered.

In response to questions the Service Director – Resources stated:

- The Council received £17.85M of funding in 2010/11, the funding for 2022/23 was £17.29M however this would be the equivalent of £11.83M at 2010/11 prices.
- Council costs had increased with inflation, and they had been additional cost rises in fuel, and staff costs. This meant that there was a 33% reduction of funding in real terms since 2010/11.
- Employees would be paid directly by the contractor and all salaries would need to comply with legislation.
- The contract would have an inflation model for salary, fuel costs and other costs throughout the contract lifespan.
- There was no requirement in the contract to pay the real living wage, that would be the choice of the contractor.

In response to questions the Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management stated:

- The new contract was about changes not cuts.
- One bin would need to be put out each week and overall bin capacity should increase.
- The blue box was being replaced by a wheeled bin for most houses under the 3,3,3 proposal.
- There would be an improved service to residents with less confusion over bin days.

Councillor David Levett stated that this report contained recommendations for Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had previously reviewed this matter and stated that the final decision should be made by Cabinet and he believed this should still be the case.

Councillor David Levett stated that many of the recommendations contained reductions of service.

Councillor Levett noted that constitutionally this Committee could not revisit the recommendation it made to Cabinet 7 November 2023 and therefore proposed an amendment to the recommendation on the report. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Adam Compton and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the recommendations in the report to Cabinet and requested that Cabinet takes into account the comments and questions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Part 1 and Part 2 when making their final decision.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: To ensure Cabinet reviews and considers the comments and questions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when considering the final recommendations of the Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning Contract Service Design.