

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16th January 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Environment & Urban Renewal

SUBJECT: Waste Management Update

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Provide Members with details of the progress in developing Plans and Strategies in relation to the collection and recycling of Halton's waste.
- 1.2 To seek Members endorsement of a Liverpool City Region (LCR) Zero Waste Strategy and support for proposals to transition to a circular food waste system for the LCR.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) Members endorse the Zero Waste Strategy for the Liverpool City Region (attached as Appendix 1).**
- 2) Delegated authority be given to the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Environment and Urban Renewal, to agree the final 'branded' version of the Zero Waste Strategy for the Liverpool City Region.**
- 3) Members support a proposal to transition to a circular food waste system for the Liverpool City Region by:**
 - (i) Supporting the principles of local circularity and green gas powered vehicles over the longer term.**
 - (ii) Acknowledging the high-level business case to support such an approach.**
 - (iii) Endorse the further exploration of this approach by the Liverpool City Region Waste Partnership.**
- 4) Members approve the capital spend associated with the procurement of food waste receptacles and collection vehicles using monies allocated to the Council by DEFRA for that purpose.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In 2021, the Liverpool City Region Strategic Waste Management Partnership was established to support the collective work of the LCR partners in addressing the significant waste management issues facing each of the authorities. The Partnership established a thematic work programme which included reviewing the implications arising from the Government's Resources & Waste Strategy and the Environment Act 2021, as well as environment & climate emergency, including opportunities to align this work with LCR and each district authority.

3.2 LCR Zero Waste Strategy

At the meeting of the Council's Executive Board 16th March 2023, Members approved the principles set out in a LCR Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Framework to reduce waste related carbon emissions (Minute EXB94/2023). All of the Council's LCR Partner Authorities also approved the principles of the Strategic Framework through their individual Committee/Cabinet decision making processes. In summary, the LCR Zero Waste Framework provided the strategic link between the partnership work being undertaken across the LCR to tackle waste, and the collective commitments to achieve our net zero ambitions.

3.3 Attached as Appendix 1 is a Zero Waste Strategy for the LCR which has been developed by the Strategic Partnership. The Strategy aligns with the existing overarching Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Framework and adopts the same three themes (People, Planet and Economy) and the same seven strategic outcomes. Members are asked to endorse this Strategy and are advised that a final 'branded' version of the Zero Waste Strategy will be produced which may result in some small, immaterial changes to content as part of the branding process.

3.4 Food Waste Collections

From 1st April 2026, all Councils across England will be legally required to offer a food waste collection service to all households in their area. As outlined in The Environment Act 2021, the service must be provided on a weekly basis, be 'separate' (i.e. not be mixed with garden waste) and the food waste preferably being treated by anaerobic digestion.

3.5 Attached as Appendix 2 is a report produced by a specialist waste management consultancy who were appointed by the LCR Waste Partnership to develop a strategy for meeting the Environment Act requirement for food waste collection. The overall brief for the commissioning of the project was to develop a strategic view of long-term options for optimised food waste collection and treatment and interim measures designed to offer Environment Act 2021 compliant solutions whilst transitioning to future state/operating

model.

- 3.6 The food waste collection vehicles being considered for the current procurement exercise are all diesel-powered (see para 3.7 below). However, based on the findings of the independent report considering an “optimal” approach to food waste management across the Liverpool City Region, it is proposed that in the longer term, gas powered vehicles could be purchased that would run on biomethane (green gas) generated from the processing of collected food waste via an Anaerobic Digestion treatment process.
- 3.7 Members are recommended to support the principles of local circularity and green gas-powered vehicles over the longer term and endorse the further exploration of this approach by the Liverpool City Region Waste Partnership.
- 3.8 In January 2024, DEFRA allocated capital monies to Council’s to fund the vehicle and caddy purchasing requirements for food waste collections – Halton’s allocation was £1.019m. In order to maximise buying power, and best co-ordinate procurement opportunities, the LCR Partners committed to jointly procuring caddies and food waste vehicles. Procurement preparation is now at an advanced stage and Members are asked to approve the spend of the capital monies allocated to Halton for the purchase of the required vehicles and caddies.
- 3.9 In January 2024, DEFRA also announced that revenue resource transitional funding will be provided to Waste Collection Authorities from the 2024/25 financial year to implement the weekly food waste collection service. DEFRA further added that ongoing resource/revenue costs will be provided to all waste collection authorities from 1st April 2026. The allocations to Halton are not known at this stage.
- 3.10 The Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority (MRWA) are working with the Waste Management & Recycling Contract (WMRC) contractor (Veolia) to ensure that appropriate facilities and offtake arrangements for separately collected household food waste are in place by the mandated date. Food waste collected by Halton Council is not an Exclusive Contract Waste under the terms of the WMRC and is not therefore required to be delivered into a facility operated under this contract. However, it is acceptable as a Contract Waste and may therefore be delivered into the Contract facilities should Halton Council request.
- 3.11 Officers will explore Halton’s option in respect of the processing/treatment of collected food waste and recommendations will be the subject of a future report to Members for consideration and approval.
- 3.12 **Future Waste Report and Members’ Seminar**

The Environment Act 2021 has also placed new requirements on Council's to collect a wider range of materials from households, including aerosols, foil, cartons/tetrapaks, pots, tubs & trays and plastic films. The new legal requirements will have both cost and service redesign implications for the Council and work is continuing to assess the Council's options and consider the cost/benefits of those options.

- 3.13 Key decisions will need to be made, and Members of the Executive Board will be presented with a further report in Spring 2025. Ahead of this it is proposed to hold a Members' Seminar setting out to all Members the Council's legal obligations in respect of waste, work to date and future options.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no new policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Whilst there are clear future resource and financial implications arising from the Council needing to put in place new collection services and waste treatment/processing arrangements in order to meet its obligations under the Environment Act 2021, the detail of those financial and resource implications are not known at this stage.

- 5.2 As stated in the report, Halton was allocated £1.019m by DEFRA to support the capital costs of delivering the mandatory weekly food waste collections from April 2026.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

There are no specific implications associated with this report.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

There are no specific implications associated with this report.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

There are no specific implications associated with this report.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

There are no specific implications associated with this report.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

There are no specific implications associated with this report.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

There are no specific implications associated with this report.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 Whilst there are risks associated with the Council failing to meet its statutory waste obligations, there are no specific risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality or diversity issues as a result of this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Zero Waste Strategy and the other initiatives planned to support waste reduction and increased recycling will support the Council's response to the climate emergency.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

'None under the meaning of the Act.'
