

To: Cabinet
Date: 11 September 2019
Report of: Transition Director
Title of Report: Oxfordshire's Resources and waste Strategy 2018-2023

Summary and recommendations

Purpose of report:

- 1 To provide update on the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership (OEP) which convenes the City, District and County Councils in Oxfordshire to share best practice and agree actions.
- 2 To seek support for the Resource and Waste Strategy for Oxfordshire (Appendix 1) which sets out how the City Council will work with others to deliver sustainable waste management services as part of our response to the climate emergency. It runs until 2023 and focuses on local authority collected waste.
- 3 To reconfirm support for the reintroduction of joint working across Oxfordshire in the form of a partnership. Including reinstating a dedicated officer post to take forward county-wide waste management, following the declaration of a climate emergency.

Key decision: No

Executive Board Member: Councillor Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford

Corporate Priority: Clean, Green Oxford

Policy Framework: Corporate Policy and Sustainability Strategy

Recommendations: That the Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Adopt** Oxfordshire's Resources and Waste Strategy for Oxfordshire 2018-2023, in response to the Climate Emergency;
2. **Agree** support for reinstating a Countywide Partnership on resources and

waste management;

3. **Support** the principle of the reintroduction of an Officer post to advance the shared goals of all Oxfordshire councils to effectively manage waste arising in the county, subject to City Council's budget process for 2020/2021; and
4. **Delegate** authority to the Transition Director in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford to conclude the negotiation and agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding with all other relevant councils in Oxfordshire concerning the partnership and shared post across the proposed reformed Waste Partnership.

Appendices

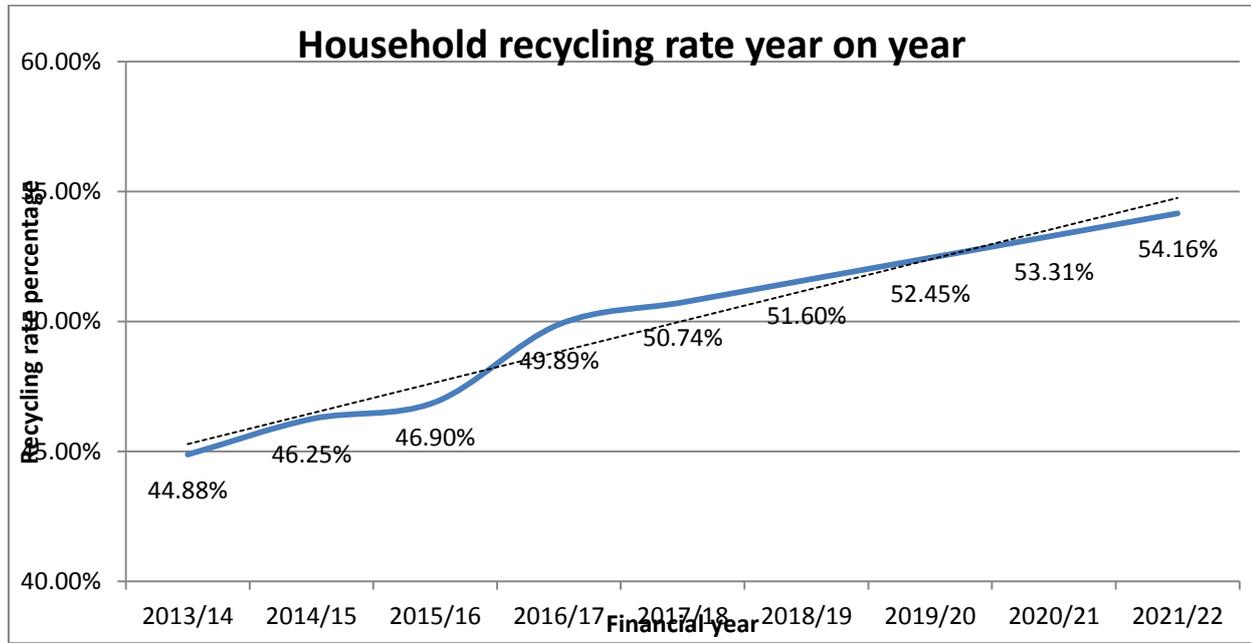
Appendix 1	Oxfordshire's Resources and Waste Strategy 2018-2023
Appendix 2	National context

