

INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY AND GROWTH COMMITTEE

15th June 2023

Report of the General Manager

Dual Stream Recycling Service Performance Update and Data

Background

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the dual stream recycling collections which were introduced in both Tamworth and Lichfield in May 2022.

A breakdown of the Joint Waste Service performance data is attached as Appendix A and the trends are discussed as follows:

Operational Performance

All collection rounds are now being completed on time unless there is an operational issue such as a breakdown or a road closure. The new recycling Service was being provided by an average of 8.8 crews per day up until the end of January, however following a round review this has been reduced to 8.5 crews per day which is in line with the original budget. This has prevented an additional £1,100 per week being spent on collection infrastructure. A further review is planned for later this year to consider the impact of new housing developments in both Tamworth and Lichfield which will need to be factored into future rounds.

There has been a steady reduction in the number of service failures such as missed bins because the crews have got used to the new rounds and the new collection methodology. The number of formal/escalated complaints peaked at 22 in June but are now averaging 2-3 per month.

The number of assisted collections that the service is required to provide has continued to increase. At the start of 2022 there were 1,852 assisted collections across both authorities; by the end of March this had increased to 2,307. The equality impact assessment completed prior to the implementation indicated that more residents may struggle to handle a bag when compared to wheeling a bin. Residents can easily apply for an assisted collection on-line or over the telephone if they don't have an able-bodied person in their household to move bins or bags.

Resident Participation

Resident participation is very high with most properties presenting both a bin for the glass, cans and plastic and a bag for paper and card every fortnight. Some residents do present side cardboard and additional bags are still being supplied. To date 9,998 additional bags have been delivered (12.4% of households).

The significant fall in the number of rejected bins does show that residents are getting to grips with sorting their dry recyclate into the two different streams. The number is now at its lowest level; 350 bins per week which is approximately 0.9% of households. Visits are being made by the Recycling Officers to some of the properties that have had their bin rejected, to offer advice on how to use the service correctly, but we don't have the capacity to visit all of them. Therefore, we are proposing to write to the resident, again offering advice whenever a bin is rejected.

Recycling performance

The headline recycling rate that includes garden waste was 40.59% for 2022/23 compared to 43.4% for the previous year. The reduction is in line with national trends and the garden waste yield was impacted by the long hot Summer last year.

The total tonnage of dry recyclate collected from the kerbside in 2022/23 has fallen 18% compared to 21/22. A total of 15,213.93 tonnes was collected in 2022/23 and 18,395.14 tonnes the previous year. The reduction is significant but does coincide with the country coming out of lockdown and we are now experiencing a cost-of-living crisis. There has also been a 10% reduction in residual tonnages over the same period.

The quality of the recycling continues to improve. The fibre stream is very clean and the amount of contamination in the blue bin fell to 2.93% by the end of Q4.

A substantial residents engagement campaign is currently being planned which aims to improve performance by explaining the benefits of recycling correctly, for both the community and the environment.

Financial Performance

The total gate fees spent on re processing the dry recyclate during 2022/23 was £728,136 compared to the full year budget of £840,810. The saving was due to the reduction in tonnage.

The Recycling Credit received from the County Council for 2022/23 was £1,186,070 compared to the full year budget of £1,198,480.

The income from the sale of dry recyclate for 2022/23 was £653,755 compared to the full year budget of £330,570. Commodity prices were very strong during the first three quarters of the year because of high demand following the end of lockdown but fell during the fourth quarter as the economic slowdown started to take hold.

There was a £194,990 overspend on the Joint Waste Service budget in 2022/23. Whilst income levels were strong, there were significant increases in driver pay, agency rates, additional infrastructure on the Recycling Service and fuel. New property growth in both Tamworth and Lichfield has also had an impact on the budget. The overspend has been funded from the Joint Waste Service Reserve with Tamworth's share being £79,770.

Joint Waste Service Projects

Several important projects are currently underway or will be completed over the next few months. These include:

- Completion of the migration of flats and HMOs onto the new dual stream recycling service
- Completion of the round review
- Options appraisal for the proposed mandatory weekly collection of food waste
- Fleet review and procurement
- Workforce plan
- Review of the commercial waste service
- The development of a citizen's app is being considered.

Regular updates on the progress of each of these projects will be reported to the Committee.

Recommendation

That the Committee:

- 1. Note the update on the performance of the Dual Stream Recycling Service**

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