**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 1 JUNE 2016**

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| Title of report | **WASTE SERVICES RECYCLING PERFORMANCE AND TARGETS UPDATE** |
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| Purpose of report | To inform Policy Development Group on NWLDC's recycling performance |
| Reason for Decision | To provide members with a clearer awareness and understanding of recycling rate methodology and initiatives aimed at improving the recycling rate |
| Council Priorities | Green Footprints |
| Implications:<br><br>Financial/Staff<br><br>Link to relevant CAT<br><br>Risk Management<br><br>Equalities Impact Assessment<br><br>Human Rights<br><br>Transformational Government | <br><br>N/A<br><br>Green Footprints Corporate Action Team<br><br>N/A<br><br>N/A<br><br>N/A<br><br>N/A |
| Comments of Head of Paid Service | Report is satisfactory |
| Comments of Deputy Section 151 Officer | Report is satisfactory |

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| Comments of Monitoring Officer | Report is satisfactory |
| Consultees | Leicestershire County Council |
| Background papers | References included in the report |
| Recommendations | **THAT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP:**<br><br>**1) NOTE THE REPORT AND ENDORSE THE NEXT STEPS AT 5.0** |

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

This report has been requested by Cllr N Clarke to understand the reason why the Councils recycling performance rate is lower than the other 6 Districts in Leicestershire.

## 2.0 MEASUREMENT OF RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

2.1 Recycling performance is measured by calculating the amount of waste either reused or recycled as a percentage of the total household waste collected. This is based on a government national indicator 192 (NI 192). More detailed information about this indicator can be found at http://www.wastedataflow.org/documents/guidancenotes/NationalIndicators/GN30_WDF_NI_Guidance_2.1.pdf

Other national indicators include NI191 which measures the kgs of waste per household that is sent to landfill. This report focuses on household waste (NI 191, 192).

Each authority's recycling rate is published by DEFRA in the Autumn for the preceding year. DEFRA publish a national recycling league table annually on the following website:https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results

The reason the recycling rate is calculated to a prescribed formula including robust definition of what is classified as recycling and what is not is to enable government to ascertain whether national targets for recycling are met, or not.

2.2 In 2013 the Waste Management Plan for England reaffirmed recycling targets that were agreed as part of the government review in 2011 of the 2007 Waste Strategy for England. Waste collection authorities are targeted to achieve a recycling rate of 50% by 2020.[1]

[1] Waste Management Plan for England, DEFRA, 2013 - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265810/pb14100-waste-management-plan-20131213.pdf

## 3.0 NWLDC RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

3.1 NI191 in North West Leicestershire

The districts recycling rate includes all of the recyclable material that the council collect as part of the kerbside recycling service and bring bank collections. It will also include all recyclable materials reused and collected either by the district or a third party such as a local charity within the district.

The Council recycles the following materials

- Garden waste (fortnightly brown lidded bin)
- Plastics and cans (red box)
- Glass (red box)
- Paper (blue bag)
- Card (yellow bag)
- Textiles (any carrier bag)
- Variety of materials at Bring sites

To calculate the district recycling rate as a percentage, the tonnes of recyclable material collected above are divided by the total amount of household waste collected. Household waste includes black bin waste, bulky domestic waste, street sweepings, and highway litter bin waste. It does not include flytipped waste or commercial trade waste.

3.2 North West Leicestershire recycling history of performance

The kerbside recycling service began in 2003 following the introduction of alternate weekly collections of refuse and recycling. The service was expanded on a phased basis to all district households and the range of materials has also been extended to include compostable garden waste, glass containers, paper, cardboard, mixed rigid plastics, metal cans, and textiles.

- The national recycling rate for England for 2014/15 was 44.9%. In NWLDC it was 46.6% - 1.7% points above the national average for 2014/15.
- Leicestershire averaged 50.53% for 2014/15 and this includes the household waste collected at the Recycling and Household Waste Sites across the County.

3.3 APSE Performance 2014/15[2]:

The council subscribe to the Performance Benchmarking service of APSE (Association of Public Sector Excellence). This allows a direct comparison with other in-house waste collection authorities.

