

Waste Services Meeting for Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee 30.7.25

Report by Michael Hanley

G Archibald (GA, LD, Cabinet member): The previous 3 areas had very different ways of collecting waste. We need to move forward at a fast pace. A decision will be made at the Cabinet in September.

Anna Smith (AS, Assistant Director of Waste Services): Discussed previous engagement and consultations.

1. Public consultation: Began on 14th of May and finished on 11th of July. 4324 responses, the biggest response of any consultation. Also had drop-ins including at Alston (Town Hall). 8/10 agreed that the environment had to be protected. Also agreed with a fortnightly general waste collection. They agreed that they would manage with a larger bin (240 litre capacity). Some people wanted a smaller wheely bin. 60% were not happy to pay for garden waste collection.
2. Business Case: Needs to be a strategic fit, affordable. We are looking for a local partnership. We are having a scoring system with points for good fit, being achievable etc. Scoring resulted in an in-house service being the preferable model. Existing budget: £9.4 million. We need to look at the capital fund for new wheely bins. We are also looking at Recycling Bring Sites.

GA: This is an enormous project. We will put in project protocols so we can track the results.

E Hennessy (EH, Chair, LD): Asked about areas where there is a lot of dissatisfaction (with the current waste service).

GA: I don't think there are such areas now.

AS: We will be monitoring the collections closely.

M. Hanley (MH, L): Said he had 3 questions. 1. Asked whether composting could be promoted to deal with garden waste. Years ago Cumbria County Council distributed compost bins to deal with garden waste.

2. The house of one of the residents on Alston Moor is at least 500 metres from the road. She would not be able to pull a wheely bin up hill to the road. Is there any solution for her?

3. Finally, there are rumours going around that the Recycling Bring Sites will be closed. What are the plans for these?

AS: Yes we are aware of the possibility of encouraging more composting to reduce garden waste as this is good (ecological) way of dealing with this.

We have thought of situations where the house is a long way from the waste collection point and we may have to retain bags for these properties.

As for the Bring Sites, there is no plan to close these. We realise they are very important in more rural areas and the contract for these does not run out until 2027.

H Irving (HI, C): I am not against composting but where they were used (compost bins) in my area, we were over-run by rats.

AS: In South Lakes the garden waste collection had a big uptake. One property apparently had 20 garden waste bins.

EH: If someone has so many extra bins, you must know what you're going to charge for these.

AS: Waste tonnage varies a lot. For example, during Covid it went through the roof.

EH: What are the timelines for implementation?

AS: We still have to determine the capital programme. The current contract still has to run, until 2027. It won't happen overnight. We don't want to overpromise and underdeliver.

A lot of other authorities are going through the same process.