



Report to: Policy and Resources Committee, 28th July 2020

Report of: Corporate Director - Place

Subject: HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP WASTE STRATEGY OFFICER

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To agree to the establishment of a Joint Waste Strategy Officer to work on behalf of the partnership of the eight Local Authorities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire;**
- 1.2 To contribute to the funding of the joint post with a small expenditure budget (£8,000 per annum) for a fixed term period of 3 years; and**
- 1.3 To consider requests for additional funding to support further work which may be identified and proposed via the partnership Senior Waste Officer Group.**

2. Background

- 2.1 The Resource and Waste Strategy 2018 is the first major policy document for waste services since the national Waste Strategy of 2007. This promises a range of changes and measures to help bring about a more circular economy. This will encourage a move away from an inefficient take, make, use, & throw away culture to an approach where we keep resources in use as long as possible, to extract maximum value.
- 2.2 Local Authorities and the waste sector must start working to address significant changes to services resulting from new government policy which will come as a result of RWS 2018, of particular note these include:
 - Requirement for local authorities to separately collect food waste from households and businesses each week;
 - The introduction of deposit return scheme for drinks containers;
 - The introduction of extended producer responsibility for packaging materials.Government expectation is that these changes will start to be implemented from 2023, leaving less than three years to plan and develop services.
- 2.3 Wychavon is the only council in Worcestershire to have ever provided a separate collection of food waste (2008 to 2014). It was agreed to end the service due to lack of participation, cost and customer feedback on budget proposals. However, just over half of local authorities in England do currently collect food waste and in

Scotland and Wales it is a statutory requirement to provide a separate collection of food waste. The Government's response to the consultation on various aspects of RWS was published in July 2019 and said, "*Given the support for separate food waste collection government will legislate to ensure that every local authority provides householders with a separate food waste collection. Government's preference is that this should be a separate weekly collection of food waste and not mixed with garden waste. However, it is clear that further consideration is needed with respect to local circumstances.... We will work with LAs and others to consider how best to deliver this requirement to take account of local circumstances.*"

2.4 Across Herefordshire and Worcestershire a strong partnership approach has been established through the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Strategic Waste Management Boards (Members and Officers) and Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (2004 – 2034). This has led to consistency across all the authorities with a core waste collection service (i.e. alternate weekly collection and the same materials collected for recycling) and the essential infrastructure including the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) - EnviroSort and Energy from Waste facility - EnviRecover. The partnership most recently collaborated on a joint response to Government consultations on different aspects of the RWS. Continuing this collaboration and consistent partnership approach is the best way to progress and develop good quality value for money waste services, which is endorsed in the RWS.

2.5 This report is being considered by all eight Partners. A joint partnership officer has been proposed through the Strategic Waste Management Board and support to the proposal was received from the constituent Local Authorities:

- Bromsgrove Borough Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Worcester City Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Wychavon District Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

3. Preferred Option

3.1 The measures promised in RWS are being progressed into law through the Environment Bill 2020 which is currently making its way through Parliament. The Bill is due back in Parliament at the end of September 2020. Key changes which will impact on how Local Authorities provide their waste management services include:

- Extended Producer Responsibility, making packaging producers responsible for the cost of dealing with packaging at the end of its life (e.g. waste collection, recycling and treatment);
- Deposit Return Schemes, to encourage "recycling on the go" schemes for drinks containers;
- Consistent Recycling Collections, to encourage a more consistent approach across the country, so each Local Authority will collect the same "core materials" for recycling;
- Weekly Food Waste Collection, where every local authority will be required to provide a separate food waste collection from both households and businesses;
- Potential free garden waste collection;

- Preference for kerbside sort recycling, where materials are collected separately from individual households (typically from boxes or bags);
- Improved Product Packaging Design & Labelling, to improve the quality of materials for recycling and provide better information to consumers.

3.2 These measures will have a significant impact on the practical delivery of Local Authority waste management services, the cost of service provision and funding, for example including:

- Up to 80 additional vehicles and crews to collect food waste separately with extra costs of around £8m per annum across the partnership;
- Additional resources if required to collect garden waste from each household free of charge and loss of income from current subscription services;
- Additional vehicles and crews to collect separate recyclables from households;
- Loss of valuable recyclable materials to deposit return schemes which will focus on high value metal and plastic drinks containers;
- Uncertain funding from packaging producers resulting from extended producer responsibility schemes.

3.3 The Strategic Waste Management Board has identified the following work streams:

- a. Engage in National Policy Development to understand and influence policy and approach to delivery in the partnerships interest ensure best possible outcomes and fair funding solutions to the partnership.
- b. Prepare for change by understanding future requirements and the implications of them on partnerships services. Assessing partnership options for changes to our existing services and of new requirements, such as food waste collection.

3.4 The Board recognises that there is not sufficient staff capacity currently provided to undertake this policy work which has an equal impact across all the authorities and therefore supports the establishment of a new joint funded post. It is proposed that a post will be managed through the Officer Strategic Waste Management Board, reporting to the chair of the Board (the chair role rotates across partnership officers approximately every two years).

