

**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Waste Minimisation Strategy

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 10 December

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment,  
Councillor Marge Beuttell

**Report by:** Operations Manager for Waste and Recycling,  
Andrew Rogan

**Wards affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Waste Minimisation Strategy responds to the main challenges faced by the Council Waste and Recycling Collection service. The Vision for the Waste services is set out in the Council's own vision and ambition of achieving 60% re-use and recycling rate as well as our commitment to good environmental stewardship and long-term sustainability.

We must also respond to the challenges presented by Huntingdonshire being an area that is growing quickly, and where the waste service must grow or adapt to absorb this growth

This strategy lays out the principles for where we intend to take waste minimisation over the next three years and appendix 1 provides an overview of the strategy highlighting the key themes we will be working on. These include maximising recycling, being innovative and leading by example. The action plan (Appendix 2) explores the projects we will be focusing on to support our key objectives and themes.

### **Our Vision**

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to managing waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy and controlling the growth of waste collected at the kerbside by promoting waste minimisation through re-use, recycling and composting with our main focus being on these key objectives.

- Reduce the amount of waste that is collected from household through our kerbside collections.
- Achieve a greater than 60% diversion of waste from landfill in line with the council's manifesto pledge.
- Improve the quality of the recycling material we collect by maintaining the contamination levels below 7%

The Cabinet are

**RECOMMENDED**

to endorse the Council's new Waste Minimisation Strategy and Waste Minimisation Action Plan.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek the endorsement of the council's new Waste Minimisation Strategy and Waste Minimisation Action Plan.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Rising demand for local government services, the growth of our district, and continued pressure on the resources available, ensure that efficiency and productivity must be cornerstones of our waste service.

- 2.2 In addition, over recent years, climate change has been increasingly identified as a major global threat. Good management of waste - preventing or minimising the amount of waste generated and maximising the repair, re-use and recycling of waste materials, are some of the most immediate things that we can do as individuals to contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions.

- 2.3 Waste is both a global and local issue and communities need to become more responsible about the waste they generate. We all have a part to play - as individuals, employers or employees, governments, and consumers.

- 2.4 In future, we must prevent waste from being generated. Where we cannot prevent, we must reduce, repair, re-use, recycle and compost more. We must think of waste as being a resource from which as much value as possible should be recovered.

- 2.5 Huntingdonshire residents has already achieved recycling more than 50% of the waste that is generated but we cannot become complacent. The recycling rate has plateaued, and we know from a recent waste analysis that there is more material that can be captured through both the kerbside and organic kerbside collections.

- 2.6 Through working with residents and monitoring our dry recycling contract we have been able to sustain the contamination rate below 7%. Further work is underway to ensure this level is met and only through continued resident engagement can this be achieved.

- 2.7 As it stands, over the last 3 years the service has seen a significant improvement in performance and value for money. Over this time period the Council has delivered a reduction on cost per household, marking us amongst the best of our comparable local government group (APSE Benchmarking) despite diesel hitting an all-time high during parts of this period and increased housing of around 1500 new properties per year.

- 2.8 At the same time, we have seen the number of missed bins reduce, staff sickness fall by over 35%, and attaining a customer satisfaction rating of 97% (either satisfied/very satisfied with the service) in addition we have also managed to keep the full waste collection service running throughout the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

- 2.9 However, we are not complacent or content. This strategy lays out the principles for where we intend to take waste minimisation over coming years.

## 2.10 Where we are now

All households in Huntingdonshire are provided with a collection for residual and dry recycling waste. 90% of residents have access to an organic waste collection service.

Residents have access to a network of 23 textile recycling banks and three household waste recycling centres.

Waste audits undertaken by Resource Futures have given us an insight into the type of waste our residents are producing. This data will assist in future campaigns to encourage waste minimisation (Appendix 4).

### 2.10.1 Household waste 2016/17 to 2019/20

Household waste is waste collected by the council from homes in the district.

The table below shows the amount of waste, in tonnes, collected from domestic properties since 2016/17. These figures have remained constant over the last four years even with growth in housing within the area

Year	No of properties	Dry Recycling (Tonnes)	Organic Waste (Tonnes)	Residual Waste (Tonnes)	Total Waste (Tonnes)
16/17	75,888	16,974	21,618	27,848	66,440
17/18	76,549	16,406	20,264	27,784	64,454
18/19	77,315	17,503	19,743	26,595	63,841
19/20	78,489	17,636	21,413	26,584	65,633

Greater than 50% of the waste we have collected has been sent for recycling or composting over the past four years.

