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Agenda

Meeting name	**Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee**
Date	**Wednesday, 11 January 2023**
Start time	**6.30 pm**
Venue	**Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH**
Other information	**This meeting is open to the public**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are summoned to the above meeting to consider the following items of business.

Edd de Coverly
Chief Executive

Membership

Councillors

R. Child (Chair)
S. Atherton
P. Chandler
C. Evans
P. Posnett MBE
J. Wilkinson (Vice-Chair)
S. Carter
J. Douglas
E. Holmes
T. Webster

Quorum: 5 Councillors

Meeting enquiries	Democratic Services
Email	democracy@melton.gov.uk
Agenda despatched	Tuesday, 3 January 2023

No.	Item	Page No.
1.	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**	
2.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Members to declare any interest as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at this meeting.	1 - 2
3.	**DEBT MANAGEMENT UPDATE** A report outlining the debt management update is to be presented to the Committee.	3 - 28
4.	**DAMP AND MOULD** A report on the Council's approach to damp and mould within Council properties is to be presented to the Committee.	29 - 44
5.	**LEICESTERSHIRE RESOURCES AND WASTE STRATEGY** The Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy will be presented to the Committee.	45 - 98

MEMBER INTERESTS

Do I have an interest?

1 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

A “Disclosable Pecuniary Interest” is any interest described as such in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 and includes an interest of yourself, or of your Spouse/Partner (if you are aware of your Partner's interest) that falls within the following categories: Employment, Trade, Profession, Sponsorship, Contracts, Land/Property, Licences, Tenancies and Securities.

A Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is a Registerable Interest. Failure to register a DPI is a criminal offence so register entries should be kept up-to-date.

2 OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

An “Other Registerable Interest” is a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect:

a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority; or

b) any body

(i) exercising functions of a public nature

(ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or

(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

3 NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

“Non-Registrable Interests” are those that you are not required to register but need to be disclosed when a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing or a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate that is not a DPI.

In each case above, you should make your declaration at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as you become aware. In any other circumstances, where Members require further advice they should contact the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Declarations and Participation in Meetings

1 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

1.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which include both the interests of yourself and your partner then:

a) you must disclose the interest;
b) not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter; and
c) must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

2 OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

2.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests i.e. relating to a body you may be involved in:

a) you must disclose the interest
b) may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter; and
c) must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

3 NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

3.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting, which is not registrable but may become relevant when a particular item arises i.e. interests which relate to you and /or other people you are connected with (e.g. friends, relative or close associates) then:

a) you must disclose the interest;
b) may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter; and
c) must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

4 BIAS

4.1 Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. If you have been involved in an issue in such a manner or to such an extent that the public are likely to perceive you to be biased in your judgement of the public interest (bias):

a) you should not take part in the decision-making process
b) you should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part
c) you should leave the room.

In each case above, you should make your declaration at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as you become aware. In any other circumstances, where Members require further advice they should contact the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Melton Borough Council

Helping people | Shaping places

Scrutiny

11 January 2023

Report of: Councillor Ronnie de Burle - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources

Debt Management Update

Corporate Priority:	Ensuring the right conditions to support delivery (inward)
Relevant Ward Member(s):	N/A
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	N/A
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

1.1 Following a verbal update from the Director of Housing and Communities on 18th October 2022 and subsequent briefing note on the progress regarding debt recovery, this report includes:

- A performance update for each area of debt
- Confirmation of the approach to recovery including the use of Charging Orders, Winding up Orders and Bankruptcy Orders for Council Tax / Business Rate arrears in line with the Corporate Debt Policy
- An Action Plan in respect of Sundry Debtor collection; and
- Information on the amount of debt written off for the last three years

2 Recommendations

That Scrutiny Committee:

2.1 **Notes and comments on the council's performance as set out within the report regarding the collection of debts.**

2.2 **Notes the proposed future action which includes the use of Charging Orders, Winding up Orders and Bankruptcy Orders for Council Tax / Business Rate arrears in line with the Corporate Debt Policy.**

3 Reason for Recommendations

3.1 Income collection is one of the key factors in ensuring that the Council is able to minimise the level of net expenditure falling on Council taxpayers and Council tenants. Detailed below is a summary for each service area.

4 Background

4.1 As part of their workplan Scrutiny Committee have requested information relating to the council's performance in relation to debt collection. A briefing note was previously provided by the Director for Housing and Communities and this report expands on that briefing note providing fuller information in relation to all areas of debt collection.

4.2 It should be noted that the Revenues Team were responsible for administering several grant schemes for Business Rate payers and test and trace payments to the public during the pandemic followed by administration of the energy rebate scheme. As a result, a considerable amount of Revenue officers time and resources were diverted from the normal day to day arrears collection work to ensure these grant schemes were paid and delivered on time. The Council was highly effective in support residents and business throughout the pandemic, and more latterly with the impacts from the cost-of-living crisis, and whilst these pressures have been managed effectively, inevitably this will put pressure on capacity and resources to undertake other duties.

4.3 Members should note that performance has improved in a number of areas despite the impact of Covid 19 and in some areas, the Council is one of the highest performing regionally and nationally.

5 Main Considerations

5.1 Council Tax

5.1.1 Council Tax is a charge on domestic properties and there are 24,072 households (annual collectable debit is £46m) in the Borough and of those 83.0% pay by direct debit, which is the second highest percentage in Leicestershire. The highest figure in Leicestershire is 83.4%. Consequently, Melton Borough Council performs very well year on year and against other Leicestershire authorities and nationally as detailed below:

- Performance for Council Tax collection in 2021/22 improved when compared to 2020/21 by 0.31% to 98.21%;
- Performance has been in the top quartile nationally for the last two years ;
- When compared to other Leicestershire authorities our performance was ranked first out of nine Councils for 2021/22;
- When compared to other District Councils our performance was ranked sixth overall and second when compared to East Midland District Councils;
- As at 30th September 2022 Melton had collected as a percentage, with Rutland CC, more Council Tax than any other Leicestershire Council;
- Performance at 30th November 2022 was slightly down 0.12% when compared to 30th November 2021. However, there is confidence the year-end target will be achieved;
- As at the 30th November 2022 Council Tax arrears amounted to just over £1.6m compared to £1.5m at 30th November 2021.

5.1.2 Detailed below is a summary of the arrears by recovery stage and in paragraph 5.3, it details what action will be taken to reduce them.

Recovery Stage	Amount
Pending Enforcement (awaiting Officer decision re next recovery stage)	£66k
Enforcement Agents (previously known as Bailiffs)	£305k
Attachment of Earnings / Benefits (deductions via someone's earnings or benefits)	£360k
Payment arrangement agreed with resident	£254k
Awaiting a forwarding address before next recovery stage can be considered	£52k
Awaiting write off to be approved by either Director or Cabinet	£79k
Further action e.g. Bankruptcy proceedings, Charging Order	£484k
TOTAL	**£1.6m**

5.2 **Business Rates**

5.2.1 Business Rates are a charge on commercial properties and there are 1,678 chargeable (annual collectable debit is £20m) properties in the Borough and of those 37.6% pay by direct debit. Generally, the percentage take up for direct debit is a lot lower than Council Tax, but Melton's figure is the highest percentage in Leicestershire.

5.2.2 Again, Melton BC performs very well year on year and against other Leicestershire authorities and nationally as detailed below:

- Performance for collection in 2021/22 improved when compared to 2020/21 by 0.80% to 98.42%;
- Performance has been in the top quartile nationally for the last two years;
- When compared to other Leicestershire authorities our performance was ranked fourth out of nine Councils for 2021/22;
- When compared to other District Councils our performance was ranked twenty third overall and sixth when compared to East Midland District Councils;
- As at 30th September 2022 Melton had collected as a percentage more Business Rates than any other Leicestershire Council;
- Performance at 30th November 2022 was up 7.28% when compared to 30th November 2021;
- As at the 30th November 2022 Business Rate arrears amounted to £535k compared to £254k at 30th November 2021, which is as a result of some large back dated bills;

5.2.3 Detailed below is a summary of the arrears by recovery stage and in paragraph 5.3 it details what action will be taken to reduce them.

Recovery Stage	Amount
Pending Enforcement (awaiting Officer decision re next recovery stage	£439k
Enforcement Agents (previously known as Bailiffs)	£46k
Attachment of Earnings / Benefits (deductions via someone's earnings or benefits)	£1k
Payment arrangement agreed with resident	£9k
Awaiting a forwarding address before next recovery stage can be considered	£19k
Awaiting write off to be approved by either Director or Cabinet	£14k
Further action e.g. Winding Order or Bankruptcy proceedings	£7k
TOTAL	**£535k**

5.3 **Council Tax & Business Rate Arrears**

5.3.1 Work is ongoing to collect the arrears for both Council Tax and Business Rates in accordance with the Council's Corporate Debt Policy. Where the Council has exhausted all other recovery avenues (further action in the above tables) then Bankruptcy Orders, Winding Orders and Charging Orders will now be considered with assistance from the Legal Team.

5.3.2 The request for these other recovery avenues would be signed off by the Revenues & Benefits Manager who would need to be satisfied that:

- All other recovery methods have been exhausted in accordance with the Council's Corporate Debt Policy; and
- There are no vulnerability issues regarding the Council Tax or individual Business Rate payer. Checks will include checking with other internal Departments.

5.4 **Current Council House Rent**

5.4.1 The Council currently owns 1798 homes which are rented by our tenants. Separately, the Council has 30 leasehold properties.

5.4.2 As at 6th December 2022, the Council had 54 vacant (void) properties (96.98% occupation rate). The average rent for our properties is currently £75.10 per week. Currently, 495 tenants pay their rent by direct debt as a method of payment (27.65%). Our budgeted collection amount for this financial year is £7,381,680 from rent for our dwellings.

5.4.3 Performance for rent collected as a percentage of the rent due (in year) as at the end of quarter four for 2021/22 was 94.85 %. This was outside the 96.50% tolerance for the end of the year by 1.65%. Income management in housing has been identified as a risk and is a key focus for the housing service.

5.4.4 The impact on resourcing, coupled with the national restrictions on tenancy action instigated during the covid pandemic has led to current arrears levels being higher than the desired level and therefore action has been taken to address this.

5.4.5 Progress has previously been impacted by the absence of key staff, a need to update processes and competing priorities as the Council embarked on multiple improvements through the Housing Improvement Plan.

5.4.6 It is also important to ensure that tenants are supported effectively, as households are likely to be facing additional financial pressures as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

5.4.7 A number of changes and improvements are underway. Over the last six months to address this position, the following steps have been taken:

- Further to a review of resources, roles and responsibilities, an Income & Tenancy Sustainment Officer role has been created. The postholder started in October 2022, and is responsible for the end-to-end process, to enable greater focus and grip on income management.
- An Income Management Policy has been developed and will be implemented in January 2023
- Initiated and implemented the use of Possession Claims Online (PCOL). This is an HM Courts & Tribunals Service function which will allow us to make possession claims for rent arrears quicker and is cheaper than in paper and post (implemented December 2022);
- Improved data collection on arrears to highlight trends and issues for early intervention.

5.4.8 To ensure that we continue to mitigate the risks to Melton Borough Council and implement a robust, statutory, and regulatory income management service the following actions are planned:

- Review of processes and development of clear guidance and processes for staff and customers
- Produce an up to date suite of letter for the stages of rent arrears collections;
- Update ICT systems to replicate and automated process where possible;
- Provide refresher training to all staff who might have a part in the process to collect income and support our customers;
- Set targets for income collection for the officer as already agreed as part of the Housing Services Dashboard.

5.4.9 With the changes in place and a focussed resources to oversee this process, improvements are expected in performance and will be reported though the corporate performance reporting arrangements. The cost-of-living crisis is likely to place additional financial pressure on households, and support to tenants to prevent and reduce rent arrears whilst also providing appropriate support is key.

5.5 **Former Tenant Arrears (FTAs)**

5.5.1 As at 30th November 2022 £348k remained outstanding compared to £318k at 30th November 2021.

5.5.2 Officers continue to pursue FTAs but because of the nature of the debt, recovery action is limited unless a contact address is provided by the outgoing tenant or tracing agent.

5.5.3 Detailed below is the arrears position by recovery stage.

Recovery Stage	Amount
Payment arrangement agreed with resident	£52k
Default on payment arrangement (awaiting Officer decision re next recovery stage)	£4k
Court Enforcement Officer (previously known as the Court Bailiff)	£73k
Pending Warrant (County Court Judgement obtained but they are they are not paying so debt needs to be sent to the Court Enforcement Officer)	£43k
Pending Court Action (cases waiting for MBC to make a court application)	£55k
Awaiting a forwarding address before next recovery stage can be considered	£22k
Awaiting write off to be approved by either Director or Cabinet	£78.5k
Pending Enforcement (awaiting Officer decision re next recovery stage)	£20.5k
TOTAL	**£348k**

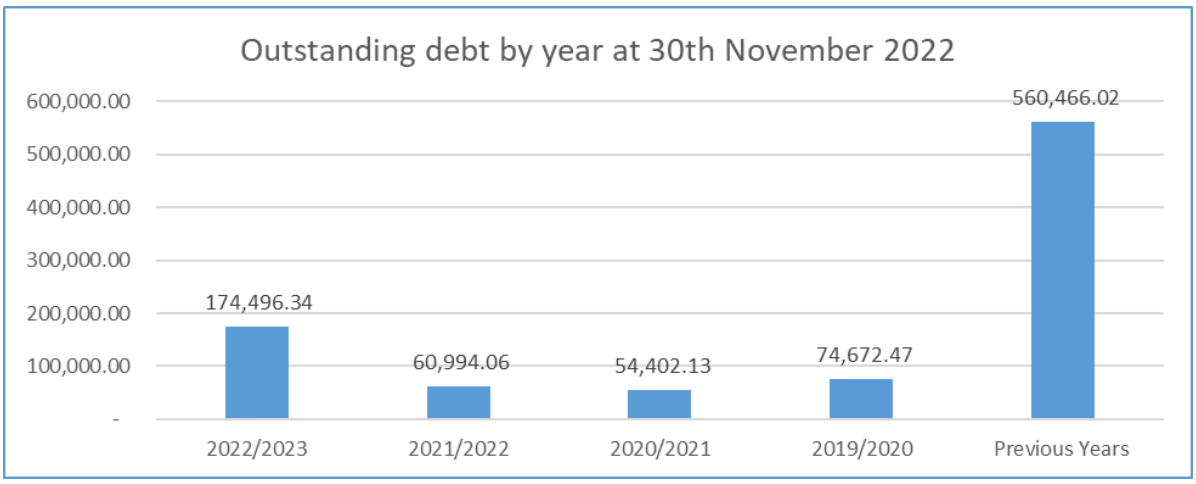
5.6 **Sundry Debts**

5.6.1 Sundry debts cover a range of services and Council functions, from Housing Benefit Overpayments to services such as lifeline and licencing.

5.6.2 As at 30th November 2022 the amount of debt outstanding to the Council was £925,031.02 compared to £962,320.00 for 30th November 2021.

5.6.3

5.6.4



5.6.5 Detailed below is a summary by recovery stage.

Recovery Stage	Amount
Payment arrangement agreed with resident	£133k
Awaiting write off to be approved by either Director or Cabinet	£70k
Pending further action (awaiting Departments decision re next recovery stage)	£722k
TOTAL	**£925k**

5.6.6 It is estimated that at least £250k of sundry debtor debt is "statute barred" and therefore needs to be written off as these debts are legally too old to be collected. If a debt is barred under statute, it means that by law (The Limitation Act) the Council has run out of time to use certain types of action to make the debtor pay.

5.6.7 As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 a considerable amount of Revenue officers time and resources were diverted from the normal day to day arrear collection work in order to ensure covid business grants and test and trace payments were paid and delivered on time. This was closely followed by the energy rebate scheme which has only just ended. This inevitably placed pressure on available capacity.

5.6.8 With regards to the £722k identified in the table above as 'awaiting further recovery action', these debts are being reviewed by the Interim Revenues & Benefits Manager in conjunction with the Sundry Debt Income Recovery Officer and subject to the usual checks they will be passed to the Governance and Democracy Team for further recovery action. This process also includes reviewing all the Housing Benefit Overpayment debt, which equates to nearly 50% of the total amount outstanding for Sundry Debtors

5.6.9 The Interim Revenues & Managers has undertaken a full review of the Sundry Debtor procedures and produced an Action Plan (copy attached as Appendix 1) with the aim of:

- Reducing the debts owed to the Council
- Ensuring performance is monitored monthly
- Ensuring write offs are written off quarterly

- Improving performance
- Changing the way performance information is reported to the Senior Leadership Team and Members

5.6.10 It is anticipated that by implementing the Action Plan, arrears will reduce within the next six months.

5.7 **Write offs**

5.7.1 Detailed below is a summary of the write offs for the last three financial years and write-offs undertaken during 2022/23 to date. A write off report will be submitted to the 8th February 2023 Cabinet meeting and ongoing they will be submitted on a quarterly basis. Once procedures for write off have been reviewed and updated, delegation limits will also be reviewed in an attempt to process these types of debts more effectively. The procedures will set out clearly the steps that need to be taken by officers before debts can be considered for write off. This will depend on the level of debts with lower amounts potentially being uneconomical to pursue, for debtors that cannot be traced the level at which tracing agents will be used, what documentation is required before a debtor or company can be declared bankrupt, as well as what process to follow in the case of a debtor having deceased. At all times a balance needs to be struck between ensuring all appropriate steps have been taken against the resources that are needed to recover the debt.

Year	Council Tax	Business Rates	Former Tenants	Sundry Debts	Total
2019/20	£ 122,961	£ 49,122	£ 81,461	£ 19,387	£ 272,931
2020/21	£ 62,531	£ 14,535	£ 13,797	£ 9,612	£ 100,475
2021/22	£ 77,022	£ 20,631	£ 37,377	£ 12,252	£ 147,282
2022/23	£ 15,934	£ 667	£ 6,473	£ 2,493	£ 25,568
TOTAL	**£ 278,448**	**£ 84,955**	**£ 139,108**	**£ 43,744**	**£ 546,256**

6 Options Considered

6.1 Not applicable. The Council's Scrutiny Committee has requested information on the position regarding Council's debt levels. This report fulfils that request.

7 Consultation

7.1 All officers involved in the debt collection process have been engaged in the development of the action plan and proposed new processes. The chair of the committee has been consulted on information relevant to this report.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

8.1 Subject to the approval of the recommendations the action plan will be progressed, and steps taken to reduce the debt levels within the Council.

9 Financial Implications

9.1 It is important of for the Council's financial health that debts are pursued and levels and write offs minimised. In respect of Council tax and business rates the Council as the billing

authority is responsible for the collection of these revenues on behalf of other preceptors and therefore any poor performance also impacts on the health of other bodies.

