

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Government Waste Strategy Delivery

21st January 2026

Report of Chief Officer – Environment & Place

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the committee on the on going works of the cross-party member Waste Policy Implementation group

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) **That Overview and Scrutiny notes the progress made by the cross party working group and considers making recommendations to be considered by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Considering the national changes to waste management under the Government Simpler Recycling reforms, Cabinet considered several extensively modelled options for the future of waste management in May 2025.
- 1.2 The national approach to waste management is to build systems and processes which work towards a hierarchy of waste management, of prevention, reduce, re-use, recycle, recover and disposal.
- 1.3 Business food waste recycling was implemented by 31st March 2025, with domestic food waste by 31st March 2026 and a deposit return scheme (DRS) in 2027. Collection of plastic film from the kerbside is also to be implemented by 31st March 2027.
- 1.4 Lancaster City Council currently collects around 9000 tonnes of recycling per annum and has a recycling rate of 36%, which is in the bottom quartile both nationally and regionally. This represents a steady decline from a peak of 41% in 2015/16. In comparison, the district's current residual waste collection is around 32,000 tonnes, equating to around 538kg per household, which again is in the bottom quartile both nationally and regionally. Under the new government strategy a baseline recycling target of 60% has been set by 2035 with an ambition to half all-residual waste sent to landfill or incineration by 2042.
- 1.5 Cabinet also added a further recommendation to the report in May 2025 which was to set up a cross-party member Waste Collection Implementation Group which would

look at the approach taken and offer scrutiny and recommendations.

2.0 Details

- 2.1 The operational teams are working on three key phases of implementation to deliver the mandates set out within the Governments Waste strategy. Phase one is the widespread roll out of wheelie bin recycling provision following the Councils capital investment. This is currently on going, with over 80% of properties now receiving these bins, with a projected completion date of January 2026.
- 2.2 Phase two will commence in February 2026 and will focus on the delivery of food waste caddies to each property, with proposed collection services starting a week later than deliver. It is anticipated that full roll out of this service will be undertaken by the government's deadline of 31st March 2026.
- 2.3 April 2026 will see the final phase be introduced, which is to move residents on to a 3 weekly bin collections service for residual and recycling of plastics/cans and glass and paper/card.
- 2.4 The Waste Policy Implementation Group meets monthly with work stream updates from officers from Public Realm, Public Protection, Waste Management and Communications. Following updates, there is opportunity for elected members to feed in comments of questions on the operational approach.
- 2.5 The group has received presentations on communications strategy, enforcement policy, waste implementation plans.
- 2.6 The group has focussed on the communications element of the implementation and looking at how we can maximise the messaging and understanding to residents, especially those in harder to service areas of our communities, in a way which aligns to the corporate priority of being a kind and cooperative Council.
- 2.7 The group remain focused on the specific messaging that is being offered to residents around nappy waste and pet waste when 3 weekly bin collections are being introduced. Whilst there is an acceptance that this advice is aligned to national guidance, the group are looking to officers to challenge the national guidance with the Waste & Recycling Action programme (WRAP) to find a more sustainable set of options to residents.
- 2.8 Other recommendations, such as additional advice to residents has been taken on board by officers and actioned immediately in order to assist with the phased roll out.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The Waste Policy Implementation Group is offering a good level of scrutiny and input into the operational delivery of the waste implementation phases and will continue to support operational teams through the phases outlined within the body of the report.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

[Insert Conclusion of Impact Assessment]

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct legal implications arising from this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct financial implications arising from this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces

No direct resource implications arising from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has no further comments to add

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has no further comments to add

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Insert list of background papers. NOTE: ALL listed background papers MUST be sent to Democratic Services for publication on the Council's website]

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