Huntingdonshire is 43rd in the national league table for recycling rates out of 345 local authorities (figures provided by Lets Recycle)

Year	Collected
16/17	59%
17/18	58%
18/19	61%
19/20	59%

### 2.10.2 Contamination of dry recycling

Contamination of dry recycling is one of the biggest financial risks to the council. The council's rejection rate is set at less than 7% of dry recycling material. Every 1% over this limit costs the council in the region of £45k in additional cost.

The Council's current contamination level is within the 7% limit and this has been achieved by a proactive, ongoing programme of bin inspections and rejections, information campaigns, both local and national, and close working with individual residents. We currently reject over 600 dry recycling bins every month.

Having a third member of the team approved by cabinet in 2019 has also played a key role in achieving our current low contamination rate. As a comparison the national average for contamination is 12.7%.

The Recycle for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough waste partnership (RECAP) have appointed a material recycling facility contracts compliance officer who closely monitors the material inputs and outputs from the MRF. The work which is undertaken provides vital information for the council to support communications and the education of our residents.

This table shows our annual contamination rate over the past four years.

Year	Contamination Rate
16/17	7.27%
17/18	7.97%
18/19	6.86%
19/20	6.86%

### 2.10.3 Cost of the waste and recycling service

Despite an increase in the number of properties the cost per household has decreased through tight service and budget management. We continue to benchmark the service through APSE Benchmarking

	Cost of service	Cost per household	No of properties
16/17	£ 2,531,153.70	£33.35	75,888
17/18	£ 2,741,274.68	£35.81	76,549
18/19	£ 2,441,220.35	£31.57	77,315
19/20	£ 2,356,816.69	£30.02	78,489

\*Cost per household does not include Central Establishment Cost

### 2.10.4 Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 5)

The latest customer satisfaction survey took place in June 2020 and gave us an opportunity to gather residents' opinions on communication methods as well as more insight in to how they dispose of their waste

- Overall, 97% were satisfied or very satisfied with the refuse/recycling service an improvement from 89% in 2019
- When asked how they usually dispose of clothing, the most popular answers were charity shop (72%) and local clothes recycling banks (59%)
- When asked how they usually dispose of small electrical items, the most popular

answer was household recycling centre (86%, an increase of 8% from 2019).

- 90% of respondents were satisfied/very satisfied with public recycling banks
- The most popular way to receive information about waste collection services was through leaflets (52%), followed by email (49%) and Facebook (41%). There was a noted increase in respondents who chose Facebook as one of their answers compared to last year (up by just over 16%). 15% preferred information from local media.
- The most popular other ways that respondents prefer to receive information about waste collection services is via bin hangars, community leaflets and in the post.
- 90% of those answering said they felt either very well or fairly well informed about waste collection services, with 9% feeling not very well informed or not well informed at all. Less than 1% did not know how well informed they felt

### **3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 3.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

### **4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

#### **4.1 Population/housing growth**

This will increase waste production therefore there will be a need for more resources to service the areas of growth.

In its current format, the service will continue to grow as the District does, this will continue to increase the revenue budget of the service by around £250K for every additional new round that goes into service.

Continued efficiency finding does have its limits with the current collection method resulting in 51% of our working time driving material around the district as reported by the 2018 productivity study undertaken by APSE.

Although the proposed Waste Minimisation Strategy does not require or suggest any changes to the current collection model, we will need to be open minded and examine all possible service delivery options moving forward if we are to mitigate the growing financial pressures of operating the service. These could include – underground bin systems and working double shifts. We have already started to model a number of scenarios with Local Partnerships (Appendix 6)

#### **4.2 Financial environment**

We are working in an environment of continued and sustained financial pressure which may result in difficult decisions having to be made on what we prioritise, including reduced budgets and less resource.

Contamination of dry recycling is one of the biggest financial risks to the council. The council's rejection rate is set at less than 7% of dry recycling material. Every 1% over this limit costs the council in the region of £45k in additional cost.

The full financial impact of the waste and resources strategy will depend on government decision on new burdens associated with any mandated changes e.g. weekly food collection, impact of Deposit Return Scheme and where the Extended Producers Responsibility tax receipts are paid either to Districts or County, which is still under

consideration by government in the proposals. What we do know is the go live date is being suggested for 2023 but what we don't know is if this is an immediate or a phased implementation.