9.2 Detailed below is the bad debt provisions at 31st March 2022.

Fund	Amount
Council Tax	£74,397.13 (MBC share)
Business Rates	£70,912.06 (MBC share)
Current Rents	£321,000.00
Former Tenant Arrears	£182,000.00
Sundry Debts	£41,000.00 (Housing Revenue Account)
Sundry Debts	£164,707.00 (General Fund)
Housing Benefit Recovery	£457,923.00
TOTAL	**£1,311,939.19**

9.3 Based on current debt levels the potential increased cost for 2023/24 in terms of the impact on the bad debt provision will be in the region of £66k if all of the debts currently identified for write off and the statute barred debts are written off.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate Services

10 Legal and Governance Implications

10.1 There are circumstances when it is appropriate to write off monies owed to the Council. Some of these are covered by statute or an instruction by the courts whereas other areas will be considered operational, for example when residents cannot be traced, where customers are insolvent or there are vulnerabilities affecting the customer's ability to repay the debt.

10.2 Cabinet approval is required for the write off of debts in excess of £2,500 as per the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

10.3 All debt recovery should be undertaken in line with the Council's Debt Recovery Policy.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

11.1 The previously approved Corporate Debt Policy was subject to an equality impact assessment prior to its approval. As no changes are being proposed to that policy there are no further implications as a result of this report.

12 Community Safety Implications

12.1 There are no community safety implications as a result of this report.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

13.1 There are no direct environmental and climate change implications as a result of this report.

14 Other Implications (where significant)

14.1 There are no other implications as a result of this report.

15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	That the new procedures and adherence to policy do not reduce the level of debt	Low	Marginal	Low
2	That there are insufficient resources in place to recover the backlog of debt	Significant	Marginal	Medium
3	That the level of write offs required will result in a negative impact on the Councils finances	High	Critical	High

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High			3	
	4 Significant		2		
	3 Low		1		
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Regular performance reporting and monitoring to ensure procedures are adhered to and are effective
2	Should resources be insufficient these will need to be highlighted and considered as part of budget setting
3	This will need to be addressed as part of budget monitoring procedures, but it is likely that this risk will materialise and result in an increase in expenditure that will need to be managed alongside other financial pressures

16 Background Papers.

16.1 None

17 Appendices

17.1 Appendix A - Sundry Debtor Action Plan.

17.2 Appendix B - Corporate Debt Policy (March 2020)

Report Author:	**Kevin Legg**, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Report Author Contact Details:	01664 502403 klegg@melton.gov.uk
Chief Officer Responsible:	**Dawn Garton**, Director for Corporate Services
Chief Officer Contact Details:	01664 502444 DGarton@melton.gov.uk

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Sundry Debtor Action Plan

Task	Comments	By Whom	Deadline
Review performance monthly with the Revenues & Benefits Manager	To ensure there is an improvement in performance the top 25 debts or any debt over £5k is reviewed each month to ensure the appropriate recovery action is being taken	Revenues & Benefits Manager	Already started
Review the Sundry Debtors recovery procedures	To ensure there is an improvement in performance	Revenues & Benefits Manager	31st January 2023
Review all documentation	To ensure the customer understands the implications of not paying their debt	Revenues & Benefits Manager	28th February 2023
Review the methods of reporting performance	Consider reporting Sundry Debtor and Housing Benefit Recovery separately and as a percentage rather than balance outstanding	Revenues & Benefits Manager	31st March 2023
Review processes for write-offs and to ensure they are submitted on a quarterly basis	There is a piece of work that needs to be undertaken so “statute barred” debts are written off Short term this will involve more debts than normal being submitted to Committee for approval Additional resources maybe needed, and these will be met from existing budgets	Revenues & Benefits Manager	30th June 2023

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Melton Borough Council

CORPORATE DEBT POLICY

Author:	Revenues & Benefits Manager Director for Governance and Regulatory Services
Owner:	Revenues & Benefits Manager
Version No:	1.0
Date:	March 2020

Approvals:

Designation	Title	Date of Approval	Version
T3	T3		
SLT	SLT		

Distribution:

Title	Date of Issue	Version
SLT		
T3		
MIKE		

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1.0 Summary of document

1.1 This policy sets out a clear framework on how the Council will collect debt by using a co-ordinated approach whilst having due regard to customers individual circumstances and ability to pay. It details the Council's approach and action it will take to recover debt.

1.2 The Council has a legal duty to ensure cost-effective billing, collection, and recovery of all sums due to the Council.

1.3 This policy is designed to support the maximisation of debt collection through adopting a fair, proportionate and consistent approach taking personal circumstances into account coupled with a firm and efficient process of escalation where appropriate.

2.0 Objectives of the Policy

2.1 To set out the general principles of debt management across all services provided by the Council;

2.2 To seek payment in advance for a service being provided where possible and make it easy for customers to pay;

2.3 To raise debt/invoices and collect those due to us in a timely manner;

2.4 To identify and assist those who face difficulties in paying at an early stage and to actively encourage them to contact us to help to reduce the effect of debt;

2.5 To ensure that where customers can't pay their debt that we consider their individual circumstances and take action on a case by case basis;

2.6 To signpost potential debtors to advice agencies and other sources of support and do everything possible to encourage them to use them;

2.7 To have clarity in the enforcement action process and ensure that customers know their obligations and potential consequences of not paying;

2.8 To recover and enforce debts in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance and in a proportionate, consistent and fair manner;

3.0 Outcomes of the Policy

3.1 The outcomes expected from this Policy are to:

a. Ensure a consistent approach to the management of debts across the Council and that appropriate action is taken depending on individual circumstances and whether the customer can't pay or is a deliberate non-payer

b. To prevent debt where possible through excellent customer care and providing ongoing support where relevant

c. To reduce debt that is owed to the Council

d. Take timely, proportionate and consistent enforcement action where debtors choose not to pay debts

e. Set out provisions to assist customers where appropriate to make payment agreements relevant to their individual circumstances

f. Ensure individuals financial circumstances are considered on a case by case basis before enforcement proceedings are commenced

4.0 Debts to which this Policy applies

4.1 This policy relates to all debts owed to the Council including (but not limited to):

a. Council Tax

b. Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates)

c. Overpaid Housing Benefit

d. Accounts Receivable (Sundry Debt Invoices)

e. Commercial Income

f. Rent including Ground rent and any other rents due to the Council

g. Former Rent Arrears

h. Recovery of enforcement costs and civil penalties, including works in default

i. Support charges

j. Planning and Building Control fees

k. Legal Fees / Court Costs

l. Miscellaneous fees and charges

5.0 Prioritising debts

5.1 Where the Council is made aware that a debtor owes multiple debts to the Council and unless the debtor advises to the contrary, debts will be considered in a priority order, to avoid the customer losing their home, or going to prison for non payment.

5.2 Where there is insufficient income available to clear all debts, payment will be appropriated in the following order except in exceptional circumstances.

a. Rent arrears
b. Council Tax Arrears
c. Business Rates
d. Sundry Income

Where contact or payments are not made for sundry debts we will suspend any non-statutory services.

5.3 Customers who indicate that they have a problem with managing or paying their debts will be signposted to seek debt advice from relevant agencies.

5.4 Non-priority debts may include:

- Bank overdraft;
- Money borrowed from family or friends;
- Store card;
- Interest free Hire Purchase agreements;
- Credit card;
- Mail Order/Catalogue;
- Unsecured personal loans; and
- Any other debt

6.0 Social Inclusion- Ability to Pay

6.1 There will generally be a presumption that any debts incurred should be payable in full to the Council. Where an issue is identified there shall be an early assessment made about whether a customer is unable to pay or is choosing not to pay and this shall be determined on a case by case basis.

6.2 Where a customer chooses not to pay, appropriate and timely action shall be taken to recover the debt using the enforcement options available.

6.3 Where an assessment has been made that a customer is not able to pay the debt, the Council will consider aspects of a customer's situation to establish the level of vulnerability and the most appropriate course of action. This should seek to recover the money owed whilst also seeking to avoid exacerbating the customers personal, social and financial circumstances where possible.

6.4 The Council will have a flexible approach to identifying vulnerability that is able to respond to the issues presented by individual customers.,

6.5 Vulnerability doesn't mean that the Council will not collect the debt but it will have particular regard to:

- How vulnerability affects a customer's ability to pay
- If additional help is needed e.g. support to apply for benefits
- Signposting or referral to help and advice
- Offering flexible or lower payment plans whilst help and advice is sought
- The method of recovery action that may be used if it becomes necessary to do so
- Allowing extra time to seek advice and support by postponing recovery action if necessary

7.0 Enforcement Action that can be taken

7.1 It is recognised that people do not pay their Council bills in a timely way for a variety of reasons; where appropriate**,** recovery action will be taken which will;

a. **be proportional** – we will strike a balance between the potential loss of income to the Council and the costs of taking a course of action

b. **be consistent** – with the aim of achieving consistency in the advice we give, the use of our powers and in the recovery procedures we use

c. **be transparent** – to help customers to understand what is expected of them and to explain the reasons for taking any recovery/enforcement action.

7.2 We will always seek to make realistic arrangements for customers to clear outstanding debts by regular payments wherever possible. The arrangement will seek to recover all monies within the financial year in question. An early review date of the arrangement will be agreed to review the situation if this is deemed necessary.

7.3 Where arrangements are made with customers there will be an expectation of them maintaining contact with the Council and proactively advising of any unexpected situations that will prevent them from meeting their agreed repayments. The Council reserves the right to reinstitute alternative recovery

and enforcement proceedings should customers fail to satisfactoritly meet their obligations in this regard.

7.4 Any reminders we issue will convey a willingness to discuss matters with customers and encourage them to make contact if they cannot pay as advised. They will also make the customer aware of the consequences of failing to pay or keeping to arrangements.

7.5 If a customer fails to make contact or maintain arrangements, we have a duty to collect what is due and will use all legal means available to recover debts. This includes:

a. attachment of earnings
b. deduction from benefits
c. enforcement agent action
d. debt collection action
e. possession proceedings
f. county court proceedings
g. charging orders
h. Insolvency proceedings including bankruptcy and winding up
i. committal to prison proceedings

7.6 Some of these methods of recovery may incur additional costs that will need to be passed on to the debtor. Whilst we will seek to recover monies due within the financial year in question, in cases of genuine financial hardship, this may be unrealistic and therefore the Council will negotiate repayment levels that take into account individual financial circumstances and accept that for appropriate cases payment arrangements may fall into the next financial year.

7.7 The table below shows the ultimate recovery action that may be taken.

Priority	**Debt type**	**Possible Action**	**Ultimate recovery action**
1	Rent arrears	Notice Seeking Possession; Direct Deductions; Possession Proceedings; County Court Judgement	Eviction
	Mortgage arrears		Repossession and Eviction
2	Council Tax	Summons to Court; Liability Order; Attachment of Earnings Order	Imprisonment Bankruptcy Charging Order
3	Business Rates		
	Sundry Debts	Summons to Court	County Court Judgements, Bankruptcy

8.0 Alternative action to Enforcement Action

Payment Plans:

8.1 Wherever possible customers are encouraged to contact us at the earliest opportunity to discuss payment of their debt. The Council can then consider the customers circumstances with an aim to agreeing a payment plan that avoids further recovery action being taken.

8.2 Customers will be required to fully co-operate with us and provide information when requested and to seek debt advice if signposted to do so.

8.3 When considering payment plans the following will be taken into account:

- Full payment will always be requested. However, if full payment is not possible a payment plan may be agreed, in most cases the debt should be fully paid up before the end of the financial year to which it relates.

- Payment plans that go beyond the end of the financial year will only be made in exceptional circumstances, i.e. if the customer is vulnerable and an assessment of the customer's ability to pay has been undertaken by a debt advice agency or an officer using a Standard Financial Statement (SFS) provided by the Money Advice Service.

- Payment plans should start with an initial payment being made within one month of the date of the agreement.

- Payment plans may be conditional i.e. the customer will be expected to seek debt advice and provide evidence of this upon request.

- Payment plans will be reviewed regularly (i.e. every 3,6,12 months) with an expectation that the customer is able to increase their payments as their personal circumstances improve.

- Payment plans will not automatically prevent us from taking further recovery action to secure the ongoing recovery of the debt or prevent us from adding costs i.e. to obtain a Liability Order or CCJ.

- Payment plans may be refused if we are likely to obtain a higher repayment from an attachment of earnings or benefits.

- Payment plans may be refused if we have reason to believe that it will not be adhered to. i.e. the customer has a history of failed payment plans, the payment plan is unrealistic and will not clear the debt in a reasonable time.

- Payment plans may be refused if the customer has sufficient assets which could use used to pay the debt but the customer is unwilling to do so i.e. savings or investments.

- Payment plans will usually be confirmed in writing so that the customer clearly understands, how much to pay, when payment is due, how to pay, the review date, and if there are any conditions attached.

- The customer is responsible for making their payments on time, reminders will not be issued.

- If the customer has an unexpected change of circumstances and can't make a payment on time, they should contact us immediately to explain the reason why. We will consider the customers circumstances and may review or cancel the payment plan depending on; the reason, previous payment history, the amount of debt owed, any conditions attached being met.

- In the event of failure to pay, the payment plan will be cancelled and recovery action will commence or continue as previously notified without any further notice.

9.0 Omission, Evasion and fraud

9.1 Occasionally customers do not tell us about a change in their circumstances promptly i.e. an omission e.g. an award of Attendance Allowance that affects the financial assessment for care fees or another adult moves into a taxpayer's property that removes the single person discount for council tax. In such cases the Council will backdate the change to the actual date of the change which can increase the amount of a debt or create a new debt. The Council will consider how we recover the debt having regard to the individual's circumstances and why the omission occurred.

9.2 Evasion of payment and fraud reduces the financial resources available to us and has a direct impact on all residents and businesses that rely on us for their services. Evasion and fraud will not be tolerated and where identified the Council will take robust enforcement action to recover the debt as quickly as possible and may seek to impose further penalties or sanctions as the law allows.

9.3 If a customer vacates and doesn't provide us with a forwarding address the Council will try to trace them which may include the use of external specialist tracing agencies. If we are not able to trace debtors we will continue to take recovery action by issuing documents to their last known address.

10.0 Review and continuous improvement

10.1 The Council will follow best practice when recovering debt and have regard to good practice guidance issued by central government and other recognised organisations, e.g. Charted Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation, Ministry of Justice, Local Government Ombudsman.

10.2 The Policy may be reviewed from time to time and refreshed as appropriate. Minor changes will be approved by the relevant Director and Portfolio Holder.

11.0 Measuring Performance

11.1 The Council aims to collect debts in a timely and efficient manner, this is essential to enable us to deliver services to residents and businesses. We will measure our performance using performance indicators. Key performance indicators are reported to Cabinet regularly and published on our website.

11.2 Collection rates and levels of debt will be reported to members annually.

12.0 Complaints, disputes, mistakes and feedback

12.1 We recognise that mistakes in the billing, collection and recovery of debts can cause distress to customers and our aim is to get it right first time. If a genuine mistake is made and brought to our attention we will put it right and apologise. We will look at our processes to see if we can prevent the same mistake happening again.

12.2 Disputes raised by customers about matters covered in this Policy will be investigated and responded to by a senior officer.

12.3 Complaints raised by customers about matters covered in this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Councils Corporate Complaints Policy.

13.0 Provision for Write off

13.1 Every effort will be made to collect debts, however in some circumstances it may be necessary to write off a debt if it becomes irrecoverable. e.g. the debtor is made bankrupt or small balances that are uneconomical to pursue.

13.2 Our Financial Standing Orders make provision for the Section 151 Officer to write off debts to a specified level, debts above this level require approval by Cabinet. A report detailing such debts is taken to Cabinet regularly.

14.0 Withdrawing Services

14.1 Non statutory services will be withdrawn completely from a nonpayer unless there are extenuating circumstances.

15.0 Data Protection

15.1 The Council will comply with the General Data Protection Regulations, further details are available on our website.

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Melton Borough Council

Helping people | Shaping places

Scrutiny

11th January 2023

Report of: Councillor Ronan Browne - Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services

Damp and Mould

Corporate Priority:	Providing high quality Council homes and landlord services
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All Wards
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	N/A
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

1.1 As Landlords and as Strategic Housing Authorities, Councils have an important role to play in keeping tenants safe, including taking action to address hazards that occur and seeking to prevent hazards where possible. The tragic death of Awabb Ishak as a result of damp and mould in his home has understandably raised the profile of damp and mould as a housing and health risk within both the social housing sector and private rented sector.

1.2 This report provides the Scrutiny Committee with details of the Council's approach and response to damp and mould across the rented sector, and as a local authority landlord. It provides details of the information and assurance provided to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Regulator of Social Housing, and also sets out details of an action plan in place to further strengthen the Council's approach and response.

2 Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

2.1 **Reviews the report and provides comments to Cabinet on the Council's approach to damp and mould.**

3 Reason for Recommendations

3.1 Melton Borough Council has an important role to play in keeping tenants safe, including taking action to address hazards that occur and seeking to prevent hazards where possible. It is important that the Council is proactive and is transparent in its approach, and that as a local authority landlord and strategic housing authority, can demonstrate that the highest housing standards can be met. Scrutiny is an important part of this. Scrutiny committee comments and feedback are welcome to further develop work on damp and mould.

3.2 The Council has submitted its response to the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) and an initial response as requested to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). An updated response to DLUHC in January 2023 will include feedback from the Scrutiny Committee, further to consideration by Cabinet. Feedback relating to Council homes will also help to shape a specific damp and mould policy, which will be considered by cabinet in early 2023.

4 Background

4.1 As Landlords and as Strategic Housing Authorities, Councils have an important role to play in keeping tenants safe, including taking action to address hazards that occur and seeking to prevent hazards where possible. The tragic death of Awabb Ishak as a result of damp and mould in his home has understandably raised the profile of damp and mould as a housing and health risk within both the social housing sector and private rented sector.

4.2 In November 2022, Local Authorities and Social Housing Providers were contacted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to request information and assurance on the arrangements in place to identify, address and resolve issues of damp and mould in the private rented sector and social rented sector, including a specific requirement for local authority landlords to provide information and assurance on damp and mould hazards in council homes.

4.3 This report covers provides the Scrutiny Committee with details of the Council's approach and response to damp and mould across the rented sector, and as a local authority landlord.

4.4 The report also sets out details of an action plan in place to further strengthen the Council's approach and response to damp and mould.

5 Main Considerations

5.1 **Damp and Mould – Rented Properties**

5.2 The Council's Environmental Health Team has responsibility for assessing, advising and taking action where required to ensure housing standards are maintained in the rented sector (focused particularly on the private rented sector).

5.3 Tenants of rented properties can raise concerns about the condition of their homes by telephone or email. There are standardised inspection and assessment forms in place (HHSRS) and inspections are carried out by HHSRS qualified staff.

5.4 The following data covers the last three 12-month reporting periods and has been extracted from the Environmental health case management system in relation to the private rented sector:

Damp and mould hazards remediated	4 Note: some ongoing
Enforcement action taken to remedy damp and mould hazards and the form this has taken	1 hazard awareness notice 3 improvement notices
Civil penalty notices issued for non-compliance	0
Prosecutions	0

5.5 A summary of these cases is shown below:

5.5.1 **Hazard Awareness Notice**, December 2021, included damp and mould category 2 hazard.

