

INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY AND GROWTH COMMITTEE

10th October 2023

Report of the Operations Manager

Dual Stream Recycling Service Performance Update and Data

Background

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on Joint Waste Service Operations.

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

*When referring to Appendix A an average of the 5 months in this financial year (April to August) is being used for comparison unless stated otherwise.

A breakdown of performance Data for Staffordshire Authorities is attached as Appendix B and discussed. This data was shared at the Staffordshire Sustainability Board in September:

Operational Performance

Performance across the Joint Waste Service is stable. All collection rounds are being completed on time unless there is an operational issue such as a breakdown or a road closure.

Crew numbers are stable across all services the recycling Service was being provided by an average 22.5 crews per day which is in line with the budget.

There is significant growth occurring across both Councils, with higher new property numbers in Lichfield. Currently the growth is being absorbed by efficiencies within the service. A 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. Please note the JWS have reserves available to absorb the increased growth.

There was an average of 350 missed bins per month versus an average of 736 in the corresponding period last year. The service is conscious that it still misses bins of assisted collection at too higher rate and is working to address the issue.

An average of 1.6 complaints per month were received versus an average of 11.6 in the corresponding period the previous year.

There are ample additional blue bags for fibre collections available for residents. The blue bags have become an acceptable form of presenting paper and card for the vast majority of residents.

Resident Participation

Resident participation in the recycling service 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. This presentation rate is between 98 and 99%.

In 2023 (calendar year), 44085 residents signed up to the Garden Waste Service. 35% of the total were Tamworth residents, with 65% being Lichfield residents. This is unsurprising due to the urban nature of Tamworth.

The number of contaminated bins reported for the 23/24 year so far is an average of 1595 per month versus an average of 3147 for the corresponding period the previous year. The Recycling Officers and crews continue to work with residents to minimise this number.

The quality of the material produced by the JWS is high since the service change. Since the change to dual stream only 1 load has been rejected at the Materials Recycling centre. For Qtr. 1 23/24 contamination rates of DMR (Plastic, cans, and glass) was 2.86%. Fibre was reported at 0% contamination.

Tonnage performance

The tonnage of both residual and recycling waste is stable as indicated on the graphs in appendix 1.

After the growth in residual waste tonnage over the Covid period, figures have settled down to an average 3122 tonnes per month so far, this financial year, versus 3051 tonnes in 22/23 and 3468 tonnes in 21/22. This is relevant as reducing residual tonnage is beneficial to all.

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. It will be interesting to see how the recycling rate changes in 2023/24 due to the changes in garden waste tonnage.

In the financial year so far, the JWS has collected 1213 tonnes of dry recycling versus 1270 tonnes in the same period of the previous year. This follows a national trend of a steady decline in dry recycling and is an area it is advisable to look for improvements.

The total tonnage of dry recycle collected from the kerbside in 2022/23 has fallen 18% compared to 21/22. A total of 15,213 tonnes was collected in 2022/23 and 18,395 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.

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.

Several slides of Residual and Recycling tonnage reported across Staffordshire have been attached in Appendix B. These are to allow opportunities for Members to analyse and compare performance versus our Staffordshire family.

Tamworth produced an overall recycling rate of 40.3% in 2022/23 versus a Staffordshire average of 44%, and a high at Staffordshire Moorlands of 55.1%.

Tamworth produced the highest dry recycling rate in Staffordshire for the past 3 years. In 2022/23 the achieved a dry recycling rate of 27.4%, versus a Staffordshire average of 23%. Please note the figures is influenced by a lower % of garden waste.

In 2022/23 Tamworth had a green composting rate of 12.8% versus a Staffordshire average of 20%. The low rate is predominantly apportioned to the density of Tamworth as a Borough, versus some of its 'leafier' neighbours.

The average weight of residual waste collected per household was 129.4kgs in Tamworth, this is on target with the average across Staffordshire. The two highest performers, Staffs Moorlands and Newcastle-under-Lyme provide food waste collections.

The graphs demonstrate the general trend in falling recycling rates.

Financial Performance

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.

Budget monitoring indicates the JWS is on track versus budget for 2023/24. Figures for recycling credits for Q2 are due shortly. The anticipated financial outturn for the financial year will be more accurate at this point, but it fully expected there will be cause for alarm.

Joint Waste Service Projects

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

- Potential launch of new recycling campaign
- Completion of the migration of flats and HMOs onto the new dual stream recycling service (nearing completion)
- Completion of the round review (to be revisited early 2024)
- 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 (Potentially only LDC).

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**