

# **Report to Overview and Scrutiny Task & Finish Panel**



**Date of meeting: 4 November 2019**

**Subject:** Waste Management Review

**Officer contact for further information:** J Warwick (01992) 564350

**Democratic Services Officer:** V Messenger (01992) 564265

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Panel consider the likely impact of any government decision following the recently concluded Resource and Waste Strategy Consultation.**
- (2) That the Panel make recommendations as to the next steps on the options presented in this report on the following items:**
  - a) That the Panel consider the option to introduce a third wheelie bin to replace clear recycling sacks;**
  - b) That the Panel consider the future collection of food and garden waste in separate containers and the option of charging for the collection of garden waste;**
  - c) That the Panel consider the possibility of not collecting garden waste in certain months of the year when demand is low;**
  - d) That the Panel consider a review of street cleansing arrangements with a view to achieve improvements in cleansing standards; and**
  - e) That the Panel consider improvements in the provision of waste and recycling containers and cleansing operations on the high street, including segregation of recycling materials.**

## **Report:**

1. At its meeting on 13 August 2019, the Waste Management Review Task and Finish Panel agreed for officers to investigate the options for the items listed above. This report sets out the initial findings as required to facilitate and focus discussion at the Task and Finish Panel meeting on 4 November.

**(1) That the Panel consider the likely impact of any government decision following the recently concluded Resource and Waste Strategy Consultation.**

2. The Panel have been tasked to consider the likely impact of any government decision following the recently concluded Resource and Waste Strategy Consultation. This is the first significant Government policy on waste since 2007 and it articulates a clear policy direction in line with the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. Government aims to make England a World leader in resource efficiency and waste reduction. To achieve this the Government plan to use regulation and economic measures to ensure people can do the 'right thing' and those creating polluting products pay for the costs of that pollution.

3. To date four consultations have taken place this year (February – May) to further the aims and objectives of the Resources and Waste Strategy. The consultations were Reforming the UK Packaging Producer Responsibility System, Plastic Packaging Tax, Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS) and Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections.

4. The Government's response to reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility are that it intends to progress its policy proposals and introduce an extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging in 2023. The Government will utilise primary powers in the Environment Bill to implement new extended producer responsibility schemes. Detailed proposals and associated secondary legislation will be published for consultation in 2020. The Government are supportive of producers covering costs associated with litter collection for packaging waste, it intends to explore this option further.

5. In terms of Plastic Packaging Tax, the Government remains supportive of the plastic tax and will set out the next steps at Budget 2019 (scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> November). HMRC will publish a technical consultation on the detail of the tax design at a later date and draft legislation for consultation will be published in 2020.

6. In terms of Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), the Government is minded to introduce a DRS for drinks containers, subject to further analysis on the costs and benefits of such a scheme. The Government anticipate that drinks containers up to 3L will be included but an upper limit is subject to further research and consultation. The Government are to seek primary powers to implement deposit return schemes in the Environment Bill and a second consultation in 2020 on the regulatory framework for introducing a DRS through secondary legislation. Following the second consultation, the Government aims to introduce a DRS by 2023.

7. In terms of Consistency in household and business recycling collections, the Government aim that all local authorities will be required to collect at least the following from 2023:

- Glass containers
- Paper and card
- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
- Steel and aluminium tins and cans

8. Government will legislate for reviewing and amending the core set of materials. Inclusion of food and drink cartons to be given further consideration in 2023. Local authorities will be required to provide a separate weekly food waste collection, The Government's preference is that it is not mixed with garden waste, further consideration on whether free food waste caddy liners should be provided as standard.

9. The Government propose that all households generating garden waste should be provided with a free collection service with a minimum fortnightly capacity of 240-litre. Garden waste contributes significantly to weight based recycling targets. Government retains the view that a free garden waste collection is the best way of ensuring it does not go to landfill or recovery plant. However, considering the lack of support (particularly from Local Authorities) Government will consider the costs and benefits before making a final decision on how to proceed.

**Next Steps:**

10. Further consultations are planned by Government from 2020. This will lead to new legislation being adopted and impacting our services from 2023. Officers will keep abreast of

any new developments and further consultations, and inform the Waste Management Partnership Board.

