

Climate Emergency Scrutiny

Emerging Themes for Resources Waste and Litter Strategy – 2020-2030

Background

It was identified in 2019 that there was a requirement to update the existing waste strategy. Given that it had been some time since a full rewrite was done, the decision was made to start afresh rather than amend the previous strategy.

Since then, work has been ongoing to compare other authority strategies, as well as researching initiatives taking place in Europe and elsewhere.

Purpose

The focus of the Council's updated Resources Waste and Litter Strategy is working with residents to achieve the national 65% recycling target, making our neighbourhoods cleaner and greener, and delivering objectives of the climate and nature emergency so that we demonstrably move forward in achieving the Council's overarching priority of improving people's lives. The strategy will include high level objectives and annual action plans to enable delivery of the objectives.

Cabinet will be considering the strategy in April.

Emerging Themes

We have drafted the eight main sections of the strategy and these are described. Areas of greatest impact on achieving our outcomes are shown in bold.

1.Key Drivers

- Corporate priorities – describing the three priorities for B&NES
- Climate emergency – principles and link to Waste
- UK waste policy – how it guides our actions
- **Government resources and waste strategy (all still being consulted on)**
 - **Consistency of waste and recycling collection. This includes a proposal that garden waste collections should be free**
 - **Deposit refund scheme – if this happens, we need to consider how we can generate more from reverse vending. Residents will put out less recycling if they can get money for it.**
 - **Changes to producer responsibility – government will take money from the producers, but how will it be allocated? We need to know our true costs in total in anticipation. Will others collect waste or will we just collect different or less waste? Will less vehicles be needed?**
 - **Plastic packaging tax.**
- Local plans policies and partnerships, WOE

2. What we have achieved so far since the last strategy

Facts and figures, how we delivered against targets.

3. Cost of Managing our Waste

Details of how much per household the service costs and how that is changing. Currently £14.5m/£181 per household.

4. What do we need to do?

- **Set clear targets. Use data to drive our strategy and focus our work with specific local communities – participation rates, waste analysis.**
- **Focus on culture change in the context of climate emergency – our expectation is that if you live in B&NES you recycle. Reinvest in education and campaigning and maximise opportunities to make our systems easy to understand so that more people recycle all the materials that they can. Develop media campaign, and new ways of engaging with communities through social media etc.**
- **Prevention – link to climate emergency and how to prevent waste before anything else**
- Reduce – education, home composting, real nappies, plastic reduction, etc. Realising that there is so little left to put in the black wheeled bin that it doesn't need collecting as much.
- Restrict – e.g. Single-use plastic, ban on specific materials
- **Reuse & repair – maximising through networks**
- **Recycle - including compulsory recycling, target of 68% recycling by 2030 (more ambitious than national strategy of 65% by 2035)**
- Recovery – continuing effectiveness of disposal arrangements
- Improving place – planning policy. Underground bin stores to be investigated where they are possible. Recycling on the go.
- **Tackling environmental crime – focus on HMOs, escalated action on fly-tipping, domestic and commercial waste in litter bins**
- **Infrastructure – new operational depot planned for delivery 2023**
- Community initiatives – how we can support, add value and sustain community efforts

5. How will we do it?

- Key Actions to be set out
- Timelines – for all big events and deliverables
- Policy – changes needed to achieve our goals, e.g. compulsory recycling approach (national and local)
- Targets – setting challenging targets e.g. 68% recycling by 2030 and delivering actions to achieve this
- Collection – consider options for future service containment and frequencies
- Disposal
- **Depot**
- Communications – annual and monthly communication plans, using whatever medium of communication is necessary to reach target residents. Sharing resources with other LA's to maximise effectiveness

6. Monitoring

7. Completed actions from 2014 strategy

8. Detailed action plan 2020 – 2030

Ideas and thoughts included in the plan so far:

Prevention

- Prioritise education & awareness raising. Helping consumers make informed choices. Capitalise on increased global interest in waste & resource issues.
- Being ahead of the game! Funding opportunities, bids, initiatives so that we are managing the changes coming rather than reacting to them
- Preparation for 2023 as government timetable dictates there will be ‘big bang’
- Increased partnership working for both delivery and supporting community initiatives e.g. WoE partners creating new measures to anticipate needs, aligning strategies
- Fleet review to consider electric replacement where possible and inform new methods of service delivery
- Greater sponsorship explored due to more big business involvement – early partnership?
- VMS and CCTV use as part of crack down on litter in high footfall areas. Ability for residents to upload CCTV/dashcam footage- wall of shame. Proactive media campaign.
- Proactive reuse work with producers to feedback highest volumes of things being thrown away
- Optimal routing for all services using new in cab technology to drive fewer miles to reduce carbon
- Learning from wider innovation e.g. Zero Waste Household Credits scheme in Belgium, Stockholm combining waste collection with parcel delivery – to be kept in context of funding mechanisms and UK legislation

Reduce

- Savings and efficiencies – as financial pressures increase, considering all options
- Updating city centre collections to increase recycling
- Tailoring of services of greater/lesser need. e.g. not collecting as often where volunteered not to
- Better integration with planning requirements - new build processes to insist on internal/external recycling space, and better bigger infrastructure for new build estates – using supplementary planning guidance and policy potential for S106 to fund vehicles/infrastructure. Developers to provide containers. Management companies to service rather than the Council etc.
- Further promotion of re-useable nappies
- Focus on reducing food waste