3.5 **Appendix 1** (Part A) provides a detailed work plan and estimated costs against the work areas. Key areas of work include engaging in and influencing national policy development (e.g. engaging with government agencies, evaluating the implications of policy changes, preparing and delivering briefings, assessing technical guidance), preparing for change (e.g. assessing options and developing proposals for food waste collection) and also further developing a joint communications strategy prior to implementation to inform and educate residents. The work plan, changes to it and any actions to be carried out by the post holder, will be agreed and monitored by the Strategic Waste Management Board.

3.6 It is anticipated that a position of PO2 (WCC Pay scale) or Scale 9 (HC pay scale) is likely result of grading, circa £35,000 per annum. It is proposed pay, welfare, leave, equipment, subsistence of the post holder will be managed by a host authority. It is proposed that this would best be provided by Worcestershire County Council who have led the strategic work of the partnership to date with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment acting as Chair of the Member Waste Board since

the partnership was established. A structure chart is provided in **Appendix 1** Part B for illustration.

- 3.7 The post holder will work remotely across the partnership with each Local Authority providing 'hot desk' arrangements. This will foster greater cohesion and collaboration across the partnership.
- 3.8 The post will be funded equally by the constituent Local Authorities in the partnership. Each contributing £8,000 per annum for an initial three year period. Towards the end of the three years the partnership will review the need for the post and consider if it should continue.
- 3.9 Each partner authority is now seeking authorisation for finalisation and recruitment to the post. Recruitment is anticipated in September 2020. The recruitment panel to be comprised of Sue Horrobin as current Chair of the Officer Strategic Waste Management Board, Richard Woodward as the host authority manager and one other representative from the Officer Board. The expected timeline for authorisation and establishment of the post is given below.

May 2020	Post establishment and outline work plan agreed in principle by the Member Board and Senior Waste Management Board
July/August 2020	Partner authorities obtain necessary authority to establish and fund joint post
	Grading of post by host authority
August/September 2020	Recruitment and establishment of post
September/November 2020	Introduction to Strategic Waste Management Board

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The partnership could decide not to fund the joint post. An alternative would be that existing staff resources are allocated to planning and responding to the requirements of RWS. This is not recommended as indicated at paragraph 3.5, there is insufficient capacity to undertake the necessary planning and preparation to meet this unprecedented challenge. Additionally, by meeting the challenge as a partnership rather than individually our approach will be stronger, more cost effective and bring efficiencies.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

If approved each Local Authority in the partnership will contribute £8,000 per annum (fixed cost) for a period of 3 years. The total annual cost to the partnership will be £64,000 per annum or £192,000 for the initial planned 3 year period. This allows for the officer salary and a small budget for distinct pieces of work which may be required, such as specialist consultancy.

Any additional significant funding requirements will be considered by the Board and referred back to each partner authority's decision-making process.

If the timetable is achieved as set out in the report the cost to Worcester City Council for six months would be £4,000. Subsequent costs would need to be built into future budgets and the Medium Term Financial Plan. It is proposed that the in-year costs be funded from the Transformation Fund which has an outstanding balance of £57,120.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

An agreement between the partnership members will be necessary to set out the governance and financing of the joint post. It is anticipated this will be fulfilled by the host authority.

5.3 Risk Implications

There is a risk that expected national policy changes are delayed. However work to prepare the partnership will remain valid. Regular review of the post and the work plan will be undertaken to ensure it remains consistent with the needs and timing of policy and requirements.

There is a risk that expected national policy changes will no longer be required. Regular updates will be provided to the Senior Waste Management Board to demonstrate requirement for the post and value of work. If necessary the post will be reallocated to other tasks within the partnership and redundancy will be considered if the post is no longer considered necessary.

There is a risk that there will be additional requirements that fall beyond the capacity of the post holder. The work plan will be regularly reviewed and updated to consider if the partnership's needs will be met. Any additional resource requirement will be considered by the Strategic Waste Management Board prior to determination by individual members of the partnership.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The post will support the development of waste policy for the City Council and Partnership further to requirements which will be introduced through the Environment Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

5.5 Equality Implications

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

One fixed term 3 year post to be hosted by Worcestershire County Council. Partnership to consider at the end of the 3 year period if the post should continue.

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

There are no direct Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal.

5.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

Social – Public and stakeholder consultation has been carried out and further is planned to ensure that waste services reflect demand from customers and organisations delivering waste services.

Environmental – RWS promotes improved environmental management and a move to a circular economy, getting value from waste wherever possible.

Economic – There are significant financial impacts both on the waste industry and local authorities with the introduction of new services and service changes as outlined in the report.

Ward(s):	All
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Background papers:	Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire & Worcestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2018
Appendices:	Appendix 1: (Part A) Partnership Work & Resourcing Plan (Part B) Post Management