

Environment Sub-Committee

8 July 2015

Present: Councillor L Bell (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, P Brooks, J Cassidy, D Drummond,
S Graham, E Hodson, G Madden and M Thirlaway

E7/7/15 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors B Burdis, C Johnson, W Lott and P McIntyre.

E8/7/15 Substitute Members

Councillor S Graham for Councillor W Lott.

E9/7/15 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

E10/7/15 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2015 be confirmed.

E11/7/15 Waste Collection Strategy Post 2017

Consideration was given to a presentation which provided an overview of the key issues facing the authority when the subsidy provided by the Weekly Collection Support Scheme would run out in 2017.

Reference was made in the presentation to the Authority's Waste Management Strategy which encouraged a change in thinking about waste from rubbish to a resource which had value. The main themes of the strategy being a reduction in the waste produced by each household, a maximisation of the amount of waste that is reused, recycled or composted and the use of technology to recover value from waste and minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill.

It was explained that in 2002 around 90% of the household waste collected had been sent to landfill whereas in 2015 this had been reduced to 9% due to the changes which had been put in place.

The Department for Communities and Local Government had provided the Authority with £3.36M to participate in the Weekly Collection Support Scheme. This funding had been provided to enable the Authority to maintain weekly collections, to deliver an incentive and awareness campaign, to support the harmonisation of weekly collections across the borough and to increase the opportunity for residents and visitors to recycle on the go. This funding would run out in 2017 and if nothing changed there would be a need to find an additional £397K to maintain a weekly collection for existing properties. It was anticipated that there would be an additional 12,500 new properties built in North Tyneside by 2030 and the provision of a waste collection and recycling service for these properties would cost in the region of £370K per year.

It was explained that there were a number of key issues which would affect waste management in future years. The first being the need to deliver the objectives set out in the Authority's Waste Strategy. There was also a need to make decisions relating to how the Authority managed its waste after the Weekly Collection Support Scheme subsidy ran out in 2017 and how it would deal with the growth in waste generated as a result of the new building proposed and the growth of waste anticipated as the country came out of recession.

A number of options were suggested for consideration by members. These included:

- A move to weekly alternate collections. It was explained that this would generate financial savings but if it were to be considered there would be a need to ensure that there was an appropriate public consultation and engagement process in place;
- A move to communal collection areas in those areas of the borough which had high density populations such as blocks of flats or terraced housing;
- The introduction of a subscription service for the collection of discretionary waste, such as garden waste;
- The provision of additional and/or smaller collection containers;
- An alteration to the frequency of collection of recyclables;
- The introduction of underground collections systems, for example in new developments;
- The introduction of a weekly food waste collection service. It was explained that this would require a capital investment in containers and new vehicles.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues including the potential for increased flytipping as a result of any changes to the collection frequency. It was explained that for those authorities which had gone down that route there was no evidence that this had led to an increase in flytipping. Reference was made that the introduction of communal bins in Jesmond had resulted in tidier back lanes, due in part to a reduction in the number of containers in the back lanes. It was explained that there was still confusion over what could be placed in the recycling bins due to a lack of information provided on packaging over what could and could not be recycled. Reference was also made to the volatility in the recycling market particularly in relation to the prices currently being paid for paper and glass.

It was suggested that the Sub-committee gave consideration to forming a task and finish group to complete a review of the waste collection policy post 2017.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation

It was **agreed** that the presentation be noted.

E12/7/15 Work Programme 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Sub-committee to give consideration to its work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year. This topic had been deferred at the last meeting to permit further consultation with the members of the Sub-committee and the Cabinet Member responsible for Environment.

The report set out all the suggestions which had been received in addition to the topics which had been carried over from the previous year as set out below:

- The council's performance in meeting its carbon reduction targets;

- The potential for cost and carbon savings in the design and maintenance of the authority's grounds;
- The Council's recycling strategy;
- A review of the Council's tree policy;
- A review of the "Friends of" groups;
- A review of the waste management contract;
- A review of the Biodiversity Action Plan

The sub committee was reminded that it was currently reviewing the Authority's waste collection strategy post 2017. It was suggested that this study should be completed by a sub group.

Members were also reminded that a review of the Council's Tree Management Policy was scheduled to be brought to a future meeting of the Sub-committee. Reference was also made to the ongoing review of the North Tyneside Cycling Strategy which was expected to be completed by September. Members were reminded that there were only sufficient resources available to support one sub group at a time.

It was suggested that the Cabinet Member be invited to attend the next meeting of the Sub-committee to provide a briefing on his area of responsibility and his plans for meeting the his targets and the challenges facing the Authority. Members were particularly interested in the successes and challenges in meeting the authority's carbon reduction targets.

In addition to the above the Sub-committee would also monitor the outcomes of the actions agreed as a result of the Sub-committee's and sub-group's reports to Cabinet. Members would also monitor the work of the North Tyneside Surface Water and Drainage Partnership on a quarterly basis.

It was **agreed** that (1) a task and finish group be set up to look in to the Authority's Waste Collection Strategy post 2017; and
(2) the Cabinet Member responsible for Environment be invited to attend the next meeting of the Sub-committee to provide Members with an overview of his areas of responsibilities and his aspirations for the future; and
(3) the Sub-committee's work programme for 2015/16 be agreed