

Terms of Reference – Waste Cross Party Joint Working Group

1. Identify the core aims and priorities in terms of service performance, identifying our current performance levels and how these are benchmarked, considering the long-term objectives of both Councils.
2. Consider the impending changes to legislation, including environmental and financial pressures. Reviewing the current service design in relation to these factors.
3. Identify best practice and where opportunities may exist to transition towards best practice where this is both financially and environmentally sustainable.
4. Seek to achieve consensus and greater consistency of services endeavouring to benefit from greater stability and efficiencies from a common contract.
5. Identify opportunities for financial efficiencies and cost reduction in service design and delivery.
6. Consider and identify the optimal long term service design options for the Councils and how these will deliver the Councils objectives and aims and principles of the shared service.
7. Specifically, the working group will focus on:
 - a. Customer Services
 - b. Street Cleansing Non-Core Services
 - c. Street Cleansing Core Services
 - d. Waste and Recycling Non-Core Services e.g. textiles collections
 - e. Waste and Recycling Core Services
 - f. Chargeable Garden Waste Collections
 - g. Chargeable Waste and Recycling Services

Recommendations from the joint cross-party working group on waste

Workshops were held with members from both East Herts Council and North Herts Council from 24th June to 24th August. These workshops focused on the recommendations for the waste and street cleansing service design from 2025. Detailed minutes were taken at the time and this document provides a short summary of the key outcomes and recommendations.

Information presented to the workshops pertinent to any recommendations for Executive/Cabinet will be provided in the Executive/Cabinet report, information or figures may be updated to reflect any new information available.

The term 'consensus' is used where all Members were in agreement. The term 'majority' is used where a consensus was not agreed but only one or two Members did not.

The term 'no agreement' is used where opinion was split by three or more Members or where members did not agree to an option. Where there is a clear preference by one authority only this is also noted.

Workshop 1 - Scene Setting

The first workshop provided an overview of current services, performance, aims and principles and the financial position of the Council and contract as well as identifying needs and options regarding our carbon impacts.

- No specific service change options were discussed .
- Consensus for the service to explore Zero or Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) where practicable and seek further information during soft market testing.
- Consensus on a need to ensure a slick customer journey with improved online offering.

- Early indication of a willingness for aligned services
- EHC Members were keen to see an improvement in recycling performance.

Workshop 2 – Customer Services

The workshop explored the pros and cons regarding in-house and out-sourced customer service models. It identified aspirations for the future provision of services and channel shift.

- Consensus that residents should experience a 'great' standard of customer service.
- Consensus that the focus should be in reducing the number of calls coming in
- Consensus that the customer journey should be simple and effective with supporting SLAs for contact handling
- Majority for in- house customer service provision – provided that the cost differences are not hugely different and therefore prohibitive.
- Majority for a joint customer service provision – subject to a future cost benefit report
- Consensus for more proactive service led communications not just service information.
- Consensus for all contacts which could be fully managed online to have a route to do online.
- Consensus on a joint comms plan for waste services
- Request to explore viability of comms lead authority for waste
- No agreement for the Contractor to lead on comms
- Consensus felt a 'waste awareness' officer would be beneficial to the service.

Workshop 3 – Street Cleansing

This workshop explored the strengths and weaknesses of the current service provision and explored options for change.

- Consensus support for continuation of 'continuous presence' requirement in town centres.
- Consensus felt there was confusion relating to reporting of litter bin issues due to multiple ownership
- Consensus support for current project asset mapping streets and parks bins with use of QR codes for reporting.
- Consensus support for asset mapping of 'non-council' litter bins and Council to act as a reporting conduit.
- Consensus for WRAPs 'right bin, right place' approach to the siting of litter bins.
- Majority felt that more comms should be done on what we expect of residents
- Consensus for replacing some litter bins for dual litter and recycling bins
- Request that viability of combining litter bin management for all bins in the district come under one contract, be explored.
- Consensus for more joined up working to prevent grass cutting before litter picking

Workshop 4 - Waste and Recycling

This workshop explored a number of options surrounding service change. This included continuing with similar services through to four weekly residual waste collections. Identifying future necessary changes as a result of the governments resources and waste strategy such as separate food waste collections as well as discussing options surrounding future potential outcomes from the government consultation on consistency.

