

Committee: Governance, Audit and Performance Committee

Date:

Tuesday, 24 March 2020

Title: Waste Management Performance Indicators

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Summary

1. This Committee previously considered the Council's Quarter 2 2019/20 performance data. At the meeting of 13 January 2020 the Committee requested that an explanation be provided detailing the reasons for adjustments made to performance targets.
2. This report provides that explanation.

Recommendations

3. The report is for information only.

Financial Implications

4. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A

Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

7. The Council carefully monitors the performance of all its services and uses a variety of indicators to identify service trends and inform future decisions. Waste management performance is currently measured using tonnage based information to track recycling and composting levels alongside the amount of residual waste requiring disposal.
8. KPI 14 monitors the Council's recycling rate and all local authorities use the same information to compare performance at a high level.
9. At its meeting on the 13th January 2020 Members noted that the target for overall percentage of waste recycled had been reduced in 2019/20 from 54% to 51.5%. (Table 1 in Appendix 1 refers). This change was made as a result of gradual changes to performance since the service model currently in operation was established.
10. It is important to consider that the percentage of waste recycled is a relatively crude measure which needs to be considered alongside a suite of other indicators to give a rounded view on service performance.
11. The indicator is affected by the nature and composition of household waste which changes over time and also reflects changes in consumer habits and legislative measures. On a month by month basis the composition of waste is impacted by the weather and even major sporting events.
12. It is nationally recognised that the weight of many packaging types, most of which are recyclable materials, have reduced over the last 10-15 years. For example, a wine bottle produced today is lighter in weight to one produced 10 years ago. If all else stayed constant the Council's recycling rate would be negatively impacted by lighter materials but the overall volume of waste would be static.
13. Some packaging materials for common products have also changed. In the case of pet food, readily recyclable cans were the most common containers for 'wet' food 10 years ago. Today, more difficult to recycle, composite plastic pouches are more routinely used.
14. The weight of newspaper and magazines available as waste has declined significantly as people's reading habits have changed moving from physical printed material to on-line.
15. These are just some examples of how waste composition, product design and consumer trends have changed and then impact on the weight of material available to recycle.

16. Figure 2 in APPENDIX 1 shows that between 2011-12 and 2018-19 there has been a downward trend in the levels of recycling rate achieved by other Essex authorities. It is evident that some authorities have diverged from this trend, however this has primarily been result of a broader change in service.
17. Over this time period the method of calculating performance has also been modified slightly effecting materials such as street sweepings. Whilst this gives a more accurate result, it also does decrease the level of recycling achieved.
18. The target for 2019-20 was updated and approved by Members. The reason for the proposed change was to reflect the reduction in rate for the reasons explained above.
19. Since 2019 the Council has invested in waste education and efforts to reduce contamination levels in recycling services have increased. These changes are likely to help increase participation in recycling services at the same time and it may be possible to slow the decline in recycling rate by encouraging recycling.
20. Within the agenda item relating to 2020/21 PI Targets, For the 2020/21 year, officers have proposed a slight target increase to 51.5%; the target for the 2019/20 year was 51.00%. It is believed that this is a genuine stretch and will require continued efforts around waste education to achieve that target.

The future

21. The Governments Waste and Resources strategy launched in December 2018 recognises the need to update the way recycling performance is measured to consider the overall environmental benefits and carbon usage.
22. The emerging Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan alongside a revised Waste and Resources Strategy for Uttlesford will look to identify how our current service performs in terms of ensuring materials are recycled into valued commodities and also minimising the environmental impact of operations.
23. It is the view of the Assistant Director – Environmental Services that Members will need to focus our waste management efforts on reducing the amount of waste collected. It may also be worthwhile the Waste Strategy panel also considering whether any changes should be made to reporting in future years.

Risk Analysis

24. There are financial and reputational risks associated with changes in waste composition and public participation in services provided by the Council. These are mitigated in part by holding a waste management reserve which is used to absorb negative impacts of reduced performance.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
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Significant overspend against current budget for dry recyclables processing	3	2	Waste reserve held and waste education programme in place to minimise impacts associated with participation.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.