

- Present:** Councillor Annie Currier (*in the Chair*)
- Councillors:** Debbie Armiger, Chris Burke, Natasha Chapman, Rachel Storer, Dylan Stothard and Calum Watt
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Bob Bushell

**1. Confirmation of Minutes - 18 March 2025**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**3. Paper and Card Recycling Options**

Steve Bird, Assistant Director Communities and Street Scene presented a report which set out the implications of change for adopting separate paper and card recycling under the government's mandated Simpler Recycling initiative. The initiative recognised there were limitations to mandating separate paper and card collections and recycling, and provided opportunity for local authorities to be exempt if they could show there were Technical, Economic, Environmental or Practical (TEEP) reasons not to implement the change.

The Council's combined rate of recycling and compost had been in the order of 33% with recycling and compost split 50/50 within that rate. Despite best efforts through aligned education and promotion, Lincoln's rate of contaminated recycling (incorrect materials put into recycling bin) varied between 20-30%. Some parts of the city had higher rates than others, however, overall, there needed to be a reduction in contamination to improve performance, for which communication and education were key.

An assessment based on TEEP had been undertaken to assess viability of paper and card recycling. This had resulted in a recommendation to delay consideration of implementing the scheme until 2027 based on the below factors:

1. Set up costs including the costs of additional bins was high.
2. Many properties in Lincoln would struggle to accommodate an extra bin.
3. Food waste collections would begin in April 2026 adding more change and extra caddies on streets.
4. It was expected the Extended Producer Responsibility regulations would see a reduction in food packaging in the waste stream which may call into question whether there would be sufficient paper and card to warrant an additional bin in the longer term.
5. Extra staff resources, not only for collections, but also enforcement would be required.

6. A strict timetable of Community Services contracts re-letting for waste, cleansing and ground maintenance (some of the largest in the Council) were being observed with a commencement date of September 2026. This added a significant work pressure.

It was suggested that the focus should be on improving Lincoln's recycling rates overall and reducing contamination before reconsidering the introduction of paper and card recycling.

In response to discussion and questions, the following was confirmed:

- The most up to date figures had Lincoln's overall contamination rate at 16.6%. It was not easy to predict whether introducing paper and card recycling would reduce the recycling rate or not as it required splitting the existing materials. On its own, probably not but it would reduce contamination. The long term could not be forecast.
- Biffa had asked if the Council would like to trial new technology that took 700 photos a second of the materials going into the back of the collection vehicle, which could be analysed by AI to assess levels of contamination and provide data on which areas had the highest rates. Communication and education could then be targeted at these areas as appropriate. Analysis would not be drilled down to individual properties but would include streets or areas.
- In tandem with this, the new software monitoring the contractor work would be used to show which properties had presented their bins, and therefore levels of engagement.
- The proposed enforcement system would see tags being affixed to offending bins explaining to residents why they had not been emptied. This also allowed bins to be tracked for checking on the following collection round. If a household repeatedly contaminated their recycling, they would receive up to three tagged warnings. Council officers would engage with residents with a house visit to offer help and guidance on correct recycling, and to ascertain if further help was needed.
- Taking a more aggressive form of enforcement was not favoured in the early stages as it was recognised that most residents wanted to do the right thing, and sometimes simply needed assistance.
- It was not known for how long digital images taken by collection vehicles would be kept. Officers would confirm this outside of the meeting.
- Details such as a change in house ownership, for example would not automatically be highlighted in systems, but could be taken into account if the Council was made aware.
- It was recognised there could be language barriers and differences in cultural understanding in some areas. These could be affecting recycling and contamination rates now and would have to be carefully considered in the new communications campaign.
- Theoretically, there were facilities available to recycle almost all materials, however it could be costly and complex. The UK did not have the facilities to

recycle all materials, and some had to be shipped to countries that could process them.

- There would be engagement with ward Councillors to enable them to assist residents before any enforcement programme was launched in any given area.
- Although considered unlikely, if a resident persistently contaminated their recycling following enforcement and offers of help and education, their bin and contents would be removed. This would be paid for by the Council. There was discussion whether the resident should pay for removal, however it was considered potentially problematic if they refused, or did not have the means to pay. This would be kept under review.

RESOLVED that the recommendation to delay consideration of installing separate paper and card collection in the city until 2027, and to engage with Lincolnshire County Council to develop an education and enforcement campaign be recommended to Executive for approval.

#### **4. Lincoln Performance Management Framework**

A report was considered which presented an updated Lincoln Performance Management Framework (LPMF). The framework was initially adopted in 2011 and last updated in 2016. Since that update, the Council's approach to performance management had changed substantially. The current framework was therefore not reflective of how the Council managed performance.

The key points to note in the proposed new LPMF were:

- It accurately reflected how the Council managed performance in respect of target setting, quarterly reporting and assurance.
- It covered the specific performance management practices that applied to the Council's role as a social housing landlord
- It was drafted to align with the Local Government Association's Performance Management Guide for Officers (2022) and took into account government launches including 'best value duty', Oflog and the two Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Codes. The references to Oflog have been removed since its closure in December 2024 noting that the local authority data explorer was now maintained and updated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- It covered a range of topics reflected in national guidance, including all topics recommended in Housemark's guidance on 'performance reporting frameworks' including data quality, data culture, and roles and responsibilities.
- It reinforced the continuous 'golden thread' between the Council's Vision and Priorities, and individual teams.
- It distinguished between different forms of performance management, namely strategic, operational and front line which were described in the framework.