Introduction

1. The proposal is to adopt Oxfordshire's Resources and Waste Strategy, and reinstatement of a countywide waste partnership with a full-time Partnership Officer post to resource the work of the Partnership. This forms part of the City Council's response to the Climate Emergency, in close alignment with neighbouring councils within the county.
2. In January 2019, Oxford City Council Members unanimously declared a climate emergency and agreed to create a Citizens' Assembly in Oxford to set out recommendations for how to move the city towards net zero carbon emissions. Oxford City Council has since set out arrangements for the Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, the first of its kind in the UK, which is set to meet in late September and late October 2019, to consider measures to reduce Oxford's carbon emissions to net zero and, as part of this, strong measures that reduce the City Council's carbon footprint to net zero by 2030.
3. The Citizens' Assembly will address three themes, divided into five separate areas of content. These were selected following work undertaken for the City Council by Anthesis, an Oxford-based environmental consultancy that provided quantitative evidence of where the Council can help deliver the most significant emissions reductions. One of the themes is titled "How do we improve environmental quality on the journey to net zero?" and includes the area of content titled "Waste—How do we reduce our waste to deliver net zero?"
4. A report by Anthesis confirms waste reduction and recycling targets similar to those outlined in the strategy to drive our ambition to net zero. The City Council recognises that waste reduction is an important part of its work to deliver emission reductions and, accordingly, additional steps may be

announced following the conclusion of the Citizens' Assembly.

- The graph below tracks Oxford city's domestic waste recycling performance, and projected performance. The Council has had great successes reflecting the continued support and recognition it places on resource management. This includes the weekly food recycling collections to all properties and the recycling incentive scheme.



- To enable the required step change to achieve the national strategy and the City Council's own ambitious net zero aspiration, national policy change is needed as it is unlikely that incremental improvements to the Council's system will deliver what is required.
- Under the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, local authorities in two tier areas have a duty to create and update a shared waste strategy.
- From 2007, this duty was formally exercised by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP), the forerunner of today's Oxfordshire Environment Partnership (OEP), which has all five district councils responsible for the collection and disposal of recycling and waste in Oxfordshire (including Oxford City Council, Vale of the White Horse, South Oxfordshire, west Oxfordshire, Cherwell and Oxfordshire County Council).
- The OWP agreed the first Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS), which set out the steps that the Partnership wished to take to move from a recycling rate of around 33% to 55% in 2020 and detailed the infrastructure and collection changes that were needed. The strategy was highly successful, resulting in Oxfordshire achieving one of the best recycling

rates in England (over 60% in 2011/12).

10. Between April 2007 and March 2014, the partnership operated as the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership and agreed the first Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) for Oxfordshire in 2007. The strategy is updated every 5 years and is now due for its second review.
11. The City Council recognised the benefits of partnership working, and at the time was against the partnership being disbanded. Members may recall the benefits realised below:
 - Single view of the public purse, ensuring effective and efficient management of resources, cross subsidy between collection and disposal activities
 - Better waste collection and disposal cooperation. e.g. local food recycling waste plants constructed
 - It lead to significant improvements in performance
 - Access and appeal to secure national funding for waste reduction and recycling initiatives and projects
12. From March 2014 the OEP replaced the OWP. The formal partnership was disbanded and alongside this went the financial arrangements and formalised joint decision making. This Council is represented on this Partnership by its Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford.
13. The reforming of the partnership will require a Memorandum of Understanding agreed and signed by all members. It is recommend that the negotiation and agreement to any Memorandum of Understanding concerning a shared post across the proposed reformed Waste Partnership is delegated to the Transformation Director to make the final decision in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford
14. The aspiration is to continue to be amongst the best in the country at waste reduction, reuse and recycling, helping economic and population growth while using our resources sustainably by working together to implement initiatives that are likely to flow from the new waste strategy at national level. Some targets in the Strategy are aspirational and, without that change at national level, will be challenging to achieve however, they are more likely to be achieved and be cost-effective through a countywide approach, formally joining waste collection and disposal activities.
15. The overarching aims for the countywide rate are:
 - Keep household waste growth to zero (per person per year)
 - Increase the amount of household waste we recycle to 70% by 2030
 - Send less than 3% of our household rubbish to landfill by 2020

This is in line with the work that the city has done on what is required to deliver net zero carbon city.