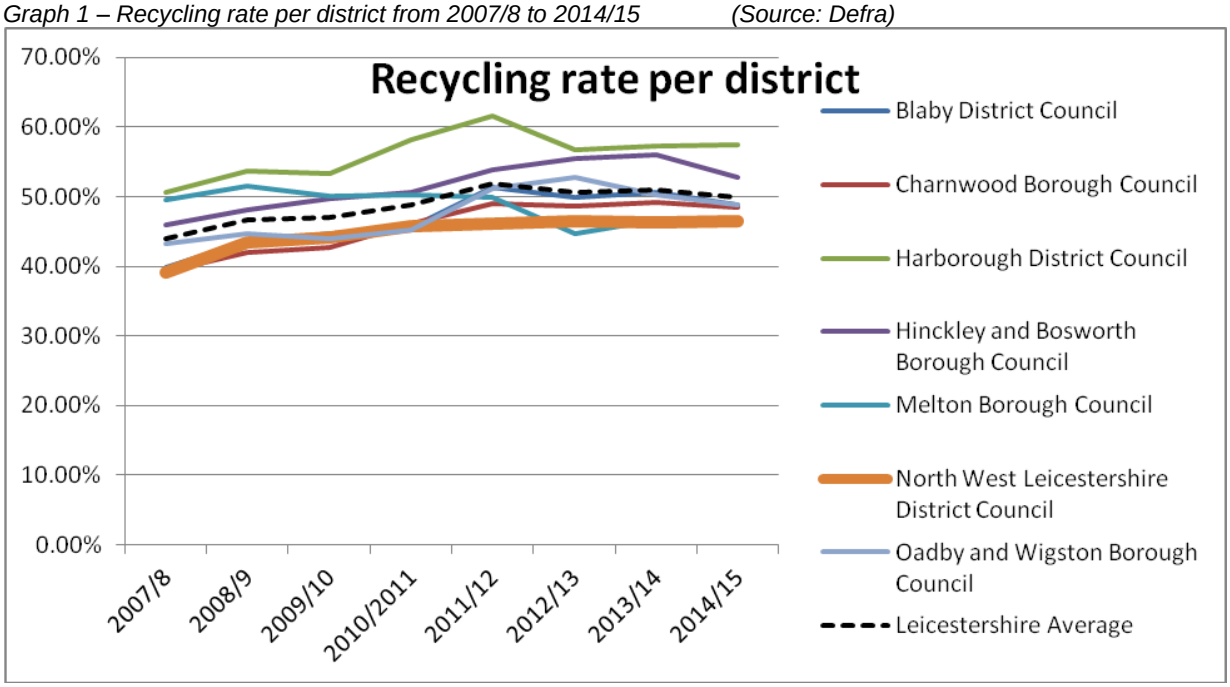
- North West Leicestershire is in the top quartile for:
    - Percentage of waste collected which is composted
    - Percentage of households covered by kerbside recycling collections

- North West Leicestershire is in the second top quartile for:
    - the tonnage of domestic waste recycled per household
    - the kgs of waste recycled per head of population
    - percentage of waste collected which is recycled

[2] 'Refuse collection', 2014/15 Issue 1 – Performance Report, APSE Performance Networks (2015)

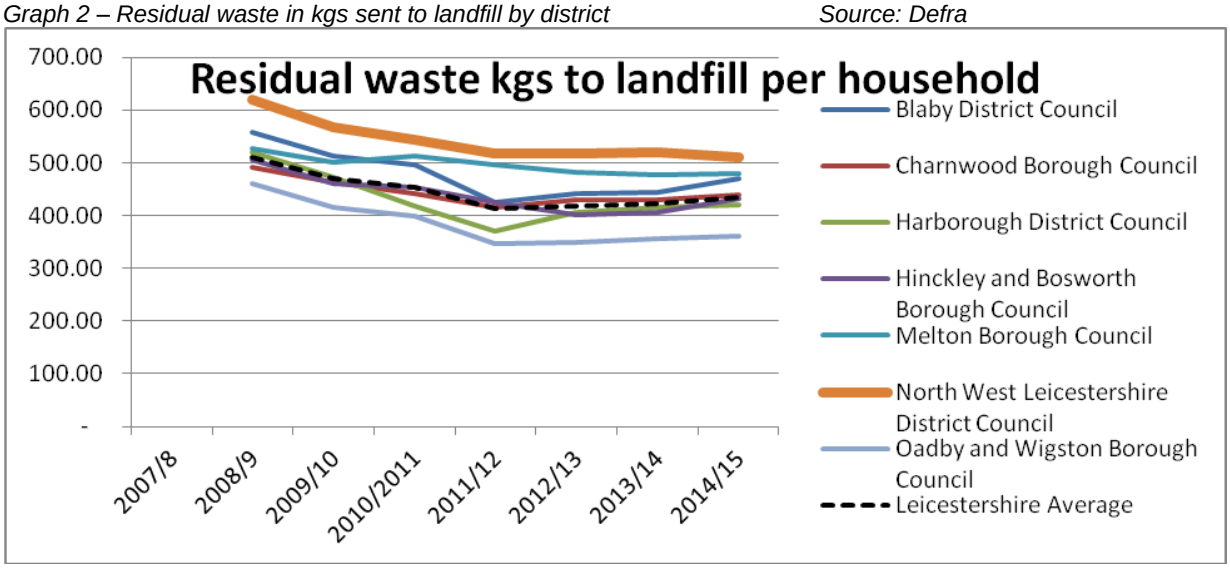
3.4 NWLDC compared to other Collection Authorities in Leicestershire

