

Meeting: Green Sub Committee

Date: 26th March 2024

Title: Waste Strategy Review: Communications Update and Reuse and Circular Economy

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**Wards
affected:** All

1. Purpose of Report

At this Sub Committee on 7th November 2023, a presentation set out the current Waste Strategy to assist the committee in helping shape a refresh of that Strategy in light of developing national policy and local needs. Members were interested in providing input on the ongoing development of communications and marketing and circular economy aspects of the Strategy, including reuse.

This report provides an update on actions taken since Sub Committee met on 9th January 2024 to implement members recommendations around communications and engagement, and outlines the approach to reuse in the Authority's Waste Strategy, which will be refreshed in 2024/25.

2. Recommendations

The Sub Committee is invited to note the follow-up actions taken since this Sub Committee met on 9th January 2024 and provide any further suggestions to enhance the Authority's communications and engagement around waste, recycling and reuse.

The Sub Committee is further invited to provide feedback on the increased focus on reuse in the revision of the Authority's Waste Strategy and the Authority's approach to promoting the circular economy across the borough.

3. Information

In 2019 the Authority set out its [10-Year Plan for Waste](#), which outlined the actions needed to address the challenges posed by new local and national drivers including the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy 2018.

The Authority's latest [Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan](#) agreed by Cabinet in September 2023 also highlights the role of our Waste Strategy in changing how we produce, purchase, consume and dispose of waste in order to reach net-zero across our borough.

The principles underpinning the current Waste Strategy remain a solid foundation for the refresh of the Strategy and Plan, and a refreshed Strategy and accompanying actions through to 2030 are now required as part of the Authority's commitment and to reflect recent national policy, such as 'Simpler Recycling' announced in October 2023.

At this Sub Committee on 9th January 2024, officers highlighted the importance of avoiding and reducing the use of materials such as plastics and ensuring recyclable materials are collected and recycled appropriately, to reduce the total tonnages of waste being disposed of via energy recovery. It is several times more expensive for the Authority to dispose of recyclable waste via EfW than it is to recycle it appropriately, whether this is dry recycling, compostable garden waste or food waste that is processed using anaerobic digestion.

At Sub Committee on 9th January 2024 officers therefore invited feedback on the current communications and marketing to encourage residents to choose more sustainable products, repair and reuse more, and recycle correctly, in order to reduce emissions associated with waste disposal and put the Borough on a pathway to achieving a 65% recycling rate by 2035. This includes the substantial engagement around food waste collections that will be essential to ensuring the successful implementation of this new service by March 2026.

Action taken to improve communications and marketing

A-Z of Rubbish

Officers have reviewed and implemented comments and suggestions raised at that meeting, as well as detailed recommendations received in writing, in particular on the Authority's A-Z of Rubbish, which have been extremely helpful. The following changes have been made to the relevant webpages and these will go live when the new website launches shortly:

- Links to the A-Z of Rubbish from other pages, such as the information on the Household Waste and Recycling Centre, and similarly links to the HWRC in the A-Z.
- Imagery of a general waste bin and recycling bin, which will be added to the 'what goes in my bins' webpage, and wider use of example materials, in particular the wide range of soft plastics on the market.
- Where recycling options are available for any material, this will be highlighted (using arrows or similar icons).
- The colour of the bin is now referenced against all relevant items in the A-Z. In addition, officers are working with regional colleagues to consider options for agreeing food waste caddies of the same colour for new food waste collection services that are due to commence by March 2026.
- Clearer language with more concise statements, including making it clear where typical household items might be made of different material types (such as sauce bottles, which may be glass or plastic).
- Broken links are now working in the new pages.
- Where items are related, they will have their own section, as well as linking to each other. Reuse options, such as donations to charity or local networks, are also highlighted. One section to which this has been applied as an example is Beds and Mattresses.
- Soft plastics categories have been expanded and made clearer, for example bubble wrap and carrier bags are included with suggestions on reusing bags and where these can be recycled, with a link to the recycling map highlighting bring sites.
- Updates about separating recyclable from non-recyclable materials (for example, plastic windows in envelopes and fabric linings on punnets).
- Inclusion of information on the correct disposal of medicines and related materials including continuous glucose monitors.
- Clarification of materials that carry the mobious recycling loop but cannot be recycled at the kerbside, and where these materials can be recycled, or how they could be reused. For example, residents are encouraged to reuse plant pots and to recycle fruit & veg, crisp and

sweet packaging at supermarkets, as they cannot be recycled by the Authority.

- Fabrics and textiles section has been amended so it features more prominently in the A-Z and includes additional information about how to recycle wool and worn clothing.
- Takeaway cups section has been amended to include links to recyclable options and, moreover, reuseable cups.
- Exploring new recycling bring bank options through Terracycle.

Paper communications

As recommended by this Sub Committee, the latest issue of the Our North Tyneside residents magazine included a condensed version of the A-Z of Rubbish providing information on some of the common and confusing materials that can and cannot be reused and recycled.

Making better use of Customer First Centres and Libraries

Recycling messages are now displayed on digital screens across council and community buildings, including:

- Hadrian Leisure Centre
- Quadrant East / West
- Killingworth
- Norham depot
- Howdon Hub
- John Willie Sams Centre
- North Shields Customer First Centre
- Whitley Bay Customer First Centre
- Oxford Centre, and
- Wallsend Customer First Centre.

Posters capturing these messages will soon be displayed across council buildings and community hubs to increase our inclusive outreach.

Officers across waste and communications are also working with our recycling contractors to develop videos and storyboards telling the 'journey' of different materials, starting with electricals.