**(2a) That the Panel consider the possibility of exploring the introduction of a third wheelie bin to replace the current clear recycling sacks for the collection of dry recycling materials.**

11. Epping Forest performs very well nationally in terms of recycling performance and is ranked 34<sup>th</sup> nationally; <https://www.letsrecycle.com/councils/league-tables/2017-18-overall-performance/> It is the opinion of the recycling industry that collection systems based on wheelie bins tend to perform better. This is because sack based collection systems can create barriers to recycling which a wheelie bin solution would help to reduce. For example, the need for residents to collect sacks from outlets (doorstep delivery was stopped to reduce numbers of sacks purchased), and the storage of sacks that have recycling materials in may present storage issues for residents. From a street scene perspective torn sacks can present street cleansing issue if the crews do not pick up the split materials.

12. One reason that dry recycling ends up in the residual bin is because of the ease of using a bin which requires the lifting of a lid compared to finding the sacks, opening the sacks and then the storage space which exceeds the footprint of a bin for comparable volumes also has its own issues.

13. A disadvantage for wheelie bins is that you cannot always see what is in the bottom of a bin so there could be a contamination issue at some properties which would have to be dealt with as done now. A third wheelie bin may also present storage issue for residents, in terms of not having enough space on the property to accommodate a third wheelie bin.

14. This report proposes three options - full implementation, a voluntary wheelie bin scheme or no implementation of a third wheelie bin. With the full implementation, the vehicle and crew configuration will not change from the current service but because the operation is slower, an additional round needs to be added to relieve some of the pressure and absorb the additional working time relating to wheelie bins. If the option of a full introduction is taken, any property exempt from wheelie bin will need a delivery of recycling plastic sacks which has an ongoing cost implication, or we can propose to issue every household with up to 3 reusable blue hessian recycling sacks free of charge. When these hessian sacks are placed out for collection they will be returned to the property.

15. With the voluntary wheelie bin scheme only, those who ask for the bin will be issued with them. The proposal would be to offer residents a standard 240-litre wheelie bin but residents would have the option to choose the size and they can have more than one bin if needed. The costs of the additional vehicle will still be there and will be related to the level of take up of the new wheelie bins. When the take up of voluntary wheeled bins exceeds 30% of the entire district households (not including properties covered by communal bins) the costs of the additional vehicle will then be applied as an additional vehicle will be needed.

16. Costs of implementing the scheme will need to be worked out in more detail and determined following discussion with Biffa, unfortunately this has not been possible in time for this report. There would also likely be a need to consult with residents which will also take a considerable amount of time, as any change in method of collection will affect every household in the District. There is a risk that if not assessed properly there could be a reputational risk to the Council. The financial risk would arise if a fully costed business case does not justify the change or the resident uptake drops due to lack of engagement.

### **Next Steps:**

17. The options are for officers to develop a detailed business case with full cost benefit analysis for full implementation or a voluntary wheelie bin scheme. The other alternative is to not introduce a third wheelie bin and take no further action.

### **(2b) That the Panel consider the future collection of food and garden waste in separate containers and the option of charging for the collection of garden waste.**

18. The council has always had a garden waste collection service in one form or another both free of charge and chargeable. A considerable element in residual bins is food waste and this has been borne out from the numerous Waste Disposal Authority (ECC) waste analysis that have been done over the last decade. This led to the Council reorganising garden waste collection to include food and move to wheelie bins to overcome issues with sack based collection, such as the weight and manual handling of sacks by operatives, eliminating or greatly reducing the attacks by rodents of all types on food waste and effectively reducing spillage before and during collections.

19. There has been a previous offer from Biffa on separation of food and garden by splitting the service and funding this by Biffa charging for garden waste and possible savings used for some of the costs on operating a food waste service. At the time it was not appropriate as the residents would be direct customers of Biffa and would remain so at the end of the contract and the charge proposed was £60 per year per bin. There were also savings which could be used to offset any costs. There could be an advantage to reopen discussions with Biffa to find an option acceptable to the authority and to Biffa. It could be that we pay a cost to Biffa for garden waste keeping either a free or reduced cost service to residents.

