

**REPORT OF THE TRANSPORT, CONNECTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****FROM WASTE TO RESOURCE****1. FINDINGS**

- 1.1 Since January 1994, the disposal contract for Birmingham's municipal waste has been contracted out to Veolia Environmental Services Birmingham (VESB) – an international recycling and waste management company. This is a 25-year contract, which has been varied on numerous occasions, and will terminate in January 2019.
- 1.2 There will be, therefore, an opportunity to change arrangements for the disposal of municipal waste, to design a modern, responsive waste to resource system, shaping how waste might become more of a resource for the city. Crucially it is now, in the five year period before the expiry of the waste contract that these important decisions need to be made.
- 1.3 The former Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee therefore set out to consider

What do we need to do to ensure Birmingham has the most sustainable  
and efficient waste/recycling strategy post-January 2019?

**2. FINDINGS**

- 2.1 The Committee considered the factors and options for a future strategy that must be sustainable over future years; responsive over a significant period; and drive behavioural change for the public good. Within this period, the landscape will no doubt change beyond recognition (as it has over the past 25 years) in terms of the financial and commercial imperatives, environmental parameters and policy drivers that are key to any future strategy's sustainability. The Committee highlighted some of the key areas of challenge, and their interdependence.
- 2.2 The report considered the options for a future strategy, looking at what should be the focus of waste strategy post-2019; what should be done with the infrastructure already in existence (the Tyseley issue); what could the next phase of waste disposal and recycling operations look like; and what approach should be taken in terms of contracting with partners.
- 2.3 The opportunity afforded by the ending of the current waste disposal contract is that the city can reshape how waste is disposed of in the city. That means doing more than just refreshing the current Municipal Waste Strategy (due to expire in 2026). A fresh debate is needed on the content and direction of the strategy. It is also important to establish a clear guiding principle that set out what the city wants to achieve from its waste strategy, as this would ensure a coherent and transparent approach to any new waste disposal arrangements and provide a mechanism to negotiate the decision-making process.

- 2.4 A people-centred engagement exercise, built on where behaviours and requirements are now and how far things can be changed, is needed to underpin the principles in the new strategy, to involve the citizens of Birmingham in one of the local issues that concerns everyone.
- 2.5 The report recognises that Tyseley Energy from Waste plant is a key part of our waste disposal infrastructure and is the main contributor to assuring Birmingham's low rates of landfill. Retaining the plant will mean low capital costs for a further 15 years and would allow the City Council to progressively introduce newer technology and/or facilities to address the waste hierarchy, at a speed which could be most responsive to technological, environmental and municipal budget imperatives.
- 2.6 Another key finding was the need to enhance good customer services, education, information and communication, which are all important in driving up recycling rates. Waste-specific communications are not being approached strategically in Birmingham and could be improved. The diversity of Birmingham's communities should be recognised, and a targeted approach recognising this is the most cost-effective way of increasing participation. There is also a need to be better about telling the positive story of Birmingham's waste collection service – how it increases recycling and benefits in the city in economic and environmental terms.
- 2.7 The Committee also recognised the need to review the city's household recycling centres, and this will be pursued in the current municipal year.

### 3. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
<b>R01</b>	That a wide-ranging exercise to engage Birmingham citizens in the creation of a new waste strategy (see R03) is undertaken; utilising the principles set out in the District & Public Engagement O&S Committee's report "Citizen Engagement".	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart & Sustainable City	September 2015
<b>R02</b>	A clear evidence base is established to underpin the new strategy. This should include on-going analysis of waste and recyclate collected.	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart & Sustainable City	September 2015
<b>R03</b>	That a new Waste Strategy for the city is put in place. This should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guiding principle, or set of guiding principles, to ensure a coherent and transparent approach to any new waste disposal arrangements;</li> <li>• A waste prevention plan for the city;</li> <li>• A consideration of all waste streams in the city including a mechanism for reviewing and, where appropriate, including new technologies to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness.</li> </ul>	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart & Sustainable City	March 2016

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R04</b>	<p>That a draft procurement plan to achieve the goals of the Waste Strategy is brought to the committee for discussion. This to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How income / financial efficiency will be maximised from the new approach;</li> <li>• How flexibility in future contractual arrangements will be achieved;</li> <li>• A statement on the role the Tyseley Energy from Waste (EfW) Plant will play and how opportunities to invest in Tyseley to improve both economic and environmental performance will be fully explored;</li> <li>• How the City Council will be in a position to react to and employ new technologies in waste and recycling processing.</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet Member, Green, Smart &amp; Sustainable City</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Commissioning, Contracting and Improvement</p>	November 2015
<b>R05</b>	<p>As part of the management of the current contract, arrangements are made for a rigorous analysis of the Tyseley plant and site, to be conducted prior to the hand-over back to the City Council. This should include full inspection by appropriate experts to ensure that the plant and site are returned in accordance with the contract, and that any losses are fully accounted for.</p>	Cabinet Member, Commissioning, Contracting and Improvement	December 2017
<b>R06</b>	<p>A revitalised waste communication plan is needed, taking into account the outcomes of the public engagement exercise in R01. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of communication options to ensure messages reach the widest possible audience;</li> <li>• More user-friendly detail about the destination of waste and recycling on the website;</li> <li>• Engaging with local Councillors to give them the resources to pass on key messages;</li> <li>• Engaging with local community groups/spaces (including schools, places of worship, community centres) to give them the resources to pass on key messages;</li> <li>• More information/explanation about why Birmingham has made the choices it has and the positive outcomes from that.</li> </ul>	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart & Sustainable City	September 2015

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R07</b>	<p>That a report is brought to the Connectivity &amp; Sustainability O&amp;S Committee on Household Recycling Centres (HRCs), their future and the options, with a view to the Committee undertaking a short piece of work on new HRCs in the city.</p> <p>The Committee's work will consider options for improving access to current HRCs, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening hours;</li> <li>• Actions to reduce queues and congestion</li> <li>• Allow waste and recycling to be delivered on foot</li> </ul> <p>It should also address how the number of HRCs in the city might be increased, particularly with regard to smaller, more local, sites.</p>	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart & Sustainable City	September 2014
<b>R08</b>	<p>Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Connectivity &amp; Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee no later than December 2014. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.</p>	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart & Sustainable City	December 2014

### **MOTION**

That the recommendations summarised in Chapter 6 of the attached report be approved, and that the Executive be requested to pursue their implementation.