

**Staffordshire Sustainability Board**  
**Monday 25 September 2023**

**Briefing Note – Food Waste the Journey So Far**

**Introduction**

To provide members of the SSB with the journey Newcastle under Lyme borough council have undertaken in separately collecting food waste since 2010, and what the challenges will be for all members of the SSB moving forward, as separate collections of food waste become mandatory for all Waste Collection authorities (WCA's) in England.

Detail what treatment solutions Staffordshire County Council, acting as Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) has put in place for the WCAs to use.

**Briefing Note**

Food waste is a national issue, with over 30% being wasted (WRAP estimates) through the supply chain. In 2019 the SWP undertook analysis of residual waste across all of the WCA's in Staffordshire and found on average 30% of the material in residual waste was food.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has separately collected food waste since 2010, as part of the move from weekly to fortnightly residual waste collections and was one of the first authorities in the Country to do so. Separate collections of food waste are mandated in Wales and Scotland and have been mandated in England as part of the Environment Act 2021, although the date is yet to be confirmed, 2025 being originally suggested, as part of the Consistency in Collections part of the national Resource and Waste Strategy (RAWS).

Newcastle took a brave step at the time, with the Anaerobic Digestion industry gaining momentum as a provider for renewable energy. Our first contract was with Lower Reule Bio-energy, owned by a farming family who were wishing to diversify. The Council took a bit of a risk at the time as the site wasn't built, and Lower Reule needed a contract for supply of material to release funding to build the facility. Thankfully it all came together, and the contract worked really well for its duration, including extensions which were built into the original contract.



In 2016 we commenced work with our second contractor, Biffa, following procurement of a new contract. It was interesting to see how the AD industry had moved on, and the gate fee for processing effectively disappeared, as the business models for these facilities was based more on selling energy, whether electricity or gas to grid.

Moving to our third procurement, we took the decision to undertake this jointly with the County Council as WDA. A joint procurement would allow for a County wide framework of providers in readiness for when it becomes mandatory for all English WCA's to have separately collect food waste as mentioned earlier in the briefing.

The results from this procurement show how the AD industry has moved on again, with income now being paid for food waste sent to AD facilities. This again is linked to changes in the energy market, and the fact that there is currently capacity within the AD infrastructure, creating competition. When mandatory collections commence, that could well change, and there will be a need for additional AD facilities potentially. This third contract, awarded to BioTech4 commenced in August 2023, and will have a positive impact on the Council budget of around £70,000 per annum over the previous arrangements.

So, thirteen years from rolling out our first separate collections, food waste is now seen as a valuable resource, not a waste, and therefore we need to do all we can to maximise participation and get food waste out of resident's residual waste bins.

In treating food as a valuable resource however, we do not want to encourage residents to waste more food, just the opposite we need everyone to reduce their food waste. The advantage of separating food for separate collection means people can see just how much food they are wasting and will amend their habits accordingly. That said you will never eliminate food waste, it's not about food left on a plate following a meal, food waste will still be created in the preparation of meals.

In the thirteen years Newcastle has been separately collecting food waste we have collected 36,122 tons of food, diverting it away from our normal disposal routes and doing so with a positive carbon benefit.

The service does cost in terms of collection. Additional income will offset this cost, and we are hoping moving forward government will fund our

operations therefore allowing us to expand further collection operations to flats and commercial premises.

#### WDA Procurement Exercise

It is still unclear when the Resources and Waste Strategy will be made public, but there is good indication that separate food waste will be made mandatory. The County acting as Waste Disposal Authority, wanted to ensure that there was a treatment route available for when it was needed.

The tender was made up of two lots, lot 1 was for NULBC, Lot 2 provided a framework of off takers that all other WCAs can use.

Currently food waste from 6 WCAs is being processed through the County established disposal routes. If this is collected separately, it is the County Council's expectation that food waste will still be directed for treatment through the County's procured framework.

There are four off takers on the framework and the disposal locations are:

1. Biogen – Atherstone
2. Biffa Poplars – Cannock
3. BioteCH4 – Shropshire
4. Olleco Northamptonshire

Alongside these disposal locations there is also Leek Waste Transfer Station, and the existing 14 House Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), that SCC looking at the possibility of using to Transfer food if needed. However, the potential disposal routes for the individual WCAs are:

WCA	Delivery method	Disposal point	Directed
NULBC	Transfer Station (Knutton)	BioteCh4	Confirmed
SMDC	Transfer Station (Leek)	BioteCh4	TBC
ESBC	Transfer Station or HWRC	TBC	TBC
SBC	Direct	Biffa Poplars	TBC
SSC	Direct	Biffa Poplars	TBC

LDC	Direct or Transfer Station (LHF)	Biffa Poplars or Biogen	TBC
TBC	Direct or Transfer Station (LHF)	Biffa Poplars or Biogen	TBC
CCDC	Direct	Biffa Poplars	TBC

As WCAs begin to collect food waste, these routes will be reviewed to ensure they deliver the best option available for each collection authority.

### Conclusion

There is an estimated average 30% of food waste within in residual waste collected in Staffordshire. Separate collections of food waste are mandated in Wales and Scotland and have been mandated in England as part of the Environment Act 2021, although the date is yet to be confirmed, 2025 being originally suggested, as part of the Consistency in Collections part of the national Resource and Waste Strategy (RAWS).

In the thirteen years Newcastle has been separately collecting food waste we have collected 36,122 tons of food, diverting it away from our normal disposal routes and doing so with a positive carbon benefit.

NULBC completed a joint procurement with SCC and the subsequent contract was awarded to BioTech4 and commenced in August 2023. It also produced a County wide framework of providers in readiness for when it becomes mandatory for all English WCA’s to have separately collect food waste as mentioned earlier in the briefing.

Currently food waste from 6 WCAs is being processed through the County established disposal routes. If this is collected separately, it is the County Council’s expectation that food waste will still be directed for treatment through the County’s procured framework.

### List of Background Documents/Appendices:

None.

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