

**PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**CABINET RESPONSE TO HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING DEEP DIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. On 17 July the findings and recommendations from the Performance Scrutiny Committee deep dive into Household Recycling rates were considered by Cabinet. It was agreed that the Director for Planning and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, would prepare a response for the next meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee.
2. The table below sets out the response from the Director and Cabinet Member to the Committee.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet Response</b>	<b>Comments/Reasons</b>
a) The Council should consider re-establishing the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, with a commitment to increasing recycling rates from 60% to 75% by 2025.	Rejected	<p>The Oxfordshire Environment Partnership (OEP) took on all the decision-making responsibilities of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) when it was established in 2014. As such, there is already a partnership in place and so the benefits of re-establishing an OWP in addition are limited.</p> <p>The OEP shares the aspiration to increase recycling rates across the county, however, a target of 75% would require significant organisational and operational change, and require considerable investment and contractual changes in order to align all services and policies.</p> <p>Whilst the merits of this recommendation are acknowledged, in July all partner organisations in the OEP discussed a sufficiently stretching target of 65% by 2025 as part of Oxfordshire’s revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.</p>

b) The Council should focus on communicating the cost advantages of recycling to residents.	Agreed	<p>As part of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy a joint communications strategy and action plan is currently being agreed.</p> <p>Whilst it is more difficult to communicate a compelling message about the cost saving per household, the communications strategy will focus on overall cost benefits to every household of recycling more, as well as the environmental benefits.</p>
c) The Council should improve support for “re-use, recycle” to avoid materials getting into the waste chain in the first place.	Agreed	<p>The standard UK waste hierarchy is to “reduce, re-use, recycle”. Oxfordshire County Council already puts significant resources into waste prevention through its work on ‘Love Food Hate Waste’, Home composting, supporting reuse and sharing activities and reducing plastic usage. This recommendation reflects an existing ambition of the OEP and is one that supports the Partnership’s aspiration to move towards a circular economy in Oxfordshire. This would help to keep resources in use for much longer, extract the maximum value whilst they are in use, and ensure they can be recovered and recycled easily at the end of their life.</p>
d) The Council should work with local collection authorities to create greater synergy in waste collection services.	Agreed	<p>Each waste collection authority has separately established contracts and collection arrangements that were developed at different times, and subject to different political and market forces. Greater operational synergy will require support and commitment from all councils and take time to establish, but as a member of the OEP we are keen to work towards consistency across waste collection services and will continue to pursue this through implementation of the Joint Strategy.</p>
e) The Council should create a strategy for effectively communicating with residents and manufacturers about what they can recycle and how, particularly food waste.	Agreed	<p>The focus of the joint communications resource agreed by the OEP is currently being scoped with waste and communications officers across the county. Food waste, plastics, additional recycling and waste reduction are all being considered in these discussions.</p>

f) The Council should work towards recycling items that are currently going to incineration, including laminated pouches, plastic film, etc.	Agreed	This aspiration is already a part of the OEP's 65% recycling target. However, it should be recognised that the County Council and the collection authorities are limited by local and international markets for these materials. Without sufficient demand, segregation and reprocessing is prohibitively expensive. OEP will work through industry and national bodies, such as the WRAP plastics pact to try and increase the number of items that are able to be recycled.
g) The Cabinet should instruct officers to make a comparative study of other councils' waste services, including in relation to new technologies.	Agreed	<p>As part of the review of Oxfordshire's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy several other high performing authorities were studied to see what could be learnt from them, and officers are tracking the progress and outcomes of others who are making changes.</p> <p>The findings from these studies indicated that Oxfordshire is performing very well against similar authorities and is still among the best at recycling and composting in the country, with one of the lowest waste arisings per head.</p> <p>The OEP recognises that it has set ambitious targets and may need to embrace change and new technologies to see these realised.</p>
h) The Council should work with manufacturers and retailers to ensure the adoption of consistent packing policies which mean all household materials are recyclable.	Rejected	The County Council has limited scope to directly influence manufacturers and retailers. However, through membership of groups such as NAWDO (National Association of Disposal Authorities), WRAP (Waste and Resource Action Programme) and CIWM (Chartered Institution of Wastes Management), and involvement with LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) and LGA (Local Government Association) we can support national efforts and campaigns to enact change, e.g. by joining the WRAP Plastics Pact when rolled out to Local Authorities.

3. The Cabinet thank the Performance Scrutiny Committee for highlighting the importance re-using, recycling and composting waste materials and for drawing attention to the good work that the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership is doing.

**Cllr Yvonne Constance**  
Cabinet Member for Environment  
August 2018

**Susan Halliwell**  
Director of Planning and Place