Leicestershire's Resources and Waste Strategy 2022-2050 Consultation Response from the Loughborough and North West Leicestershire Green Party.

Submitted on 22nd April 2022.

The Loughborough and North West Leicestershire Green Party is an active group of over 150 members who are committed to halting climate change and have a keen interest in our local area. Below are the responses we submitted to consultation ran in April 2022 on Leicestershire’s Resources and Waste Strategy.

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| Q. The district and borough councils and Leicestershire County Council are setting out their draft strategy for managing waste (which includes general rubbish and recycling) for the period up to 2050. The vision of the draft strategy is  *To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2050 in Leicestershire. This means fully embracing the waste hierarchy by preventing waste and keeping resources in circulation for as long as possible, through reuse, repair and recycling, to realise their maximum value whilst minimising environmental impacts*.  To what extent do you agree or disagree with this vision? |
| 1. Strongly Agree |
| Q. The draft strategy is supported by objectives and pledges that sit alongside national policy changes - setting the direction for long term management of material resources for the benefit of the residents and communities of Leicestershire. Below is a summary of the 11 pledges but the full wording and additional detail is available in the supporting information.   |  | | --- | | The draft strategy is supported by objectives and pledges that sit alongside national policy changes - setting the direction for long term management of material resources for the benefit of the residents and communities of Leicestershire. Below is a summary of the 11 pledges but the full wording and additional detail is available in the supporting information.  In summary the pledges are:  1. Lead by example in promoting waste prevention, reuse and recycling in council purchasing activities  2. Work in partnership to promote waste prevention, reuse and recycling  3. Continue to deliver reuse services and expand these where practical  4. Implement and promote separate food waste collections to all households\*  5. Explore the use of alternative fuels for waste collection and transportation vehicles to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality  6. Continue to offer a garden waste collection service\* |  |  | | --- | | 7. Ensure that the full range of recyclables as specified by Government are collected by 2025 (or sooner)  8. Continue to explore the viability of adding extra materials to recycling collections  9. Contribute towards the achievement of the national 65% recycling target by 2035, this may include restricting general waste capacity and improving material recovery at waste sites  10. Invest in communications to help promote good recycling behaviour and maximise resource recovery  11. Reduce waste sent to landfill to less than 5% by 2025, well in advance of the 10% national target by 2030 |   To what extent do you agree or disagree with our pledges as set out in the draft strategy? |
| 1. Strongly Agree |
| Q. Is there anything you think we’ve missed?  We feel that a stronger commitment could have been made towards those living in shared accommodation such as flats, terrace housing other other types of housing that makes keeping a large waste bin inappropriate.  We also think that there should be a focus on public waste bins as well as private households, with a commitment to separating and collecting as much recycling through public bins in the towns and parks as possible.  There is no mention in this document of targets or ambitions for the consequences of trade or commercial waste collection. This is mostly managed by private companies, but there is a knock-on effect of fly tipping, major littering from construction sites and outside commercial and business premises which affects households and communities, and the environment. |
| Q. To reduce the amount of packaging or goods you buy, which methods would you be interested in trying (or continuing to use)?  Buy or rent washable nappies  Try different methods of reducing food waste such as recipes for leftover food, meal planning and storing food appropriately  Learn new skills that could help reduce textile waste – e.g. sewing courses  Learn new skills to reduce furniture waste – e.g. repair or upcycling courses  Shopping for products that are better for the environment (i.e. refills, products with less packaging or environmentally friendly ingredients  Use an app or website with details of low waste retail or other activities in your area  What other methods would you be interested in trying (or continuing to use)? |
| 1. We answered “a great deal” to these questions.   In the other methods we wrote:  We would like to see a greater emphasis put on what we can achieve as a community. Support for community initiatives such as the “repair cafes” ran by Transition Loughborough would be extremely beneficial. |
| Q. To reduce the amount of packaging or goods you buy, which methods would you be interested in trying (or continuing to use)?  Take reusable (unwanted) items to a Household Waste Recycling Centre for sale / reuse by others  Community swap (Give or take) events - where you can bring an unwanted item and take another item away  Find shops that sell or rent second hand goods (tools, clothing etc.)  Use an online platform for selling or donating unwanted goods or to purchase second hand goods (like Freegle, Freecycle, Preloved, Marketplace, Ebay, etc.  Use an app or website with details of second hand shopping options in your area  Visit a charity shop or car boot sale  Other, please specify |
| 1. We answered “a great deal” to these questions.   In the other methods we wrote  We would like to see the Deposit Return Scheme extended to include many types of reusable containers and for this to be led by the government but coordinated by local councils.  Again, support for initiatives such as the repair cafe is important. |