Supporting businesses

Officers have taken on board the need to provide more direct support to businesses and the Environmental Sustainability Team are working together to

integrate waste and the circular economy into the forthcoming workplan for the External Carbon 2030 Net-Zero Board, including developing toolkits and hosting an event for all businesses around new requirements around recycling including food waste.

Targeted and joined-up interventions

Finally, to better assess the effectiveness of our waste awareness campaign, officers are planning more joined-up interventions in target areas with data analysis to get to the root of contamination issues and inform more impactful engagement. This could include undertaking more detailed research in hotspot areas and officers are grateful for the offer to work more closely with councillors in those target areas during the new financial year.

Net-zero consultation

The Waste Strategy was integrated into a week of engagement events during February half-term as part of the update to the Authority's Carbon 2030 Net-Zero Action Plan. Officers provided a range of opportunities to encourage participation from businesses, residents, young people and the voluntary and community sector, including through social media, online questionnaires, a workshop with the Youth Council, four group in-person events and one-to-one sessions with residents in 14 community hubs and libraries. This face-to-face conversation helped target some of the younger residents and those who wouldn't ordinarily complete surveys.

The waste engagement workshop provided attendees with an understanding of the borough's waste management strategy and the evolving national policy landscape. Participants learned about engagement activities, new strategies around the circular economy and upcoming food waste collections. Through interactive engagement, officers explored strategies for driving behavioural change around reuse, the effectiveness of current communications and attitudes towards food waste.

Common feedback included the need for clear terminology and myth-busting. Nearly all residents were in favour of food waste collections and expressed a desire for the Authority to host longer and more frequent sessions to receive more information on food waste and recycling in general.

Re-use and the circular economy

Part of the engagement activity with residents in February 2024, and the focus for the meeting of this Sub Committee on 26th March 2024, is the Authority's updated strategy around re-use and the circular economy. This relates to going beyond recycling, designing waste out of products and reusing materials. The reuse of a product retains the quality of the material and its inherent value by keeping it in use for longer. This minimises waste and consumption, and the associated carbon footprint, but can also support inclusion, job creation and positive health and wellbeing.

Officers are mapping local initiatives that promote reuse and repair in North Tyneside and a list is appended to this report. In discussing this list with residents, questions were posed around how the upcoming Strategy could use a more localised approach to focus on greater collaboration with charities for reuse programmes, utilise school workshops for repair and reuse and sorting and redistributing materials collected from the Household Waste and Recycling Centre and waste collections.

Members of this Sub Committee are invited to add to this list, and, moreover, to help identify opportunities to connect, expand and enhance these initiatives to promote and boost the circular economy across the borough.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 Reuse Opportunities in North Tyneside

Appendix 1: Reuse Opportunities in North Tyneside

Clothing & Textiles

Name	Background
Charity Shops	Local charity shops and their important role in reuse
Grass Boots @ Life Vineyard Church, Wallsend	Donation & redistribution of nearly new sports and school footwear
Kit Hub	Donation & redistribution of used activewear, recently expanded with new recycling points. Every Thursday 10am-12pm at the Cedarwood Trust
Restoration Chapel, Norham Road	Donation & redistribution of used clothing
School Uniforms	Donation & redistribution of used school uniforms from local schools. See Uniformerly for similar projects
Swap/Swish Shops	Hosting and supporting local swap shops
Walking With	Donation & redistribution of used clothing

Food & Drink

Name	Background
Allotments	Local allotment groups who promote composting and food redistribution.
Bread & Butter Thing	Mobile food clubs which redistribute surplus food. Locations at Howdon Hub, Fordley Primary School, Shiremoor Adventure Play Park, and Longbenton Community Centre.
Community Gardens	Organisations such as Station Masters' Garden and Lovaine Community Garden hold nature events and promote sustainable food
Eat Smart	School campaigns to reduce food waste. Current campaigns are in Richardson Dees, St Stephen's, and Collingwood primary schools
Fare Share	A charity which helps redistribute surplus food.
Food Banks	The Bay Food Bank Walking With People's Kitchen
Food Fix	Redistributing surplus food from council buildings to 3 rd sector organisations.
Greggs	Greggs donates some of its surplus food to local

	charities, including Howdon Hub
Grow & Eat	NTC & VODA help communities grow food
Refill Shops	Local refill shops, such as Buy the Kilo
Social Supermarkets	Social supermarkets, such as Cedarwood Trust
Surplus Food Apps	Food saving apps, such as Too Good to Go and Olio
Water Fountains	Local water fountains, highlighted on the NTC water fountain map
Water refills	Local businesses, working with Refill, to display window stickers showing customers they can refill their water bottles

Garden

Name	Background
Composting	Subsidised compost bins from North Tyneside Council, in collaboration with Get Composting See Brighton & Hove Food Partnership for an example community composting scheme
Hot Bin	Promote Hot Bin as a potential composting option
Water butts	Half price water butts from North Tyneside Council, in collaboration with Get Composting

Hygiene

Name	Background
Period Products	The Government's period product scheme for schools includes sustainable products
Real Nappies	£30 cashback on reusable nappies from north Tyneside Council, in collaboration with Fill Your Pants Nappy libraries, such as UK Nappy Network and Green by the Bay

Things

Name	Background
Aids for daily living	Collected and cleaned by North Tyneside Council and redistributed to Adult Social Care services
Beach toys	Beach toy recycling boxes are in place by the coast. Boxes are made from reused pallets.
Bicycles	Bicycles taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centre are refurbished and redistributed to local community groups

	Local bicycle repair schemes, such as Whitley Bay Hub's Bike Café
Junk Mail	Residents can remove themselves from junk mail registers, using advice from Citizens Advice
Repair cafes	Local repair cafes, such as Whitley Bay Hub's fixit café.