Reasons: Flat had a leaking roof in rainstorms which was leading to extra condensation and water staining in flat interior. Management company in place by Freehold landlord; so, notice was served on the Management company and Freeholder Landlord.

Outcome: Response by Management company to comply with hazard awareness notice included works to reline the roofing felt with waterproof paints and to seal holes in felting.

5.5.2 **Improvement Notice**, January 2022, included a category 1 damp and mould hazard.

Reasons: Flat was excessively cold due to lack of working radiators leading to damp walls and ceiling. Walls were saturated with damp as plaster was peeling. Mould detected in kitchen around exterior walls.

Outcome: Improvement notice served due to Category 1 damp and mould. Landlord was not identified as having a legal address in the UK to serve the notice. Having overcome this issue, Environmental Health Team engaged with landlord/family to improve the property. Landlord confirmed works completed at property

5.5.3 **Improvement Notice**, September 2022, included category 2 damp and mould hazard.

Reasons: Damp and mould detected around walls and ceiling join in bedroom at the rear of the property. Mould detected around window frames to property (bedroom and kitchen). Extractor fan in bathroom not working.

Outcome: Improvement notice was served regarding the structural integrity of roof line as evidenced by damp and mould along the interior roof line of rear bedroom. Required an investigation in the suitability of windows and frames in the property as whether sufficiently sealed. Compliance with notice ongoing.

5.5.4 **Improvement Notice**, October 2022

Reasons: Damp and mould on exterior walls and ceiling line of front bedroom. Damp and mould in ceiling of outhouse extension downstairs. Mould present on window frames of most rooms. No working heating boiler so excessively cold.

Outcome: Improvement notice served for investigation into structural integrity of roof line and windows, and requirement for boiler to be repaired. Compliance with notice ongoing.

5.6 The lead Environmental Health practitioner has not identified any patterns or trends, based on the cases detailed above. Opportunities to take a more proactive approach to raising awareness of damp and mould in rented properties are captured within an action plan, detailed at section 5 of this report.

5.7 **Damp and Mould - Council Homes**

5.8 In November 2022, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) wrote to all social landlords, including Melton Borough Council, to seek information and assurance relating to identifying, assessing and remedying damp and mould in tenants' homes. The RSH specifically requested information on:

a) The approach taken to assess the extent of damp and mould issues affecting our tenants' homes, including how the prevalence of category 1 and category 2 damp and mould hazards is assessed

b) Details of the most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards in our homes, including the prevalence of category 1 and category 2 hazards

c) The action being taken to remedy any issues and hazards, and to ensure that our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

d) How individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively when raised by tenants and residents

5.9 Melton Borough Council submitted its response to the RSH on 19th December 2022. The recent improvements in housing including services improvements, stock condition survey (inclusive of a HHSRS assessment for each property), HRA Business Plan and HRA Asset Management Plan have enabled a robust and confident response, as well as identification of areas where the Council's response could be further strengthened.

5.10 The Council's HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Plan are clear that tenant safety is an absolute priority for the Council and will always remain so. The Council can demonstrate a detailed understanding of the prevalence of damp and mould hazards in tenants' homes and can demonstrate a robust response whilst also ensuring that future stock investment plans help us to tackle some of the known causes of damp and mould in our properties.

5.11 A summary of the Council's response to the Regulator of Social Housing is set out below.

5.12 **The approach taken to assess the extent of damp and mould issues affecting our tenants' homes, including how the prevalence of category 1 and category 2 damp and mould hazards is assessed**

- The Council's Asset Management System (NEC) includes a field that allows Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards to be recorded. HHSRS bandings are used to assess the extent of damp and mould issues affecting council properties and to identify category 1 and 2 hazards.
- Between September 2021 and August 2022, a stock condition survey of 90.45% council homes was undertaken (including a HHSRS assessment) meaning that data is

current and can be relied upon. This survey gathered data relating to decent homes compliance, energy (RdSAP) and HHSRS hazards. The survey was carried out by Michael Dyson Associates, using appropriately trained surveyors and the data was uploaded directly into the asset management system.

- The Council has committed to continue a cyclical programme of stock condition surveys, which will ensure 20% stock is surveyed each year over a five-year cycle. This is included within the Asset Management Plan. The stock condition surveys in 2023 will focus initially on the remaining 9.55% properties that have not so far been accessed or assessed. Enhanced tenant engagement will be required to support this, as gaining access to properties is key.
- The Council also receives reports of damp and mould in properties from tenants. Reports of damp and mould are monitored by managers to ensure inspection timescales are met and remedial actions undertaken.
- Reports are also monitored to better understand damp and mould prevalence and issues across our stock. Analytical reports include house type, location and causes of damp and mould
- Officers do not currently carry out in-house assessments based on the HHSRS. Training is scheduled for staff (included within the associated action plan).

5.13 **Details of the most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards in our homes, including the prevalence of category 1 and category 2 hazards**

- The recent stock condition survey identified that 11 properties out of the 1619 surveyed had HHSRS hazards related to damp and mould. 2 properties had category 1 hazards (immediately followed up) and 9 had category 2 hazards.
- In 2022, 104 properties were inspected by officers further to reports of damp and mould.

5.14 **The action being taking to remedy any issues and hazards, and to ensure that our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard**

- Damp and mould hazards identified through a stock condition survey are logged on the asset management system and a visit to the property from surveyor (officer) is arranged. They will diagnose the cause of the problem and place an order for work to be completed. This is logged on the asset management system, along with timescales for completion of works.
- Further to a recommendation from the team, the Council has committed to installing additional ventilation if it is required for any council home where damp and mould is reported.
- The recent stock condition survey identified 2 properties with category 1 hazards. These were immediately followed up and remedial work undertaken. A follow up visit has also been arranged to check that the risk has been reduced satisfactorily in both cases. A review of the 9 properties with category 2 hazards identified is currently being undertaken to ensure that appropriate inspection arrangements are in place and / or orders placed to ensure remedial works. The Council will also arrange for a follow up inspection of all of these properties, to that the work carried out has resolved the underlying issues leading to damp and mould.

- The council will implement a process of following up on damp and mould cases as a matter of course, to ensure that remedial works have been successful.
- The Council recently approved a HRA 30-year business plan and a five-year asset management plan / action plan. These plans demonstrate a shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to damp and mould in tenants' homes. For example, data from the stock condition surveys and tenant reports will be used to identify where there are particular ongoing issues or risk factors with damp and mould, to inform detailed surveys of these properties and options to create a planned maintenance programme that puts things in place to reduce the risk of damp and mould appearing at all. This will allow officers to work proactively, deal with the root cause of the problem and address the issue before it appears.
- Tenant safety is a key part of the Council's Asset Management Plan, and we are committed to continuing to review our service and to implement procedure changes as a result of any learning. A specific damp and mould policy is in development to ensure clarity for tenants on the Council's approach and response to damp and mould.
- The Asset Management Plan also covers the Council's approach to meeting the Decent Homes Standard. Stock condition survey data has enabled the development of a thirty-year programme of investment that focusses on Decent Homes improvements. Budgets have been set and contractors resourced to meet the requirements. The plan also reflects on the proposed changes and allows capacity to adept to meet the enhanced standards.
- Within its Asset Management Plan, the Council has made some key commitments to address damp and mould, including replacement of aluminium windows that can increase the risk of mould due to cold surface, efficient heating systems that tenants find more affordable, extraction in all new kitchens and bathrooms and a plan to review energy efficiency and explore insulation upgrades.
- As a landlord we expect to be held account for the highest standards in housing. It has been agreed that the Council's Scrutiny Committee will consider a report on our approach to damp and mould in January 2023.

5.15 **How individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively when raised by tenants and residents**

- Advice and guidance is detailed on the Council's website. This has recently been updated and includes details of who to contact for advice and support (Council tenants, other social housing tenants, private sector tenants). See: Preventing damp, mould and condensation – Melton Borough Council
- A leaflet on damp and mould in homes has also been updated. The guidance is designed to help tenants to manage condensation, but also make it clear that they can and should report any issues with ongoing damp and mould to us. This is distributed to residents as part of their welcome packs, but also through contact with the tenancy services team, repairs team and other customer facing teams and stakeholders. The information has recently been shared with GP's, parish councils and voluntary sector organisations and has been shared on the Council's social media channels.
- Regular meetings are held with the Council's tenant representative group (Your Choice), where key issues are discussed, and views / feedback sought. At the most recent meeting, damp and mould was a key focus including the Council's approach to individual cases. The leaflet was updated as a result of this discussion, to ensure wording was clear in relation to the use of tumble dryers.

- The Council has a process in place to respond to reports of damp and mould in a tenant's home:
  i) Report received from stock condition survey or tenant is logged on our repairs system
  ii) Timescale allocated based on the severity / urgency (maximum of 28 days for routine inspections and 7 days for more urgent cases).
  iii) A Void Response Repairs Officer (VRRO) visits the property within those timescales to assess the situation. They will identify the cause of the damp and mould. The results are logged on the system.
  iv) Schedule of work is identified and sent to contractor for completion. Again, a timescale will be allocated to the repair based on the severity (maximum of 28 days).
  v) A further step has recently been implemented. Officers will arrange a follow up call or visit six months after the work is completed, and the outcome recorded. This is to ensure that remedial works have addressed the damp and mould satisfactorily and it has not reoccurred.
- Officers produce a weekly report of all inspections raised to VRROs. This allows managers to monitor all inspection timescales, with a particular focus on any that relate to health and safety, particularly mould. Action is taken if any exceed the designated timescales.
- The Housing Leadership Team takes any complaints relating to damp and mould seriously. A full review of the history and situation is always undertaken and learning embedded into day-to-day procedures. It is a review of complaint that has led to more proactive monitoring of inspections and analysis of underlying issues.
- A visit to a small number of properties that have previously experienced damp and mould was undertaken in December 2022 by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services and Housing Asset Manager to ensure that required works had been completed. Feedback from these visits has been positive. Reports of damp and mould are welcomed, to enable swift assessment and remedial action to be undertaken as required.
- An external review of the Council's draft Housing Asset Management Plan by Savills has led to a recommendation for the Council to develop a specific damp and mould policy to provide absolute clarity on our policy position, commitments and processes. This action has been added to the housing service plan and is in development. It will be considered for approval in early 2023.

5.16 **Action Plan and Next Steps – All Tenures**

5.16.1 The death of Awaab Ishak is tragic and we agree wholeheartedly that the housing sector should do all that it can to reduce and prevent the risk of households experiencing poor health caused by damp and mould. We are resolute in our commitment to ensure that tenant lifestyle is not blamed.

5.16.2 The Council can demonstrate good practice across all tenures, however, the need for increased awareness raising and proactivity is a key next step. The Council has formed a cross departmental **damp and mould project group** to ensure that we can fully review our approach and processes across all tenures and jointly coordinate delivery of an **action plan**.

5.16.3 The project group is being led by the Councils Deputy Chief Executive (Director for Housing and Communities) and includes representation from colleagues across the following teams: Housing Assets (Council Homes), Housing Options, Environmental Health, Policy and Performance.

5.16.4 Three key areas for increased focus have been identified and actions are underway:

- **A more proactive approach to raising tenant awareness of damp and mould, and the support available**
- **A more proactive approach to raising landlord awareness of damp and mould, HHSRS / housing and health and associated responsibilities**
- **Operating transparently, and to be accountable as a landlord whilst also holding other landlords to account**

5.17 The following initial actions have been agreed:

1. **A more proactive approach to raising tenant awareness of damp and mould, and the support available:**

- The Council already has literature in place, which is provided to Council tenants at the point of tenancy sign up. It is now being provided to customer services, housing options and environmental health colleagues. Copies will also be made available to all elected members, parish councils and key stakeholders.

- This leaflet has been uploaded to the Council's website and information made available and clearly accessible on the website. The leaflet has been discussed with and made available to the Council's tenant engagement panel, to seek feedback. The published leaflet can be found here: Damp, Mould and Condensation (melton.gov.uk)

- The Council will issue more social media communication, to raise awareness of damp and mould and how to access advice and support. We recognise that this will increase reports and complaints regarding damp and mould. Our teams are briefed (customer services, housing, housing options, environmental health) and ready to respond proactively.

- Specific damp and mould policy to be developed and published once approved (Council Homes)

2. **A more proactive approach to raising landlord awareness of damp and mould, HHSRS / housing and health and associated responsibilities:**

- In addition to the improved communications outlined above, the Council will also arrange and host a landlord forum in February 2023. It is proposed that the Council will do this in partnership with a neighbouring authority. This will include information, advice, and guidance on:

  - Damp and mould, and landlord responsibilities
  - Housing and Health / HHSRS, and landlord responsibilities
  - Cost of Living – information, support and referral pathways

3. **We know how important it is to operate transparently, and to be accountable as a landlord whilst also holding other landlords to account. We will enhance our actions by:**

- It has been agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services and the Chair of the Council's Scrutiny Committee that there will be a report to the Scrutiny Committee on 11th January 2023 on the Council's response to damp and mould. Feedback from the committee will be shared with the Cabinet (as is standard practice) and will also be made available to DLUHC.

- There are other Registered Providers who and landlords in the Borough. Each of them will be required to respond to the Regulator of Social Housing on their assessment, approach and response. The Council will write to Registered Providers to seek assurance that the social housing being provided by other landlords is safe, and that the Council understand any actions or improvements required.

- We already have HHSRS trained practitioners in the Council across housing and environmental health teams. However, we have agreed to increase HHSRS knowledge and awareness and will support more staff members in being trained, alongside the more specialist damp and mould training being arranged for staff within the Council's landlord services.

- For Council properties, the Portfolio Holder and Asset Manager have visited properties where damp and mould has been reported previously to follow up on the actions taken.

- A review of the Council's housing register has been undertaken, to identify those applicants that have identified issues with damp and mould. Contact will be made in all of these cases and a further update will be included within the update provided to DLUHC in January 2023.

- A review of disrepair cases, to ensure that prompt and effective action is being taken to remedy any hazards within council homes

6 Options Considered

6.1 None. The Council is committed to ensuring excellent homes and landlord services and has statutory duties to ensure that tenant safety is not compromised in rented accommodation. As a local authority landlord, the Council should be transparent about its approach to ensuring the highest standards of housing, and that it takes every opportunity to review and improve where necessary.

6.2 The Council has taken the opportunity to review its approach to damp and mould and has identified three areas that would benefit from further focus and attention. These are set out in Section 5 of this report.

7 Consultation

7.1 There has been no specific consultation on this report. However, a number of examples of engagement and consultation have helped to inform the Council's response to damp and mould. This includes:

7.1.1 Discussion with the tenant group (Your Choice) on damp and mould, including the leaflet

7.1.2 Visits to properties where damp and mould have previously been reported

7.1.3 Consultation on tenant priorities, informing HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Plan

7.1.4 Engagement with the Scrutiny Committee is an important part of shaping the Council's approach to damp and mould.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

8.1 Tenant safety is already embedded as a key priority. The Council has some key things in place to ensure a robust and effective response. Additionally, the project group will continue to oversee and implement action plan, with oversight from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services

8.2 Further update submitted to DLUHC by 27th January 2023

8.3 Implementation of the HRA Asset Management Plan – approved by Council December 2022

8.4 Specific damp and mould policy to be developed and considered by Cabinet for approval. Comments and feedback from the Scrutiny Committee on the Council's response to damp and mould to be shared with Cabinet.

9 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The Council has already considered and approved the HRA Business Plan 2022-2053 and HRA Asset Management Plan 2023-2028. The associated capital programme is included within the budget proposals for 2023/24. It is important that the Council takes a proactive approach to addressing and preventing damp and mould in tenants homes. Failure to do so can result in service and / or disrepair complaints which may require financial redress. There are costs associated with taking action against private sector landlords, on a case-by-case basis, however this forms part of the council's statutory duties. The action plan identifies some additional training needs, and the housing service will ensure there is sufficient budget provision to enable training to take place.

9.2 Financial Implications reviewed by: **Director for Corporate Services**

10 Legal and Governance Implications

10.1 This report is intended to provide the Scrutiny Committee with a position update on the Council's response to damp and mould in rented properties. The Council has already considered and approved key policy documents that form the basis of the response and assurances in place (HRA Business Plan and HRA Asset Management Plan). A specific damp and mould policy will be an operational policy and will be considered by Cabinet.

10.2 The Council has a legal duty to refer to the Regulator of Social Housing if it finds that it has breached its legal duties as a landlord. The Council has been able to provide detailed and comprehensive data and assurances to the Regulator.

10.3 The Council has a legal duty to take action including enforcement action to remedy serious hazards in rented properties. Officers carrying out HHSRS inspections and taking such action must be qualified to do so.

10.4 The Council's legal team will continue to provide legal support and advice in all cases as required.

10.5 The following legislation, standards and statutory guidance apply:

- Section 10 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 requires a privately rented home must be fit to live in. It gives a checklist of factors to consider that are issues for landlords to address which include damp and mould
- The Housing Act 2004 provides provisions about housing conditions to regulate houses in multiple occupation and certain other residential accommodation
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) - The HHSRS is a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 and applies to residential properties in England and Wales.
- Decent Homes Standard 2006 – the definition of what a decent home was updated to reflect the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which replaced the Housing Fitness Standard in April 2006. A decent home must meet four criteria:
  - It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
  - It is in a reasonable state of repair
  - It has reasonably modern facilities and services
  - It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 creates a new right for tenants where their landlords have failed to maintain their home to the appropriate standard in an attempt to improve housing conditions for tenants

Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

11.1 The Authority must comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in S149 of the Equality Act. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the HRA Business Plan and has been reviewed by the Council's Check and Challenge Group. It can be found on the Council's website here. Investment in decent and safe homes will positively impact the safety and wellbeing of council tenants.

12 Community Safety Implications

12.1 None arising directly from this report.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

None arising directly from this report. There is a risk that the rising cost of energy leads to more people being unable to heat their homes, which could increase the risk of damp and mould. Advice, guidance and support is available to support households experiencing damp and mould and to support households who are struggling with rising energy costs.

14 Other Implications

14.1 **Health and Wellbeing Implications**: Damp and mould can create serious health and wellbeing complications, particularly through prolonged exposure. This report seeks to provide information and assurance on the steps in place to reduce the risk of damp and mould as a hazard in rented accommodation across the borough.

