



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

**to
COUNCIL
12 SEPTEMBER 2024**

ADOPTION OF THE ESSEX WASTE STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members with the key results of the public consultation on the Essex Waste Strategy which was carried out by Essex County Council on behalf of all District / Borough and City Councils.
- 1.2 To clarify what amendments were made following that consultation.
- 1.3 To seek Members agreement to the adoption of the Waste Strategy for Essex 2024-2054 as attached at **APPENDIX 1** to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Waste Strategy for Essex 2024-2054 (**APPENDIX 1**) be adopted;
- (ii) that the Post Adoption Statement on the Strategic Environmental Assessment **APPENDIX 2** to this report be noted.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Essex County Council (ECC), together with the Borough, City and District Councils, has a legal duty to maintain a joint strategy for the management of waste. The thirteen Councils have worked together, as the Essex Waste Partnership (EWP), to jointly develop a new Waste Strategy for Essex (the Strategy) to comply with this duty.
- 3.2 The Strategy provides a 30-year framework for how Essex Councils are seeking to manage the waste collected by local authorities from homes, businesses and street cleansing. The focus of the Strategy is to protect the environment whilst delivering high quality, value for money services that align fully with national policy and meet local needs. The Strategy identifies the key areas of work to deliver the aims and ambitions of the partnership, shared targets and approaches for the management of waste. Following Strategy adoption decisions, work will be undertaken to develop the required countywide and local action plans to deliver the aims and aspirations of the Strategy.
- 3.3 A draft Waste Strategy for Essex was developed and endorsed by the EWP for public consultation in June 2023. The consultation methodology was designed in line with the HM Government code of practice and the Gunning principles and externally validated by The Consultation Institute (TCI).

- 3.4 The public consultation commenced on 13 September 2023 for 10 weeks. Respondents were also able to have their say on the priorities and approaches proposed in the draft Strategy and provide feedback on the Strategic Environmental Assessment published alongside the draft strategy. The findings of the consultation exercise have been independently analysed and used by the EWP to develop a final strategy. Over the consultation period 4,545 consultation questionnaire responses were received.
- 3.5 The 10-week public consultation provided an opportunity for respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the draft Strategy, its priorities, targets, and approach to the management of waste. Respondents to the consultation were also able to provide comments and suggestions on the Strategy and its approach. This has enabled quantitative and qualitative analysis of the consultation responses to be undertaken to inform the final strategy content. A summary of the consultation findings is detailed below.

3.6 **Consultation: Summary of Quantitative Findings**

- 3.6.1 At a county wide level there were very good levels of support for all the elements of the Strategy. The level of agreement for each distinct element of the Strategy ranged from between 61% and 86% with the levels of disagreement between 11% and 26%. Although views differed across the county, the level of agreement exceeded the levels of disagreement in all cases. A full breakdown of responses by a range of demographic factors such as location, age and gender are contained in the Final Consultation Report which can be viewed on the consultation portal – Appendix 8 <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/waste-strategy-for-essex-consultation/>.
- 3.6.2 The consultation also provided respondents with an opportunity to indicate their views on the proposed targets and level of ambition. 48%, nearly half of respondents thought the targets were about right. 28% of respondents indicated a preference for more ambitious targets.

3.7 **Consultation: Summary of Qualitative Findings**

- 3.7.1 Respondents to the questionnaire were able to provide additional contextual information in the form of comments on all aspects of the draft Strategy. Over 16,000 comments were made by those responding to the consultation. These comments were grouped into common themes by the independent evaluator to enable analysis and to inform the development of the final Strategy. The detailed analysis of comments is contained in the Final Consultation Report
- 3.7.2 The comments made by respondents included broad support for the Strategy, suggestions for action planning, and raised some areas that respondents felt needed to be addressed in the final strategy or action planning. Similar comments and themes were identified across the different sections of the strategy and are summarised below:
- General support for the Strategy proposals, aims and ambitions.
 - A suggestion to include clear actions and commitments from the partnership to deliver the necessary change and to enable progress to be monitored.
 - Respondents are supportive of Strategy proposals to provide further information and guidance on how to reduce waste.
 - Respondents are supportive of the Strategy proposals to provide accessible and expanded reuse and recycling services.

- Questioning whether the Strategy aims were achievable and affordable.
- Respondents wanted to understand more about the environmental and local impacts of waste infrastructure, particularly EfW facilities, and where such facilities may be located.
- Suggestion that the partnership should be more active in lobbying government and ensuring businesses reduce waste and packaging.
- Asking for the final version of the Strategy to be clear and easy to understand, avoiding the use of jargon.