### 4.3 Waste and Resources strategy

The proposals laid out in this strategy have the potential to transform the landscape for the way we manage resources and waste, and how we deliver our services in the future.

- Development of **circular economy** is a new concept. Success will be dependent on there being a business case for the organisations
- **Consistent collections – driving up recycling** - proposals for all local authorities to collect a consistent range of materials to a standard. This will play an important role in reducing confusion for householders, increasing recycling rates and improving material quality.
- **Food Waste** - Separate weekly food waste collections for every household. This will require an additional new service involving specialist collection vehicles and extra resources.
- **Deposit Return Scheme** - adding a surcharge to a bottle of drink which would be reimbursed if the item is returned for recycling. If people choose to recycle in this way rather than through council waste services, the recycling rate could reduce by as much as 5%, along with a loss of income from the material being diverted from the MRF
- **Extended Producer Responsibility** could mean we start to see less packaging along with different types of materials being used. However, we could also see the full net cost of collection and processing of material being met by the packaging producers which may help reduce some of the financial burden of operating the service.

4.4 **National Pandemic** – We have seen more waste being produced from households due to changing habits and working arrangements. Over the first four months (April to July 2020) we have seen on average an additional 200 tonnes of waste (refuse and dry recycling) being collected.

4.5 **Recycling markets** have continued to be an extremely volatile environment with no long-term certainties and guarantees for prices of and demand for materials.

## 5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

### 5.1 Local Framework

#### 5.1.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2022

The corporate plan sets out a programme identifying areas which working together to meet the council's vision:

***We want to support a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth, provide value for money services, and create opportunities for the people of Huntingdonshire***

***We want Huntingdonshire to be a good place and we work to Create, protect, and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment***

Ruling administration manifesto - Increase recycling rates in the district so that 60% of waste is recycled and not sent to be landfilled.

5.1.2 The council is working on a revised and co-ordinated Climate Change Strategy to be delivered in Autumn 2021. The Waste Minimisation Strategy is a key element of this overall approach to ensure that the Council has a financially sustainable approach to enhancing the natural environment within which we live and work. This includes continuing to reduce the impact of the council's own activities on the environment whilst promoting activities within our business and residential communities that deliver pride of place, with reduced impact on this highly valued environment.

## 5.2 National Framework

### 5.2.1 Waste Minimisation Act 1998

A relevant authority may do, or arrange for the doing of, or contribute towards the expenses of the doing of, anything which in its opinion is necessary or expedient for the purpose of minimising the quantities of controlled waste, or controlled waste of any description, generated in its area.

### 5.2.2 Waste Framework Directive

By 2020, the preparing for re-use and the recycling of waste materials such as at least paper, metal, plastic and glass from households and possibly from other origins as far as these waste streams are similar to waste from households, shall be increased to a minimum of overall 50 % by weight.

### 5.2.3 Waste and Resources Strategy 2018

This strategy sets out how we will preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency, and moving towards a circular economy. At the same time, we will minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully, and by tackling waste crime. It combines actions we will take now with firm commitments for the coming years and gives a clear longer-term policy direction in line with the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. This is our blueprint for eliminating avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Plan, doubling resource productivity, and eliminating avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050.

5.2.4 **The Environmental Protection Act 1990** relates to how waste is managed and how emissions into the environment should be controlled.

## 6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

6.1 The Council set a high target for reuse and recycling of materials at 60% in 2018 which we are working towards achieving. This reflects the importance of Waste Minimisation and its activities.

Minimising waste is a key component of the Council's commitment to Climate Change ensuring Huntingdonshire reuses and recycles as much as it possibly can.

Waste minimisation and low contamination also makes financial sense, minimising costs to re-processing for the Council.

This strategy continues to re-affirm our commitment to the environment, the impact of Huntingdonshire's waste on our climate and focus to strive further whilst accommodating



the challenges of COVID19 and Housing Growth.

## **7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Waste Minimisation Strategy at a glance

Appendix 2 – Waste Minimisation Action Plan

Appendix 3 – Annual Communications Plan

Appendix 4 – Waste analysis

Appendix 5 – Customer Satisfaction Survey

Appendix 6 – Waste Collection Modelling

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