16. In recent times the recycling rate for the county (includes domestic waste collections and waste recycling centre) has slipped to around 57% (in line with national trends) but continues to be one of the highest rates in England. The city's, domestic collection, performance has not slipped and in fact continues to make gains at the margins. However, to realise future aspirations, action is required. In early 2018 the public, across Oxfordshire, was consulted to determine their priorities for the service, and this fed into a draft Strategy discussed by OEP Members in July 2018. It was then announced that the National Resources and Waste Strategy was due to be published that autumn, so sign off and adoption was delayed in order to ensure that it did not contradict any of Oxfordshire's proposed policies.
17. The national strategy was published on 18 December 2018 and the potential implications of this were presented at the OEP meeting in late January 2019. At that meeting OEP agreed Oxfordshire's JMWMS as presented in Appendix 1, and this is now being presented to all partners for adoption.
18. All the member councils of OEP have agreed to this, though as this is an informal partnership, the decisions of OEP are not binding.
19. The national context is set out in Appendix 2
20. It has been stated that the net cost of any new burdens on the Local Authority will be met by Government, and Councils will be holding the Environment Minister to account for that welcome commitment. These policies are in their infancy and reportedly will be developed through further stakeholder engagement and consultation during 2019/20. First draft responses were published in July 2019. Implementation dates stretch through to 2023.
21. Oxfordshire's ability to reach the recycling targets proposed in the JMWMS will be impacted by these national changes. Oxfordshire's JMWMS proposes a 65% recycling rate by 2025, but national changes are not set to be implemented until 2023, and it is understood that the process of withdrawing from the European Union has further halted national strategy development, so there may be a time lag before recycling rates rise. Oxford City's performance impacts the overall targets as well as its own ambitious commitments to work towards waste reduction and improved recycling performance. Alternatively, new policies and legislation may remove recyclable material from local authority control, and while more material will be recycled nationally, it may no longer count towards the Council's figures and, therefore, lower Oxfordshire Local Authority recycling rates.
22. The county's ability to reach the less than 3% to landfill target is currently being impacted by several external factors, including Brexit; continuing political uncertainties (and the consequent absorption of Government and Parliament); the global commodities markets; and the appetite for cost-effective waste contracts in the industry. A recent contract to provide a bulky waste shredding service that would have reduced the Council's landfill to less

than 1% was not awarded following a change in risk profile and cost increases that rendered it undeliverable. The Council continues to explore other avenues and monitor market developments and may revisit this contract in due course.

23. OEP has stated its wish for Oxfordshire's strategy to be ambitious, helping economic and population growth while using our resources sustainably. The targets in the JMWMS have been set to demonstrate Oxfordshire's commitment to reducing waste arisings and increasing recycling, but it should be noted that the JMWMS will be reviewed in 2023/2024 (in accordance with the 5-year review cycle), and that targets may be adjusted then to reflect the changing situation.

Other implications

24. Not being part of the strategy and partnership could lead to issues operating within a two-tier waste management structure and lost opportunities to gain economies of scale and transfer of funding from disposal savings to enhanced collection activities.
25. The waste strategy expresses support for partnership working. Future waste consultations and potential outcomes would be better considered and managed as a partnership, committing to better outcome for citizens. We need to be working co-operatively as councils in Oxfordshire to meet our climate emergency.
26. The approach supports actions towards tackling the climate emergency declared in Oxford and the high level of performance and initiatives expected for recycling and waste in Oxford City as one of the best performing urban authorities.

Financial implications

27. There are no direct immediate financial implications with adopting this strategy. The legislative and policy changes proposed (subject to consultation) in the National Resources and Waste Strategy will be considered in future business planning cycles when further detail is known.
28. Reforming the partnership, along with a full time partnership officer, assumes a contribution from all districts with county providing the bulk of £50k and all other districts contributing. The anticipated increase from recycling credits could cover the contribution of £10k pa, subject to Council budget approval.
29. Recycling and composting materials costs around half the price of disposing of it at the Energy from Waste plant or landfill. If all of the recyclable materials in the residual bin were recycled then the County Council could save around £3million/year. As the county's population grows so the waste bill for all authorities will increase and keeping that as low as possible will help to fund essential services.

Legal issues

30. In terms of the framework covered by the Partnership it is the Council's intention that the targets in the Resource and Waste Strategy all relate to household waste and do not include the commercial operations of Oxford Direct Services Trading Ltd. ODSTL will continue to drive recycling and efficient waste management with its customers. However, allowing those operations to be drawn into the municipal waste strategy would be inconsistent with the way that the company has been set up and operates and may put at risk the council's income stream from those activities.

Level of risk

31. The risk of not adopting this strategy for Oxford puts the efficiency and performance of recycling and waste at risk. Operating within a two-tier waste management structure relies on good working relationships and shared objectives. Oxford city has minimal opportunities to partner with other authorities and benefits from shared resources and opportunities.

Equalities impact

32. There are no direct immediate equalities implications with adopting this strategy. Any changes in the collection services which result from the new waste strategy, or changes in national policy/legislation will be considered at the time.

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Background Papers: None

