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HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Monday, 22 January 2024

Attendance:

Councillors
Cramoysan (Chairperson)

Bolton
Brophy
Greenberg

Morris
Wise

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Tippett-Cooper and Warwick

Deputy Members:

Councillor Brophy (as deputy for Councillor Tippett-Cooper)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency), Lee and Wallace

[Full Video Recording](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies and deputy members for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That, Councillor Morris be appointed Vice-Chairperson for this particular meeting of the committee.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson drew members attention to the supplementary agenda that had been circulated and published in relation to the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023.

The committee agreed to accept the minutes as a late item onto the agenda requiring approval.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 5 December 2023 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillors Lee and Wallace addressed the committee in relation to item 6 and their comments are summarised under the relevant minute below.

6. **FUTURE OF WASTE AND RECYCLING (PRESENTATION)**

Councillor Wallace addressed the Committee on this item.

In summary, Councillor Wallace made reference to the following points which were responded to accordingly by Councillor Learney and the Service Lead: Environmental Services:

- The importance of recycling to residents and welcomed the efforts of officers to improve the council's waste collection service.
- Recognised the key target date for having a new waste management process in place was March 2026, and sought clarification on the action being taken by the council to manage the two main risks (the completion of Hampshire's new MRF and the availability of waste collection vehicles) which could impact this target date.

Councillor Lee addressed the Committee on this item.

In summary, Councillor Lee made reference to the following points which were responded to accordingly by Councillor Learney and the Service Lead: Environmental Services.

- Pleased to see a large response to the public survey.
- Made reference to the need and importance of improved waste management and recycling collection being key for natural resource support for lifestyle and prosperity.
- Waste prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal was the waste hierarchy; everyone needed to rethink their relationship with waste and consumption and what was best for the environment.

- Reassurance that the council will not lose sight of the need for parallel messaging about the correct consumption with least impact as the council introduces its future waste and recycling service.
- Read a statement made on behalf Dr Dixon which emphasised that there were too many confusing choices of what could and could not be recycled which were situated in many different locations.
- In conclusion, Councillor Lee stated that there was a need for consistent, comprehensive and 'easier to understand' recycling options from the least number of sites possible, which did not rely entirely on goodwill.

Councillor Learney introduced the item emphasising that since the matter was presented to the committee in June 2023, significant developments had taken place. In particular, the Government had announced the results of the consistency consultation and advised local authorities what was required in order to recycle under the banner of 'Simpler Recycling' going forward.

The committee noted that the council had carried out extensive consultation and received a significantly high response rate to the public engagement survey of November 2023, the results of which provided a broad representative range from all age groups and households to steer the creation of a system that works for all residents.

The Service Lead: Environmental Services gave a detailed presentation which provided an update on developments, progress made since June 2023, clarification from Hampshire County Council on their position with a one system approach to be put in place for all Waste Collection Authorities (WCA), a breakdown of survey responses following the consultation, the key modelling options and results, the financial position including New Burdens Funding and Extended Producer Responsibility, collaborative working with other authorities and the target deadlines and core time constraints. The views and comments of the committee were sought for inclusion in the report to Cabinet on 8 February 2024 to consider how this matter should be taken forward.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and comment on the following matters which were responded to by the Cabinet Member and the Service Lead: Environmental Services:

- (i) Contamination in Recycling – The committee expressed concern regarding contamination in recycling bins and the levels of contamination tolerated before rejection of the entire bin. Questions were asked about the process of sorting contamination at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF), including the impact on person-power and the risk of rejecting other materials due to contamination.
- (ii) Survey Results and Public Engagement - Councillor Greenberg welcomed the excellent results of a waste and recycling survey and questioned whether its success was due to residents' passion for recycling or specific strategies employed by the council. Further queries were raised about the cost implications and life cycle analysis of waste and recycling processes, including the impact of co-mingling on MRF costs.

- (iii) Financial and Environmental Implications - The committee asked questions in relation to the detailed breakdown of costs associated with various waste and recycling options, including capital and operational expenses, future financial risks, and the potential need to increase taxes.
- (iv) Clinical and Glass Waste Collection – The committee sought clarification regarding the continuation of clinical waste collections and the council's plans for glass recycling. The potential role of recycling centres in glass collection and the timeline for introducing soft plastics recycling was also raised.
- (v) Use of Electric Vehicles for Collections - The importance of using electric vehicles for increased collection rounds, particularly for weekly food waste, was highlighted to mitigate environmental impacts.
- (vi) Biodiesel Usage and Competition – The committee discussed the use of biodiesel for council vehicles and the potential competition for biodiesel resources, emphasising the need to explore alternatives.
- (vii) Deposit Scheme Impact and Practicalities – The committee raised the potential impact of the upcoming deposit scheme on glass waste and its practicality for residents who rely on delivery services.
- (viii) Food Waste Bin Capacity and Flexibility – The committee queried the flexibility of food bin capacity to accommodate different household sizes and the lessons to be learned from other councils' experiences.
- (ix) Negotiations with Other Authorities - Concerns were expressed about the potential challenges in negotiating waste and recycling strategies with other authorities, particularly those with differing financial positions or ambitions.
- (x) Collection of Batteries and Small Appliances – Clarification was sought on whether collections of batteries, small electrical appliances, and disposable vapes would continue alongside normal waste collection.
- (xi) Public Engagement and Communication - The importance of engaging hard-to-reach groups in recycling initiatives and ensuring widespread understanding and buy-in for the programme was emphasised.
- (xii) Reduction Strategy - The council was urged to consider further investment in communication and education about waste reduction and to evaluate the financial, environmental, and ethical benefits of such initiatives.

At the conclusion of debate, the committee thanked officers for the informative presentation and the progress carried out to date and welcomed the positive outcomes from the survey and the engagement and promotion carried out within the local community.

RESOLVED:

1. That, following a vote thereon, the co-mingling approach to simpler recycling be unanimously supported as the preferred option of the committee going forward; and
2. That the contents of the presentation be received, and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 February 2024.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.15 pm

Chairperson

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