20. Government in its Resource and Waste Strategy Consultation are seriously considering making food waste compulsory and separate. This is because a considerable amount of residual waste is organic in nature with the overwhelming part of that being food waste. By undertaking this work EFDC will be ahead of the national drive by authorities to collect separate food waste.

21. The general cost of processing food is up to three times as much compared to pure garden waste and since garden waste is between 80 to 90% of the co-mingled weight the savings can be used to offset the costs of the separate food service. There is also a possibility that the WDA will finance the splitting of the service completely but this needs to be discussed with a formal agreement through the IAA (Inter Authority Agreement).

22. Another advantage of having separate services is that the authority must pay the contract price for a food and garden service per property. Were the services split EFDC could negotiate to pay for a garden service where there is a garden to use the service. The question of do we issue free caddy liners is very prominent or let residents pay for them. The lack of them is known to be an obstacle to food recycling as residents do not like having dirty caddies that need regular cleaning. However, the costs of providing these liners will be substantial and a continuous expense.

23. The splitting of the two waste streams will require new additional 7.5 tonne DAF with Terberg lift vehicles, with the necessary equipment for the safe storage and collection of food waste. All vehicles will need to be crewed by a driver and two loaders to be effective and collect the necessary volume of properties. According to where we need to tip the waste it may be possible to purchase electric or hybrid vehicles to undertake this work. This would help to nullify the additional emissions created by additional vehicles. It would mean that the infrastructure needed to charge these vehicles would need to be established at the Biffa depot.

24. Staff currently used on the combined service would be redeployed to the new food service and the separate garden service as outlined in another T&F Panel report. The Qualified HGV drivers may be over qualified for driving the new food vehicles but with the turnover of staff these would be assured of a job at their previous level. With the additional vehicles especially when the garden service is operational for the six months, we may need to help Biffa with additional parking. The current Biffa depot in the way it is presently configured is at capacity.

#### 25. Capital Costs

To purchase a vehicle would be approx. £81,000 x 6 rounds plus 1 spare = £567,000. This does not include servicing and fuel, the possibility of using electric vehicles, or higher up-front costs but lower operating costs.

Kitchen caddies will be funded out of existing budgets.  
45,000 x 25 litre kerbside caddies @ £1.02 = £45,900

Total capital costs £612,900

#### 26. Revenue costs

Total staff yearly cost = £70,681.73 per crew x 6 = £424,090.38\*

Total vehicle running costs to be ascertained.

Caddy liners cost @ £2.00 x 2 rolls per year = £208,000

Total revenue costs £63,2090.38 + vehicle running costs

\*Driver £12.30 x 44 = £541.20 per week

Loader = £10.49 x 39 x 2 = £818.06 per week

Total cost per week = £1,359.264 x 52 = £70,681.73

27. From the public it will be another container that they will need to deal with but the industry and government are heavily leaning in that direction anyway. Also, it is possible that our WDA may require us to separate food waste off due to the high processing costs that they incur especially as the current service is a mixed food and garden service. There are liable to be increased missed collections due to size of the container unless we are very clear on where the food caddy needs to be placed for collection.

#### **Next Steps:**

28. Members recommend that a proposal is put to Overview and Scrutiny to separate food and garden waste or the collection service remains as is. A decision is also made whether it is recommended for the Council to charge for the collection of garden waste or whether this remains a free service.

#### **(2c) That the Panel consider the possibility of not collecting garden waste in certain months of the year when demand is low.**

29. The Council has operated garden waste collection previously over a 6-month period from beginning of April until the end of September. It has also previously charged for the service when garden waste was collected in bio-degradable and ordinary plastic sacks. Epping Forest District has a high number of properties with gardens therefore the Council has always provided a service that has taken this type of household waste.

30. The separation of garden waste from other types of waste is important as the waste itself is clearly durable and can be recycled into other products such as soil improver. This is processed by the Waste Disposal Authority (ECC) contracts as they did not want it taking up valuable space in landfill and now do not want it in the sorting facility at Basildon.

31. By reducing the year-long current service it will mean lower overall emissions and fuel costs and fewer large vehicles on the road during that period. It would allow the re-allocation of resources into creating a separate food waste service with other advantages such as using smaller vehicles and others detailed in the Task and Finish Panel report on separate food & garden collections.