- It drew a direct link between performance and the Council's governance framework.

Questions from the Committee confirmed the following:

- The updated framework made a positive shift in the ways things worked and had changed the relationship with Performance Scrutiny Committee.
- There was no requirement for the trades unions to be consulted on the updated framework as neither people management nor individual officers were referenced or included in the framework.

RESOLVED that the updated Lincoln Performance Management Framework, as attached as Appendix B to the report, be approved.

## **5. Statutory Food Waste Collection Service - Policy Proposal**

The Committee considered a report which presented the draft operational policy for the new statutory food waste service.

The requirement for Waste Collection Authorities to provide weekly food waste collections to all households was mandated by its inclusion in the Environment Act 2021.

The statutory requirement would have to be implemented by 31 March 2026 for all households, and collections would be weekly. It would affect all districts in Lincolnshire, and the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) had worked cohesively on the project and achieved as much consistency across the county as was possible.

Households would receive a small 5 litre indoor caddy for collection of food waste, to be decanted into a larger 23 litre caddy to be kept outdoors and presented at the kerbside each week.

For those with communal bins, the same 5 litre indoor caddy would be provided for indoors, with a larger 140 litre wheeled bin for the communal bin store areas for decanting.

The LWP was recommending that a year's supply of plastic liners (52) would be provided for each household in the county for their indoor caddies as an initial trial, after which an assessment on demand, take-up and environmental impact would be undertaken.

Alternatives to the plastic liners had been considered such as heavy cardboard, however its strength was lost when it got wet.

All food waste collected in Lincoln would be taken to an anaerobic digester at Caenby Corner where it would be made into plant compost and manure for farming. There was provision for removing the plastic liners during the process, with these being taken to the Energy from Waste plant in North Hykeham.

There was evidence to suggest that within households, food waste collections made people think about their food buying and consumption habits and this could improve recycling figures overall.

Questions from the Committee were welcomed and the following was noted:

- The initial rollout of the scheme would cost in the order of £1million which was funded by central government. The ongoing cost would be approximately £700,000 per year for collection services.
- Adoption of the scheme would be monitored by way of tonnages taken and presentation rates.
- It was not compulsory for households to participate.
- The Council had recently let a new contract for waste and recycling services operable from September 2026. In addition, a Food Waste Promotion Officer had been appointed jointly by LWP members.
- The outdoor bins had a self-locking lid which should keep animals from accessing food waste.
- With extra bins on the streets of Lincoln, it may be necessary to seek support from the Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour team.
- More than one bin may be provided in certain circumstances such as student accommodation.
- It was the responsibility of each household residence to keep their bins clean. Communal bin users would be responsible for keeping the 5 litre caddy clean, but the Council would be washing out the 140 litre bins.

RESOLVED that the draft policy document and comments made be noted.

## **6. Health Scrutiny Update (Verbal Report)**

Cllr Chris Burke provided the Committee with a verbal update from the most recent meetings of the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire (HSCFL).

As the incumbent Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Annie Currier would take over attending the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire going forwards. The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 11 June 2025.

During the update, the following points were noted:

- The February 2025 meeting of the HSCFL had received a report from the NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board, and the East Midlands Primary Care team on NHS Dental Services in Lincolnshire where it was confirmed that 12,000 extra urgent dental appointments had been created in Lincolnshire. Anybody not registered with a dentist could dial the NHS non-emergency phone line, 111 to receive assistance on accessing care.
- Reform to the national GP contract was discussed and there would be better financial sustainability in GP contracting. In addition, there would be increased funding to pharmacies and hospices.
- At the March 2025 meeting, a report on performance of the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) had been received where it was noted that

service response times had improved as well as hospital handover procedures.

- The Quality Accounts 2024-2025 for NHS-funded service providers had been discussed and a working group was set up to look at the accounts in more detail.

RESOLVED that the verbal report be noted.

## **7. Scrutiny Self Evaluation Review**

Following a governance health check undertaken by Internal Audit in July 2024, the Committee was required to complete a review of its scrutiny effectiveness. This would involve forming a working group to complete a performance matrix with assistance from Democratic Services.

The Committee decided on the membership of the working group, and the date and time of the meeting would be confirmed in due course.

It was noted that each of the Council's scrutiny committees was completing this exercise.

RESOLVED that:

1. A group of up to five councillors be selected to attend a round table discussion to complete a document for presentation at the next meeting of Policy Scrutiny Committee.
2. The working group contain the Chair of the Committee and at least one member from a non-controlling group.

## **8. Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25**

The Committee considered the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/25 which would be presented to Council at its July meeting for final approval.

It was felt the report presented a good resume of the Committee's work over the period.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/25 be noted.

## **9. Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-26 and Executive Work Programme Update**

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025/26 and Executive Work Programme Update report.
- b. presented the Executive Work Programme June 2025 – May 2026.
- c. invited members questions and comments.

Members made no further comments or suggestions regarding the Policy Scrutiny work programme.

RESOLVED that:

1. The work Policy Scrutiny work programme be noted.
2. The Executive work programme be noted.