15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Failure to respond to RSH request for information on damp and mould assessment, approach and response in Council homes	Very Low	Critical	Low
2	Failure to respond to DLUHC request and directive for information on damp and mould assessment, approach and response in rented accommodation	Very Low	Critical	Low
3	Inability to provide information on damp and mould hazards in council homes	Very Low	Marginal	Low
4	Evidence of damp and mould issues in council homes, and inability to demonstrate clear plan to remedy issues satisfactorily	Low	Critical	Medium
5	Damp and mould complaints increase as a result of increased awareness and focus	Significant	Marginal	Medium
6	Lack of appropriate advice and guidance to tenants and landlords	Significant	Marginal	Medium
7	Lack of staff knowledge, capability and capacity	Low	Critical	Medium

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High				

	4 Significant		5, 6		
	3 Low			3, 4, 7	
	2 Very Low			1, 2	
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Response submitted, signed off by Senior Leadership Team and Portfolio Holder
2	Initial response submitted, signed off by Senior Leadership Team and Portfolio Holder. Follow up response to be overseen by project group, sign off arrangements in place. Action plan in place.
3	Stock condition survey, HRA Business Plan, HRA Asset Management Plan and increasingly proactive approach to raise awareness all significant factors in reducing this risk. Cyclical stock conditions surveys key to maintaining data integrity.
4	Stock condition survey, HRA Business Plan, HRA Asset Management Plan and increasingly proactive approach to raise awareness all significant factors in reducing this risk. Cyclical stock conditions surveys key to maintaining data integrity. Process improvements in place. Damp and mould policy required to ensure clarity and transparency for staff, stakeholders and tenants.
5	An increased in complaints as a result of increased awareness must be seen as a positive. The Council must monitor complaints and service requests and if necessary, adjust resourcing arrangements. There must be an effective response if households contact the council for advice. Customer services team briefed, website information updated.
6	Website and leaflet updated, information shared with key stakeholders, members and parish councils. Awareness is key and the Council must respond proactively if ay gaps in awareness are identified. Landlord forum is a key action to engage directly with private sector landlords. Appropriately trained staff.
7	Increased staff training, relevant to individual role profiles. To be accelerated to ensure sufficient capacity and capability to diagnose and remedy damp and mould hazards effectively. Stock condition survey already has HHSRS element which adds mitigation (90% properties surveyed with plan to access and survey remainder in 2023)

16 Background Papers

16.1 Letter to Local Authorities from Rt Hon Michael Gove MP dated 19th November 2022 / Letter to Local Authorities from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 25th November 2022 20221116 LA direction letter on standards (publishing.service.gov.uk)

16.2 Letter to Social Landlords from the Regulator of Social Housing, November 2022 Letters to registered providers about damp and mould - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

16.3 Housing Ombudsman spotlight on damp and mould, October 2021 Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report on damp and mould (housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

16.4 Melton Borough Council Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2022-2052 (melton.gov.uk)

16.5 Melton Borough Council Housing Asset Management Plan 2023-2028

17 Appendices

17.1 Appendix A - Melton Borough Council Damp and Mould Leaflet (Link) Damp, Mould and Condensation (melton.gov.uk)

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Damp, Mould and Condensation

Many people have experienced damp and mould in their property at some point. Most mould growth is likely to be the result of condensation, however, in some instances it may be the result of damp.

What causes dampness and condensation in your house?

- Lack of adequate heating and/or ventilation.
- Water coming in from the outside through leakage.
- Rising damp - dampness from the ground rising up into the building fabric.
- High levels of moisture/water vapour being produced inside the house.

Where does Condensation occur?

The conditions for condensation can exist in many areas around the home with poor air circulation and/or high heat loss such as:

- Cold surfaces like mirrors and windows
- Kitchens and bathrooms
- Solid, uninsulated walls of unheated rooms
- Cold corners in unheated rooms
- Wardrobes and cupboards

How To Prevent Condensation

Top tips:

- On dry days open some windows for ventilation.
- Keep lids on your pots and pans when you cook.
- Keep the doors to the bathroom and kitchen closed when you are bathing or cooking.
- Always wipe excess moisture from windows.
- Limit the number of pot plants in your house.
- Keep furniture away from outside walls to allow air circulation.
- On cold days try to keep indoor temperatures at least 18°C.
- Wherever possible, dry your clothes outside.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure that it is vented outside.
- If you must dry your clothes on a clothes rack inside, do this in a well-ventilated room with doors closed to the rest of the house.

If you are following this guidance but still experiencing problems with damp or condensation in your home, please contact us on:

01664 502502

contactus@melton.gov.uk

Melton Borough Council

Melton Borough Council

Helping people | Shaping places

Scrutiny

11th January 2023

Report of: Cllr Alison Freer
Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement

Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy (2022-2050)

Corporate Priority:	Excellent services positively impacting on our communities Protect our climate and enhance our rural natural environment
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All Wards
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

1.1 This report sets out the final draft of the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy (LRWS Strategy) 2022-2050. It replaces the previous Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy originally adopted in 2002.

1.2 The LRWS strategy has been developed through a collaborative approach between district and county council partners that form the Leicestershire Waste Partnership. It has been finalised further to an extensive public consultation and sets out how the Leicestershire Waste Partnership intends to manage municipal waste up until 2050.

1.3 The strategy contains a range of pledges. Some of the pledges contained within the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy can only be implemented if sufficient ongoing additional funding is provided by Government to cover the costs incurred by both the waste disposal and collection authorities respectively.

1.4 The LRWS will be considered for adoption by all councils that form the Leicestershire Waste Partnership.

2 Recommendation(s)

That Scrutiny Committee:

2.1 Reviews the draft Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2022 – 2050 (Appendix A) and provides comments for consideration by Cabinet

3 Reason for Recommendations

3.1 The Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy has been developed over a long period of time, through a collaborative approach between Leicestershire County Council and the District and Borough Councils (Leicestershire Waste Partnership). It has been finalised further to an extensive public consultation and sets out how the Leicestershire Waste Partnership intends to manage municipal waste up until 2050.

3.2 The results from the public consultation exercise have been incorporated and a final Strategy produced.

3.3 The Strategy provides a policy framework to enable a sustainable system of waste management to be implemented.

3.4 The Strategy includes objectives and pledges which provide guiding principles and commitments to deliver the waste management service as a whole to meet the overall vision. Importantly, some of the pledges contained within the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy are caveated and can only be implemented if sufficient ongoing additional funding is provided by Government to cover the costs incurred by both the waste disposal and collection authorities respectively. These caveats are important as without ongoing funding assurances, there would be significant financial burdens and risks to local authorities.

3.5 The Strategy sets out the broad direction for delivery of service development. Further work is required on the details before any major changes can be introduced.

3.6 Each authority within the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP), which comprises the County Council and the seven district councils in Leicestershire, is in the process of seeking adoption of the final Strategy. For Melton Borough Council, the strategy will be considered by Cabinet and a recommendation made to Full Council. Scrutiny Committee comments will be considered by Cabinet.

4 Background

4.1 The first Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy (LMWMS) was adopted by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP) in 2002. In 2006 it was comprehensively reviewed including a public consultation and full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Strategy was subsequently updated in 2011 to reflect changes in performance and the economic climate since 2006 but maintained the objectives of the 2006 Strategy.

4.2 The LWP commissioned consultants Frith Resource Management to undertake a full review of the Strategy.

4.3 The national Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) was released in 2018. It focuses on known problems with effective solutions that will reduce reliance on single use plastics, cut confusion over household recycling, tackle the problems of packaging and end food waste.

4.4 The RWS outlines how the Government aims to make the UK more resource efficient and to move towards a circular economy which keeps resources in use for longer. The RWS covers the period until 2050 and includes the Circular Economy Package target of 65% recycling rate of municipal solid waste by 2035.

4.5 Following on from the publication of the national RWS, two rounds of consultations were released with local authorities identified as key stakeholders. These included proposals that are expected to affect local waste services including mandatory weekly food waste collections, free garden waste collections, the introduction of a deposit return scheme for single use drinks containers, extended producer responsibility for packaging (this is in essence where the full cost of collection, recycling and disposing of packaging is met by the producers of the packaging), and a move towards consistent waste collections by all local authorities. These three policies are known collectively as the 'Collection and Packaging Reforms' and consist of;

- Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) (England, Wales & NI) – closed June 2021
- Reforming the UK packaging responsibility system/Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) (UK) – closed June 2021
- Consistency in household and business recycling collections (England) – closed July 2021

4.6 To date, the results of the second round of consultations have only been published for extended producer responsibility for packaging (pEPR). They have not yet been published for a deposit return scheme and consistency in household and business recycling collections.

4.7 Legislation to enable the policy changes within the RWS are contained within the Environment Act which received Royal Ascent on 9 November 2021.

4.8 The review of the LMWMS has considered the potential forthcoming legislative changes and these are reflected accordingly, and in some instances, caveats have been made due to the continued delay of confirmation of Government policy.

4.9 It is important to note the Strategy is high-level and therefore non-site specific.

4.10 Further clarity from Government is needed to fully understand the impact of the potential policy changes which may be the most significant seen for many years. The options modelled which support the Strategy provide a reasonable guide to the magnitude of changes that might be expected and are subject to forthcoming legislation and future funding mechanisms.

4.11 Scrutiny members received a briefing on the draft strategy ahead of public consultation, in October 2022. Feedback was shared with Cabinet in November 2022 ahead of Cabinet consideration of the draft strategy.

5 Main Considerations

5.1 Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Review Process

5.2 The purpose of a joint municipal waste management strategy is to:

a) Identify the baseline position
b) Outline where partners want to be and when by
c) Articulate how this will be achieved.

5.3 To achieve the above the following steps were undertaken:

- Strategy Review Steps Outputs
- Production of a detailed project plan Project Plan
- Project planning, gap analysis, data analysis Baseline Report
- Undertake full Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment
- Agree objectives and options and options assessment criteria Draft Options Appraisal Report and Draft Headline Strategy
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- (SEA) Scoping Report and 5-week statutory consultation; Draft Environmental Report, Public Consultation Report
- Finalisation of Strategy Final Headline Strategy
- Action Plan
- Final Action Plan

6 Public Consultation

6.1 Public consultation on the draft strategy commenced on 31 January 2022 and ran for 12 weeks until 25 April 2022.

6.2 The full suite of documents for public consultation comprised of:

6.2.1 The Draft Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy

- Described the approach the LWP would take in delivering recycling and waste management services from 2022 – 2050
- Contained the vision, objectives and pledges that sit alongside forthcoming national changes
- Included 11 pledges covering; leading by example; waste prevention; reuse; food waste collections; alternative fuels; garden waste collections; consistent collections; extra materials for recycling collections; the national recycling target of 65% by 2035; communications to target recycling behaviour and reduction of waste sent to landfill

6.2.2 The Draft Options Appraisal Report

- Explored the current and alternative ways of delivering the wastes services, the associated costs and the recycling rates that could be achieved as well as considering potential implications of upcoming national policy changes

- Provided evidence behind the pledges within the draft Strategy

6.2.3 **The Draft Environmental Report – from the SEA process**

- Considered the environmental impacts of the alternative ways of delivering the Strategy
- Involved a five-week statutory consultation period from July 2021 and received input from Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency

6.3 In addition to the above, a consultation summary document outlining the main aspects of the Strategy was available to view.

6.4 The consultation documents were available online, with hard copies available upon request. Social media posts were shared to encourage feedback from residents.

6.5 The consultation comprised a survey (predominately online) consisting of tick box questions and open comments. Questions sought views on the vision, objectives and pledges within the draft Strategy and asked a series of questions on waste prevention, reuse and recycling behaviours.

6.6 A wide range of communications were used to promote the survey utilising online and printed media. Presentations were given to specific groups and an online forum and workshop was delivered by Community Research, an independent research marketing firm.

6.7 The quantitative and qualitative responses to the online questionnaire and responses from groups and organisations to the public consultation are included as a background paper to this report.

7 Public Consultation Findings

7.1 **Have Your Say Survey Results**

7.2 A total of 5233 responses to the online survey were received. Almost two thirds of the respondents were female (63%). Compared to the known population of Leicestershire (Census 2011) this shows that females were overrepresented, and males underrepresented. Almost half (45%) of respondents were aged between 45-64 years. Underrepresented age groups in respect to population include 15-24 years old and those over the age of 85 years.

7.3 The majority of the respondents were supportive of the strategy vision with 83% in agreement:

"To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2050 in Leicestershire. This means fully embracing the waste hierarchy by preventing waste and keeping resources in circulation for as long as possible, though reuse, repair and recycling, to realise their maximum value whilst minimising environmental impacts"

7.4 83% of respondents also agreed with the pledges and an analysis of the open text comments revealed that fly-tipping was the most common issue, followed by residents wanting more pressure placed on producers to make their packaging recyclable and products more easily repairable. Other comments referred to increasing education and

engagement, so people have a better understanding of link between waste and climate change.

7.5 In regard to behaviours, 38% of respondents said that they currently compost at home with 70% expressing an interest in taking part in reuse activities such as using an online platform for selling goods and taking items to a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).

7.6 For food waste collections, respondents were generally positive on the introduction of food waste collections (65% of respondents stated they did not see any barriers to participating in a weekly food waste collection service) but there were concerns raised of how it works in practise, for example smells and hygiene.

7.7 Evidence shows that delivering the highest recycling rates and reducing carbon emissions can best be achieved by restricting general rubbish capacity (either through distributing smaller bins or collecting the waste less frequently) alongside adding more recycling services including weekly food waste collections. Respondents were asked which service configuration they would prefer. Overall, the option of a fortnightly collection with a smaller bin size was more favourable (39%) than a three-weekly collection with a current size bin (16%).

7.8 Overall, the majority (64%) of the respondents agreed with the draft Strategy to some extent.

8 Other Consultation Activity

8.1 A company called Community Research were commissioned to explore residents' views of the draft Strategy. An online forum was conducted with 25 Leicestershire residents taking part and completing a series of tasks including polling questions, discussion boards and self-filmed videos.

8.2 Key conclusions included that the vision and strategy resonated with residents and addressed many of their concerns; and that residents are enthusiastic about greater engagement in reducing waste and recycling and recognise the key role they have to play.

8.3 Presentations were provided to various groups in order to capture their views and these included Leicestershire Equalities Group, Leicestershire Parish Clerks and County Youth Council for Leicestershire.

8.4 Consultation comments included the need for strengthened references to fly-tipping and litter within the Strategy, noted the differences between district kerbside collections and to look to have a common collection regime to make county wide communication easier.

9 Overall Findings

9.1 The results to the survey were analysed and the key conclusions were:

- The proposed Vision and Strategy resonate with residents
- The understanding of the relationship between waste and climate change is limited.
- Residents are enthusiastic about greater engagement in reducing waste and increasing recycling and recognise they have a key role to play (community initiatives and collective action).

- Communications and engagement activities need to be developed bearing in mind learning from behavioural science, addressing the environmental, personal and social factors that can affect behaviour

9.2 The key themes that have been highlighted in the consultation responses together with the issues and considerations that have been raised are summarised below. These are not presented in an order of priority:

- Tackling fly-tipping - an area of concern for residents.
- Putting pressure on producers – residents would like to see producers take more responsibility and use recyclable packaging for their goods.
- Increased access to sustainable activities – recognition of these to be accessible and affordable for all, especially waste prevention and reuse.
- Engagement and encouragement – respondents like to be kept informed and suggested potential for incentives for rewarding positive behaviours.
- Educating residents - suggested that efforts need to be made to encourage understanding the issue of waste and its relationship to climate change.
- Concerns with food waste collections - respondents were generally positive on the introduction of food waste collections but there were concerns raised of how it works in practise, for example smells and hygiene.
- Expanding kerbside recycling - to reduce the amount of residual waste, respondents were keen for the introduction of a wider variety of materials collected at the kerbside.
- Accessibility of garden waste collections – residents were generally satisfied with the service, but a reoccurring theme was accessibility to this service and charging.
- Restricted residual waste collection and household size – residents from larger households raised concerns on restricted residual waste. Overall, the option of a fortnightly collection with a smaller size bin was more favourable (39%) than a three-weekly collection with a current size bin (16%).
- Improving HWRCs - levels of satisfaction with HWRCs were high although some respondents did raise concerns regarding short opening hours, too few HWRC sites and inaccessibility

10 Changes to the Strategy

10.1 Findings from the consultation exercise will be utilised to help inform future initiatives and campaigns.

10.2 A key theme which came out of the consultation exercise, which is not dealt with by the pledges, is fly-tipping. Leicestershire Waste Partnership has therefore committed to address this and added an additional pledge (pledge 2 below)

10.3 Minor modifications have been made to the remaining 11 strategy pledges, but it is not considered that these existing pledges require substantial alteration.

10.4 The final pledges are set out below:

1. All councils within the Partnership will review their purchasing activities and internal waste management services to seek to promote waste prevention, reuse and recycling to support the objectives of this Strategy and lead by example.

2. Environmental crime, particularly fly-tipping does not recognise council boundaries. The Partnership will work together to reduce fly-tipping and litter across Leicestershire and educate residents, businesses, or anyone disposing of rubbish, about their legal duty of care to dispose of their rubbish responsibly.

3. The Partnership pledge to support and encourage waste prevention activity across LWP. This will include working with stakeholders, residents and communities to prevent unnecessary waste arising, for example through food waste reduction campaigns such as Love Food Hate Waste.

4. The Partnership pledge to continue delivering reuse services and expand activities where practicable, working in partnership with other stakeholders and to signpost to places that advocate for waste prevention and reuse, in support of developing a circular economy. This includes a pledge to continue to improve the collection of items for reuse at Household Waste Recycling Centres and explore the development of reuse shops at suitable sites.

5. The Partnership will implement and promote separate food waste collections to all households, subject to confirmation of the national policy, legislation and the provision of total ongoing Government funding. This will be as soon as possible when contracts and circumstances dictate. The County Council will procure anaerobic digestion capacity to treat the collected food waste in a manner that contributes to effective carbon emissions reduction across the County and improves soil quality.

6. The Partnership will explore the use of alternative fuels for collection vehicles and the transportation of waste and resources to further reduce carbon emissions of the service and improve air quality.

7. The Partnership will continue to offer a garden waste collection system to Leicestershire residents. This will follow national guidelines as to the form of the collection and will be subject to legislation and total ongoing Government funding. The Partnership will continue to procure composting capacity to treat the collected garden waste in a manner that supports carbon reduction and improves soil quality.

8. The Partnership shall ensure that the full range of recyclables (as specified by the Government and subject to funding) are collected from residents (and businesses where applicable) across Leicestershire by 2025, or as soon as possible when contracts and circumstances allow.

9. The Partnership shall continue to explore the viability of adding extra materials to recycling collections (e.g., for batteries, small electric goods or clothing) striving to continually improve Leicestershire's recycling performance.

10. The Partnership will put in place collection systems to contribute towards the achievement of the national 65% recycling target by 2035. This may include restricting residual waste capacity to encourage greater materials separation, carbon savings and resource recovery. Improvements in materials recovery at Household Waste Recycling Centres will also contribute towards the national target.

11. The Partnership will continue to allocate a communications budget sufficient to help promote good recycling behaviour and support resource recovery to progress the circular economy and low-carbon objectives of this Strategy.

12. The County Council will reduce waste sent to landfill to less than 5% by 2025, well in advance of the 10% national target by 2035. The County Council will undertake future procurement processes for residual waste treatment (alternatives to landfill) in line with the vision and objectives of this Strategy.

