

## INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY AND GROWTH COMMITTEE

05<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### Report of the Operations Manager

#### Operations Service Performance and Data Briefing Paper

#### None Exempt

#### Executive summary

The purpose of this briefing update report is to provide the Committee a quarterly update of the Joint Waste Service. This is a shared service that Lichfield District Council (LDC) deliver on behalf of both authorities.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

1. Endorse the progress and updates provided.

#### Background

This report provides the Committee a briefing paper as requested with an update on Joint Waste Service Operations, including Operational Performance, Resident Participation, Tonnage Performance, Finance Update, Joint Waste Service Projects.

The data being reported is up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

**A breakdown of the Joint Waste Service (JWS) performance data is attached as Appendix A and the trends are discussed below:**

#### Operational Performance

Performance across the Joint Waste Service remains good. All collection rounds are being completed on time, with very few exceptions because of operational issue such as a breakdown or a road closure.

It is worth noting during the three-week period over Christmas the service did experience a number of collections being made a day late, due to a combination of high volumes presented at kerbside, staff absence, a fire at the Waste Transfer station and poor weather conditions. All delays were communicated to residents. Whilst the majority of these late collections were in January, it is prudent to share the difficulties with Members. 'Lessons learnt' have been discussed amongst the team.

- There was an average of 308 missed bins per month, which equates to 0.04% of collections in the second quarter of this year versus an average of 324 per month in the previous 12-month period. The trend is a positive, and there has also been a decrease in the number of missed assisted collections. If the crews do inadvertently miss a bin, then they will return to collect it, this is how this figure is generated.

## Resident Participation

Residents participation in the recycling service remains 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 97 and 98%.

- For the calendar year of 2024, 44876 subscriptions for garden waste had been taken.
- In 2023 44085 residents signed up to the garden waste service.
- 34% of the total subscribers are Tamworth residents, with 66% being Lichfield residents. This is unsurprising due to the urban nature of Tamworth.
- 42.5% of Tamworth residents sign up to the service.

It is worth noting that the total number of subscriptions increased in 2024 when LDC increased their charges from £36 to £40 per garden waste bin.

Residents now have the option to sign up to the garden waste service using either direct debit or traditional card payment. This increases customer choice, and around 8% of residents have chosen direct debit as their preferred payment option.

So far this year 24269 number of residents have signed up of which 30% are Tamworth. Sales are as expected at this time of year.

## The number of contaminated bins reported per month

For quarter 3 of this year there was an average of 2023 per month versus an average of 1188 for the previous 12 months.

This is a significant increase on the previous year, and December saw a high figure of 2495. The rise was a result of reports from Biffa highlighting an increase in contamination, and the crews being asked to be more vigilant when checking recycling bins. It is felt the crew were too thorough, and the message was re-aligned to ensure checks were not 'over-zealous'. The trend is being monitored, and January's figure has fallen to 1672.

The recycling officers and crews continue to work with residents to minimise this number.

The **quality of the material** produced by the JWS has remained high since the service change.

- For Quarter 2 this year the contamination rate has risen to 3.22% compared to 2.98% for the previous 12 months
- Quarter 3 figures have not yet been released by Biffa Waste, our contractor.
- Fibre was reported at 0% contamination.

## Tonnage performance

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

Residual tonnage for the JWS (average monthly tonnage):

- 3359 tonnes per month in 2024/25 to end of Jan
- 3253 tonnes per month for 23/24
- 3051 tonnes in 22/23
- 3468 tonnes in 21/22 (Covid year)

The slight increase is an area to be monitored.

The recycling rates are unfortunately following national trends and falling. TBC figures for quarter 1-3 in 2024/25 are 36.90%, compared to 37.15 in 2023/24 (36.61% in quarters 1-3 in 2023/24), they are slightly below the quarter 1&2 figures from 2023/24.

<b>Recycling Rate: JWS &amp; TBC</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/5 Qtr. 1-3</b>
JWS	45.5%	43.27%	41.36%	42.45%
TBC	42.26%	37.71%	37.15%	36.90%

In the financial year to end of Dec 2024, the JWS has collected an average of 1228 tonnes per month of dry recycling versus 1246 tonnes per month in the previous year. This follows a national trend of a steady decline in dry recycling and is an area which is being worked on. Unfortunately, the trend across Staffordshire authorities is of recycling rates falling.

The current DRY recycling rate is following the same trend of slightly lower rate so far for 2024/25.

