

To: Council
Date: 17 July 2023
Report of: Head of Corporate Strategy
Title of Report: The Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To note the annual update on the Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member with responsibility:	Councillor Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies
Corporate Priority:	Support Thriving Communities; Pursue a zero carbon Oxford
Policy Framework:	None.
Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1. Note the annual update report on the work of the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership.	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	ORWP Annual report 2022-23

Introduction and background

1. This paper provides an update on the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP), which was established in 2019, and which Oxford City Council is a member of along with the other countywide waste collection and disposal authorities.
2. It receives £100k funding per annum, with a contribution of £50k from Oxfordshire County Council and £10k each from the City and district councils.
3. Prior to the ORWP's establishment, the previous Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) existed until 2015 through a joint arrangement between collection and disposal authorities.

4. 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.
5. [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. The ORWP Officers Group is currently updating the strategy – however any significant changes are expected to follow only after there is clarity on the new recycling and waste framework DEFRA is proposing (see paras 9 and 10 below)
6. 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
7. 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.

ORWP Annual Report

8. An annual report on the work of the ORWP has been prepared by the ORWP officer, and is attached as Appendix 1. The ORWP Partnership Manager is a role jointly funded by all of the ORWP Partners.
9. Over the past couple of years Oxford City Council and the other Oxfordshire councils have been working collaboratively through the ORWP in particular to help influence - and prepare responses to - the very significant changes in the national regime for waste and recycling that are being prepared by DEFRA. These are expected to be far-reaching and lead to significant changes in both the funding streams and systems for recycling and waste collection and disposal.
10. At the time of writing, we are still awaiting final details from DEFRA of the proposed new arrangements.

Oxford City Council waste performance 2022-23

11. Oxford City Council's waste recycling performance is still tracking ahead of national averages. Total recycling for the city - including materials collected through the Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre, streets and sweepings for 2021/22 - was 51.84%. This compares to the national performance of 41.5% (Source: DEFRA National statistics Local authority collected waste management - annual results 2021/22)
12. Over the past 5 years the national statistics show that overall recycling rates have plateaued and dropped below 42% in 2020/21 and 2021/22. The City Council's performance appears to have followed a similar trend. Our recycling performance for 2022/23 reduced to 50.05% (national figures are not yet available).
13. The detailed performance for kerbside collections in Oxford is shown below.

	General Waste	Dry Recycling	Food Waste	Garden Waste
2021/22	44.91%	30.49%	13.43%	11.18%
2022/23	46.49%	29.92%	13.26%	10.32%

14. ORWP members agree that it will be difficult to achieve the step change improvement in recycling rates targeted within the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Strategy without the significant changes in funding streams and systems for recycling and waste collection and disposal envisaged in the proposed DEFRA reforms.

Round Changes

15. In April 2022 a reroute of household collections was implemented with a view to balancing collection volumes each day and improving efficiencies. There have been a few operational adjustments to staffing of the rounds to ensure consistency of service, but the primary challenge following the reroute was implemented has been dealing with issues of traffic congestion.

16. Our Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) are permitted to pass through the LTNs barriers when carrying out collections, and the planned introduction of ANPR cameras at certain points will reduce the time taken to navigate the existing bollard restrictions. However, traffic volumes on arterial routes linked to roadworks, traffic accidents and other causes have affected the efficiency of the rounds. We are keeping our collection routing under review and if any further measures can be made to mitigate this we will explore this further.

COVID

17. Since the removal of COVID restrictions there has been a quick transition back to normal working practices. As society has adjusted to “living with COVID” we have experienced very few reports of confirmed cases among staff. Indeed, there has not been a reported case among the waste collection teams since January 2023.

Heatwave 2022

18. The heatwave last summer created a challenge for the collection teams. The high temperatures combined with the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) the crews are required to wear and the physical nature of the work made working in the high heat uncomfortable. To try and mitigate this we adjusted the time collections started to 1 hour earlier than normal. This not only provided benefits from working in the cooler early mornings, the lack of traffic at this time meant crews avoided an hour of rush hour traffic and could complete their work earlier. This was a common approach across the industry, and we are grateful to the public for their understanding.

CRC removals

19. After reviewing the current Community Recycling Centre (CRC) or “bring bank” provision for the city it has been agreed that this will be significantly reduced. The reasoning behind this has multiple elements but primarily, as all residents have access to kerbside recycling there is little benefit from them remaining. The CRC locations are also notorious areas for fly-tipping and cost a significant amount to manage each year. In the coming weeks the number of locations will reduce and residents will be directed to alternate forms of recycling and/or disposal going forward. A comms plan is currently being put together to ensure that prior to, during

and after the changes residents will receive the guidance on how to responsibly dispose of their waste. The aim is to remove most of the CRCs in September 2023.

Financial implications

20. The ORWP is funded by the Oxfordshire councils with a £10,000 contribution per annum from Oxford City Council. This cost is offset by an increase in recycling credits received by the Council, and was approved in the Budget of 2020.

Legal issues

21. There are no legal implications. The ORWP is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) called the "Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Strategy 2018-2023".

Level of risk

22. Not applicable.

Environmental considerations

23. Oxford City Council and the ORWP are committed to the 'waste hierarchy' that puts waste prevention ahead of reuse, then recycling, recovery and disposal. Waste and recycling. Waste and recycling is responsible for around 1 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in Oxford.

Equalities impact

24. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not applicable. Core waste and recycling services are provided without charge at the point of use to all residential households. While the service is universal with standard requirements for all on how to present their waste and recycling, some allowances are made for those unable to move heavy waste bins – for example the provision of waste sacks instead.

Conclusion

25. It is intended the ORWP should continue to provide an important forum for coordination and collaboration on recycling and waste management in Oxfordshire, governed by the MOU in place and coordinating work under the JMWMS.

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Background Papers:
None