

## DEVON AUTHORITIES STRATEGIC WASTE COMMITTEE

22 February 2023

Present:-

Councillors R Croad (Chair), G Jung (Vice-Chair), C Leather, R Williams and A Dewhirst

Apologies:-

Councillors K Baldry and L Wood

Members attending virtually

Councillors N Pearson, M Morey, D Brown (Reserve)

\* **29**      **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be signed as a correct record.

\* **30**      **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

\* **31**      **Update on Government policy and regulations (to include Deposit Return Scheme & Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) Regulations)**

Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR)

Members received an update on the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging policy, designed to make the producers of packaging more responsible for packaging at the end of its life and to aim to incentivise the use of higher levels of recyclable materials and make organisations liable for the cost of packaging collection and disposal.

It would be implemented from April 2024, with Local Authorities to be informed of proposed payments in November 2023. A Scheme Administrator would be set up which would be a public body but had yet to be established.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was currently undertaking workshops and consultations with authorities to develop their cost models. Local Authorities were being encouraged to work with DEFRA to help calibrate the cost models.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

The Deposit Return Scheme for England had been announced, which is a scheme that place a small deposit (amount yet to be confirmed) on the purchase of particular packaging drinks materials which is then refunded at point of return. This was designed to provide a financial incentive to the public to recycle and to reduce litter. The scheme as announced would include PET plastic and steel/aluminium cans of a volume between 50 millilitres and 3 litres. Summer 2024 would see the setup of a Deposit Management Organisation to oversee the scheme, who would amongst other responsibilities set the deposit amount received. The scheme would operate using reverse vending machines and retail takeback with no digital scheme for England currently proposed.

Concerns included the impact on Local Authorities in that some materials would still be in kerbside collections and residual waste with questions around how these costs will be covered and by whom. Additionally, that glass was not included in the announced DRS in England was a disappointment. It was felt that this was a missed opportunity to not consider a digital DRS.

#### Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) Regulations

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) were explained to be organic chemicals that take a long time to break down and can cause health issues if entering the food chain. POPS had historically been used as flame retardants on upholstery for domestic seating. In Devon, all waste upholstered domestic seating (WUDS) are sent for incineration. The Environment Agency are insisting that Local Authorities move towards separating POPS materials from non-POPS at recycling centres, where they are currently mixed in Devon. Officers considered that separating these before they get incinerated together nonetheless would be an inefficient use of resources. Work was continuing at a national level to try to agree a pragmatic solution with the EA.

#### Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23)

The 'Environment Act 2021' required EIPs to be refreshed on a 5-yearly basis. EIP23 set out targets for kilograms of waste per head across a number of categories with Devon and Torbay already reaching these targets.

#### Future Items

Future items for action by the Waste Management team, or items on which they were awaiting update, included a response from the Government on consistency of waste collections across Devon; as well as the Waste Prevention Plan and a response on the recent consultation on the development of a DIY charging / booking system at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). It was proposed that once the Government had made further announcements a workshop would be set up with members.

## 32 Residual Waste Composition Analysis Results

Members considered the report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/7) on the results of the Residual Waste Compositional Analysis which was undertaken in October 2022 and consisted of the residual waste of 1800 houses across Devon and Torbay being collected and analysed.

Overall, results across Devon were mixed. Results around food waste were of particular note, with 'kitchen organics' consisting of a large proportion of residual waste in Devon (28.2%) and Torbay (23.2%) which was disappointing given the availability of food waste collection across the region. The vast majority of this food waste was considered 'avoidable' (79.31% average across Devon), namely that it could have been otherwise dealt with (for instance consumed). It was also observed that all of this food waste, both 'avoidable' and 'unavoidable' (the latter referring to food items such as peelings, eggshells, teabags and so on), should not have been disposed of in residual waste, where residents had food waste collections.

The analysis also demonstrated that a large amount of materials disposed of in residual waste were in fact recyclable. In Devon, the worst offender was card, with 61% of that disposed of in residual waste being recyclable. In Torbay, this figure was 73%, and Torbay also showed a high amount of recyclable textiles being put into residual waste (with 84% being recyclable). The overall figures for the amount of residual waste that could have been recycled was 41% in Devon and 58% in Torbay, with potential improvements being possible if both Devon districts and Torbay were to expand the range of recycling services to cover all materials.

On average, Devon had shown a decrease in recyclable materials being disposed of in residual waste (since the last analysis in 2017) in all categories except plastic film, with the results varying widely across Districts. The overall results for Torbay were more mixed, with reductions in areas such as glass and metals, but increases in food and garden waste.

Members and officers had received more specific analyses of their individual districts in advance of the meeting. The analyses included ACORN ratings (which is used to segment the population in socioeconomic classifications based on a number of factors) alongside waste disposal trends which could help inform targeted improvement actions.

Key areas of discussion included:

- Concern around the impact of low recycling of textiles, with textiles being a huge polluter per item, and its wider relationship with the changing culture around clothes, particularly considering 'fast fashion' and a culture of disposal;

- That there was clearly work to be done around increasing correct disposal of food waste and how this could be incentivised. Members and officers observed that there are likely to be a number of factors ranging from some residents not having knowledge of how to dispose of their food waste, some being too busy with other priorities and others finding themselves without a kitchen caddy for a variety of reasons.
- There was anecdotal confusion about what is recyclable and what is not, with one councillor reporting that they had spent time at a recycling plant separation line and had seen items such as used cat litter being disposed of in the recycling. There could therefore be opportunities for targeted education informed by the compositional analysis results as well as local intelligence that could be collected by waste collection staff.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Croad, **SECONDED** by Councillor Leather and

**RESOLVED** that

(a) the results of the Waste Composition Analysis carried out in October 2022 be noted; and

(b) the proposed actions detailed in Section 6 of the report be approved.

\* **33**      **Budget Proposal for 2023/24 - Allocation of Underspend**

Members considered the report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/8) which detailed the 2021/22 underspend and proposed allocation of this.

The proposals outlined in the report, to use the underspend from previous years to focus on a Food Waste Project, were in direct response to the results of the Residual Waste Compositional Analysis, and the need to address levels of food waste being disposed of in the residual waste.

The report also outlined a proposal regarding a sum of £25,000 previously agreed by the committee for convergence work as well as plans regarding the creation of a part-time Clean Devon Liaison Officer post to assist the partnership in its key priorities.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Leather, **SECONDED** by Councillor Williams and

**RESOLVED** that

(a) the allocation of the underspend of £57,895 towards a food waste campaign in 2023/24 be approved;

(b) the use of the previously-agreed £25,000 sum for convergence be approved for use towards the food waste campaign;

(c) the Clean Devon Liaison Officer plans be noted.

\* **34**      **Future Meetings**

Future meetings were noted as:

28 June 2023, 2.15pm

17 October 2023, 2.15pm

21 February 2024, 2.15pm

**NOTES:**

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

\* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.18 pm and finished at 4.11 pm