*Graph 1 – Recycling rate per district from 2007/8 to 2014/15 (Source: Defra)*




- The overall trend of other authorities is a reducing amount of recycling per household whereas North West Leicestershire's trajectory is more positive generally.
- There was a noticeable increase in NWLDC from 2007/8 to 2008/9 following on from the roll out of glass collections to the remaining half of the district.
- Further increases were achieved the following year as a result of introducing mixed plastics recycling.
- There is a plateau effect in more recent years for North West Leicestershire whilst other Leicestershire collection authorities are seeing a drop in recycling rate. Some authorities have introduced chargeable garden waste collections, and/or ceased food waste collections that may have affected their rates.

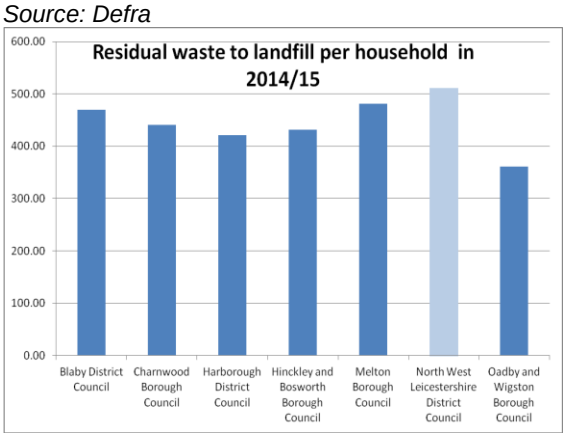
*Graph 2 – Residual waste in kgs sent to landfill by district* *Source: Defra*

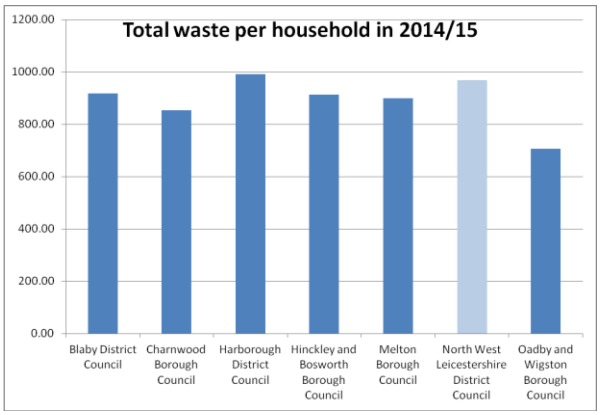


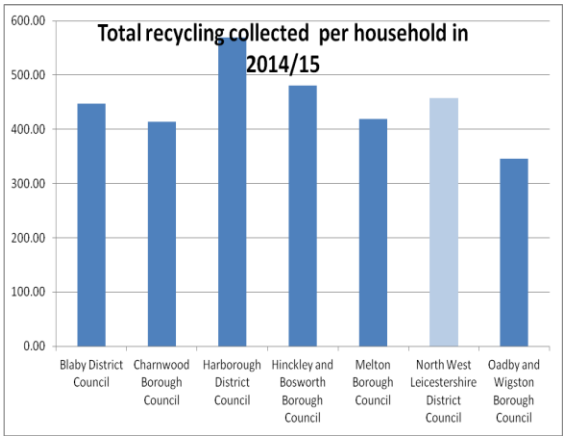

- The trajectory of refuse waste collected by NWLDC is clearly showing a positive downward trend compared to most of the authorities in Leicestershire.

The graphs below depict North West Leicestershire's most recent published recycling performance - 2014/15:

*Source: Defra*



- NWLDC collect the second highest amount of total household waste in the County behind Harborough DC, the third highest recycling per household behind Harborough and Hinckley, and the highest refuse per household in Leicestershire.

