

Thursday 29 February 2024 10:00

Climate and Ecological Emergency – Recycling

In Attendance:

East Suffolk Council Officers Kate McFarland (Waste and Recycling Contract Manager) and Sophie Underwood (Waste and Street Scene Monitoring Officer)

Lowestoft Town Councillors Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray.

Lowestoft Town Council Officers Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

This meeting had been arranged following a query on the inclusion of blister packs and tetrapaks in the East Suffolk Council (ESC) Refuse & Dogs Waste Bin Policy. Kate McFarland informed the attendees that ESC was unable to recycle these items due to the mix materials composition being difficult to separate and often the organisations able to facilitate recycling these items had limited capacity and were located outside of the UK.

ESC were keen to collaborate with Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) to improve recycling in the area and encourage residents to use the services available and attendees were asked for suggestions.

The ESC Officers were asked if there were plans to reinstate food waste recycling, which had previously been undertaken by Waveney District Council. Kate McFarland confirmed government funding was available until April 2026 to implement food waste collections. Due to the short timescale, there were issues with instigating procurement and acquiring new vehicles, containers, employees and arranging the disposal route (for which Norfolk and Essex were being considered) therefore ESC were working with Suffolk Waste Partnership to meet the deadline. It was confirmed that the food would be composted.

Cllr Ray mentioned that a local organisation (Use It All) had previously arranged local collection for recycling, such as tetrapaks, and ESC could review storage options for Use It All to resume their collection activities. This organisation also intended to run a campaign on recycling and reducing contamination.

The ESC Officers informed attendees that a compilation of data on recycling and the bins collected would be difficult as collection rounds were set up for efficient routes and would not yield ward-specific data, though reporting the kilograms of waste collected per household would be feasible. Links with information on what is collected and where the waste goes (suffolkrecycling.org.uk) would be shared with the LTC Councillors.

Cllrs Brooks noted residents often leave their bins out in public areas and suggested ESC undertake a campaign to encourage the public to take their bins in. Cllr Ray added that the campaign could include education on what items were allowed in the blue bin. Sophie Underwood agreed this was an ongoing issue and informed the attendees that any properties with their bins left out were served a Section 46 Notice, with further action undertaken by the Environmental Protection Team who were the enforcing powers, and ESC were in the process of designing stickers to place on the bins to act as the Section 46 Notice and speed up the process.

Cllr Brooks suggested a competition to improve the streets and alleys, perhaps with planting in the areas, be considered and whilst the ESC Officers agreed this was feasible, any land ownership issues would need to be considered and planting must not obstruct the residents or vehicles.

Kate McFarland suggested a campaign be launched with data on the number of blue bins rejected due to the wrong composition, with an aim to educate the public and monitor if there are reductions in the number of rejected bins. LTC offered to provide financial support for these campaigns from its Climate and Ecological budget.

Kate McFarland suggested an action plan be created on collaborative ideas and campaigns, with a follow-up meeting to be arranged to share these ideas and formulate a plan. This would be discussed by the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee.

As part of collaboration between the two Councils, it was queried if ESC could acknowledge the LTC bulky waste initiative on their website. Kate McFarland was uncertain on this but confirmed ESC could provide data on fly-tipping and the collection of bulky items through their service. LTC Councillors asked officers confirm if data from the LTC bulky waste contractors could be shared with ESC.

The next meeting would be scheduled for 21st March 2024 14:00-15:00.

The meeting was closed at 11:15