

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Herefordshire and Worcestershire Partnership Waste Strategy Officer</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Joint Waste Partnership – Presented by Cllr Margaret Sherrey</b>

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

To consider the establishment of a Joint Waste Strategy Officer working on behalf of and jointly funded in partnership by the 8 local authorities within Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The proposed Waste Strategy Officer will lead crucial work to prepare all Local Authorities for the changes put forward in the Resource and Waste Strategy 2018 (RWS), progressing through parliament in the Environment Bill.

The Resource and Waste Strategy (RWS) 2018 is the first major policy document for waste services since the national Waste Strategy of 2007. This promises a range of changes and measures to help bring about a more circular economy. This will encourage a move away from an inefficient take, make, use, & throwaway culture to an approach where we keep resources in use as long as possible, so we extract maximum value from them.

The post holder will build on the success of the partnership producing our collective Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, delivering cost effective, easy to use and consistent waste & recycling services for all our residents.

We must start working to address significant changes to our services resulting from new government policy, of particular note these include:

- Requirement for local authorities to separately collect food waste from households and businesses each week.
- Potential introduction of compulsory garden waste collections, and removal of discretionary charges for service.
- The introduction of deposit return scheme for drinks containers.
- The introduction of extended producer responsibility for packaging materials.

The government's expectation is that these changes will be implemented from 2023, leaving less than three years to plan and develop services.

Wychavon is the only council in Worcestershire to have ever provided a separate collection of food waste (2008 to 2014). It was agreed to end the service due to lack of participation, cost and customer feedback on budget proposals. However, just over half of local authorities in England do currently collect food waste and in Scotland and Wales it is a statutory requirement to provide a separate collection of food waste.

The Government's response to the consultation on various aspects of RWS was published in July 2019 and said, "Given the support for separate food waste collection government will legislate to ensure that every local authority provides householders with a separate food waste collection. Government's preference is that this should be a separate weekly collection of food waste and not mixed with garden waste. However, it is clear that further consideration is needed with respect to local circumstances.... We will work with LAs and others to consider how best to deliver this requirement to take account of local circumstances."

Across Herefordshire and Worcestershire a strong partnership approach has been established through the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Strategic Waste Management Boards (Members and Officers) and Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (2004 – 2034). This has led to consistency in service across all the authorities with alternate weekly collection and the same recyclable materials across all authorities along with the essential infrastructure including the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) - EnviroSort and Energy from Waste facility - EnviRecover. The partnership most recently collaborated on a joint response to Government consultations on different aspects of the RWS. Continuing this collaboration and consistent partnership approach is the best way to progress and develop good quality value for money waste services.

The proposed post would be managed through the partnership's joint Strategic Waste Management Board, reporting to the chair of the Senior Officer Group. To manage pay, welfare, equipment and subsistence the post is proposed to be hosted by Worcestershire County Council.

To fund the post each Local Authority is asked to commit to contributing a fixed sum of £8,000 per annum for an initial period of three years. This will allow the post holder to support the strategic planning processes of the councils until the anticipated implementation of planned changes.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) Bromsgrove District Council agree to the establishment of a Joint Waste Strategy Officer to work on behalf of the partnership of all 8 Local Authorities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire;**
- (b) Bromsgrove District Council allocate £8,000 per annum from existing funds for a fixed term of three years;**
- (c) Bromsgrove District Council will consider requests for additional funding to support further work which has been identified and proposed via the partnership Senior**

## Waste Officer Group.

### Key considerations

1. The government published its Resource and Waste Strategy for England (RWS) in late 2018. This promised a range of changes and measures that would help bring about a more circular economy. This will encourage a move away from an inefficient take, make, use, & throw away culture to an approach where we keep resources in use as long as possible, so we extract maximum value from them.
2. The measures promised in the RWS are being progressed in to law through the Environment Bill 2020, which is currently making its way through parliament.
3. Key measures affecting how Local Authorities provide their waste management services are:
  - a. Extended Producer Responsibility, making packaging producers responsible for the cost of dealing with packaging at the end of its life (e.g. waste collection, recycling and treatment);
  - b. Deposit Return Schemes, to encourage “recycling on the go” schemes for drinks containers;
  - c. Consistent Recycling Collections, to encourage a more consistent approach across the country to recycling collections, so each Local Authority will collect the same “core materials” for recycling;
  - d. Weekly Food Waste Collection, where every local authority will be required to provide a separate food waste collection from both households and businesses;
  - e. Potential free garden waste collection
  - f. Preference for kerbside sort recycling, where materials are collected separately from individual households (typically from boxes or bags)
  - g. Improved Product Packaging Design & Labelling, to improve the quality of materials for recycling and provide better information to consumers.
4. These measures will have a significant impact on the practical delivery of Local Authority waste management services, the cost of service provision and funding, for example:
  - a. Up to 80 additional vehicles and crews across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to collect food waste separately with extra costs of around £8m across the partnership for collection and disposal. (Approximate annual cost to BDC of £800,707 - with funding from Central Government to support)
  - b. Additional resources if required to collect garden waste from each household free of charge and loss of income from current subscription services provided across the partnership (Loss of over £900,000 income for BDC, as well as additional staffing and vehicle costs)
  - c. Additional vehicles and crews to collect separate recyclables from households.
  - d. Loss of valuable recyclable materials to deposit return schemes which will focus on high value metal and plastic drinks containers.

