

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 September 2023
Subject:	Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Strategy
Report of:	Head of Service: Waste and Recycling
Head of Service/Director:	Director: Communities
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

The Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership (GRWP) includes all Councils in Gloucestershire and aims to work collaboratively to reduce the tonnage of waste collected in the county, while promoting projects which reduce and reuse waste.

The partnership works to an overarching strategy, where the previous version has expired but uncertainty in government direction prevents a new full strategy being developed. To bridge the gap this interim strategy is proposed to ensure the partnership continues to have direction ahead of the waste elements of the Environment Act being fully implemented.

Recommendation:

To APPROVE the Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Strategy.

Financial Implications:

None arising directly from this report

Legal Implications:

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council is the waste collection authority with responsibility for the collection of household waste and has a duty to comply with any directions about separation of waste given by the waste disposal authority for its area.

There are no legal implications arising directly from the content of the report. Where necessary, Officers will instruct One Legal on the implementation of the proposals outlined in the strategy.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

Consideration of climate impacts is a core aim of the strategy and the GRWP works closely with Climate Leadership Gloucestershire as waste is one of the areas of focus.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

None arising directly from this report

Safeguarding Implications:

None arising directly from this report

Impact on the Customer:

Most customers should not see a significant difference in their waste collection as the majority of the new size bins will be going to new developments. Customers will see a difference if they need a replacement bin. The Waste team will work with the Communications team to develop a communications strategy around this, outlining the need for the changes and the benefits, making links to our commitments around carbon reduction.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership (GRWP) is a partnership between the statutory waste functions of the county and district Councils of Gloucestershire. These are Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. Our waste partner Ubico also attends and inputs into the meeting of the partnership.
- 1.2** The GRWP provides countywide leadership and a framework for joint working on resources and waste related matters. GRWP members work together to optimise waste management services across the county and recognise the need for a new strategy following the expiry of the previous strategy in 2020.
- 1.3** Many changes have impacted waste services in Gloucestershire since the previous strategy was adopted in 2007, such as high levels of population growth and changes to waste composition. Despite the challenges, services across the partnership have adapted, for example increasing the recycling rate from an average of 32% in 2006/7 to over 50% in 2023/23.

2.0 INTERIM STRATEGY

- 2.1** This is a period of significant change in the waste sector, with three elements of waste legislation within the Environment Act 2020 expected to be in place by 2025/26, although this is by no means certain. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) will move the costs of recycling waste to the producers, but in doing so will create expectations from producers around material quality and service cost.
- 2.2** A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will add a fee to the purchase price of drinks cans and plastic bottles, which will be refunded when those items are returned. The impact on local government collection schemes will be a likely drop in the material volumes of plastic bottles and cans collected.
- 2.3** Consistency of collections will enforce a minimum set of items to be collected through local government collection schemes and could go further by requiring particular collection methods, such as source separated collections.
- 2.4** Against the backdrop of such significant potential change and the uncertainty of the timing of the introduction of these changes, the decision was made to opt for a short-term interim Resources and Waste Strategy. This will allow a full new strategy to be developed once the impact of new waste legislation is known.

- 2.5** The new interim strategy focuses on several areas of collaborative effort which will see continued alignment across the partnership. Key elements of this position will be treating waste as a resource to maximise its environmental and economic value and continuing to target a reduction in collected waste per household.
- 2.6** The partnership will seek to work with external organisations to further circular economy principles and will seek to reduce CO₂ from waste management services in line with net zero commitments. The latter element is led by Tewkesbury Borough Council on behalf of the partnership and reports to Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.
- 2.7** Further key targets are value for money of services and aiming for high quality recycling materials collected.
- 2.8** One practical application of the goals of reducing waste per household and providing cost effective services is the adoption of an approach where smaller bins are used for new and replacement bins. This approach avoids replacing all bins at once, which means there is no net increase in cost to the authorities as bins would already need to be provided.
- 2.9** The approach is in line with a proposal made by Friths (a specialist consultancy commissioned by the GRWP in 2020) following a countywide assessment of waste services in 2021. Evidence shows that restriction of waste capacity given to each household has a positive impact on recycling rates and encourages a reduction in the waste presented for collection.
- 2.10** The Friths report modelled several alternate collection arrangements for the Gloucestershire authorities including restricted waste capacity, weekly and kerbside sort recycling collections, three weekly waste collections and collection of additional recycling materials.
- 2.11** Several options had a significant projected increase in recycling rates and reductions in carbon emissions; however, these also came with the highest increase in overall services costs and 'cost per 1% increase in recycling performance'. Assumptions around new burdens funding available through the EPR changes could also not be guaranteed until the full detail is released.
- 2.12** The lowest relative cost for maximum impact was deemed to be keeping recycling collection schemes unchanged but restricting waste by issuing 140 litre bins for new requests, which has led to the inclusion of this measure in the interim strategy. A full move to smaller bins would reduce carbon emissions by more than an estimated 2,000 tonnes if adopted across Gloucestershire.
- 2.13** In Tewkesbury Borough, 180 litre bins are currently used as the standard bin for refuse, with 240 litre bins used for recycling. This proposed change will not impact the recycling service, but it would move the standard refuse bin size from 180 litres to 140 litres for all bin requests following adoption of the strategy.

3.0 COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1** A communications strategy will be developed to communicate the waste strategy with residents. This will focus on the need for the proposed changes and the benefits they will bring, in particular the carbon reductions from using smaller bins.
- 3.2** This countywide strategy is a good opportunity to demonstrate climate leadership and how partnership working can maximise the benefits gained from the resources available.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 A consultation exercise was run by Gloucestershire County Council to gain feedback on the interim strategy. The findings from this consultation have been incorporated in the final version of the strategy.

5.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

5.1 Approval of the interim strategy would remove the potential risk of not having an agreed partnership strategy in place, which could lead to a lack of waste leadership and reduced co-operation at a time of industry change.

6.0 MONITORING

6.1 The strategy contains performance measures which will be reported to the GRWP at their quarterly meetings.

7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

7.1 None

Background Papers: None

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Interim GRWP Strategy
Appendix 2 – Friths Report