3.8 Post Consultation Strategy Amendments

3.8.1 Each of the thirteen Councils in the administrative county of Essex must adopt the Waste Strategy and in doing so they must each consider the consultation responses. The authorities have met together, and they do not recommend any substantial changes to the consultation version. As the public have been broadly supportive of the Strategy. However, the insight obtained via the consultation has highlighted several areas requiring minor amendment, update or enhancement. The Strategy document appended to this report is the output of the post-consultation consideration process and is the version of the Waste Strategy for Essex 2024-2054 proposed for adoption (**APPENDIX 1**).

3.8.2 Details of how consultation response, insight and government policy updates have been considered and reflected in the Waste Strategy for Essex. Detailed below are the key changes that have been made in response to the feedback received.

- Language has been simplified and unnecessary technical terms or jargon have been removed to ensure the Strategy is easy to understand.
- The vision statement has been updated to ensure it more strongly aligns with the strategy focus on waste reduction, reuse and recycling.
- The commitments and high-level actions proposed by the partnership have been updated to make them easier to understand. These will be used by the partnership as the basis for the development of detailed action plans.
- The targets and ambitions have been updated and consolidated to ensure only things which can be quantified and measured are included.
- The Strategy position on landfill has been strengthened by committing to ceasing the use of landfill by 2030.
- Interim steps to achieve a target have been removed from the strategy. These will be incorporated into future action plans to ensure progress can be consistently measured.
- A commitment has been added to regularly review the Strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose and to publish progress reports to ensure continued transparency.
- A commitment has been added to work together to increase recycling in public spaces, reduce litter and fly tipping.
- The Strategy now includes an enhanced commitment by the partnership to lobby government for better regulation to tackle waste at source, ensuring manufacturers and retailers play their part to reduce waste.
- The Strategy has been updated to better reflect the role of business and communities and the need for the partnership to support them to reduce the impact of waste.

3.9 Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.9.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was carried out to consider the environmental impacts of the strategy and the approaches proposed to ensure a high level of protection for the environment and that sustainability is at the forefront of the draft Strategy.
- 3.9.2 Statutory consultees were invited to give responses to the SEA. Responses were received from Natural England and the Environment Agency. Natural England confirmed that, in their view, the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that it has a statutory duty to protect. The Environment Agency had no comment to make on the documents.
- 3.9.3 Feedback on the Strategic Environmental Assessment was also received from 288 respondents via the public consultation. Of those that responded to the SEA, 54% thought the Environmental Report correctly identified the likely significant effects of the draft Strategy. Full details of consultation response to the SEA is included in the Final Consultation Report.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Council along with its partners (including Essex County Council) has a legal duty to agree a countywide Waste Strategy. The Essex Waste Partnership (of which Maldon District Council is a member) has developed this Strategy which sets out a 30-year framework for how Essex Councils are seeking to manage the waste collected by local authorities from homes, businesses, and street cleansing.
- 4.2 The proposed Strategy has been subject to public consultation, with over 4,500 responses being received from stakeholders and members of the public. As outlined above, the draft policy has now been amended appropriately to address feedback received.
- 4.3 Members at all of the Council's within Essex are now being asked to consider the final version of the Essex Waste Strategy as attached in **APPENDIX 1** and to confirm the adoption of the Strategy through their individual governance procedures.
- 4.4 Officers are therefore recommending that the Council reviews the final version of the revised Essex Waste Strategy (**APPENDIX 1**) and with consideration to the processes that have been undertaken to develop the Strategy, that Members agree to its adoption by Maldon District Council.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

5.1 Supporting our communities

- 5.1.1 This strategy outlines how the Essex Waste Partnership will develop and improve its waste collection and waste processing activities to protect the environment whilst delivering high quality, value for money services that align fully with national policy and meet local needs.

5.2 **Helping the economy to thrive**

5.2.1 The Strategy considers how waste collection and disposal can support the economy through initiatives that reduce waste and increase recycling of materials as appropriate.

5.3 **Provide good quality services.**

5.3.1 The Strategy outlines how services will be incrementally improved to ensure that high levels of customer service can be maintained.

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)**- None, this Strategy outlines how we will deliver statutory duties.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.

Background papers: None.

Enquiries to: Carol Love, Waste Commissioning and Contracts Manager.