- e. Uncertain funding from packaging producers resulting from extended producer responsibility schemes.
5. The partnership through its joint Member and Senior Officer Groups have identified the following initial priority work streams:
  - a. Engage in National Policy Development to understand and influence policy and approach to delivery in the partnerships interest ensure best possible outcomes and fair funding solutions to the partnership.
  - b. Prepare for change by understanding future requirements and the implications of them on partnerships services. Assessing partnership options for changes to our existing services and of new requirements, such as food waste collection.
6. The partnership's Member and Senior Officer Groups recognise that there is not sufficient staff capacity currently provided to undertake this work. Both groups support the establishment of a new joint funded post to help best prepare the partnership for expected future challenges.
7. It is proposed that a joint post is created managed through the partnership's Strategic Waste Management Board. The post holder will report to the chair of the Senior Officer Group of the Board (the Chair role rotates across the officers on the Board on a two yearly basis)
8. **Appendix 1 (Part A)** provides a detailed work plan and estimated costs against the work areas. The work plan, changes to it and any actions to be carried out by the post holder will be agreed and monitored by the Senior Officer Group.
9. It is proposed pay, welfare, leave, equipment, subsistence of the post holder by managed by a host authority. It is considered that this would best be provided by Worcestershire County Council who have led the strategic work of the partnership to date with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment acting as Chair of the Member Waste Board since the partnership was established and the Strategy first published in 2004.
10. A structure chart is provided in **Appendix 1 Part B** for illustration.
11. The post holder will work remotely across the partnership with each Local Authority providing "hot desk" space. This will foster greater cohesion and collaboration across the partnership.
12. The work plan and performance will be managed collaboratively through the Senior Officer Group.
13. The post will be funded equally by the constituent Local Authorities in the partnership. Each contributing £8,000 per annum for an initial three year period. Towards the end of the three years the partnership will review the need for the post and consider if it should continue.
14. The proposal for a joint post has been supported by both the Member and officer Groups and each partner authority is now seeking authorisation for finalisation and recruitment to the post.
15. It is anticipated that a position of PO2 (WCC Pay scale) or Scale 9 (HC pay scale) is likely result of grading, circa £35,000 per annum (NB the post has not yet been graded).
16. See **Appendix. 2 & 3.** For the proposed Job Description and Person Specification

17. Recruitment is anticipated in August 2020. The recruitment panel to be comprised of Sue Horrobin from Worcester City Council as current Chair of the Senior Officer Group, Richard Woodward from Worcestershire County Council as the Host Manager and one other representative from the Senior Officer Group. The expected timeline for authorisation and establishment of the post is given below.

<b>May 2020</b>	Post establishment and outline work plan agreed in principle by the Strategic Waste Management Board
<b>July 2020</b>	All partner authorities obtain necessary authority to establish and fund joint post
	Grading of post by host authority
<b>August 2020</b>	Recruitment and establishment of post
<b>September 2020</b>	Introduction to Strategic Waste Management Board Member and Senior Officer Groups

## Alternative options

18. Decision not to fund the joint post. This is not recommended, as the partnership authorities will be expected to make significant changes to their waste management services as a result of the policy changes. By meeting the challenge as partnership rather than individually we will be able to co-ordinate a cost effective collective response that will save money in the short term and deliver greater efficiencies in future.
19. It has been identified that the challenges presented by the planned changes cannot be managed effectively within existing resource by any of the waste partnership authorities.

## Equality duty

20. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
21. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
22. Consultation with service users has taken place, no equality impacts were raised.

## Resource implications

23. If approved each Local Authority in the partnership will contribute £8,000 per annum (fixed cost) for a period of 3 years.
24. The total annual cost to the partnership will be £64,000 per annum or £192,000 for the initial planned 3 year period.

## Legal implications

25. A joint agreement between the partnership members will be necessary to set out the governance and financing of the joint post. It is anticipated this will be fulfilled by the host authority.

## Risk management

26. There are various risks associated with the recommendations in this report, these are summarised below:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Expected policy changes are delayed	Work to prepare the partnership will remain valid.  Regular review of post and work plan to ensure it remains consistent with needs and timing of policy and requirements,
Expected policy changes are cancelled	Joint post regularly reviewed to demonstrate requirement. Post holder can be reallocated to other tasks within the partnership or within WCC, redundancy considered.
Additional work requirements are identified	Work plan is regularly reviewed and updated to consider if partnerships needs are going to be met. Any additional resource requirement to be considered by the Member and Senior Officer Group prior to determination by individual members of the partnership.

## Consultees

27. A joint partnership officer was proposed through the Waste Member and Senior Waste Officer Groups. Support to the proposal was received at both from the constituent Local Authorities:
- a. Bromsgrove Borough Council
  - b. Herefordshire Council

- c. Malvern Hills District Council
- d. Redditch Borough Council
- e. Worcester City Council
- f. Worcestershire County Council
- g. Wychavon District Council
- h. Wyre Forest District Council

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1. Part A - Partnership Work Plan  
Part B – Management Structure
- Appendix 2. Joint Waste Strategy Officer Job Description
- Appendix 3. Joint Waste Strategy Officer Person Specification

## **Background papers**

None