- In general terms residents of North West Leicestershire produce comparatively high volumes of refuse and recycling

3.5 What affects recycling performance?

3.5.1 Demographics

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) (www.wrap.org.uk) conduct research on improving recycling behaviour and other waste related research and development on behalf of central and local government; WRAP maintain there are certain barriers to recycling stating that there are '...lower yields associated with areas with higher levels of deprivation'[3]. That is, more affluent areas recycle more than less affluent areas and there is a correlation between areas that score high on the deprivation index also score poorly on the recycling league table. For example, Harborough is the least deprived authority in Leicestershire as can be seen from the table below and has the highest recycling rate. North West Leicestershire is the most deprived and has the lowest recycling rate.

NWLDC is not considered to rank amongst the highest levels of deprivation nationally but is the most deprived local authority in Leicestershire[4].

Table of Indices of deprivation 2015
Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015

| District rank in order of Least deprived to most deprived | Rank of Average rank |
|---|---|
| Harborough | 311 |
| Blaby | 288 |
| Oadby & Wigston | 249 |
| Hinckley & Bosworth | 248 |
| Charnwood | 237 |
| Melton | 236 |
| **North West Leicestershire** | **214** |

3.5.2 High proportion of homes on solid fuel heating

Although there is no correlation between affluence and the total amount of waste produced NWLDC's main difference between the other Leicestershire waste partners is the number of households that are still on solid fuel central heating. Arguably this is partly due to the coal miners free coal subsidy. The waste mainly produced in winter is ash which is not currently recyclable. This waste contributes significantly to the overall tonnage.

[3] 'Analysis of kerbside dry recycling performance in the UK 2008/9', *WRAP Summary Report*, (September 2009), p.4
[4] 'Index of Multiple Deprivation', English Indices of deprivation 2015, *Official Statistics*
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015-

The table below[5] puts into perspective the scale of properties producing ash compared to other authorities in Leicestershire. Over half of the households in Leicestershire that are still on solid fuel central heating are within North West Leicestershire – 54%. There are central heating systems such as oil and gas that produce no refuse waste. North West Leicestershire District Council have 11 times the proportion of homes on solid fuel than both Charnwood or Blaby and 4 times the rate of Hinckley & Bosworth, and Melton, and over 60 times the rate of Oadby and Wigston who are in the top ten of authorities with the lowest amount of waste sent to landfill.

`` *Source: Census 2011 – Table of Households with solid fuel central heating*

| **Authority** | **Households in 2011** | **No of households on solid fuel central heating systems** | **Proportion of households on solid fuel CH systems as a %** |
|---|---|---|---|
| NWLDC | 39,128 | 1,707 (4.4%) | 4.4% |
| Charnwood BC | 66,516 | 260 (0.4%) | 0.4% |
| Melton BC | 21,490 | 283 (1.3%) | 1.3% |
| Harborough DC | 34,898 | 248 (0.7%) | 0.7% |
| Oadby & W BC | 21,339 | 15 (0.07%) | 0.07% |
| Blaby DC | 38,686 | 156 (0.4%) | 0.4% |
| Hinckley & B BC | 45,377 | 475 (1.05%) | 1.05% |

One cubic foot of coal ash weighs 18kgs[6]; about the size of a shoe box. If all these households switched to gas central heating then the impact on NWLDC's recycling rate would increase by another 0.66%.

3.5.3 Service performance

Graph 2 above shows that the amount of residual waste per household in NWLDC is declining and this may be due to improved recycling habits as the recycling service is well established and according to WRAP 'is the growing recognition that recycling has become a social norm'[7].

Both the recycling service and the frequency of refuse collection have experienced a growing acceptance consistently from the first satisfaction survey in 2008, again in 2010, and the most recent in 2014[8] showing the following results:

| **Customer satisfaction levels** | **2008** | **2010** | **2014** |
|---|---|---|---|

[5] Office of National Statics Central Heating, www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/...**statistics**...**statistics**.../rft-qs415ew.xls

[6] http://www.aqua-calc.com/calculate/volume-to-weight - based on a household using a solid fuel central heating system producing approximately 1 cubic foot of ash (the size of a shoe box) per week over 17 weeks between the winter months of December and March would produce 306kgs per year. From 1,707 homes would add up to 522 tonnes per year.

