

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	5 March 2024
Subject:	Refuse and Waste Recycling		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Communities and Housing Locality Services Planning and Building Control		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek approval of recommendations arising from an informal meeting of the Committee, following a visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre on 15 January 2024, in respect of refuse and waste recycling.

Recommendations: That:

- (1) the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate measures that could be introduced as part of the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes to compel landlords to have a level of control over their tenants to alleviate the anti-social actions of littering and dumping rubbish in rear entries;
- (2) the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals; and
- (3) the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on methods to increase Sefton's recycling rates; the introduction of communal bins; and wider waste containment issues.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To comply with a decision of the informal meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills).

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications in complying with recommendations contained in this report will be included in reports to future, appropriate meetings.

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None	
Legal Implications: None	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Impact on Children and Young People: None	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	Yes
Have a neutral impact	No
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
Issues discussed at the informal meeting included methods to increase the Council's recycling rate. This is particularly important considering that recycling targets are required to increase to 65% by 2025. Sefton's current recycling rate was around 39%.	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report.
Commission, broker and provide core services: The proposed report on methods to increase Sefton's recycling rates; the introduction of communal bins; and wider waste containment issues will improve the provision of a Council core service.
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report.
Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.
Cleaner Greener: Issues discussed at the informal meeting included methods to increase the Council's recycling rate. This is particularly important considering that recycling targets are required to increase to 65% by 2025. Sefton's current recycling rate was around 39%. The recommendations in the report also aim to reduce fly-tipping and rear entry dumping; and to increase recycling rates which will in turn will improve residential amenity in the borough.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7516 /24) has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5616 /24) is the author of the report.

Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services)
Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)
Chief Planning Officer

(B) External Consultations

None

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 At its meeting held on 27 June 2023 the Committee agreed (Minute No. 5. (2)) that a review be undertaken on the topic of refuse and waste recycling and in respect of this matter, that a visit be arranged to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre (the Centre); and that an informal meeting of the Committee be held following the visit.

1.2 Problems were experienced arranging a mutually agreeable date for the visit to the Centre. The visit to the Centre, and informal meeting of the Committee, eventually took place on 15 January 2024.

2. Background Information on MRWA Materials Recovery Facilities

2.1 On the 1 June 2009 Veolia were awarded a twenty-year Waste Management and Recycling Contract with a value of £640 million by the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA) on behalf of the Merseyside and Halton

Waste Partnership.

The Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) at Gillmoss handled the kerbside collections of Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton and Halton; where co-mingled materials were recovered and separated to be sent on to recycling plants for reprocessing. A similar facility was in operation in Bidston which handled co-mingled materials from Wirral.

The Gillmoss facility had the capacity to sort up to 150,000 tonnes of dry recyclable materials a year; and could process materials at a rate of up to 35 tonnes per hour.

Over the two sites, Merseyside and Halton's MRFs had the capacity to process over 200,000 tonnes per year, producing seven secondary raw material grades and diverting in excess of 63,000 tonnes away from disposal.

This was achieved by using a complex system of conveyors which transported the recyclable material through the process. Technology used through the recovery processes featured mechanical, optical and manual; and these sorting techniques ranged from basic size separation methods to complex computer-controlled equipment used to identify and remove non target materials within the material streams.

Through the combination of such technologies MRWA were able to achieve the high levels of separation of the different materials and convert what would otherwise be waste into secondary raw materials. After the sorting of the materials there was a bulking and storage function whereby balers were used to compress some of the recyclables into dense bales for transport to the materials re-processors and other materials were bulked for transport.

3. Site Visit to Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre

3.1 A tour of the Centre was facilitated by colleagues from MRWA and Veolia.

3.2 Following the tour of the facility Members asked questions/commented on the following matters:

- the new regulations introduced by the Environment Act 2021 to drive up recycling rates across England. A consultation Government response detailing the new regulations can be accessed [here](#) - It was noted that some low-grade recyclable materials had little market value and hindered investment in the recycling of such materials. The MRWA 20-year contract with Veolia was now in its 15th year and the future contract would have to take account of the new legislative changes proposed. However, there was a concern that there would not be a market for the additional materials included in the regulations.
- The recycling of plastic bags/soft plastics by supermarkets – It was noted that supermarkets used their own recycling operators for this purpose.
- Were there any major, recent, changes in the recycling market? – an example was given of China, from 2014, refusing to accept paper for recycling unless it was 100% “clean”. This resulted in less paper being

exported and more recycling undertaken in the UK. It was suggested that due to the increase in digital publications the amount of paper sent for recycling would reduce over time.