<b>Dry Recycling Rate: JWS &amp; TBC</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25 Qtr. 1-3</b>
JWS	24.60%	23.63%	22.51%	21.27%
TBC	27.42%	24.11%	23.26%	21.76%

The Council's 'Recycle for Good' had a soft launch on 29<sup>th</sup> October, with a full launch in November. Councillors from both Lichfield and Tamworth are promoting the campaign. This is the start of a 3-year campaign with the aim of helping to address the issue of falling recycling rates. Sponsorship from partners in the private sector has funded the campaign. [Recycle for good](#)

The campaign has had a slow start due to staff changes at Lichfield District Council Communications team, but work has started to re-invigorate the messages.

A Staffordshire County Council campaign, which involves 'bin-tagging' many of our bins with recycling messages was due to launch prior to Christmas. Due to delays at Staffordshire County Council the launch will now be March/April 2025. It is intended to tag all Tamworth residents who have individual bins.

## **Financial Performance**

Further financial performance will be presented at the Joint Waste Committee at the end of March.

At the end of the 2023/24 financial year the JWS overspent by £265,677. Tamworth Borough Council's contribution was £110,894 which was paid for by TBC's Joint Waste reserve, with Lichfield District Council's being £154,783.

At period 11 the JWS is forecasting an overspend for the end of year of £94,208. Tamworth Borough Council's contribution is forecast at £39,162. This is in addition to the current forecast overspend of £189,570 on Tamworth's budgeted contribution to the JWS. A policy change has been submitted as part of the 2025/26 budget process to increase the budget to meet additional costs going forward.

There is an additional pressure on Tamworth Borough Council due to the difference in garden waste subscriptions for the calendar year of 2024; as Tamworth's remained at £36 per bin in 2024, whilst Lichfield District Council increased their subscriptions to £40. To address this difference an amount at £52,000 plus VAT has been calculated and is to be paid directly to the joint waste service for 2024/25. From January 2025, garden waste subscriptions have been increased to £41 for both councils to ensure the cost of garden waste collection is covered.

The JWS vehicle procurement has been completed and is now at the implementation stage. The project was delivered at a cost of £11,604,269, which is below the budgetary figure of £11,640,000.

The JWS has a total budget of £1,227,600 for the procurement of food waste vehicles. This is £409,200 for TBC and £818,400 for LDC, funded from New Burdens Government grant. The tender process is completed, and there is confidence that the food waste fleet will be delivered within the allocated budget.

### **Joint Waste Service Projects**

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

- Fleet procurement – NRG Ltd, are our new contractor, and 25 new Refuse Collection Vehicle's (RCV's) are in build and will be in operation by April 2025. The contract value is £11.5million over a 7-year period, which was within budget. The planning is going well, and smooth implementation is expected.
- The launch of the new recycling campaign 'Recycle for good' is taking place, with joint support from Councillors from both Lichfield and Tamworth. As stated in the report, due to staffing changes at Lichfield District Council the campaign has started slowly, but engagement with the JWS has re-started and progress will be achieved.
- A Staffordshire County Council campaign, which involves 'bin-tagging' many of our bins with recycling messages was due to launch prior to Christmas. Due to delays at SCC the launch will be March/April 2025. The scheme will 'tag' all Tamworth residents who have individual bins.
- Production of a Roadmap to transition to an alternatively fuelled fleet. The project has progressed well, and a report is now close to completion, which advises on the costs to 'electrify' the current depot, as well as timescales / options / costs around transitioning to an alternatively fuelled fleet.
- Dry Recycling Contracts. The current three-year contract with Biffa Waste Ltd. ends April 2025. However, it incorporates the option for extension of 1+1+1 year, this is intended to be activated-subject to formal approval processes.
- Preparation for 'Simpler Recycling' (specifically food waste collections and disposal)
  - Food waste vehicle procurement process has been completed. The decision on the total number of vehicles is still to be finalised but will be 10 /11 vehicles. Once approval of the appropriate Cabinet members, Directors and S151 officers, at both Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council, has been completed an order will be placed for food waste vehicles.
  - Food waste receptacles – the procurement process is in progress alongside other Staffordshire Authorities.
  - Anaerobic Digestion contracts – procurement process due to be started (via Staffordshire County Council)
  - Project team and associated tasks to ensure service delivery by April 2026.
- Both Tamworth Borough Council and Lichfield District Council received confirmation of the guaranteed payment they would receive through Extended Producer

Responsibility (pEPR). Tamworth Borough Council will receive £721,000, whilst Lichfield District Council will receive £958,000.

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

#### Appendices

Joint Waste Service Statistics

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