10.5 In the period during the public consultation the Government released its response to its extended producer responsibility for packaging consultation and has confirmed that glass which was originally to be included in the proposed deposit return scheme will now be part of extended producer responsibility for packaging. No further modelling was undertaken within the options appraisal due to the continued uncertainly around the Governments preferred approach, however the future waste and recycling projections were updated to take account of this amendment.

10.6 Due to the continued uncertainty regarding Government policies a Local Government finance position statement also been added to the Strategy on Plan**.**

10.7 A further step in the review process is produce an Action Plan. The Action Plan provides a route map for delivering the vision, objectives and pledges set out in the Strategy. It provides a clear direction of travel to ensure that resources and waste are managed effectively**.**

10.8 The Action Plan will guide the implementation of the Strategy and will be subject to regular review and monitoring. Changes may be made to the Action Plan in response to (for example):

- Accelerated or delayed implementation of actions
- Variance in predicted performance of actions
- Changes in Government policy, legislation or regulations; or
- Other changes in circumstances

10.9 The Action Plan has been divided into the following themes:

- Reuse/Circular Economy
- Recycling (performance & collections)
- Residual Waste Reduction
- Partnership Working
- Leading by example
- Communication
- Carbon

10.10 Some of these themes contain overlapping elements. Each action within the plan details what action is to be taken, how this relates to either an objective or pledge of the Strategy, by whom and when.

10.11 The Action Plan associated with the Resources and Waste Strategy is high level but builds on the objectives and pledges of the Strategy. There may be further (more detailed) actions for example: a procurement plan; individual Council action plans; business cases, or communications plans.

11 Options Considered

11.1 The Leicestershire Waste Partnership could choose not to adopt this strategy given the absence of clarity from Government. Further clarity from Government is needed to fully understand the impact of the potential policy changes which may be the most significant seen for many years.

11.2 However, the options modelled which support the Strategy provide a reasonable guide to the magnitude of changes that might be expected and are subject to forthcoming legislation and future funding mechanisms. It has been agreed that to progress with the adoption process, subject to the pledges being caveated where required, is appropriate.

12 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

12.1 Each authority within the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP), which comprises the County Council and the seven district councils in Leicestershire, is in the process of seeking adoption of the final Strategy.

12.2 For Melton Borough Council, the strategy will be considered by Cabinet and a recommendation made to Full Council. Scrutiny Committee comments will be considered by Cabinet.

12.3 Implementation and communication will be overseen by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership.

13 Financial Implications

13.1 Due to the continued uncertainty regarding Government policies a Local Government finance position statement also been added to the Strategy:

13.2 This Strategy has been published during a time of uncertainty in regard to the Government's progression of the implementation of the national Resources and Waste Strategy (Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England). The Resources and Waste Strategy was released on 18 December 2018 and sets out how Government will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy.

13.3 Three significant consultations took place during 2019 including Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections in England, a Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging. Further secondary consultations took place in early 2021 and subsequent changes from 2024/25 could include mandatory household food waste collections, restrictions on garden waste charging and the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers. At this present time Government has not released the outcomes from two of the consultations, therefore there remains uncertainly in regards to forthcoming legislation and future funding mechanisms.

13.4 All councils are facing challenging financial outlooks. The pressures of high inflation levels, coupled with an ever-increasing demand for core services, is presenting a challenge across the whole local government sector.

13.5 In acknowledgement of this some of the pledges contained within the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy are caveated and can only be implemented if sufficient ongoing additional funding is provided by Government to cover the costs incurred by both the waste disposal and collection authorities respectively.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate Services

14 Legal and Governance Implications

14.1 Legislation to enable the policy changes within the Recycling Waste Strategy (RWS) are contained within the Environment Act which received Royal Ascent on 9 November 2021.

14.2 The review of the LMWMS has considered the potential forthcoming legislative changes and these are reflected accordingly, and, in some instances, caveats have been made due to the continued delay of confirmation of Government policy. It is important to note the Strategy is high-level and therefore non-site specific.

14.3 Each authority within the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP), which comprises the County Council and the seven district councils in Leicestershire, is in the process of seeking adoption of the final Strategy.

14.4 For Melton Borough Council, the strategy will be considered by Cabinet and a recommendation made to Full Council. Scrutiny Committee comments will be considered by Cabinet.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer

15 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

15.1 An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) Screening was undertaken and concluded that the review of the LMWMS was subject to a full EHRIA. This EHRIA provides a strategic framework and further EHRIAs will be undertaken, where appropriate, for delivery of activities, and as specific schemes are developed.

15.2 This EHRIA has enabled the LWP to assess whether the new LRWS discriminates or has any adverse impact on any particular community or group of people within Leicestershire. The key outcome of the EHRIA is for the LWP to ensure the LRWS promotes accessible services, accessible information and appropriate equality training where required.

16 Community Safety Implications

16.1 None arising directly from this report.

17 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

17.1 The Strategy sets the LWP in a robust policy position for an imminent period of substantial change (2023 – 2027) and longer-term goals and will help deliver on Net Zero priorities. This vision of the strategy is particularly pertinent:

"To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2050 in Leicestershire. This means fully embracing the waste hierarchy by preventing waste and keeping resources in circulation for as long as possible, though reuse, repair and recycling, to realise their maximum value whilst minimising environmental impacts"

18 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Preparedness for significant changes in national policy	Significant	Critical	Medium
2	Affordability of implementing significant legislative and national policy changes	High	Critical	High
3	Delayed outcomes from Government consultation	Significant	Critical	Medium

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High			2	
	4 Significant			1, 3	
	3 Low				
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Engage in consultations and ensure consideration the impact of these significant changes to national policy. Ensure strategy pledges are sufficiently caveated to be clear that implementation of changes with significant resource implications will be subject to full and ongoing government funding. Strategy development to progress, overseen by Leicestershire Waste Partnership.
2	Ensure strategy pledges are sufficiently caveated to be clear that implementation of changes with significant resource implications will be subject to full and ongoing government funding.
3	Leicestershire Waste Partnership in place to monitor updates, consider implications and advise on next steps or risks as required.

19 Background Papers

19.1 Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy, Consultation Feedback: https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/you-said-we-did/engagement-2022

19.2 Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy, Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment

20 Appendices

20.1 Appendix A: Leicestershire Resources and Waste Management Strategy 2022 – 2050

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Appendix A

Leicestershire Waste Partnership

Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy

2022 - 2050

Image ???

Foreword

The Government set a clear ambition to improve the environment within a generation in their 2018 Strategy; 'A Green Future: our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. How we manage our waste plays an important part in achieving this ambition as everything that we buy, use and eventually throw away has an impact on our environment.

The Leicestershire Waste Partnership (the County Council and the seven District and Borough Councils) work together to manage all of the household waste that is produced in Leicestershire. In this Strategy, the Partnership sets out how we will deliver recycling and waste management services up to 2050.

We are working towards reducing the amount of waste that is produced, increasing recycling, reducing carbon emissions to support net zero ambitions and keeping resources in use for longer. Additionally, we are pledging to reduce waste sent to landfill.

Depending on the funding that we receive from the Government, we are committed to introducing separate food waste collections across Leicestershire, offering garden waste collections to all residents, and expanding recycling collections.

We are also committed to reviewing our own purchasing activities and internal waste management services to lead by example.

But we can't do this alone. We need people to work with us to achieve these ambitions and we are committed to working with stakeholders, residents and communities to prevent unnecessary waste from being produced in the first place, to promote good recycling behaviour and support resource recovery to progress a circular economy. By working together, we can improve our environment, now and for the future.

Blaby District Council – the heart of Leicestershire
Charnwood
District of Harborough
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Leicestershire County Council
Melton Borough Council
North West Leicestershire District Council
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Local government financial statement

This Strategy has been published during a time of uncertainty in regard to the Government's progression of the implementation of the national Resources and Waste Strategy (Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England). The Resources and Waste Strategy was released on 18 December 2018 and sets out how Government will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy.

Three significant consultations took place during 2019 including Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections in England, a Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging. Further secondary consultations took place in early 2021 and subsequent changes from 2024/5 could include mandatory household food waste collections, restrictions on garden waste charging and the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers. At this present time Government has not released the outcomes from two of the consultations, therefore there remains uncertainly in regard to forthcoming legislation and future funding mechanisms.

All councils are facing challenging financial outlooks. The pressures of high inflation levels, coupled with an ever-increasing demand for core services, is presenting a challenge across the whole local government sector.

In acknowledgement of this some of the pledges contained within the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy are caveated and can only be implemented if sufficient ongoing additional funding is provided by Government to cover the costs incurred by both the waste disposal and waste collection authorities respectively.

Executive summary

How we view 'waste' has changed; it is no longer only something to get rid of, but is considered a valuable resource, to be retained and reused, or avoided at all where possible. Using waste as a resource can help to reduce the raw materials needed for producing new goods, which has environmental, social and financial benefits. This updated Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy (LRWS / the 'Strategy') reflects this global current thinking and describes the recycling and waste management services which will be delivered by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP)[1] from 2022 up to 2050. The Vision of the LRWS is:

> *To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2050 in Leicestershire. This means fully embracing the waste hierarchy by preventing waste and keeping resources in circulation for as long as possible, through reuse, repair and recycling, to realise their maximum value whilst minimising environmental impacts.*

This vision is supported by specific Strategy objectives and a range of pledges and measures that sit alongside national policy changes - setting a direction for long term management of material resources for the benefit of the residents and communities of Leicestershire[2]. In addition, the Strategy includes:

- The policy framework - the current and future context for resources and waste management, considering local issues e.g. air quality, and global issues such as carbon reduction / greenhouse gas reduction and climate change.
- Strategy delivery - how resources and waste will be managed to achieve the vision and objectives, through the services provided by the LWP to its residents and communities and 12 pledges regarding commitments, actions and performance.

[1] Leicestershire Waste Partnership comprises Leicestershire County Council and the seven District and Borough Councils. Leicester City Council is an associate member.

[2] Note that this Strategy does not cover Leicester City Council which is a unitary authority with its own waste collection and disposal arrangements.

The LRWS includes a focus on waste prevention (avoiding waste generation in the first place) and developing more initiatives on reuse of goods - both at the Household Waste and Recycling Centres and in the community. There are challenging targets around recycling and reuse, aiming to enhance Leicestershire's performance from current levels (around 44% recycling rate) to 65% by 2035, with the majority of progress made over the next five years through the Countywide implementation of weekly food waste collections, more consistent and effective recycling collections and, subject to Government guidelines and funding, potential changes to garden waste collections.

If the national 65% recycling rate is to be met the amount of residual waste (all general mixed 'rubbish') managed by Councils will need to fall from around 260kg per person to around 160kg per person by 2035. Furthermore, the management of residual waste in Leicestershire is also set to change with a pledge to reduce the amount of waste landfilled from current levels (of around 30%) down to 5% by 2025. This is substantially ahead of the new national target of 10% landfilled waste by 2035.

The net effect of the measures within the LRWS is a reduction in the amount of carbon (as measured in CO2 equivalents) in the range of 5,000 -10,000 tonnes of CO2 eq. each year from the collection and management of wastes and resources in the County. This is equivalent to taking between 1,800 – 3,600 cars off the road, in terms of annual emissions savings.

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1. Introduction

What is a Resources and Waste Strategy?

This document is the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy (LRWS) for the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP). The partnership comprises Leicestershire County Council (the Waste Disposal Authority) and the seven Leicestershire Waste Collection Authorities (the District and Borough Councils). Leicester City Council manages its waste via separate arrangements as a Unitary Authority.

This LRWS is an update to the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy which has been in place since 2002 and was reviewed and updated in 2006 and 2011 respectively.

The LRWS describes the recycling and waste management services which will be delivered by the LWP up to 2050. The Strategy sets outs:

- The policy framework - the current and future context for resources and waste management, considering local issues e.g. air quality, and global issues including carbon reduction / greenhouse gas reduction and climate change.
- The vision, aims, and objectives - what the LWP wants to achieve in terms of resources and waste management.
- Strategy delivery - how resources and waste will be managed to achieve the aims and objectives, through the services provided by the LWP to its residents and communities.

How we view 'waste' has changed; it is no longer only something to get rid of, but is now considered a valuable resource, to be retained and reused, or avoided at all where possible. Also, the adverse impacts of raw material inputs e.g. the resources we use, are becoming increasingly apparent, meaning now more than ever raw materials need to be used efficiently and conserved. Using the resources from waste can help to reduce the raw materials needed for producing new goods, which has environmental, social and financial benefits. This updated LRWS reflects this global current thinking.

The Strategy covers services for managing municipal solid waste (MSW). MSW is all the waste

collected by the local authorities in the LWP[3]. This includes household, commercial and street cleansing wastes, and wastes taken to the Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs).

As Waste Collection Authorities, the District and Borough councils have a legal duty to collect municipal waste and Leicestershire County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA), has a legal duty to treat, manage and dispose of MSW. The WCAs and WDA work in partnership, recognising that joint working on planning the collection, treatment (composting, recycling, and recovery) and disposal of waste supports efficient service delivery for residents and communities, including businesses.

This Strategy runs up to 2050, however it will be reviewed regularly at appropriate periods during this time. Reviews are needed to make sure the Strategy remains current and in line with national guidance.

How is the service delivered?

All districts in Leicestershire currently have household collections of recycling, residual[4] and garden waste. Food waste is not currently collected district wide by any WCA; however some have either collected this in the past or have trialled weekly food waste collections over the last few years, including Harborough District Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council. North West Leicestershire District Council have been successfully trialling a food waste collection since November 2019, and continue to do so.

Recycling

How recycling is collected is broadly consistent across the LWP. Six of the Districts collect all recycling material together in one container (typically a wheeled bin), this is often referred to as a 'commingled collection' and is collected every two weeks. Residents in North West Leicestershire District on the other hand, are provided with a mixture of bags and boxes to separate out key recyclable materials, which are then placed in different compartments on a specialist vehicle. This is often referred to as a 'kerbside-sort' or 'multi-stream' collection. Examples of the containers for each District and Borough council are shown below.

[3] It also applies to similar wastes collected by other parties; however this is not under the control of the local authorities.

[4] 'Residual' waste is 'black bin' waste that is not separated, so is mixed waste or 'general rubbish'.

Commingled collections for:
Blaby District Council,
Charnwood Borough Council,
Harborough District Council,
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council,
Melton Borough Council and
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Kerbside sort
or multi-stream
collections for
North West Leicestershire
District Council

All of the commingled recyclable materials collected from residents are currently sent to a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Leicester. At this facility, recycling is separated using a combination of manual and automatic sorting processes to sort material streams before being baled and sent for reprocessing.

North West Leicestershire District Council has its own arrangement for processing recycling (which is already separated on the vehicle as it collects from households). Their recycling is transported to a depot in Coalville. Here, the materials are unloaded from the collection vehicles and tipped into dedicated bays where further separation is used where needed. For example, magnets are used to separate the metals from the plastic. Once baled, the collected recyclables are sold on, and this can be directly to reprocessors.

Garden waste

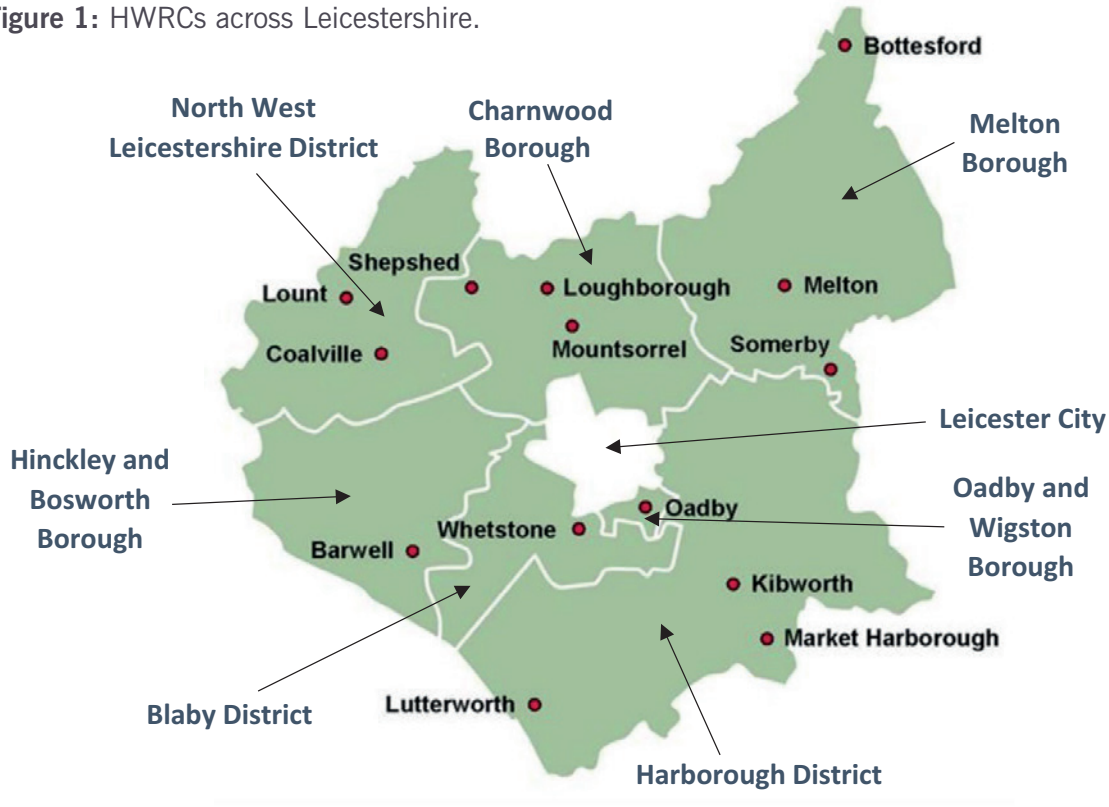
Unlike recycling and residual waste, the collection of garden waste is a non-statutory service and is a discretionary service provided by Local Authorities. As such, Local Authorities are able to provide this service for free, or to ask residents to pay for its collection. All authorities in the LWP charge for the collection of garden waste, except for North West Leicestershire District Council who offer this service for free. Residents wishing to have their garden waste collected typically pay an annual subscription fee which covers the cost of a wheeled bin, vehicles and crew that collect garden waste.

Residents are also encouraged to use other methods to dispose of garden waste. Firstly, via home composting garden waste (cuttings, trimmings, plants, branches and other garden waste which can be composted). Alternatively, residents can also take their garden waste to any of the Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs)[5] are provided for residents to dispose of any bulky or additional waste and recycling which cannot be collected through the kerbside collection. There are fourteen HWRCs located across Leicestershire, as shown in the image below. These sites are managed by Leicestershire County Council.

Figure 1: HWRCs across Leicestershire.