32. The disadvantages are that the current service requires the use of 26 tonne or larger vehicles to collect even when it is no longer the growing season and garden waste is reduced to nearly nothing. This is because the food element of the service still needs to be collected and the container for the mixed service is a wheelie bin. This leads to higher costs for lower tonnage and higher emissions as well.

33. The service in its current format could not operate separate services. The collection of garden waste during part of the year could only operate if the Council chooses to operate the separation food and garden waste collection service.

34. The service implications from going from a full year service to a six-monthly service operationally is relatively straight forward. The decision on the frequency of the service is more complicated if it stays weekly or goes fortnightly. The bins supplied could range from 180 to 340 litres if it moved to a fortnightly service. Any returned bins by residents not using a chargeable service can be re-lidged into refuse or the voluntary recycling bin mentioned in another Task and Finish Panel report.

35. In terms of the vehicles, these already exist so it would be difficult to reduce these costs for the 6 months the service does not operate. However, they can be used as spare vehicles during this 6-month period instead of the current practise of hiring in additional vehicles to cover servicing, accidents and repairs.

36. The current permanent staff for the food and garden service can be protected and used to cover vacancies created by natural wastage and to cover short term absence such as holidays, sickness etc. From discussions with Biffa there is no need for redundancies to change existing staff contracts. When the new service is operating the new crews will be a mixture of full time employees (to ensure quality of collections, reliability etc) and agency/fixed term contract staff.

37. There would be staff and vehicle (fuel, servicing etc) savings for the six-month period it does not operate. There could be slightly higher staff costs during the operational six months due to agency costs over costs of full time employed staff but we would encourage Biffa to recruit based on a fix term basis which would reduce costs to basically the same as full time staff. Any costs of advertising these fixed term posts would be small. Overall for this part of a new service there would be savings which would be offset against the costs of the new food service. More detailed discussions with Biffa on costs have not been held as there is a submitted Biffa report issued last year which allows the separation of food into a new service and the operation of a garden service based on charging the residents. If the Council were to pursue this option, formal discussions with Biffa would be required.

38. The Council has the option of charging to cover the cost and delivery for the larger wheeled bin and to further charge for the ongoing collection to cover actual costs and to raise revenue. Some of the public believe that this service should be free at the point of collection and paid for via council tax. The legislation regarding this form of household waste is clear –

that a charge can be made and that the cost of containers can also be recovered. (In fact, the charging for containers covers all waste services including refuse). Many councils do have a charge for the collection of garden waste and most of the public do know these charges exist elsewhere. While it is not a “first” choice option nor is the raising of council tax to cover the costs of the service that not all residents have access to (flats).

**Next Steps:**

39. A recommendation is made to either collect garden waste at certain times of the year or to keep the service as it currently operates (all year round).

**(2d) That the Panel consider a review of street cleansing arrangements with a view to achieve improvements in cleansing standards.**

40. The authority has one of the highest specifications in the country that fully covers the EPA (Environmental Protection Act) COPLAR (The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse) guidance. The actual effectiveness of this is restricted by the contractor’s ability to cover the work without being constantly monitored by client officers (Enfield has 17 monitoring officers on the streets). Contract supervision in this area goes from being very effective to very weak.

41. Street cleansing is divided into various zones according to usage and between detritus and litter. Most residents do not take notice of detritus unless it is very bad. What our residents complain about is litter, either vehicle thrown or dropped by residents with very little footfall. To lead to an improvement in these areas we either increase our spending or re-allocate paid existing resources to tackle the issue. The costs of this additional work are shown under costs below.

42. Officers feel a more effective and efficient way of dealing with this litter is to create litter pick routes on the major through roads in the district and reduce the frequency of full cleansing in residential roads. This will not include roads off the District’s high roads or tube stations. *Appendix A* shows the proposed through routes which the majority of traffic including commuters uses to get from one side of the District to another.

43. There are two options for reducing the cleansing to fund these additional litter picking routes. These are: -

1. To reduce the frequency from every two weeks to three weeks.
2. Change the cleansing schedule from full cleanse every two weeks to every four weeks with other scheduled cleanse undertaken by litter picking. Over a six-week period it will be a full cleanse then two weeks later litter picking operation then two weeks later a full cleanse and so on.

