

To: Council
Date: 22 March 2021
Report of: Head of Corporate Strategy
Title of Report: Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with an update on the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP) which convenes the City, District and County Councils on resource and recycling action between collection and disposal authorities in Oxfordshire.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member with responsibility:	Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services
Corporate Priority:	Zero Carbon Oxford
Policy Framework:	Business Plan
Recommendation: That Council notes the content of the report.	

Introduction and background

1. This paper provides an update on the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP). In 2019, officers reported to Council a proposal to establish a reformed partnership, and reinstate a full-time Partnership Officer post to resource its work.
2. The previous Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) existed until 2015 through a joint arrangement between collection and disposal authorities. This was disbanded in 2015 largely due to Oxfordshire County Council decision to reduce funding, which was opposed by Oxford City Council at the time.
3. From 2016-2019 meetings took place under the aegis of the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership with a focus on sharing best practice. The Oxfordshire Environment Partnership no longer exists.
4. [The Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Strategy](#) was developed across all Oxfordshire authorities. It runs from 2018 to 2023 and focuses on Local Authority collected waste. The context was linked to Oxfordshire Housing & Growth Deal assumptions and the rise in numbers of households across Oxfordshire. However, it predates Oxfordshire councils' Climate Emergency declarations and the DEFRA 25 year Environment Plan.

5. The Strategy sets out an ambitious target of reaching the following targets:
 - Recycle or compost at least **65%** of household waste by 31 March 2025
 - Recycle or compost at least **70%** of household waste by 31 March 2030

Alongside this, Oxfordshire County Council is seeking to find savings of circa £3m. This is a stretching target that needs coordinated action across both collection and disposal authorities – which will form a key area of focus for ORWP.

6. ORWP is now funded to £100k per annum, with a contribution of £50k from Oxfordshire County Council and £10k each from the city and district councils. This has enabled the partnership to take on a dedicated officer and in December 2020 Vicky Beechey commenced work as the Partnership Manager, employed by the County Council but very much as a shared resource to work across collection and disposal authorities.
7. Oxford City Council holds the Chair of the Partnership for 2021, with Cllr Nigel Chapman taking that position.
8. Waste and recycling are an important part of Oxford City Council's response to the Climate Emergency, in close alignment with our neighboring councils. Waste and recycling issues are central to the circular economy.
9. At a national level the Environment Bill proposes a number of changes to waste legislation and is currently at report stage in the House of Commons and is not expected to be put into legislation until autumn 2021. The Bill sets out Government's ambition to ensure the environment is protected following the UK's departure from the EU. Legally binding targets will be introduced for resource and waste efficiency (along with air quality, nature and water). There will be a new, independent Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) will be created to 'hold government and public bodies to account' for their environmental credentials. The next round of consultations related to National resource and waste strategy element of the Bill are due imminently.
10. The Bill sets out to 'transform the way we manage our waste' – through powers to ensure that producers take responsibility through extended producer responsibility (EPR) for the waste they create, introducing a 'consistent approach' to recycling collections including what materials are collected for recycling and how they are collected, food waste, tackling waste crime, introducing deposit return schemes (DRS) and 'more effective' litter enforcement, and powers to introduce new charges that will aim to 'minimise the use and impacts' of single use plastics. DEFRA has also stated the ambition to ensure that the Bill bans the export of waste to developing countries.
11. The Environment Bill and the new regulatory framework that underpins it will have considerable impact on the Council's waste and recycling operations and need to be factored in to statutory services provided by Oxford Direct Services Ltd on its behalf. This may also have budget implications in the Mid Term Financial Plan which will be considered in the 2022-23 Budget-setting process.
12. An updated Oxford City Council Recycling & Waste Strategy is being developed to sit within a hierarchy of waste management strategies and policies at European, national and local levels. It will reflect the new obligations introduced through the Environment Bill. Its aims will incorporate feedback received from residents at Oxford's Citizens Assembly for Climate Change and it will sit alongside Oxford's

wider carbon reduction strategy. The Strategy will be presented to Council for consideration in 2021.

13. The new strategy will address the new statutory landscape and priorities and help ensure that Oxford, in partnership with residents, businesses and organisations, manages its waste in a more sustainable way and delivers the highest quality services, with minimal impact on the environment. It will also reflect the shared agenda established through the Council's working within the OWRP.

Terms of Reference and Work Programme

14. The terms of reference and work programme for the OWRP are still being developed among partners.

Legal issues

15. A Memorandum of Understanding for Oxford City Council's involvement with the OWRP is being established.

Financial issues

16. Reforming the partnership, along with a full time partnership officer assumes a contribution from all districts. The County Council will provide £50k per annum and districts will provide £10K per annum which would come from the anticipated increase in recycling credits which would offset the cost. This was approved in the budget of 2020.

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Background Papers: None

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