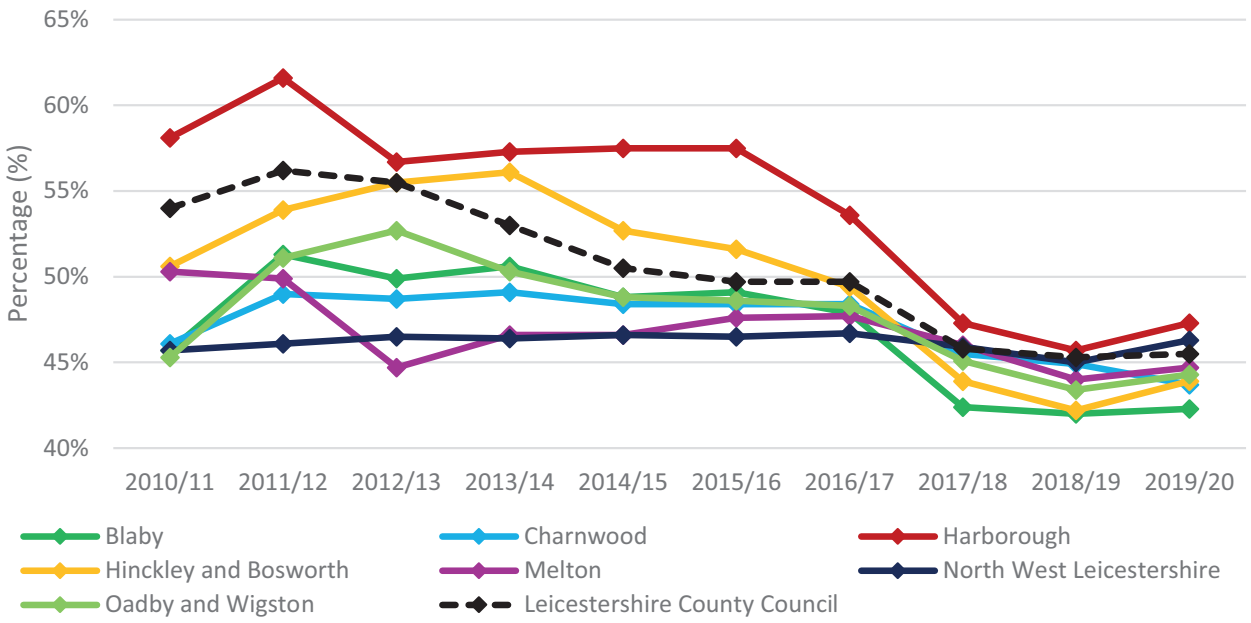


The HWRCs take a wide range of items which can be sent for reuse, recycling or disposal. Opening hours and the waste accepted varies across each site. Leicestershire residents are generally able to use these sites for free. Some charges may apply for specific materials, including hardcore and rubble, tiles, plasterboard and asbestos. Vans, pick-ups and cars with trailers, and any vehicle bringing asbestos, chemicals or liquid paint, require a permit to visit the sites.

In 2019/20, the combined reuse, recycling and composting performance was 45.5% for household waste from collections at the kerbside and from the HWRCs. This is lower than the UK's target to recycle 50% of household waste by 2020. The average for England within the same period was 43.8%, meaning that Leicestershire did perform above national average, despite the fall in overall performance shown below. A key reason for the fall, shown in Figure 2, was not that householders were recycling less, but that a facility which was extracting extra recycling from residual waste had closed.

[5] Locally in Leicestershire known as Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS) or historically known as 'the tip'.

Figure 2: Current and historic recycling rates for Leicestershire Councils 2010/11 - 2019/20.



Although the recycling rate is above the national average, the amount of waste sent to landfill (the least desirable outcome) was 31.8% in 2019/20, this is much higher than the average landfill rate for local authorities in England, for the same time period (8.5%). Both reducing the waste sent to landfill and increasing recycling are key elements of this Strategy (see section 3).

Who delivers the collection services?

The collection of waste and recycling is the responsibility of the District and Borough Councils. The delivery of this service can be managed in several ways; in-house (the Council run the collections using their staff), via a Local Authority Trading Company (a type of publicly owned 'arms length' company), or by outsourcing the service to a private contractor (also known as contracting out the service). At present, four of the District and Borough Councils operate this service in house (Blaby, Hinckley & Bosworth, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston) and three are outsourced to the private sector (Charnwood, Harborough and Melton). Collection service contracts typically last between 7 and 10 years.

Bulky waste

Across the County, residents can arrange for the collection of larger items - this is known as a bulky waste collection. Each District and Borough Council has its own service in place for its residents. This service is chargeable (price varies per Council), often with a minimum collection fee. The types of items that can be collected include domestic furniture, appliances (televisions, fridges, freezers, washing machines), beds etc.

Trade waste

Some District and Borough Councils also offer a collection service from businesses in their area, this is known as a trade waste collection. An overview of the trade waste services is provided below.

Council	Waste types collected	Other characteristics
Blaby District Council	General Waste Mixed Recycling Glass Only	Customers can choose from a range of options for both the frequency of collection and the size of containers provided.
Charnwood Borough Council	General Waste	Weekly (or multiples of weekly) collections of residual waste. Intention to start mixed recycling collections soon.
Harborough District Council	General Waste Mixed Recycling	Customers can choose from a range of options for both the frequency of collection and the size of containers provided.
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	General Waste Mixed Recycling	Customers can choose from a range of options for both the frequency of collection and the size of containers provided.
Leicestershire County Council	N/A	LCC run a trade service at Whetstone Waste Transfer Station (WTS) which includes an outlet for general waste and also source separated waste such as cardboard, green waste, wood and inert waste.
North West Leicestershire District Council	General Waste Mixed Recycling	Customers can choose from a range of options for both the frequency of collection and the size of containers provided.

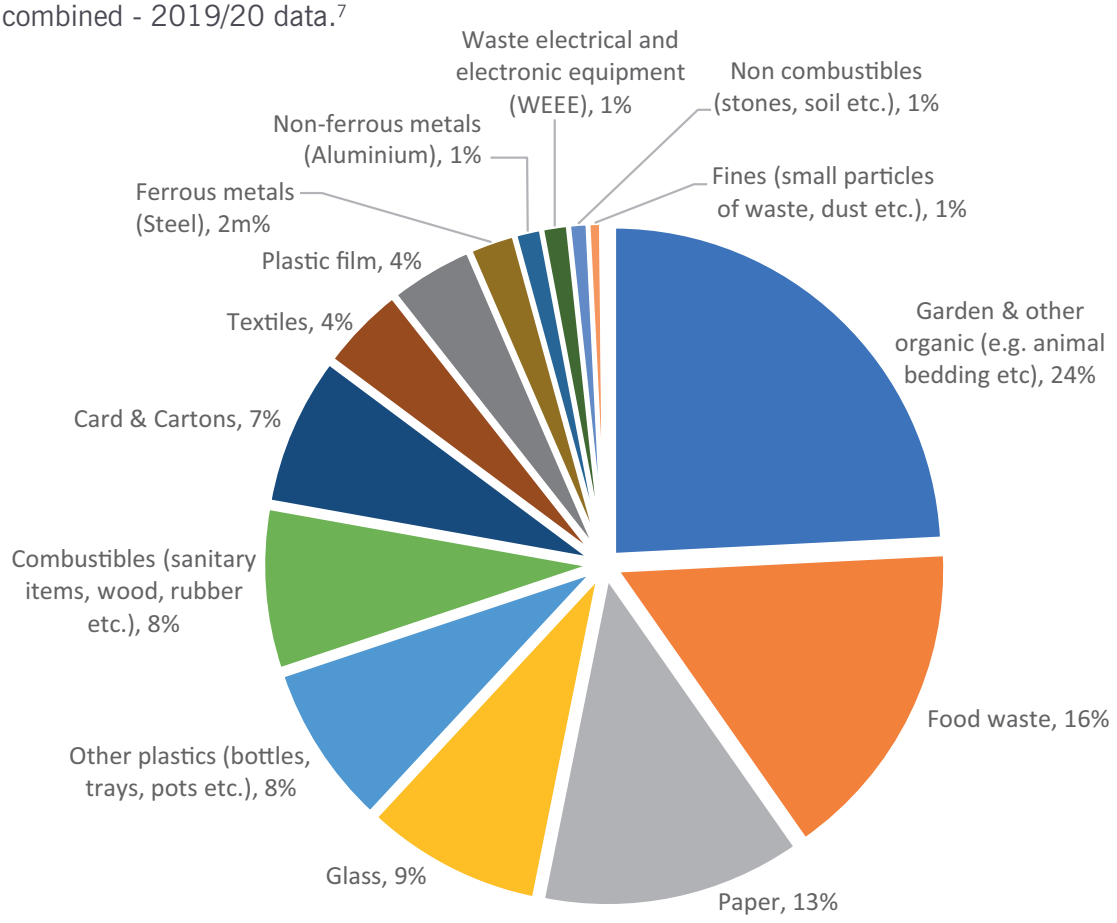
What is in your bins?

The average composition of what a Leicestershire resident puts in their bins each year is shown in the pie chart below. What this illustrates is that the vast majority of items that are disposed of can be prevented, reduced, reused or recycled in some way. This isn't just the materials that we are familiar with recycling like paper, card, metals, glass and plastic, but also other materials like food waste and waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), which can be collected separately and have their resource value recovered.

Separating these additional materials for recycling can help contribute towards achieving 65% recycling, the national recycling target for 2035, set by Government[6].

Furthermore, other items may be reused to prevent them becoming waste at all. This is preferable to recycling, and options such as using washable nappies, reusable water bottles for drinks and refilling containers with goods from a refill shop or station to avoid new packaging all help conserve resources and avoid packaging and other wastes. There is more on this in sections 3 and 4 of this Strategy.

Figure 3: Waste composition of all bins (residual, recycling and garden) combined - 2019/20 data.[7]



[6] This is included in the 2020 Circular Economy Package (CEP).

[7] Data may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

2. What is the proposed strategy for Leicestershire?

This section explains the direction envisaged for the LRWS and includes a summary of influences (both national and local) that have shaped its development.

The Strategy focuses on municipal waste that is waste generated by households and similar wastes from businesses and commerce. It explores different options to reduce the amount of waste arising in the first place (see 'the waste hierarchy' described later in this section), and then to manage the remaining material in a way that gives benefit from its resource value.

The management of the residual waste (the remaining waste left for disposal) is managed by long term contracts. Whilst there are different ways to manage this waste, the Strategy takes the position that the prime aim is to avoid waste going to landfill. When new contracts are to be let for managing residual waste, they should review the latest options available and adhere to the principles of this Strategy for subsequent decision making on residual waste management technologies.

The vision and objectives of the LRWS are explained below.

Our strategic vision

The overarching vision of the LRWS is:

To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2050 in Leicestershire. This means fully embracing the waste hierarchy by preventing waste and keeping resources in circulation for as long as possible, through reuse, repair and recycling, to realise their maximum value whilst minimising environmental impacts.

Key aspects of this vision, like what we mean by a circular economy and the waste hierarchy are explained in more detail later in this section of the Strategy.

Our objectives to deliver the vision

To achieve the vision outlined above, the following objectives have been developed, and grouped into themes. These are all important guiding principles for the service as a whole and are not in order of priority.

Deliver services in accordance with circular economy principles

Objective 1: Manage materials in accordance with circular economy principles, except where costs are prohibitive, or where the environmental consequences can be demonstrated to be negative.

Objective 2: As local authorities, set an example by preventing, reducing, reusing, recycling and composting our own waste and use our buying power to positively encourage sustainable resource use.

Reduce the climate change / carbon / air quality impact of waste services in Leicestershire

Objective 3: Reduce carbon emissions from Leicestershire's waste management services.

Deliver services that are financially sustainable and equitable across the Partnership

Objective 4: Consider the whole life financial, social and environmental impact, and deliver quality services designed to allow flexibility, innovation and improvement.

Objective 5: Promote the economic and employment opportunities of sustainable waste management where this is consistent with circular economy principles. Consider local / regional supply chain and markets for recyclate and other secondary raw materials.

Delivery of high quality waste services for the residents of Leicestershire

Objective 6: Work together to adapt and deliver coordinated services and infrastructure for waste services with lower environmental impacts.

Objective 7: Aim to reduce and manage residual waste within the County where this is consistent with the proximity principle and to manage all other waste at the nearest appropriate facility by the most appropriate method or technology.

Work in partnership with local communities across Leicestershire

Objective 8: Work with the community and businesses to raise awareness about environmental matters (including climate change, energy and resource management) and increase participation in waste prevention, reuse and recycling initiatives and link to national campaigns.

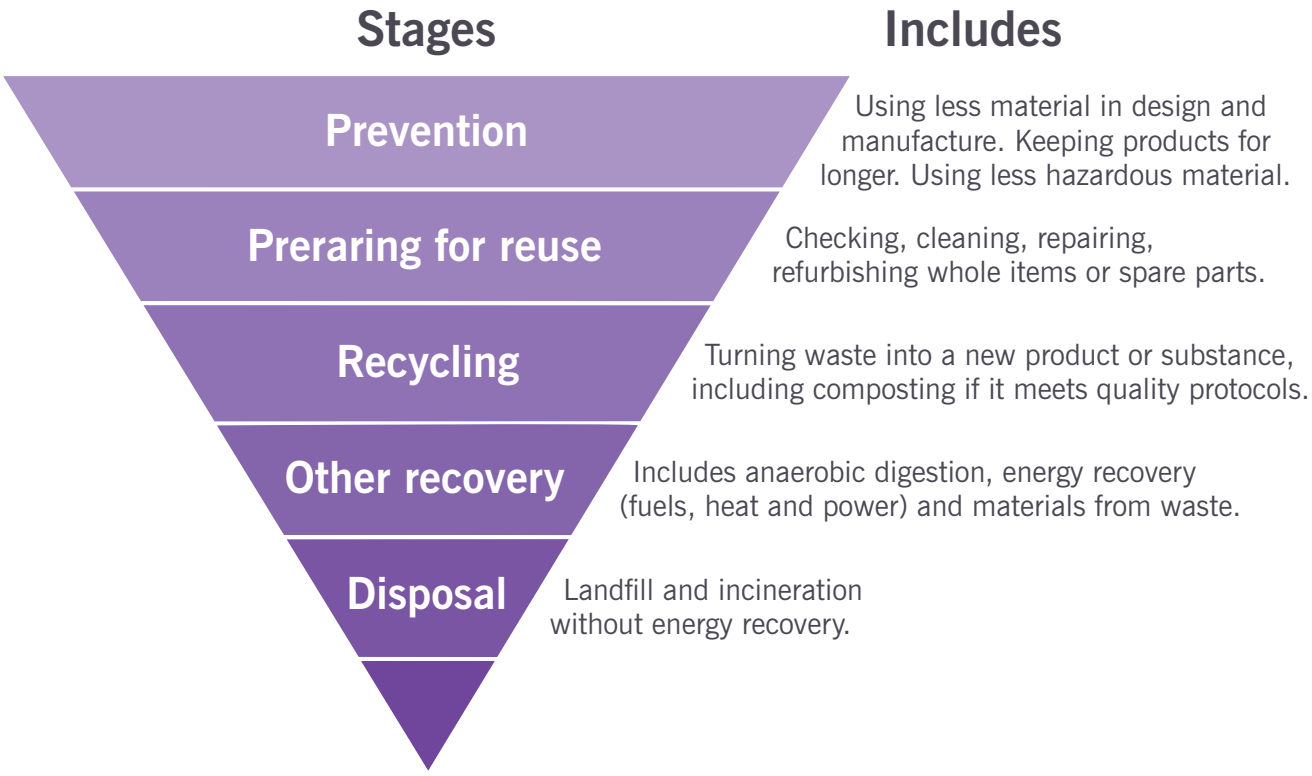
Objective 9: Lobby and work with others, in pursuit of the Partnership's vision of sustainable waste and resource management.

The Strategy also includes a number of pledges setting out specific actions to support and achieve these objectives, these are presented in section 3.

National policy and influences

A guiding principle of managing waste and resources is the 'waste hierarchy', this is shown below with definitions as to the meaning of each level. The most beneficial method is 'prevention' of waste and the least beneficial 'disposal'. This Strategy sets out Leicestershire's intentions on each level.

Figure 4: The Waste Hierarchy (2011).



Resources and waste strategy for England

"Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England" (2018), is focussed on improving recycling quality and increasing recycling rates from households and businesses. It includes substantial reforms to municipal waste collection and management services, including requiring the separate collection of food waste from households. It also puts a greater responsibility on producers of goods and packaging to play their part in dealing with the products at the end of their life. New measures proposed include Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging materials (EPR)[8] and the introduction of a deposit return scheme (DRS) for single use drinks containers. This is explained in more detail in section 3. These measures are likely to have a significant impact on the services delivered in Leicestershire and who pays for them. The direction of the national Strategy has had a major influence on the LRWS.

Waste prevention programme for England

Waste prevention activity reduces the amount of waste which is generated, and the Government's view on how this can be achieved is set out in the Waste Prevention Programme for England, "Prevention is better than cure: the role of waste prevention in moving to a more resource efficient economy" (2013). Key actions for Central Government include setting a clear direction, leading by doing, driving innovation, and ensuring that information regarding waste prevention is available to all. In March 2021, a consultation on a revised Waste Prevention Programme for England was held. The consultation document outlines how waste prevention could be achieved through transforming product design, making it easier for consumers to make sustainable choices or purchases and aligning policy with a circular economy approach (see below).

[8] The National Strategy also raises the potential for further producer responsibility measures including for textile wastes (e.g. to help tackle 'fast fashion' impacts), bulky waste (e.g. mattresses, carpets) and other waste streams.

Net zero carbon

Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world and is driven by rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (which include gases such as carbon dioxide and methane). This results in global heating, rising sea levels and changing patterns of rainfall. These changes can increase the risk of flooding, heatwaves, droughts, and wildfires. To overcome this, the Government has committed the UK to achieving net zero by 2050. This means that there will be an equal balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere, through planting trees or using technology such as carbon capture. The waste management sector is estimated to have contributed around 4% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK in 2019[9]. These emissions can be addressed through minimising the quantity of waste sent to landfill (which is a large contributor of methane emissions), and by applying the waste hierarchy (prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery).

Circular economy

In a Circular Economy, we see a transition away from a take-make-dispose ideology to a more circular system in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible. This is achieved through maintaining the maximum value when in use, and then recovering and repurposing material at the end of its life. The EU Circular Economy Package (CEP) introduces a revised legislative framework, identifying steps for the reduction of waste and establishing an ambitious and credible long-term path for waste management and recycling. This has been largely incorporated into UK Government strategy and policy and key elements within "Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England" (2018).

Clean growth strategy

The Clean Growth Strategy was published in 2017 by HM Government, which aims to increase national income while reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet the UK's 2050 net zero goal. The Strategy highlights that the UK waste sector has contributed to significant falls in carbon, with the large reduction in waste being sent to landfill resulting in lower greenhouse gas emissions. 12.5% of the UK's energy was generated from 'renewable sources and waste' in 2019. The incineration of waste (Energy from Waste or 'EfW') made up 13.3%[10] of the renewable energy generated.

[9] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2021). 2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures.