44. The spare capacity created can then be used to have these weekly litter picks in the proposed through roads. Therefore, it is not a real reduction in service but a reallocation of resources to areas that need a more frequent litter pick clearance. This will lead to greater public satisfaction with whatever option is chosen. If the three-week option is chosen officers intend to involve the refuse crews in emptying the litter bins on these residential roads affected by ensuring the scheduling will still empty litter bins every two weeks as now.

45. A high-profile publicity campaign would be required, making residents aware of the enforcement of the new law regarding vehicle thrown litter and issuing dashcam cameras to staff who work outside to try and catch vehicle litter offenders in the long term. In the short-term officers propose purchasing three tripod movable street signs 3 x 3 with different messages to be agreed such as “don’t throw litter from cars, this can lead to a fine – mobile

cameras in operation” You don’t drop litter in your home so don’t do it on the street this can lead to a fine – mobile cameras in operation”.

46. The ability to reduce litter on through roads will have a visual effect and lead to the area being cleaner and seen to be cleaner. This reallocation of resources will be an advantage to the Council’s budget and the adverse impact on the streets by going from a 2-week full cleanse to an alternative full cleanse then litter pick to full cleanse is small. The same with moving the schedule from 2 weeks to every 3 weeks and reusing the resource from the saving of 9 cleanses per road per year to create the litter pick through routes will lead to improvements.

47. The only disadvantage is the possible limited perception with a small number of residents that this is a down grading of the service in relation to their road unless you live on one of these proposed through routes. This is not a reduction in service but a reallocation of resources to areas that need a more frequent litter pick clearance. This will lead to greater public satisfaction and will reduce the “there is rubbish here so a bit more won’t make a difference” mentality. This will also lead to a reorganisation of how streets are cleaned where we see a condensed form of cleansing with either larger crews or existing crews all working in one area. This will increase the level of supervision and onsite training to ensure standards are maintained and less downtime travelling from one site to another.

48. The ability for our Environmental Neighbourhoods Team (ENT) to hold high publicity enforcement of the new law about vehicle thrown litter will need to be explored further. The issuing dashcam cameras to staff who work outside to try and catch vehicle litter offenders will lead to a cost for the cameras and installation. This could be trialled with Biffa vehicles first and costs paid for out of the funds Biffa have available for such works. This will lead to process mapping of an effective procedure that the ENT can use for their enforcement.

49. There are no obvious issues except a small number of residents may notice that we have gone from a two-weekly schedule to a three-weekly schedule or the split service of one cleanse full clean and one litter pick. This can be justified because of the high standards we have in EFDC and that we want to deal with the issue of litter on main through roads at no extra cost to the council tax payer. If there are serious cleansing issues between the scheduled cleanses this will be covered by the COPULAR clauses within the existing contract. It also shows residents that we keep the service under review and react to changing circumstances.

#### **Next Steps:**

50. A recommendation is made to implement the changes to street cleansing arrangements, the first option is to reduce the frequency from every two weeks to three weeks. Alternatively, the second option is to change the cleansing schedule from full cleanse every two weeks to every four weeks with other scheduled cleanse undertaken by litter picking. Over a six-week period it will be a full cleanse then two weeks later litter picking operation then two weeks later a full cleanse and so on.

#### **(2e) That the Panel consider improvements in the provision of waste and recycling containers and cleansing operations on the high street, including the segregation of recycling materials.**

51. Litter bins are a well-known functionally item of street furniture when kept clean, emptied regularly and of the right storage and design. It can also be used as an educational driver by presenting options allowing residents to turn passive support into positive action by separating recyclables from general waste. Examples of recycling litter bins are shown in *Appendix B*.



52. There are currently 311 bins in High Street zones that have a daily emptying of litter bins by either static and crew street cleansing workers and is worth undertaking the change in litter bins. I would suggest also that a priority ranking of these areas also takes place so our main central shopping high streets are done first. Officers have done this on *Appendix C* which has reduced the numbers to 187 but locations can be changed as necessary by Councillors. Further reductions can be made by not replacing all the litter bins at large locations. It is advised that the replacement of bins is phased over a 5-year period to keep the costs manageable. We can keep to the black colour of the bin but for this to be successful we either colour the recycling part of the lid with colour or livery. If metal bins are used we could look at wrapping that part of the bin in some way with a recycling message.

