



**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY 2025**

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26-2028/29

MINUTE EXTRACT

**Environment and Climate Change Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 –
2/28/29**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Environment and Waste Management Services within the Council's Environment and Transport Department. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. B.L. Pain CC, Cabinet Lead Member for the Environment and the Green Agenda to the meeting for this and other items.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

Revenue Budget

- i) A reduction in residual waste and therefore a saving had been forecast due to the planned introduction of mandatory food waste collections from April 2026. A member questioned what else the Council planned to do to reduce this further. The Director assured members that the Council would continue to deliver existing programmes that sought to encourage recycling and reuse and educating residents on how they could better dispose of their waste as well as continuing to implement the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy. However, Members acknowledged there would always be some demand for residual 'black bin' waste disposal. The Lead Member highlighted that reductions would be countered by rising population and housing growth which were expected to result in more waste being generated. The Authority would monitor the impact of growth against the impact of its programmes and the introduction of mandatory food waste collections and other factors such as changing waste types, which all had to be taken into account when assessing the Council's future waste contract needs.

- ii) A Member raised concern that the Department' s resources of £0.39m to tackle Ash Dieback had been transferred to the Corporate Resources Department. It was noted that this was simply an accounting matter and reflected the fact that the Corporate Resources Department employed the team that looked after trees and woodlands.

Growth

- iii) The technology currently being used to dispose of residual waste which came at a cost was currently considered the most viable option to dispose of waste at the scale required. A Member challenged whether it was more economical to use and therefore pay landfill tax or to incinerate waste and pay the proposed incineration tax. It was noted that the Council sought to manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy at the top of which would be waste prevention, reuse and recycling and landfill at the bottom. It was agreed that there needed to be a push towards repurposing waste in line with the circular economy principals rather than sending it to landfill as there were no benefits from this, in order to limit any damaging impact on the environment.
- iv) A Member commented that the ultimate aim would be to reduce non-recyclable packaging. As previously discussed by the Committee, it was noted that the Government' s introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging would now make producers responsible for the costs relating to that packaging from 'cradle to grave' (i.e. from production of the material to its disposal). A scheme administrator had been set up by the Government who producers paid a fee to, and which was now feeding through to the Authority to help it meet the cost of disposing of this type of waste. The Lead Member emphasised that the Council had been indicatively allocated £6m for 2025/26 but that future allocations were unclear. It was intended that this approach would help to manage away non-recyclable packaging materials, which would then in turn reduce the payments having to be made by the industry.

Savings

- v) Opening hours at recycling and household waste sites (RHWS) were being reduced in the summer but not universally. Sites would no longer be open 9am until 7pm every day through the summer opening period. Some sites would close at 5pm on certain days but on occasion be open later for residents' convenience. Evidence of use showed that sites were used less in the evenings compared to morning usage. However, it was acknowledged that some evening access would still be needed and there would therefore be days when some sites would be open until 7pm, to accommodate this. The Director emphasised that the advice to the public would be to check the Council' s website prior to visiting.

- vi) Fly-tipping was raised as a concern by some Members who queried whether there were links between closing waste disposal sites and an increase in fly-tipping. It was noted that there was currently no data to suggest there was an escalation in fly tipping cases as a result of closed sites. A Member suggested that enforcement action was the biggest deterrent which was the responsibility of district councils. However, the Lead Member emphasised this was not only a district council problem as the County Council had responsibility for disposing of the waste which could be costly. The Council therefore worked closely with district councils and other agencies, such as the Police and the Environment Agency to address what was a criminal offence. Members noted that the cost of disposal had been factored into the budget.

Other Factors Influencing MTFs Delivery/Other Funding Sources

- vii) It was noted that the County Council had responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of a section of the Ashby Canal as a result of the legacy of a proposal a number of years previously to restore and reopen the canal.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 -2028/29 be noted;
- b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 27 January 2025.

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