| Q. Do you see any barriers to you participating in a weekly food waste collection where you live (if this is not already offered by your council)? |
| 1. Yes |
| Q. To what extent, if at all, are any of the following barriers to you participating in a weekly food waste collection where you live (if this is not already offered by your council)?  Concerned about smells  Concerned about keeping my kitchen caddy clean  I don’t have enough space inside for storing a kitchen caddy  I don’t have enough space outside to store another bin  Other (please specify) |
| 1. We answered “a great deal” to these questions.   In the other methods we wrote  These answers assume that there is some outdoor space, but what about those who don’t have any outdoor space at all?  Additionally education on how to compost might be a barrier |
| Q. Which, if any, of the following options would you prefer? Please tick one box only.  Option A - Weekly food waste collections & a smaller general rubbish bin collected every two weeks  Option B - Weekly food waste collections & the current size general rubbish bin collected every three weeks |
| 1. We would prefer Option B so that new plastic bins are not being created |
| Q. How interested would you be in your council collecting any other materials (if your council does not already collect these)?  Small electrical items (e.g. electric toys, hairdryers etc.)  Batteries (small, portable)  Clothing and other textiles  Other (please specify |
| 1. We answered “very interested” to these questions.   In the other methods we wrote  Paint, oil and rubble are all other common items people need to recycle. |
| Q.What is your personal preference about how the council should keep you informed about and involved in, forthcoming changes to services? Please tick all that applicable  Council websites  Council app / text alerts  Social media (e.g Twitter, Facebook)  Email newsletter  Leicestershire Matters and district council newsletters / magazines  Bin hangers / stickers  Collections calendar  Engaging with specific community group  Through specific events (e.g. roadshows) |
| 1. We thought these were all good suggestions and covered those who are not online and may have difficulty accessing online communications. |
| Q.Do you have (or anticipate having) any difficulties with using our waste services? This might be for any reason such as (but not limited to) age, disability, isolation, poverty, ethnicity or language etc. |
| 1. We think there are several issues with a waste strategy that relies on people’s ability to devote time and energy to sorting their waste, waste which they may have had little option in creating. People experiencing poverty have less choice in where they shop, what they buy and how they prepare it. Therefore centering the individual actions is not the most efficient way to create a waste strategy that will truly reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.   The current system of packaging symbols is also very confusing and is a struggle for people no matter their language ability, introducing a clear system followed across the UK would help with this. |
| Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft strategy? |
| 1. Tend to agree |
| Overall comments  While we welcome the draft strategy and commend many of its goals, it does not address the root cause of most of the waste that is generated in Leicestershire, and that is the production process that leads us to a situation in which consumers are left with no choice but to purchase plastic wrapped items at every turn and then try in vain to minimise the impact of their purchase.  By focusing on the individual’s actions we are diverting attention away from the large corporations whose decision to keep using plastic and copious amounts of other packaging, all in the name of endless profit, is driving this increase in waste.  Although it was beyond the scope of the consultation, and indeed the council, we feel it is important to record that it is our opinion that having individual council plans for waste is not the way forward, we think that the national government should take a more central role in setting out the waste plans that can be implemented by councils.  Throughout the strategy there is an assumption that a car is and should be available to the individual; so they can participate in dropping off items to the household waste centre, travel to car boot sales and find shops that rent tools. As always, everything is connected and the provision of better, more frequent, cheaper, more reliable public transport is a key driver here to move people towards choosing a more “sustainable” option for their waste. Having a refill shop in Loughborough town is a good thing, but if it’s only accessible by large numbers of people by car, it lessens the environmental impact it can have.  Additionally, the lack of consideration for those living in flats or shared housing is also an issue. While it is mentioned in the strategy we felt that it was given a poor second place to those households which have space outside for multiple large wheelie bins. This is the councils’ opportunity to propose a significant change along the lines of large municipal recycling bins for those in shared buildings, such as are common in the Netherlands.    The public realm is not mentioned in the consultation document, but of course people create waste outside of their home too. This needs to be a central element to the plan and we would propose that the number, location and type of public bins are all increased. At the moment town and village centres have public bins, but if you walk outwards from those village centres towards the houses, there are no bins leading to inevitable littering along the way.  And lastly, the summary of the strategy does not mention who will be delivering this service? At the moment it is contracted to Serco - tendering this to a private company will inevitably mean they are looking for ways to cut costs and increase profits. We would propose this should be taken in house and delivered by the councils whose main responsibility is to the people of their local area. |