53. The disadvantage could be rust and graffiti. However, there are smooth surfaced plastic mixture bins that would have the same effect as metal. This will mean that "themed" litter bins that exist in the District will over time need to be replaced with the recycling litter bins.

54. The advantages of undertaking a change in litter bins on the high street is that it creates a good publicity story, reinforces the Council's position as a lead recycler and continues to educate the public that not all waste is waste, certain waste has value not only in money but in environmental benefits. Officers do not believe there are any implications for residents as many will see the option of recycling as a positive advantage and in line with helping to combat environmental and climate issues.

55. To be effective recycling bins need to be next door to a waste litter bin, if they are separate you create a barrier that could mean recyclables will end up in the waste. However, if you place them side by side and the recycling section is noticeable by using a bright colour, it will encourage the separation of waste on the street as it becomes an extension of what is done at home. This change can be used as a practical example of driving behaviour change and the thought process on all waste without being overtly prescriptive.

56. The disadvantages are that litter bins are not cheap to purchase and that we should look at each high street and complete any change over one high street at a time. The other issue is that the new bins have a greater footprint than existing ones and we may have to move the locations as needed. This can be taken as an inconvenience by residents who are used to a bin being there but we would need to keep the new ones as close to the original locations as possible and within eyesight with clear sightlines to other bins both backwards and forwards in that pedestrian's route of travel.

57. The only service implementations are the need for training of staff to keep the recyclables separate and identified so the public can clearly see the operation in action and the care to keep separate the recycling. This can be done by using a different colour sacks for the collection of recyclables. The vehicles would need a separate storage compartment in the caged area and any new vehicles must have this in its design feature. Due to previous and current recycling needs on street cleansing we have already created such areas on the existing vehicles.

58. There are no additional street cleansing contract, labour or sacks costs with the adoption of this item. The reason for undertaking the change over several years is because the costs of purchasing and changing the bins is considerable.

The current cost of installing a litter bin is £65. The costs of purchase of the various litter bins is shown below: -

The NEXUS double recycling bin	£530.45	
Topsy Royale (plastic)	£199.46	(We buy 10 and get one free)
Brunel	£662.62	

59. To replace all 311 litter bins would be £164,969.95 (without possible discounts) with installation at £20,215 plus removal of old bin and taking to storage. The cost for the entire project would be around £190,000. It is recommended that certain locations are identified and prioritised to have the new bins installed, which will reduce the number of bins to 187 and costs £99,194.15 with installation at £12,155 making a total of £111,349.15. The costs over a 5-year period would be a budget increase of £22,270 per year. There would also be savings in the existing street furniture budget by reusing the old bin especially if it's the Brunel square reinforced litter bin (see below) which are installed in most of our high streets.



60. This could also allow us to increase the litter bin provision in the District by looking at areas that create litter because people are stationary like certain bus stops or school areas. This can be done because it will cost us £65 per bin to install reusing bins from the high streets instead of £65 plus £662.62 per location.

**Next Steps:**

61. A recommendation is made to replace the litter bins with new recycling bins over a phased period as detailed above. Options to be able to replace bins within existing budgets is being explored by officers and a verbal update will be given at the meeting on 4 November.

**Resource Implications:**

These are detailed in the body of the report except for the full costings of introducing a third wheelie bin for dry recycling. Further work and time is required to ascertain these should the Council wish to pursue this option.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Council's Constitution sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities.

Any changes to the collection arrangements or types of materials collected would require a formal contract variation with the Council's waste management contractor Biffa Municipal Limited.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The proposals listed in the report will have a positive impact on the street scene in the District.

There are no adverse implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the District.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Not at this stage. Biffa and other internal and external stakeholders will be consulted once work commences on the recommendations in this report.

**Background Papers:**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee decision on the formation of this Task and Finish Panel.

**Impact Assessments:****Risk Management:**

The Council's Constitution (Article 6) sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities.

**Equality:**

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.