- Consensus for the same specification across the contract for both authorities
- Consensus for introduction of separate food waste for EHC in line with the current NHC service
- Consensus for an alignment of bin sizes, meaning a transition to a 180l residual waste bin in EHC through the natural replacement cycle.

- Consensus for an earlier start time of 6am during the summer
- Consensus for an optional earlier start time of 6am all year
- Consensus on soft plastics collections for 2025 in advance of potential 2027 mandate
- Consensus on three weekly residual waste collections
- Majority wanted supportive policies for households with additional needs during the transition.
- Majority would like to explore a transition to four weekly residual waste collections mid contract – further information to be provided at conclusions workshop
- Consensus that the preferred option if fibre is mandated to be kept separate is for three weekly fibre (paper and cardboard) , three weekly containers (plastic and cans) and three weekly residual waste with fortnightly chargeable garden waste and weekly food waste.

Workshop 5 – Non-Core Services

This workshop looked at the non-statutory elements of the services for both street cleansing and waste collections. Looking at the pros and cons of continuing with the existing non-statutory service provision.

- EHC Member consensus to cease the provision of paper bring banks
- EHC Member consensus to cease the provision of textile bring banks provided there is supportive comms for the charity sector.
- NHC Member consensus to cease kerbside textile collections provided there is supportive comms for the charity sector.
- Consensus that 5L kitchen caddies not provided as part of standard 'bin set' to all households.
- Consensus that 5L caddies be provided on request only via events etc. but not replaced as standard.
- Consensus a 'waste awareness' officer post would be beneficial to the service and contractor.

- Consensus on bin colours – purple lidded for residual waste, blue lidded for mixed dry recycling and brown lidded for garden waste.
- Consensus on ‘fibre’ separate bin colours - purple lidded for residual waste (new 180L purple lidded provided in EHC), existing grey/black bin for mixed dry recycling (formally residual waste bin in EHC), blue lidded for paper and cardboard (New for NHC residents – existing mixed dry recycling bin for EHC) and brown lidded for garden waste.
- No agreement from NHC Members on the removal of the leaf fall clearance service.
- Consensus for officers to explore out of contract options for setting up market stalls and salt bins
- Consensus to continue with ‘Adopt an Area’ scheme
- Majority of EHC members agreed to remove parish litter picking grants and bring parish street litter bins back into the contract.
- Consensus to agree to policy alignment where there are current minor differences. – updates will be provided as part of the Cabinet and Executive report.
- Consensus to remove policy 19 – relating to bin stickers

Workshop 6 – Chargeable Services

This workshop explored options regarding the chargeable services offered by both Councils and reviewed the differences between them. The workshop also looked at the pros and cons of an expansion of commercial waste services to include food waste and garden waste.

- Consensus to align the standard garden waste charge from 2025 based on future contract costs being the same.
- Consensus from NHC members that options need to be explored to manage the potentially big hit in 2025 when contract rise.

- Consensus to consider an aligned start date of 1st April if price is aligned
- Consensus from NHC members to keep a concession, EHC Members wish to ensure that concessions are not subsidised by other service users and therefore this should be a NHC funded element.
- Consensus that there should be an agreed mechanism for future uplifts when there is a shared price.
- Consensus that a solution should be found for online self-serve for bulky waste collections
- Some support for small WEEE as an 'add on' item to bulky service
- Consensus that commercial clinical should be provided in both districts on the assumption that it's no significant additional burden
- Consensus the domestic clinical should not be charged
- Consensus for the introduction of commercial food waste services subject to resources being available to administer new services.
- Consensus support a part time commercial waste post to support marketing of services and introduction of new services – subject to cost – benefit analysis
- Majority support a limitation of event cleansing and bin emptying offering. – income and costs to be provided at conclusions workshop