

## **COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS)**

### **WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Panel discussed the Waste Minimisation Strategy at its meeting on 3rd December 2020.
- 3.2 The Panel questioned the focus on contamination, particularly as the current rate is favourably comparable to the national average. It was confirmed that the types of contamination that Officers have witnessed are entirely avoidable with the appropriate communications campaign. This is drawn to the Cabinet's attention for consideration.
- 3.3 Members' attention was drawn to commercial waste; however, it was confirmed that the strategy focussed solely upon domestic waste. The Panel was informed that since the beginning of lockdown in March, the amount of domestic waste had increased as residents adjusted to life at home.
- 3.4 The types of materials that the Council collects for recycling was discussed by Members. It was noted that the Council collects a significant number of different materials for recycling and that, if all recycling facilities are utilised, then residents would be able to recycle additional materials.
- 3.5 The Panel discussed whether there was tension between waste minimisation and alternative ways of disposing of waste, such as waste incineration. Members were informed that the District Council is the collection authority and not the disposal authority. The disposal authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, currently have a lengthy and expensive waste disposal contract with a contractor, therefore discussions on alternative options in the disposing of waste are presently financially prohibitive.
- 3.6 Members discussed the 60% reuse and recycle target and the step, or steps, that would need to be taken in order to exceed it. It was confirmed that the current focus of Officers is a separate food waste collection. This is because separate food waste collections are expected to be mandated throughout England next year. Members were informed that Officers have modelled the introduction of separate food waste collections within the District and consequently the Council is aware of the approximate costs of introducing and running the service. Further to this, Members were informed that food waste is the Council's biggest contaminate and has been previously found in the recycling and general waste bins. At the same time, it is important to note that it has the greatest potential to increase recycling rates.
- 3.7 Following on from food waste contamination, the Panel suggested an information campaign might be undertaken which sees leaflets attached to bins. Whilst recognising the value of such a campaign, Officers were mindful of the logistical, time and cost issues that would have to be overcome in order to successfully execute the campaign. Again, this is something the Cabinet might want to consider.

- 3.8 The Panel thanked the Operations Service who have maintained full waste collection provision throughout 2020, despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.9 In discussing its overall orientation, Members praised the document as well written and commended the positive and proactive attitude of the Strategy in progressing the waste minimisation aims and objectives of the Council.