[10] www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/datasets/ukenvironmentalaccountsenergyconsumptionfromrenewableandwastesources

Air quality

Air quality is used to describe the condition of our air, it can be negatively impacted by a number of pollutants including sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide. Road transport is a contributor to poorer air quality, demonstrated by the fact that it accounted for 33% of nitrogen oxide emissions across the UK in 2019. The impact of waste management activity on air quality is most likely to arise through transport impacts, for example, when collecting household waste and recycling and the transport of this to transfer, recycling, treatment and disposal facilities. However, alternative fuels for Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs, or 'bin lorries') are coming into the market which will help to reduce the impact that the waste management sector has on air quality, this is because these fuels are cleaner and have a lower environmental impact in comparison to diesel. A pledge on alternative (low emission) vehicle fuels is included in section 3.

Local policies and influences

The LRWS will be implemented in the context of local policies, which both shape and affect it. The proposals in this Strategy have been developed in consideration of these policies, in order to check that the Strategy can be practically implemented and that it either complements or does not diverge from the wider aims of the LWP member authorities, as set out in other relevant policies.

The types of policies influencing the Strategy include the Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (the Local Plan). For waste, the Local Plan aims to provide adequate facilities for waste management and mineral extraction/processing facilities within Leicestershire to meet identified needs. The current plan runs from 2019 to 2031. The Local Plan includes Leicester City; Leicester City Council is not within the LWP, but both parties cooperate to deliver plans which affect a wide geographic area.

Further policies and plans considered during the Strategy update cover a wide range of environmental and social issues, such as carbon management, climate emergency declarations and net zero ambitions, community strategies, air quality management, biodiversity and transport. It is important that, to the extent possible, the LRWS is aligned with these other documents. This is specifically addressed by an Environmental Report (see below) which gives more consideration to the local policy influences.

Supporting documents

This LRWS is not developed in isolation; it is supported by research, analysis and consultation. This has been undertaken through the following processes.

Firstly, an Options Appraisal was prepared. This is an assessment of alternative resource and waste service delivery options, analysing combinations of factors such as waste collection methods, recycling options, or treatment approaches. The outcome was a selection of possible approaches to meet the Strategy aims and objectives.

Secondly, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was undertaken. SEA considers wider policy influences and assesses the Strategy options against important environmental effects and proposed mitigation. An Environmental Report is the outcome of the SEA; the assessment and mitigation measures in the Environmental Report have influenced the final selected strategy option(s).

Thirdly, an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) was conducted. This considers, at a strategic level, if the proposed resource and waste services are accessible to the entire community, regardless of characteristics such as age, gender, health, disability, race, or socio-economic status. The EHRIA also includes a public consultation which helps identify any additional unknown barriers the community may have in accessing services in the Strategy. The EHRIA influences the Strategy, identifying if any proposed options need adjusting in order for everyone to have access to the services.

Lastly, there has been a public consultation on key elements within the Strategy to gain feedback from the residents and communities of Leicestershire. The results from the consultation have been reflected within the Strategy.

3. How can the strategy be delivered?

This section identifies LWP's commitments required to deliver the Strategy. These are divided into the topic areas needed to meet the overall vision.

Working in partnership

The LRWS has been developed jointly by LWP members, and it will be implemented by the LWP members working together. The Strategy update has included consultation with officers and elected members from all the LWP authorities. The LWP also recognise that waste issues cross administrative boundaries, and therefore it works with Leicester City Council. Leicester City Council is a Unitary Authority, which makes its own independent waste collection and disposal arrangements, but it co-operates with the LWP on strategic waste issues.

The LWP also works in partnership with residents and communities as they are central to the Strategy. The Strategy objectives are to deliver resource and waste services in which residents and communities can participate effectively. This requires clear and effective communication between the LWP and its residents. Residents are encouraged to maximise resource recovery by using the wide range of recycling services provided by the LWP; in turn, the LWP is required to provide accessible services for the residents, responding to their needs and aspirations.

In the near future, the LWP will also be working with private sector 'Producers' of waste under new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation. EPR is intended to promote packaging[11] design which considers resource inputs and easier end of life recovery (e.g. reuse or recycling) of the resources within the products. Once finalised, EPR regulations will require the LWP members to participate in its implementation with possible service changes.

[11] Government has indicated that EPR may be expanded beyond packaging into other goods and products.

The Partnership is also aware of its role in managing wastes and conserving resources from materials generated in Council buildings and activities and makes the following pledge:

Strategy Pledge no. 1:

All Councils within the partnership will review their purchasing activities and internal waste management services to seek to promote waste prevention, reuse and recycling to support the objectives of this Strategy and lead by example.

The environment in which we live has a significant impact on our quality of life. Residents care about their environment and LWP want Leicestershire to be a great place to live, free from litter and fly-tipping. Tackling environmental crime requires joint working. The Partnership therefore makes the following pledge:

Strategy Pledge no. 2:

Environmental crime, particularly fly-tipping does not recognise council boundaries. The Partnership will work together to reduce fly-tipping and litter across Leicestershire and educate residents, businesses, or anyone disposing of rubbish, about their legal duty of care to dispose of their rubbish responsibly.

Preventing waste and preparing items for reuse

Waste prevention is the highest priority of the waste management hierarchy and is an integral part of any Resources and Waste Strategy. Waste prevention measures ensure that the quantity of waste is reduced (either through the avoidance of waste creation in the first place, reuse of products and services, or the extension of its useful life). It therefore reduces the adverse impacts on the environment of waste generation and management, and subsequently prevents impact on human health.

It also eases our demand on finite natural resources and as such, reduces the carbon emissions associated with waste management activity.

The most effective waste prevention activities are often focused on particular waste streams or products. Over recent years, LWP members have implemented a number of initiatives in support of waste prevention and reuse. These projects have included food waste reduction training through Adult Learning Services, supporting the use of reusable nappies by offering free trials of reusable nappies, encouraging home composting via compost bin subsidies and training, and providing guidance on reducing unnecessary waste such as contamination or junk mail.

As part of the Options Appraisal supporting this Strategy, we have explored the impact of waste prevention measures and make the following pledge:

Strategy Pledge no. 3:

The Partnership pledge to support and encourage waste prevention activity across LWP. This will include working with stakeholders, residents and communities to prevent unnecessary waste arising, for example through food waste reduction campaigns such as Love Food Hate Waste.

The second highest priority of the waste hierarchy is 'preparing items for reuse'. The aim of repair and reuse is to extend the useful life of a product or service. This has wide ranging benefits which include saving money, conserving the Earth's limited resources and lowering carbon emissions. Reuse activities often support social and economic development, through skills training, employment and community volunteering.

Recent examples of reuse activity across Leicestershire include:

- **Adult Learning Service -** Furniture reuse workshops are available to all Leicestershire residents. These workshops take place regularly and teach individuals how to fix and upcycle items of furniture.
- **Textiles repair -** An online guide is available on the Less Waste website, which aims to reduce clothing waste. It encourages more sustainable purchasing habits, gives advice about how to care for and repair clothes, how items can be upcycled and where clothing can be donated/sold. Classes are also available for residents to learn sewing skills, such as how to make new items out of existing fabric at home.
- **Give or Take Day toolkit -** A Give or Take Day is an event where people can exchange unwanted goods for items which they may need. A toolkit is available on the Less Waste website to help individuals set up their own event.

Leicestershire residents are also able to engage in reuse activities at the HWRCs across the County. Leicestershire County Council have been investing in developing its provision for reuse at its HWRCs, creating signage and designated deposit areas called 'ReHome Zones', for items which residents deem eligible for reuse or repair. This currently includes bric-a-brac and bicycles however Leicestershire County Council have a vision to expand and enhance the range of materials which can be saved from going into the 'waste' stream, retaining the definition as a 'product' thereby extending its useful life.

LWP also run the 'Less Waste' website which serves as an online platform for the Partnership to provide information on recycling and waste management to its residents, focusing on themes of 'reduce', 'reuse' and 'recycle'. The website also includes links and information on many of the initiatives quoted above[12].

[12] www.lesswaste.org.uk

As part of the Options Appraisal supporting this Strategy, we have explored the role of reuse in developing a waste strategy and as such make the following pledge:

Strategy Pledge no. 4:

The Partnership pledge to continue delivering reuse services and expand activities where practicable, working in partnership with other stakeholders and to signpost to places that advocate for waste prevention and reuse, in support of developing a circular economy. This includes a pledge to continue to improve the collection of items for reuse at Household Waste Recycling Centres and explore the development of reuse shops at suitable sites.

Collecting food waste and garden waste

After preventing food waste occurring (see Love Food Hate Waste example referred to previously), the next most important method of reducing carbon emissions from food waste is to separately collect and treat it. The most effective way of doing this is to collect food waste from households and businesses on a weekly basis, as a separate material stream, and to process the food waste in Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facilities.

The Government has recognised that a key method of avoiding damaging methane emissions from landfill (methane is a powerful greenhouse gas 28 times more potent than CO2), is to remove food waste from the residual waste stream, through a dedicated collection service. The Government is requiring (through the Environment Act) all households to have a separate collection of food waste, on a weekly basis, from the mid 2020's.

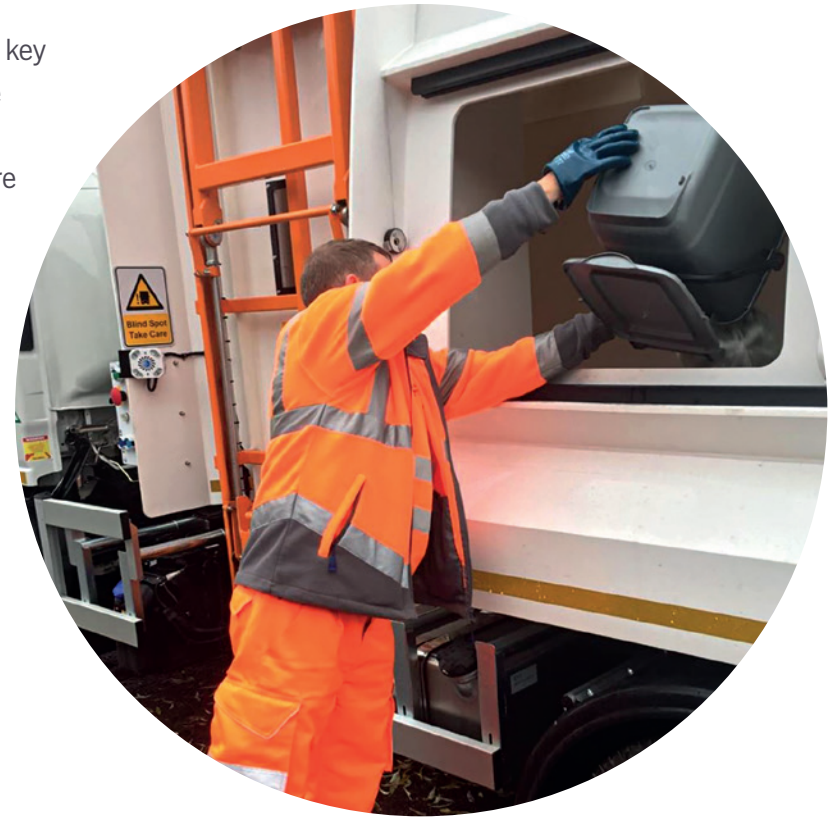


Figure 5: Food waste collection trial taking place in North West Leicestershire District Council.

Food waste collections have been trialled in parts of the County and there are increasing numbers of councils implementing them across the UK. They tend to use small, dedicated collection vehicles and the carbon benefits from separating and effectively managing the food waste far outweigh the carbon emissions of the collection fleet. An image of the collection trial in North West Leicestershire is shown in Figure 5. More separation of waste for recycling can mean additional mileage to operate the collection service and this can add to local air pollution if not appropriately managed. Electric Refuse Collection vehicles, and some fuelled by hydrogen have been trialled and implemented in the UK, and these have the potential to dramatically reduce local air emissions and save significant amounts of carbon emissions. Vehicles running on alternative fuels are currently much more expensive and require new infrastructure around refuelling / charging, however this is an important area to be evaluated by the Partnership as new vehicles are procured and the cost of technology falls. Some districts within the Partnership are using HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) fuel as a substitute for diesel, including North West Leicestershire District Council and Blaby District Council.

The separately collected food waste is usually sent to an AD process. Anaerobic digestion is a process that takes place in sealed vessels in the absence of oxygen. Food waste is fed into the vessels which act like a digestion process, breaking down the food waste using bacteria (in a similar way and a slightly higher temperature than your stomach digesting food). The waste degrades and releases a flammable biogas (which is roughly half methane and half carbon dioxide), this gas is then usually combusted in a gas engine to generate electricity, which can be fed back into the national grid as renewable electricity. The gas can alternatively be used to fuel vehicles with 'biomethane' or, after further processing, as an input into the gas grid. The remaining residue from the food waste is reduced to a slurry and can be, after some further 'maturation' (like a composting process), applied to land as a soil conditioner or fertiliser. As part of the Options Appraisal supporting this Strategy, we have modelled the introduction of separate food waste collections across the County and make the following pledges:

Strategy Pledge no. 5:

The Partnership will implement and promote separate food waste collections to all households, subject to confirmation of national policy, legislation and the provision of total ongoing Government funding. This will be as soon as required and when contracts and circumstances dictate. The County Council will procure Anaerobic Digestion capacity to treat the collected food waste in a manner that contributes to effective carbon emissions reduction across the County and improves soil quality.

Strategy Pledge no. 6:
The Partnership will explore the use of alternative fuels for collection vehicles and the transportation of waste and resources to further reduce carbon emissions of the service and improve air quality.

A garden waste collection is offered to all residents in Leicestershire on a fortnightly basis, as described in section 2. There is currently no duty on WCAs (the Districts / Borough Councils) to collect garden waste, however the Government is considering making a free garden waste collection a mandatory requirement (or introducing a maximum charge), through the National Resources and Waste Strategy for England, this is subject to separate consultation.

The collected garden waste from the County is sent to composting facilities and the resulting compost applied to land to improve soil quality and add nutrient value.

As part of the Options Appraisal supporting this Strategy, we have modelled both free of charge and subscription based garden waste collection systems and make the following pledge:

Strategy Pledge no. 7:
The Partnership will continue to offer a garden waste collection service to Leicestershire residents. This will follow national guidelines as to the form of the collection and will be subject to legislation and total ongoing Government funding. The Partnership will continue to procure composting capacity to treat the collected garden waste in a manner that supports carbon reduction and improves soil quality.

Expanding recycling for homes and businesses

The residents and communities of Leicestershire already have a wide range of materials collected for recycling. This mirrors the Government intention to have a standardised set of materials collected for recycling from each house and business across the Country. This will include food waste (as described previously) and each of the following:

- Metals (cans, foil trays, foil, aerosols)
- Plastics (plastic film, bottles, trays, pots, tubs)
- Cartons (e.g. Tetra Pak)
- Card
- Paper
- Glass

The aim is that all of England has the same range of materials collected (by 2023) and that this will enable more targeted nationwide messages and standardised product labelling for recyclability to be established. Furthermore, residents moving from one area to another will know what materials can be separated for recycling (although there might be different colours or types of containers in which to separate them).

In addition to these changes, Government are seeking to introduce a deposit return scheme (DRS) for all single use drinks containers (excluding bottles made of High-Density Polyethylene plastic, primarily milk bottles and glass bottles). This is likely to place an additional 20p charge (the deposit) onto bottles and cans containing drinks, which then may be redeemed (returned) when the bottle / can is placed in an authorised collection point. The collection points are likely to be at shops / supermarkets and are known as reverse vending machines, although alternative methods of redeeming deposits are also being investigated. The DRS scheme is still undergoing consultation but is due to be implemented in 2024. This could have the effect of changing consumer behaviour to an extent, also potentially reducing the amount of littering of containers (covered by the DRS) and may reduce the amount of recyclables and waste handled by the local authorities.

As part of the wide-ranging national changes and to encourage greater resource recovery from waste, the Government are also intending to implement Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for all producers of packaging. EPR means that all packaging producers will need to pay for the costs of dealing with their packaging at the end of its life (e.g. when it is recycled or thrown away). In future (and this is intended to be implemented from 2024), packaging producers will be responsible for the net costs of collecting, handling, recycling, treating and disposing of packaging waste, by providing monies to local government equivalent to that cost. This, together with the DRS scheme, will also provide an incentive to product and packaging producers to consider how their products can be designed better for their resource recovery, for example by making them easier to recycle. Packaging that is hard to recycle will cost more for disposal which will ultimately cost the producer of that packaging. This approach helps the role of the Councils and should assist in improving resource recovery and recycling over the medium and long term.

The appraisal of different collection systems (see supporting Options Appraisal document) demonstrated a preference for maximising recycling through the establishment of a food waste collection. This would be alongside maintaining similar recycling collection systems as at present but increasing participation and use of the recycling service by restricting the residual waste. The preferred method of restricting residual waste was by providing smaller wheeled bins whilst still allowing for plenty of space in the recycling containers. The addition of a weekly food waste collection should also reduce the need for the current levels of residual waste capacity. The Options Appraisal also demonstrated the benefit of providing collection services for other materials like batteries and textiles from households. As part of the modelling for this Strategy we have considered EPR and DRS in addition to different recycling collection systems across the County and make the following pledges:

Strategy Pledge no. 8:

The Partnership shall ensure that the full range of recyclables (as specified by Government and subject to funding) are collected from residents (and businesses where applicable) across Leicestershire by 2025, or as soon as possible when contracts and circumstances allow.

Strategy Pledge no. 9:

The Partnership shall continue to explore the viability of adding extra materials to recycling collections (e.g. for batteries, small electric goods or clothing) striving to continually improve Leicestershire's recycling performance.

Strategy Pledge no. 10:

The Partnership will put in place collection systems to contribute towards the achievement of the national 65% recycling target by 2035, this may include restricting residual waste capacity to encourage greater materials separation, carbon savings and resource recovery. Improvements in materials recovery at Household Waste Recycling Centres will also contribute towards the national target.

Strategy Pledge no. 11:

The Partnership will continue to allocate a communications budget sufficient to help promote good recycling behaviour and support resource recovery to progress the circular economy and low carbon objectives of this Strategy.

Avoiding landfill as much as possible

During 2020/21, Leicestershire landfilled more waste than the national average. This is explained in section 1 of this Strategy and is a situation that the County Council aims to address. An example of this is a recently procured residual waste treatment contract that should enable Leicestershire to exceed national targets for landfill, i.e. no more than 10% of municipal waste should be sent to landfill by 2035.

The County Council, over the period of this Strategy (to 2050), are likely to procure further contracts for residual waste treatment capacity. The technologies and options available for waste treatment may change over time, but they will be assessed in accordance with the vision and objectives of this Strategy, to ensure that they are consistent with the direction expressed in this document, and local and national objectives.

Leicestershire County Council makes the following pledge:

Strategy Pledge no. 12:

The County Council will reduce waste sent to landfill to less than 5% by 2025, well in advance of the 10% national target by 2035. The County Council will undertake future procurement processes for residual waste treatment (alternatives to landfill) in line with the vision and objectives of this Strategy.

