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## KIRKLEES COUNCIL

### ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY PANEL

**Wednesday 14th August 2024**

Present: Councillor Andrew Cooper (Chair)  
Councillor David Longstaff  
Councillor Will Simpson  
Councillor John Taylor  
Councillor Susan Lee-Richards

Co-optees Garry Kitchin

In attendance: Will Acornley, Head of Operational Services  
Neil Conway  
Nick Jenkin  
Graham West, Service Director - Highways & Streetscene

Observers:

Apologies: Councillor Matthew McLoughlin

- 1 Membership of the Panel**  
Apologies were received from Councillor Matthew McLoughlin.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**  
The Panel considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
  
**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the previous meetings be approved.
- 3 Declaration of Interests**  
Councillor John Taylor declared an interest relating to item 6 as the alternative director for SUEZ Recycling and Recovery Kirklees LTD
- 4 Admission of the Public**  
All items were considered in the public session.
- 5 Deputations/Petitions**  
No deputations or petitions were received.
- 6 Public Question Time**  
No public questions were received.

### 7 **Cleansing Performance Update**

The Panel considered an update on 'Cleansing Performance' which was presented by Will Acornley, Head of Operational Services – Highways and Street scene who explained that:

- The update had been provided as requested by the Panel in response to reported missed bin collections and set out the measures implemented within the waste collection service to improve performance.
- Following the implementation of measures, (i.e. strong governance, the monitoring of performance data and the introduction of area-based working in the North) the situation had improved and the target percentage for collections had been achieved as per the previous reporting week.
- The improvement journey was continuous and there were still challenges particularly relating to restricted access.
- This was due to several very narrow roads in Kirklees, alongside an increase in the number of parked vehicles (due to home-working) and overhanging vegetation from 3<sup>rd</sup> party owned land.
- Additionally, the current narrow track vehicles which were relied on for harder to reach areas were not offered during the tendering exercise and were being phased out by the only supplier.
- To combat restricted access there were plans to:
  - Investigate different ways of working, including engaging with other local authorities, to understand best practices.
  - Review how we communicate access issues alongside colleagues from comms and IT as the council move to a digital first model for customer interaction.

There had also been several lessons during the improvement journey and the next steps included:

- The Rerouting of rounds in the south of the district to the area based working model to achieve the following key benefits;
  - Increased accountability for crews,
  - Consistent availability to return for blocked access and missed bins.
  - Allows crews to learn the geography of their area.
  - Easier to spot pressures through new house building.
  - More targeted approach to customer communications.
- Reviewing the market to understand how technology and new systems can support service improvement.
- Using best practice knowledge to understand how to best serve harder to access locations.
- Work with comms and IT to look at a digital first approach, and how best to use non digital solutions in a cost-effective way.

In the discussion to follow questions and comments were invited from the Panel, with the following issues being covered:

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- In relation to engagement with elected members, it was found that local ward Councillors had been helpful in passing messages between the Council and communities about missed collections and restricted access (i.e.- advising residents when to move vehicles etc...) This was noted to be particularly effective, and it was agreed that thanks be given to the ward councillors involved for their support.
- In relation to re-routing the South, it was requested that Councillors be made aware of changes in advance to help support the dialogue with residents.
- As well as learning from neighbouring local authorities it was important to also consider the best performers nationally in waste collection. This information may be accessible through the Local Government Association (LGA).
- In relation to housing growth, the Panel highlighted that there would come a point where increases in housing made waste collection unmanageable within existing budgets and it was important to consider the trigger point and communicate this.
- In relation to the narrow track vehicles, the Panel suggested that work be undertaken with neighbouring local authorities to investigate the potential of a joint tender which created better outcomes for all parties.
- with residents the importance of understanding why a bin collection had been missed and feeling heard was noted.
- In relation to improving communications it was suggested that the Council should aspire to an approach like successful delivery companies such as DPD or Amazon in the long-term (i.e.- immediate updates via SMS/email).
- In relation to improving communications, it was noted that there were limited resources, and in the mid-term, it was important to set realistic expectations about what the service could confidently deliver. It was explained that a wider communications campaign around vehicles blocking access on the end of roads/ adjoining roads was to be developed to help engage residents and increase understanding of the challenges.
- In relation to the long-term strategy for addressing the challenges of ageing vehicles it was advised that the Vehicle Replacement Programme had been signed off and it was confirmed that this was on the Panel's 2024-25 work programme for consideration.
- In relation to the performance data, the Panel recommended the use of a heat map to track missed collections by area.
- In relation to reducing contamination, it was advised that the recent trial showed that contamination rates had reduced from 60% to between 20-24% depending on the ward area. This was a large improvement but was still above the target.
- In relation to archiving contamination reduction targets, it was advised that discussions were ongoing with SUEZ to investigate the role of modern technology in making further improvements.
- In relation to behaviour change, the next phase of the Waste Strategy focused on education, and where areas of high levels of contamination were identified a Waste Advisor's would be targeted to those areas.
- In relation to all steps taken to reduce contamination the Panel requested that an update be added to the Panel's work programme.

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- In relation to the workshops held with elected members, it was advised that these were delivered at the end of April 2024 and the start of May 2025. These were noted to be successful, and the offer for any member to request to review the performance data with officers was made.
- In relation to changes to the Environment Act and the potential impact it was advised that some clarification had been given on Simpler Recycling (reforms to household and business bin collections) but there was still little clarity on revenue and as a result the focus was on work/changes that could be implemented between now and 2028.
- In relation to brown bins collections, it was advised that this was a paid service and that refunds were given where service was compromised.
- In relation to assisted collection, it was confirmed that the use of concrete pads was being explored.
- In relation to the discussion around communal collection points the Panel highlighted the importance of using elected members as a resource.
- In relation to the student population, it was noted that where young people were managing households independently for the first time, that there was opportunity for education at freshers fairs, as well as working with student agencies to ensure the proper management of waste.
- In relation to the challenges in introducing food waste collection such as the cost, carbon impact and the volume of material, it was noted that there may be opportunities to engage on the issue further through the LGA.
- In relation to behaviour change it was highlighted that there was value in helping residents understand what happens to a resource after recycling (i.e. showing the journey of a recycled item from bin to reuse demonstrating to the individual the impact they had though recycling and recycling correctly).

**RESOLVED:** The Panel noted the report **Cleansing Performance Update** and recommended that:

1. Thanks be given to the ward councillors involved for their support to the council and the public around missed collections.
2. When re-routing the South Councillors should be made aware of changes in advance to help support the dialogue with residents.
3. Learning should be taken from the best performers in waste collection across all Local Authorities.
4. The possibility of a joint tender for narrow track vehicles be investigated with neighbouring local authorities.
5. A heat map be used to monitor performance and track missed collections by area.
6. An update be presented to the Panel on the steps taken to reduce contamination.
7. Opportunities for Education for the Student population be explored (i.e.- Freshers Fairs) and working with students agencies to best support their management of household waste.
8. Opportunities for engagement around the introduction of Food Waste Collection be explored through liaising with the Local Government Association.

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9. A communications/education campaign be used to show the journey of a recycled item from bin to reuse demonstrating to the individual the impact they had through recycling and recycling correctly.

- 8** **Draft Work Programme 2024/25**  
The Panel reviewed its Draft Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.  
It was agreed that:

**RESOLVED:**

1. An update report on reducing contamination be added to the work programme.

The draft work programme be approved for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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