- How market conditions impacted on the volatility of the value of recyclable materials; and that this generated uncertainty in decision making and future plans.
- Extended producer responsibility for packaging (EPR) whereby producers would pay the full net costs of managing and recycling the packaging waste they produced through a system of fees.
- Problems experienced in areas of Sefton covered by terraced housing in respect of the storage of bins. It was noted that investigations had been undertaken as to the introduction of communal underground bins in such areas; but that due to the expensive nature of the scheme it was considered to be currently not cost effective.
- It was noted that in areas of terraced housing, where a weekly, black sack collection service was in operation, the collection of recyclable materials was less than other areas of the borough. A reason given for this being that residents simply disposed of all or most of their refuse in the black sacks, as there was no limit as to how many sacks could be presented for collection.
- Concern was expressed at the increasing levels of contamination, currently at about 30%, in materials submitted for recycling at the Gillmoss Recycling Centre. It was agreed that education and enforcement was required to guide residents to make the right choices about recycling. It was also noted that with the introduction of new regulations under the Environment Act 2021, for example food waste collections and co-mingling of other recyclable materials, a behavioural change would be required of residents.
- Concern was expressed at the proliferation of nitrous oxide cannisters in the environment and particularly the problems caused by their disposal in recycling. It was noted that due to their pressurised state, the cannisters could not be recycled at the Gillmoss facility, yet up to 300 per day were removed by staff at the facility. It was also noted however that Veolia had a plant in the West Midlands that was currently looking at ways to recycle such cannisters. If the cannisters could eventually be recycled then information would be provided to community groups who undertook litter picks in their areas.
- It was considered that communications would play an important role in pushing the recycling message and that Merseyside/Halton local authorities, MRWA and Veolia should have a coordinated approach on such matters.

4. Informal Meeting – Bootle Town Hall

- 4.1 Members returned to Bootle Town Hall and an informal meeting of the Committee was held during which Members asked questions/commented on the following matters:

It was agreed that enforcement would play a crucial role in improving recycling rates and combatting anti-social activities such as fly-tipping. Reference was made to the [Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group](#)

which made recommendations about a very significant increase in uniformed enforcement officers to tackle the problems of littering, fly-tipping and rear entry dumping and a high-profile publicity campaign being introduced to highlight the increased enforcement activity to be undertaken.

Reference was also made to the information provided by the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) to the meeting of the Committee on 19 September 2023 on the breakdown of offences for which penalty charge notices had been issued ([PCN Statistics](#)); and information on the reduction in time civil enforcement officers would spend patrolling if the parking and environmental enforcement functions were split ([see report](#)).

It was noted that the Cleansing Service received lots of complaints about fly-tipping/rear entry dumping; that a reactive response/service was provided to the problem; and that it was very difficult to secure convictions for such offences.

It was noted that consultation and engagement could be undertaken to advise residents of their duty to not fly-tip or dump rubbish in rear entries and that initially this would have some success. However, due to the high turnover of tenants in certain parts of the borough, this would have to be an ongoing exercise to ensure continuous improvements in the street scene.

The removal of dumped rubbish on private land was also referred to and how this was treated by the Council. It was noted that on some occasions rubbish would be removed for health and safety/eyesore reasons but that each case would be considered on its individual merits.

It was noted that in various wards in the south of the borough there was an increase in dumping of rubbish in rear entries and it was considered that private and registered social landlords should have some responsibility for the anti-social actions of their tenants.

It was agreed that communications would play a vital role in getting the recycling message out to Sefton's residents regarding what could or could not be recycled in an effort to reduce contamination rates. An example given was that of livery being used on Council vehicles to highlight such matters. This was particularly important considering that recycling targets are required to increase to 65% by 2025. Sefton's current recycling rate was around 39%.

5. Recommendations Arising from the Informal Meeting

5.1 The informal meeting resolved that:

- (1) the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate measures that could be introduced as part of the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes to compel landlords to have a level of control over their tenants to alleviate the anti-social actions of littering and dumping rubbish in rear entries;
- (2) the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development

proposals; and

- (3) the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on methods to increase Sefton's recycling rates; the introduction of communal bins; and wider waste containment issues.

5.2 The informal meeting of the Committee had no formal decision-making powers. Accordingly, for decisions of the informal meeting to be actioned, formal approval is required by a meeting of this Committee.