Reuse

- Raised importance of reuse as national measures change from recycling % to carbon. Potential further incentive.
- Prevention work using data from HWRC to reuse more e.g. small kitchen electricals are currently bought in in high volumes

Recycle

- Culture – make recycling the norm (see Appendix A for discussion point)
- Targeted education and increased campaigning. Reinvestment into awareness raising material – tackling confusion, maximising use of existing service provision
- Reviewing box provision – lids, nets etc to reduce littering. Reviewing costs of replacements.
- Using data to drive performance improvements. Parish competitions etc.
- Commercial waste zoning (1 provider- e.g. BID model) and closer working with business as it becomes compulsory for them to separate certain waste types.
- Explore commercial bulky waste collection
- Focus on 26% of black bin which is food, 65% recycling target 2035 nationally but we want to target sooner? Maximum possible based on current data is estimated at 77%. Whilst recycling everything is not realistic, we do still have capacity to close the 19% gap from where we are at 58% to the maximum. Target 58%-68% in 10 years?
- Help offices recycle more
- Identifying any opportunities to recycle items we don't currently recycle
- Sorting black bags at HWRCs and review of HWRC services
- Greater marketing of garden waste service – review to reduce cost and environmental impacts
- Introduction of in cab technology to improve the service and increase participation and quality of recycling

Improving Place

- Wider use of council resources to help other service areas e.g. street cleaners reporting street lights or road conditions for Highways.
- In Cab technology helping identify when assisted customers are not putting their waste out, and flagging to our Older Peoples Service to follow up
- Review of litter bin provision to determine the best placement, sizes, approach to collection etc.

Tackling Environmental Crime

- Fly-tipping and litter enforcement enhanced and increased – clear message
- Zero tolerance with fly-tipping and where there is evidence, every case where there is clear evidence will be investigated
- More cases through magistrate's courts to increase the level of fine
- Name and shame. Promote use of dash-cam footage and CCTV
- Awareness raising and education to show the impact of litter on the environment (e.g. cigarette butts)

Infrastructure

- Depot completion and forward planning of operational efficiencies and processes to be changed
- Increased sorting/baling infrastructure to maximise quality and income from materials
- Review opening times of HWRC to fit public needs and achieve cost benefits – e.g. evenings and weekends

Community Initiatives

- Maximise value of volunteers – street champions (e.g. help with leaf collection)
- Help people do more to help themselves – provision of low-cost equipment
- Local interest groups – transition groups etc.
- Create greater support in the council for volunteer coordination

This gives an outline of the ideas so far.

Pam Jones
Project Manager
0122 5394 352
Pam_jones@bathnes.gov.uk

Appendix A – Discussion Point

Culture change – should we make recycling compulsory?

B&NES is a good performing recycling authority, but the culture within the district is that recycling is optional. 18% of residents choose not to recycle at all, whilst many more do not recycle all that they can. The current content of the black bins is 54% not recyclable and 46% which could have been recycled at kerbside. Over half of this recyclable waste is food.

We have a low-key enforcement approach currently, and our strategy to date has been on education and awareness raising but we are still failing to persuade a significant amount of people to take recycling seriously. We need to think what more we can do to encourage all residents to take responsibility for recycling the waste they produce.

How do we do more to engender culture change and make recycling the norm for everyone?

Have other councils done this?

By coming out with bold statements that recycling is compulsory in their districts. If you live there you are expected to recycle. It is compulsory, not optional. This approach has been used successfully by other local authorities, such as Islington (2011), Mid Devon (2015) and Swindon (2019). Increases in recycling rate were seen in all councils. Mid Devon moved from 50% to 53%. The education and campaigning approach that recycling is compulsory, brought about change in itself.

Further information from these councils has shown that although they stress the importance of helping residents to comply with their schemes (through education and publicity campaigns) – they admitted that it was promoting the legislation and the possibility that fines could be issued – rather than actually fining anyone – which generated the real results.

Calling a service compulsory itself generated a huge change in behaviour towards recycling.

It is important to be serious about the possibility of fining but many of the councils have never issued any fines. Further analysis shows that the first letter has always generated the most positive responses.

Their approach

They have made it compulsory to recycle the following materials that are collected through the kerbside scheme:

- food
- paper and cardboard
- tins, cans, foil and aerosols
- glass bottles and jars
- plastic packaging – bottles, pots, tubs, trays

Households that are not participating in recycling are identified by crews when they are collecting. The methods include:

- seeing recyclable materials in the black bin as it empties into the truck
- no or little recycling being presented in the recycling collection

- other non-invasive methods

If after further education a resident still continued to not recycle then as *a last resort* they reserve the right to encourage participation with formal enforcement.

This is a multiple stage enforcement process allowing several opportunities to correct behaviour before a fixed penalty notice is issued. Up to this point they work with residents to assist them and give them every opportunity to participate in recycling.

In reality this process is the one we already follow for those identified as presenting their waste inappropriately.

Thoughts?

We currently operate a similar enforcement approach but in a much more low-key manner. We have not told residents they **MUST** recycle.

We would appreciate discussion and thoughts about whether this should be something included in the action plan for the new strategy, and any other thoughts about how we can compel people who currently won't recycle into doing so.