Contributing to net zero carbon in Leicestershire

The measures throughout this Strategy will make significant reductions to carbon emissions from the municipal waste management service. Modelling undertaken for the Options Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment process indicates that by implementing all of the measures within this Strategy, carbon savings of the range of 5,000 - 10,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent would be delivered each year, compared against the current situation. This is the equivalent (in carbon emissions terms) of taking approximately 1,800 - 3,600 cars off the road.

4. Where will the strategy take us?

Projecting ahead to 2050

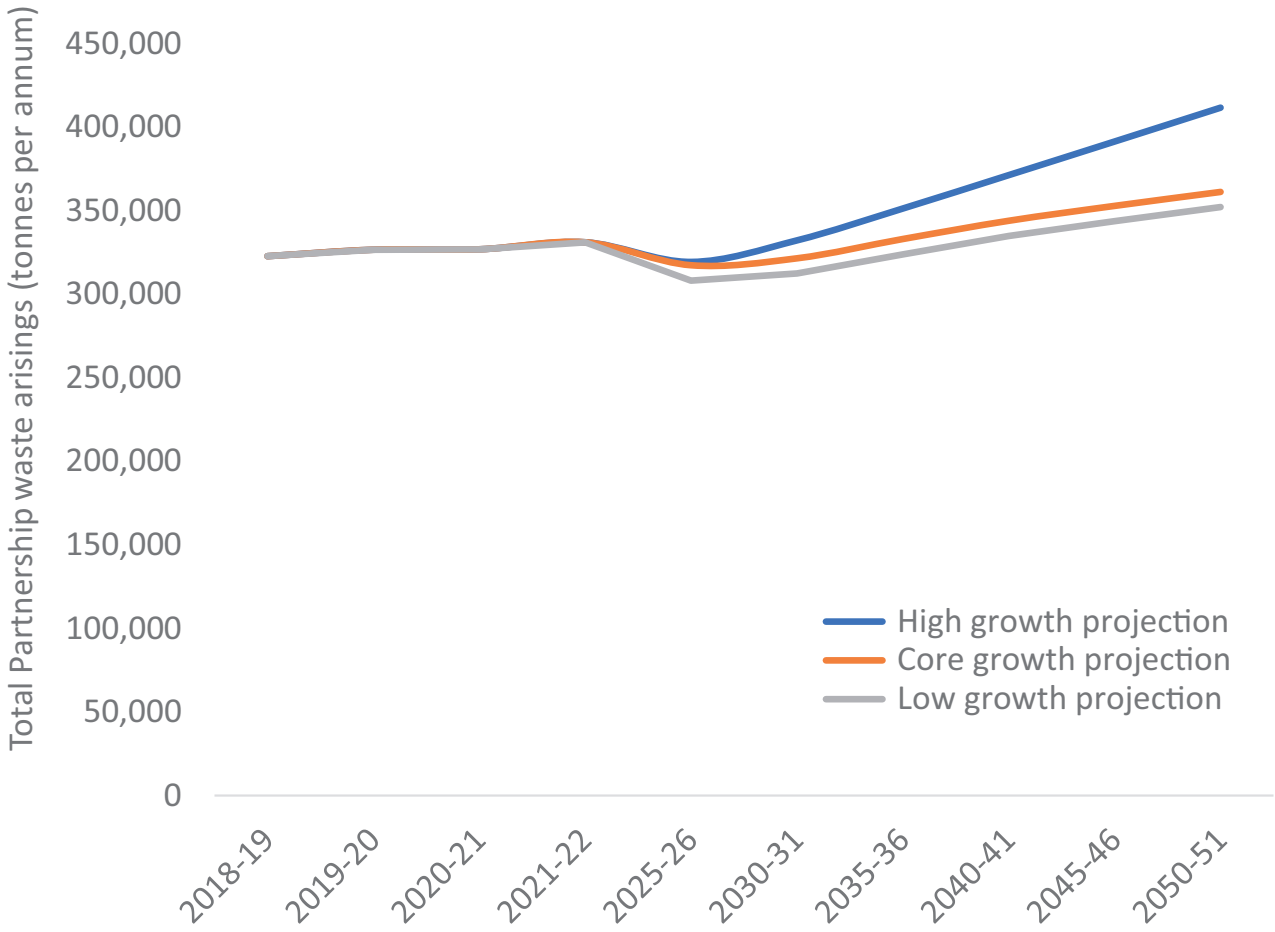
Although it is impossible to predict the future for resource and waste management, we can be sure that 2050 will be very different from today; consider how we manage waste in our households now, compared with 20 years ago. The need to reduce carbon emissions to achieve net zero will require many changes to our current lifestyles and to our environmental impacts. This lifestyle change is part of the global movement towards a circular economy model, essential to reduce our demands on limited resources and to dramatically decrease our carbon impacts. These influences will affect the future amount and type of resources and waste in Leicestershire.

Already, Leicestershire has seen major changes in its resources and waste. Recently, increasing digitisation means residents and communities produce less paper. By contrast, more on-line shopping has increased quantities of household cardboard; this was exacerbated by the lifestyle changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, over the last 20 years, although each person is now producing less waste because of lighter weight packaging, the waste they do produce includes far more plastic. Because plastic is usually oil based (fossil carbon), this conflicts with the aims of a low carbon future, unless we can recycle that material multiple times.

Dealing with these uncertainties and changes to resource and waste arisings needs a responsive and flexible LRWS, which tackles new challenges with a broad range of solutions. We have set out a range of pledges and measures to support national changes and set a direction for long term resource recovery for the benefit of residents and communities of Leicestershire. We recognise however that there will be many substantial changes impacting on materials and wastes over the next five years, as the national Strategy takes effect. There is likely to be a need to review or update this Strategy before the end of the 2020's.

Consideration of future waste growth rates is shown in Figure 6, with High, Low and Core projections. These projections are informed by housing forecasts and future policy and legislation that may impact on waste arisings, discussed in section 2[13]. This includes local and national changes driven by packaging producers affected by the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) measures, austerity impacts, consistency of collections, single use plastics ban and other resource management drivers.

Figure 6: Waste growth projections for wastes collected by Local Authorities, 2019 - 2050.

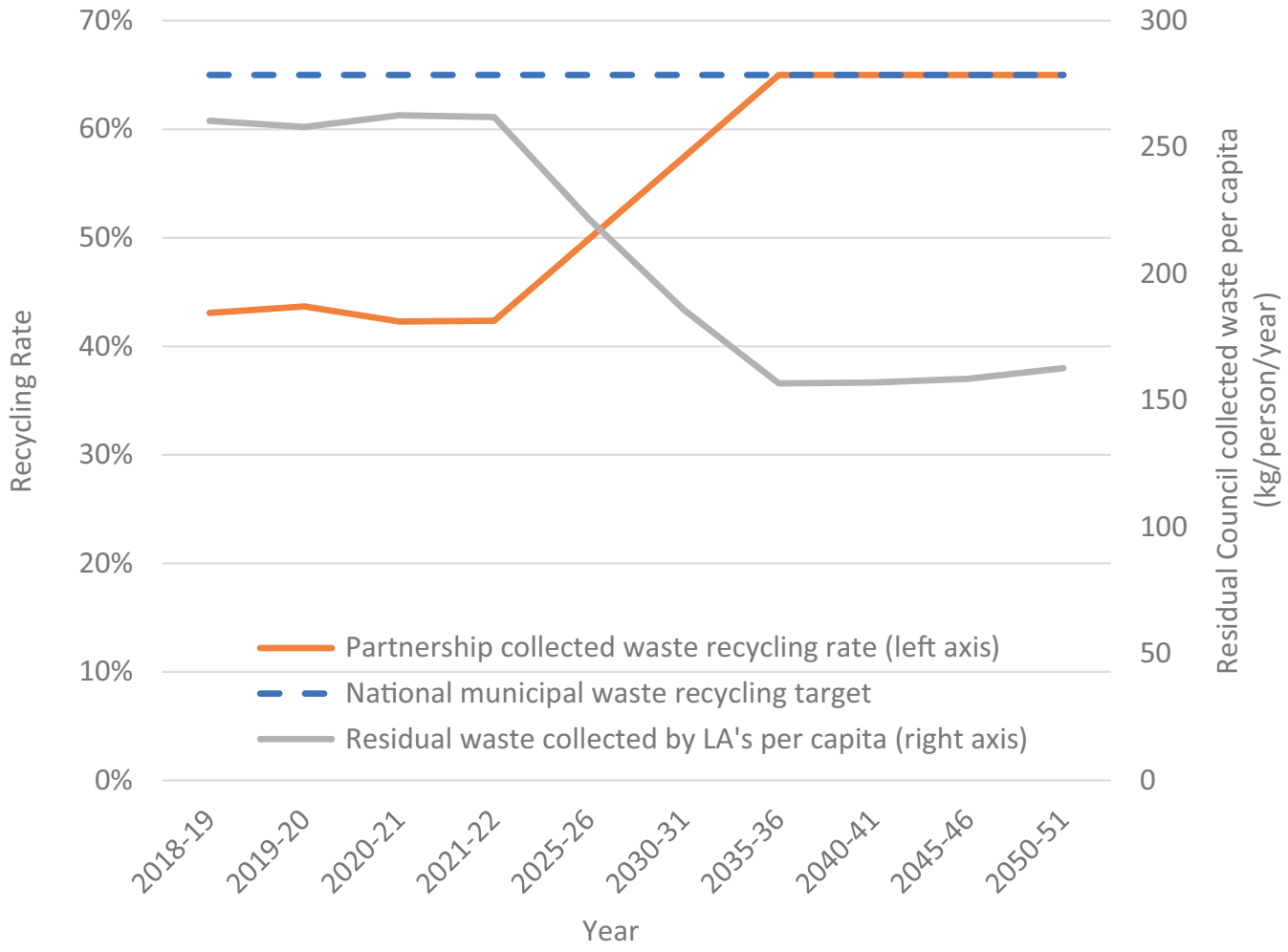


[13] The variations across the projections is the extent to which different policy interventions are implemented.

The increase in waste shown around 2020 and 2021 is the extra arisings generated by the Covid-19 pandemic (and associated behavioural changes such as home working, use of Personal Protective Equipment and internet shopping), this is assumed to revert back to 2019 levels in the following years, albeit influenced by rising numbers of households and other factors. The subsequent dip in waste arisings is the estimated result of the implementation of a national Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in the period 2023 – 2025 (this is described in section 3).

Figure 7 shows delivery in Leicestershire of the national target for 65% of municipal waste to be recycled and prepared for reuse by 2035.

Figure 7: Recycling rate & residual waste per person projections for wastes collected by Local Authorities, 2019 - 2050.



The modelling which informs this Strategy shows that c.62% recycling can be achieved through combinations of the options described in section 3, such as expanding recycling and food waste collections (Pledges 5, 7, 8, 9 & 10)[14]. In addition to these options, recycling and reuse will be further enhanced to reach the 2035 target by:

- The LWP continuing to promote and develop systems for reuse of usable goods and packaging (Pledge 4).
- The LWP promoting ongoing education and awareness raising for its residents and communities (Pledge 11).
- The County Council aiming to increase recovery from the Household Waste Recycling Centres (Pledge 10).
- The national changes around product labelling, and extended producer responsibility (making products and packaging easier to recycle).
- Residual waste treatment procurement, which may also deliver additional recycling (Pledge 12)[15].

Figure 7 also shows that the actions set out within this Strategy, supported by national policy, should also reduce the amount of Council collected residual waste (general rubbish not separated for recycling). If the national 65% recycling rate is to be met the amount of residual waste (all general mixed 'rubbish') managed by Councils will need to fall from around 260kg per person per year to around 160kg per person by 2035. Furthermore, the management of residual waste in Leicestershire is also set to change with a pledge to reduce the amount of waste landfilled from current levels (of around 30%) to less than 5% by 2025. This is substantially ahead of the new national target of 10% landfilled waste by 2035.

[14] In March 2022, Defra announced that the DRS for England will exclude glass bottles. It is anticipated that the kerbside recycling rate could increase by between 1.5% and 2% above the recycling rate modelled in the Options Appraisal.

[15] Subject to clarifications on how recycling performance is calculated in the future.

5. Action plan

Introduction and background

This Action Plan provides a route map for delivering the vision and objectives set out in the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy (LRWS) / the 'Strategy'. It provides a clear direction of travel to ensure that resources and waste are managed efficiently.

Context

The Action Plan will guide the implementation of the Strategy and will be subject to regular monitoring and review. Changes may be made to the Action Plan in response to (for example):

- Accelerated or delayed implementation of actions
- Variance from predicted performance of actions
- Changes in Government policy, legislation or regulation
- Other changes in circumstances

The Action Plan is intended to be a living document and will be monitored and updated on an on-going basis. Significant changes that render the Action Plan inconsistent with the LRWS may necessitate revision of the Strategy or Action Plan.

The actions have been categorised in line with themes set out within the Strategy document. Each action has been allocated the responsibility of either the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP) as a collective, or Partners within LWP (i.e. the Districts / Boroughs or County Council).

The Action Plan associated with a resource and waste strategy is usually quite high level but builds on the pledges and objectives of the Strategy. There may be further (more detailed) actions that fall out of the actions within the plan for example: a procurement plan; District Council action plans; business cases, or; communications plans.

Key challenges for the action plan

The Partnership is committed to delivering the objectives and policies set out in the Strategy in a way that represents good value for the Partnership and the residents of Leicestershire as a whole. This approach requires coordination of effort between seven local authorities and between the two tiers of local government that in the case of waste management, have very different roles and responsibilities.

At a national level, Government is currently consulting on a suite of potential policy changes which are intended to reform the resources and waste industry (see Resources and Waste Strategy for England 2018). The legislative basis for implementation of these reforms is included in the Environment Act (2021). Outcomes from the national consultation could require substantive changes from the LWP. Where changes are anticipated (e.g. separate food waste collections) these have been acknowledged within the Action Plan with defined actions. However, where there is more ambiguity (e.g. relating to the charging for garden waste collections), these have been excluded from the Action Plan until further clarity is provided from Government.

Action plan headings

The Action Plan has been divided into the following themes:

- Reuse/Circular Economy
- Recycling (performance and collections)
- Residual Waste Reduction
- Partnership Working
- Leading by example
- Communication
- Carbon

Some of these themes contain overlapping elements. Each action details what action is to be taken, how this relates to either an objective or pledge of the LRWS, by whom and when.

Table 1 provides an overview of the key actions by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership. Links to the Strategy Objectives and Pledges are also summarised.

Overview of actions

Action	Objective	Pledge
Reuse / circular economy		
Reuse service - Evaluate and explore further reuse options at household waste and recycling centres (HWRCs)	1	3. 4
Facilitate or support the delivery of repair workshops (e.g. for Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE))	2	3, 4
Circular Economy principles promotion - Liaise and engage with stakeholders	1, 5	
Waste prevention / reuse focused campaign - run at least once a year across the Partnership	1	3, 4, 14
Explore development of reuse shops at suitable sites	1	4
Promote reuse - provide opportunities for or signpost householders (including those that cannot access HWRCs)	1	4
Recycling (performance and collections)		
Food Waste - Implementation of weekly food waste collections (all districts from 2025 or as contracts allow) with consideration of alleviating concerns raised in consultation (pests, containers, previous trial etc)	6	5
Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) – Explore any collection and treatment options associated with the introduction of DRS	1, 6	
Review garden waste collection service with consideration given to Government response to national waste consultation		7
Implement dry collection systems to achieve high quality recycling with consideration given to Government response to national Resources and Waste Strategy for England consultation		8

Action	Objective	Pledge
Kerbside collections - contribute towards the achievement of the national 65% recycling target by 2035	1	10
Kerbside recycling collections - Review materials collected within core recycling service (e.g. plastic film) and explore additional collections (absorbent hygiene products (AHP), small waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), textiles, batteries, bulky waste)	1	8, 9
Food waste treatment - procure Anaerobic Digestion capacity to treat the collected food waste (and promote the positives of this acquisition)		5
Residual waste management		
Consider options for reducing kerbside residual waste including reduced average residual waste capacity and implementation of no side waste policy where not in existence (alongside educating residents on the rationale of waste prevention, recycling, etc). Closely monitor where in existence	6	
Evaluate options to enhance separation at HWRCs to maximise recycling / reuse and recovery performance	7	4
Align with national residual waste reduction targets (kg/person/yr)	1, 7	
Landfill reduction - Reduce waste sent to landfill to less than 5% by 2025		12
Review options and approach to residual waste treatment to support greater resilience and align with the long-term aim to reduce waste arisings	7	12
Review / Adoption of resource efficiency metric as per data and Government policy[16]	1, 4	

[16] Subject to consultation.

Action	Objective	Pledge
Partnership working		
Quarterly meetings - to discuss and action strategic and operational resource and waste issues and engagement with existing and new parties or bodies (e.g. producer responsibility organisations)	6, 8	3
Adopt and promote the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy	6	
Action Plan review (annual)	4	
Strategy review (5 yearly) or when there are significant changes in waste/environmental policy	4	
Explore efficiencies of joint procurement (e.g. containers and food waste vehicles and collections) at strategic points (dates TBC)	6	
Lead by example		
Lobby both Government and businesses to reduce the amount of waste generated and increase reuse, recycling, composting and recovery in line with the waste hierarchy	1, 9	
Each Partner to review / audit their purchasing activities and internal waste management services regularly to promote waste prevention with a view to reducing, reusing and recycling / developing a Circular Economy		1
Update EHRIA during review of LRWS	4	
Coordinated publicity campaigns - Maintain high profile of green / sustainable activities / events and initiatives in Leicestershire (e.g. through Less Waste / signposting enquiries to relevant contacts)	5, 8, 9	
Develop district level action plans for LRWS implementation	1, 4	

Action	Objective	Pledge
Communication actions		
Engage with businesses and local communities to increase participation in waste prevention, reuse and recycling initiatives to reduce climate change impacts and improve other beneficial outcomes	5, 8, 9	3
Work together to reduce fly-tipping and litter by educating residents and businesses about their duty of care to dispose of waste responsibly.		2
Consider opportunities to improve communications to residents regarding operation and safe use of HWRCs		10
Continue allocation of communications budget		11
Communication Plan - Develop for LRWS implementation for LWP (working in partnership with local communities and businesses, promoting lead by example etc)	8, 9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Carbon		
Explore the use of alternatives to fossil fuels for the waste collection services (and promote leading by example)	3	6
Monitor LWP waste management services carbon emissions in order to reduce environmental impacts	3	
Contribute to the County wide Net Zero targets and engagement with all partners to support this aspiration	3	11

Monitoring

Monitoring the progress and performance of each action will be crucial to the success of the Strategy. The Partnership will continue to work together and will meet regularly to monitor progress. It will also provide an update on joint working as part of regular reporting against the Strategy Action Plan. This should form a regular agenda item for LWP meetings.

Where the Action Plan monitoring identifies that insufficient progress is being made in a particular area, then additional actions / corrective measures may be introduced to rectify any shortfall.

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