[7] 'Barriers to Recycling: A review of evidence since 2008', *WRAP Final Report* (December 2014), p.27 http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/WRAP%20Barriers%20Synthesis%20Full%20Report%20final%20121214%20PUBLISHED%20-%20PDF.pdf

[8] NWLDC Customer Satisfaction Survey on Refuse and Recycling, (2008, 2010, 2014) - available online at www.nwleics.gov.uk/recycling

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|---|---|---|---|
| Satisfaction with the kerbside recycling service<br>Overall service | 95%<br>91% | 95%<br>92% | 94%<br>93.5% |
| Satisfaction with the frequency of refuse collection | 71% | 77% | 83% |

More information on barriers to recycling can be found at this link: http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/barriers-recycling-home

3.5.4 Lighter recyclable packaging

There are other reasons for lower recycling rates nationally; for example, packaging companies are now light weighting material which is predominantly recyclable packaging such as metal food and drink tins and cans and glass bottles. According to WRAP 'lighter weight wine bottles are becoming commonplace on supermarket shelves...Sainsbury's trialled a PET [plastic] wine bottle weighing just 54g...with a view to rolling it out across other wine offerings'.[9]. This sort of trend is borne out by our own waste collection figures whereby the amount of plastics is increasing whilst glass tonnage is reducing per household year on year.

3.5.5 Reduction in paper

The consumption of another important recyclable material such as newsprint and magazines is also continuing to decline. In 2008 NWLDC collected 3,200 tonnes of paper; in 2014-15 this figures was 1,900 tonnes. The development of social media and Smartphone app technology has led to declining newspaper sales. According to OFCOM, 66% of UK adults have a Smartphone so this trend looks set to continue; this is up from 61% the year before.[10]

3.6.6 Reclassification of waste types

In terms of the trend for Leicestershire declining overall, this may partly be explained by certain materials that were previously being classified as recyclable no longer being counted for recycling. For example, wood waste is no longer classified as a recyclable material for NI 192 purposes. A recent analysis by Leicestershire County Council concluded that wood waste previously accounted for 19kgs per person per year of the recycling and composting rate decrease in 2014/15[11]; this equates to 4% of total waste per person.

## 4.0 SUMMARY OF RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

4.1 In summary, the challenges of improving the districts recycling rate is significant. An improving economy means more waste will be generated over the coming years, packagers light weighting recyclable material means there is less weight in recyclable waste whereas the refuse waste will still be heavy. Smart technology is resulting in even less recyclable material being consumed as paper quantities diminish, a high number of households on solid fuel resulting in high ash content exacerbates the issue for NWLDC in particular as coal ash cannot be recycled. The demographics of the

[9] 'Lightweighting wine bottles: less is more', WRAP Case Study
http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/GlassRight%20Wine%20lightweighing%20-%20web%20version.pdf

[10] 'Proportion of adults with a smartphone 2015', OFCOM, http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/

[11] 'Analysis of Leicestershire's recycling, composting and refuse – Final Performance Report', Leicestershire County Council, *Produced by Amec Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrsstructure UK Limited*, January 2016, p.19

district means that it is unlikely to have the same high performing rates of more affluent Leicestershire districts.

4.2 On the plus side the Council has a collection service that has high customer satisfaction levels. Recycling is being perceived to be more and more of a social norm as seen with the consistently high customer satisfaction levels and growing acceptance of the fortnightly frequency of refuse collection. The gradual demise of the coal subsidy over time may have the effect of consumers switching from solid fuel to cleaner energy which reduces waste going into the black bin. The introduction of smaller bins for new households in the District which reduce the capacity of the landfill bin may also have an effect over time.

## 5.0 NEXT STEPS TO MOVE TOWARDS 50% TARGET BY 2020

5.1 To maximise recycling performance more recycling needs to be collected and/or less residual waste needs to be collected. The following initiatives and actions are due to be progressed to help improve recycling performance:

- The council will continue to replace and issue new 180l refuse bins in order to reduce capacity for new residents and those requiring replacements which will result in less and less refuse waste capacity
- the Green Footprints corporate action team are working with officers from across the Council to undertake a targeted approach to improving recycling participation in poor performing areas
- The council will continue to promote the importance of recycling on the annual waste collection calendar
- Refuse vehicles now have technology which can be used to identify non-recyclers for waste officers to make individual contact and support households
- Greater use of social media to promote recycling
- Joint waste communications with other district and County partners
- On-going work with Landlords to promote conversion from Coal to Gas heating systems
- Annual Recycling roadshows and presence at Community events
- Continually offer replacement containers for recycling

5.2 However, achieving 50% is seen as a difficult target to achieve within existing and reducing resources and one that the Leicestershire Waste Partnership which includes all Districts and the County Council will continually monitor, discuss and work together on.