

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Executive Director
(Legal and Democratic Services)

to

Cabinet

On

27th July 2021

Report prepared by: Tim Row

In-Depth Scrutiny Project - To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Place Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Members: Councillor Mulroney & Terry

A Part 1 Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

To present the final report of the in-depth Scrutiny project entitled "*To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough*". The project report was agreed by the Place Scrutiny Committee on Monday 5th July 2021

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet approves the report and recommendations from the in-depth scrutiny project attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 To note that approval of any recommendations with budget implications will require consideration as part of future years' budget processes prior to implementation.

3. Background

3.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee selected its topic at the meeting on 8th July 2019 (Minute 153 refers). The project plan was agreed by the Committee on 7th October 2019 (Minute 388 refers).

3.2 The project was led by a member project team and the appointments were agreed at Council on 16th May 2019. The project team comprised – Councillors A Bright (Chair), K Buck, L Burton, A Chalk, S George, D Jarvis, S Wakefield and P Wexham. Officer support was provided by Carl Robinson, Imran Kazalbash and Tim Row with additional support as and when required from other officers.

3.3 In the context of the Southend 2050 Vision, the proposed outcomes from the project were to:

- (a) To review current strategies, initiatives and methods of waste recycling/collection and their effectiveness;
- (b) To consider best practice from exemplar Local Authorities (e.g. Tendring, Rochford) including incentive schemes;
- (c) To examine operational and cultural barriers to domestic waste recycling and how these may be overcome;

- (d) To identify and consider recycling measures and initiatives to increase the amount and type of domestic waste recycling in the Borough;
- (e) To investigate how the community be educated and encouraged to increase domestic waste recycling levels reduce the level of waste sent to landfill; and
- (f) To investigate the potential alternative uses of suitable residual waste after recycling as an alternative to landfill.

3.4 The review was undertaken using a mixture of evidence and intelligence gathered by:

- Scrutiny of relevant documentation, data and intelligence
- Structured interviews with selected groups/industry
- Site Visits
- Review of current and alternative operational models, initiatives and strategies
- Survey and engagement with residents.

3.5 The project Group met on 6 occasions between September 2019 and February 2021. Progress with regard to the review was achieved in the first half of the 2019/20 municipal year, including the development of an action plan and the receipt of relevant presentations. However, the completion of the project was subsequently delayed from late-2019 as a result of a number of issues including reduced officer capacity in key service areas.

3.6 From March 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic also further delayed activity with regard to the completion of the review, reflecting the Council's approach to the handling of the pandemic, including the necessary focus on the delivery of key services and priority activities. As a result, it was not possible for the in-depth review to be completed by the end of the municipal year and the Committee agreed that it be carried forward into the current municipal year

3.7 The Place Scrutiny Committee received regular updates on the progress of the review during the course of the study.

3.8 The final report from the in-depth scrutiny review undertaken in 2019/21 has now been agreed by the Place Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 5th July 2021 (Minute 106 refers).

4 Recommendations

4.1 In accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10 (Part 4 (e) of the Constitution), the in-depth scrutiny report is now attached at **Appendix 1** for approval by Cabinet. It should be noted that approval of any recommendations with financial implications that will require new investment will need to go through the normal budgetary process before they can be implemented.

4.2 By way of providing some context to and delivery of the recommendations in the final report, it was noted that during the review Officers updated the project group on the ongoing work to assess whether an extension to the current waste collection contract is viable, which would take the end date to 4th October 2031. Dialogue in the process has focused on improving recycling rates, reducing environmental impact and contributing to carbon savings.

4.3 The recommendations in the final reports are as follows:

- Options for a service change that improve recycling rates should be considered during the extension dialogue for the current waste collection contract and/or a new procurement. This should draw on best practice from high performing authorities and consider potential legislative impacts from the forthcoming Environment Bill.
- Engagement with communities is ongoing to encourage participation in recycling services. This should be through: targeted communication campaigns on a local and national level which focus on low performing areas; use of reward schemes subject to funding (and further investigation), regular customer surveying to inform service design and satisfaction levels.
- The Council should explore disposal arrangements for residual waste other than landfill, possibly to recover energy and in the context of the waste hierarchy

5. Other Options

5.1 To note the report but not progress any of the recommendations.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

As described in the report.

6.2 Financial Implications

Any recommendations with major financial implications will need to go through the annual budgetary process before implementation.

6.3 Legal Implications

None

6.4 People Implications

None

6.5 Property Implications

None

6.6 Consultation

As described in the report

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

None

6.8 Risk Assessment

None

6.9 Value for Money

None

6.10 Community Safety Implications

None

6.11 Environmental Impact

Any increase in recycling will reduce waste going to landfill and will therefore benefit the environment.

7. Background Papers

None.

8. Appendix

Appendix 1 – In-depth scrutiny project report: “To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough”