

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
9 NOVEMBER 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene, and Environment Adrian Chapman – Executive Director, Place and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Nigel Simons - Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene, and Environment	
Contact Officer(s):	James Collingridge – Assistant Director of Operations Richard Pearn - Head of Waste, Resources and Energy	Tel. (01733) 864736/864739

PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR WASTE, STREET SCENE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Councillor Simons Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene, and Environment	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>Considers and scrutinises this report and endorses the approach being taken under the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene, and Environment.</p>	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is provided to update the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the progress of items under the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene, and Environment.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The report is being presented by Cllr Simons at the request of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee. The report will provide an overview of all the key portfolio areas. It will also provide an overview of the current performance of Aragon Direct Services, including recycling rates and open space management.

- 2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

- 2. Environmental Capital
- 6. Waste Strategy and Management

- 2.3 The Cabinet Portfolio for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment covers the following areas: -

- a) Peterborough Limited trading as Aragon Direct Services (ADS), ADS have responsibility for the following Services: -
- Street Cleansing
 - Waste and Recycling Collections
 - Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture
 - Home to School Transport

- Property Maintenance
- Vehicle Maintenance and Taxi MOTs
- Catering

Peterborough Limited additionally cover: -

- Vivacity Leisure

- b) Waste Strategy and Management
- c) Leads on the Council's energy strategy
- d) Responsible for Westcombe Engineering

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 **Aragon Direct Services (ADS)**

- 4.1.1 ADS is a trading name for part of the Peterborough Ltd company. Since ADS was formed in February 2019 it has seen many back-office changes to streamline operations and reduce overhead costs to the authority. More recently, it has also taken on certain services previously delivered by Vivacity which has led to efficiencies as a result of the cross-business sharing of resources. This has really helped to bolster ADS in areas such as Communications, Finance, and HR.

The current ADS contract now delivers a breadth of services including:

- Street Cleansing
- Waste and Recycling Collections
- Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture
- Home to School Transport
- Property Maintenance
- Vehicle Maintenance and Taxi MOTs
- Catering

- 4.1.2 ADS is overseen by a board of directors which includes senior ADS officers and Councillors. The board is in place to oversee the running of the company and maintain an overarching view on spend and business development.

PCC have fortnightly contractual meetings with the Managing Director of Peterborough Ltd and fortnightly operations meetings with its senior managers. Ultimately any changes to the governance or structure of Peterborough Ltd, as well as overall performance, is reported into the Shareholder Cabinet Committee.

Daily the contract is monitored by Assistant Director for Operations, who also uses contractual key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure ADS are delivering cost effective services.

4.2 **Overview of Service Areas and Performance**

4.2.1 **Street Cleansing**

- (i) ADS undertake street cleansing throughout the city, currently emptying 1,386 litter bins and 355 dog waste bins on varying schedules. Between April 2021 and March 2022 ADS have collected 1,322.65 tonnes of street sweepings.
- (ii) ADS has also been fully supportive and actively helping the Peterborough Wombles and the

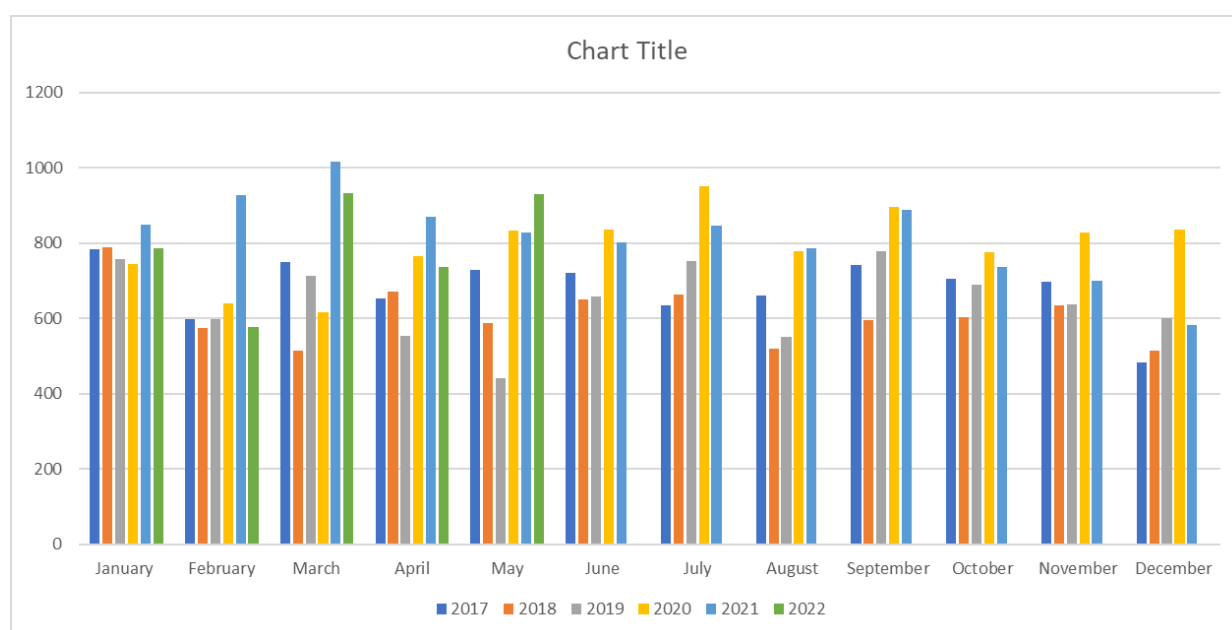
magnificent work they have been doing around the city, via provision of litter pickers and bags, as well as collecting the waste gathered.

We are now currently working jointly to produce a litter strategy that we will adopt for the city including the types of bins we will install, signage and working with groups such as the Wombles.

We have continued to see a positive increase in the number of residents and groups wanting to volunteer to carry out litter picks and have recently purchased 500 litter pickers to help support volunteer activity.

- (iii) Fly tipping continues to be an issue across the city and country. ADS are working hard to clear fly tipping within the KPI timeframe of 24 hours for hazardous waste and 48 hours for non-hazardous waste as soon as this is reported to them.

The following table gives a monthly comparison on fly-tip numbers per month since 2017. As you can see the data shows that we have continued to see a high-level rate of fly tipping across the board and at this point this does not seem to be reducing.



Between April 2021 and March 2022, 68 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for fly tipping offences and 18 cases have been prepared for court action. In this period ADS have collected 1,709.38 tonnes of fly tipping.

We have been working with third party enforcement companies that are bringing different technologies including surveillance and CCTV to the city, in an attempt to catch the culprits. A director-led cross-council/ADS working group has also been established to examine long term options to reduce fly tipping in the city.

4.2.2 RECAP Fly Tipping Group / Task and Finish Group

RECAP - Recycling for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – is a partnership comprising all councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, including the County Council, and is focussed on tackling fly tipping together using a nationally available toolkit.

The RECAP fly tipping group continues to meet monthly and is currently focussed on:

- social media / awareness campaigning linked to the fly tipping SCRAP It campaign
- submitting a funding submission to the Police and Crime Commissioner around environmental crime, for equipment to support surveillance and enforcement
- Sharing of best practice / intelligence around environmental crime, in particular fly tipping across the districts

4.2.3 **Waste, Recycling Collection and Waste Treatment**

- (i) ADS operate a fortnightly collection of residual and recycling waste from circa 85,000 properties, with food waste being collected weekly.

Garden waste continues to be a paid-for service and we have 20,408 subscriptions this year compared to 20,183 last year. Residents continue to take up the Direct Debit option, with 9,429 choosing to pay by breaking down the charge over 3 payments and making it a recurring subscription. Of these totals, 4,229 households subscribe to two bins.

Current recycling rates are shown below compared to the previous financial year; we are currently slightly down which is a situation many councils have found following the impacts of Covid-19. Projects are in hand to drive this rate back up, recognising that with each 1% that can be diverted into the correct recycling waste stream we can save the authority circa £65,000.

- April 20 - March 21 = 40.90% Recycled/Composted
- April 21 - March 22 = 38.90% Recycled/Composted

- (ii) The tender for the new refuse vehicle fleet has been completed by Dennis Eagle, who have delivered the new core fleet with food pods and moving from all diesels to new diesel body with electric bin lifts. We are also awaiting delivery of two fully electric refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) which will be used on the garden waste service as they do not require the food pods. The use of food pods restricted the ability to source all electric RCVs for the main service with presently available vehicles.
- (iii) ADS recognise there is currently a limited number of HGV drivers applying for positions as refuse drivers, and as such they have been internally training staff and have already seen 5 operatives now qualify for their HGV licence.

4.2.4 **Bulky Waste Collections**

This service presently is booked through the call centre at Peterborough Direct, with payment being required at time of booking before the collection is approved and scheduled with ADS.

The service can offer up to 30 collections per day on a Tuesday to Friday inclusive and is very well used with available slots booked up for at least 3 to 4 weeks in advance.

The existing customer interface is a legacy system which is not fit for the future demands of the service, and as such a project is underway to directly connect the customer interface on the council's website with the back-office computer system ADS use to streamline the user experience and reduce administrative costs. This work was required irrespective of the status of charging or otherwise.

4.2.5 **Recycling Improvement - Education and Awareness Raising**

Members may well have seen some of the good work undertaken in 2021-22 with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) supported food waste communications campaign, bin stickers and associated social media engagement.

In February and March 2021 all residents in the city were delivered a food waste leaflet and a roll of liners with a No Food Waste sticker applied to the black residual waste bin with the aim to increase participation in the weekly food waste service and thus increase tonnes captured. Annual results show it has been a success with 1,247 tonnes of additional food waste collected between April 2021 - March 2022 compared to the previous year, an impressive 30% increase. In addition, requests for food waste caddy's increased with 5,214 indoor caddy requests and 6,168 outdoor caddy requests being made.

Caddy requests:

Caddy type	Requests
Inside only	843
Outdoor only	1797
Indoor and Outdoor	4371
Total Indoor	5214
Total Outdoor	6168

Tonnes of Food Waste collected:

	2020	2021	Increase in tonnes	% Increase
February	304	315	11	3.61%
March	336	386	50	14.88%
April	376	504	128	34.04%
May	367	480	113	30.79%
June	333	478	145	43.54%
July	319	489	170	53.29%
August	324	379	55	17.13%
September	351	404	53	14.97%
October	339	418	79	23.30%
November	340	430	90	26.47%
December	331	492	161	48.64%
	2021	2022	Increase in tonnes	% Increase
January	376	469	93	24.73%
February	315	412	97	30.79%
March	386	449	63	16.32%

Total increase over 12 months post project is 1,247 tonnes which equates to a saving of £107,000.

Officers are now working on proposals to develop and deliver a targeted education programme, which, subject to funding, would commence in early 2023. Dedicated education and communication staff will target areas where contamination, poor participation or other issues are affecting the recycling performance of the city as a whole. Using information gathered from crews, inspections of collected material and data gathered by the onboard equipment areas can be identified and communication efforts targeting the key issues can be undertaken in conjunction with ADS.

4.2.6 Household Recycling Centre (HRC)

The HRC has been performing well in segregating material away from disposal and performance to year ending March 2022 is 71.11% of received materials separated for recycling, reuse, and composting. This is above the performance achieved at the Dogsthorpe site. However, the development of the service is not yet complete. Part of the facility is specifically designed to permit the hand sorting of any bags of mixed waste that contain recycling and included within the contract is a role for educating site users as to how to prepare for recycling on site. This will improve the resident's next visit, as segregated materials are often quicker to deposit and allows an opportunity to engage in the wider recycling and environmental message at home. Due to the implications of Covid-19 this development is under review with and a starting date to be arranged when it is deemed safe to regularly come into close contact with residents using the service.

4.2.7 Resources and Waste Strategy – RECAP

A project was undertaken across the RECAP authorities to develop proposed ways of waste and recycling collection to allow partners to move services towards aligning with the developing national government Resources and Waste Strategy.

The strategy, arising from the Environment Act 2021, aims to bring consistency to the materials collected by councils across the country to improve the quality and quantity of recycling collected nationally. By working with RECAP partners, funding for a modelling exercise was secured from DEFRA with the ultimate aims being to align to the national strategy, reduce cost and improve services to residents. It is not expected that the government will publish their response to the second round of consultations until sometime during late 2022, and therefore RECAP partners will wait to revisit this modelling to ensure it reflects any update to previously published policy direction.

Other provision in the expected strategy aims to legislate to influence the producers of packaging to simplify its design for improved recycling and to ensure the costs of recycling, and treating non-recyclable packaging, is borne by the producers themselves. This aims to assist councils in future service design and delivery subject to how this is implemented, and the modelling work aims where possible to take account of these implications to futureproof developing services.

4.2.8 Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture

- (i) ADS have completed all the city-wide grass cutting and have commenced shrub cutting. We have seen some great resident and community group engagement in the city this year with our biodiversity areas with both enhancements and creating new wildflower areas. We have been working closely with PECT who have supported both PCC and community groups in further enhancing natural habitats in our local areas.

ADS have retained Green Flag status at 4 parks across the city and continue to work with friends' groups to improve park facilities, including working more closely with the groups to apply for external funding for improvements and events within the parks. All our parks received incredibly positive feedback from the judges and is a credit to the works of not only ADS but the friends' groups who work hard to improve the parks and put on events.

Towns Fund money that was received for improving parks is continuing to be implemented with several new parks already completed across the city. The new Parks App, which we are jointly creating with Cambridgeshire, is also nearing completion and will offer residents key information on our parks and events.

- (ii) The committee specifically requested information relating to grass cutting. At present we have several regimes for grass cutting ranging from 1 cut per year in our biodiversity areas to 8 cuts per year in most open space and parks environments.

We have been working with PECT in some of our biodiversity areas to complement the long grass with wildflower planting and are also looking to trial an area under trees where grass may struggle to establish with a woodland wildflower mix.

Currently we have 3,602,111 m² of grass that we cut 8 times per year, mostly open space and recreation areas and verges directly outside residents' homes and along pathways. In contrast at present, we have 230,252 m² of biodiversity grass. When these areas were originally installed, we did receive some negative comments, however we are now seeing more groups wanting to get involved in their own biodiversity areas with some great initiatives in Hastings Road and John Clare Rec.

High speed road verges used to be cut the full length back to the fence line every year. However,

this was reduced to 3 cuts and only the first 1.5 metres and following this change we have seen natural regeneration in the rear sections. Most recently we have reduced the cutting regime further and now cut the high-speed road verges twice per year to a 1.5m width; this reduction offers both cost savings to the authority due to less traffic management being needed but also increased natural regeneration.

The main areas of the city where we have a more intense mowing regime are those used for sports purposes such as bowls, croquet, and tennis facilities.

4.2.9 **Home-to-School Transport**

ADS currently operate 30 home-to-school routes for PCC, including services for both mainstream and special schools. They additionally operate the Community Link Service that takes residents who cannot use public transport to get their shopping and back home, which continues to be a well-used service and utilises the staff in between their school runs to undertake the work.

ADS are also looking to upskill their staff members as they have seen a lack of skilled PSV drivers in the market for the hours required to cover home-to-school routes. As such they are training non-PSV drivers and passenger assistants to obtain their PSV licence. This will allow greater flexibility in the services delivered and offer the resilience needed to cover for sickness etc.

4.2.10 **Property Maintenance**

ADS provide a repairs and maintenance helpdesks function for all PCC properties with a 24 hour on call service where required. They also ensure that all our statutory servicing obligations on our properties are fulfilled, and a 5 yearly condition survey of our estate is conducted.

This is seen as an area of the business that can be further expanded with some schools already signing up to SLAs with ADS, although we want to expand this further as ADS can offer a complete package with property, grounds maintenance, and cleaning,

4.2.11 **Energy Generation and Consumption**

- (i) In 2020-21, the council purchased and utilised 10,941 MWh of electricity, 14,732 MWh of gas and 1.9 MWh of propane.
- (ii) The council owns solar panels installed on council owned buildings. In 2021, the council generated 2,583 MWh electricity through these solar panels. Much of this electricity is used directly in the buildings. Since their installation around 2% of all electricity generated has been exported back to the national grid.

Between April 2022 and the entry into the planned maintenance period in July, the Energy Recovery Facility generated 17,703 MWh of electricity. Following the maintenance period, the facility has returned to a steady state of operation and is exporting electricity again. Subject to unforeseen events, the facility is on target to achieve its expected target output.

- (iii) The Peterborough Integrated Renewable Infrastructure (PIRI) project has completed the current phase of work. An application has been submitted to the government's Green Heat Network Fund to complete further commerciality work.

4.2.12 **Westcombe Industries**

Westcombe Industries has, like most manufacturing companies, seen an impact on their works through COVID and the increase in core material costs, with subsequent negative impacts on their current pricing and cost model.

The staff within Westcombe recognised these factors and have re-priced all their products working with core material suppliers and customers to put these in place. These price increases are now impacting through the budgets which are now in a more favourable position.

We continue to look to bring in further work and have potentially two new suppliers coming online for parts with one being a large corporate company.

Most recently the company has been reviewed for its BSI standards and we are pleased to advise the company retained this with no negatives.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation relevant to each aspect of the portfolio has been carried out as part of 'business as usual' operations.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 It is anticipated that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee will note the content of this report and any comments will be fed back to aid in future improvements to the services delivered.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 To allow scrutiny of the Portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene, and Environment.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The alternative option was to not present this report to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee; this option was not taken forwards as it is important to allow clear and transparent scrutiny of these front-line services.

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial Implications

9.1.1 This report is to give an overview / progress update, and as such there are no financial implications.

9.2 Legal Implications

9.2.1 This report is intended to give an overview / progress update, and as such there are no direct legal implications. As regards specific projects, legal advice has been sought on a case-by-case basis.

9.3 Equalities Implications

9.3.1 This report is to give an overview / progress update, and as such there are no anticipated equality implications.

9.4 Rural Implications

9.4.1 This report is to give an overview / progress update, and as such there are no rural implications.

9.5 Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5.1 The report contains no proposals for changes to service delivery and therefore there is no decision to take which may impact carbon emissions of the council or the city.

Under this portfolio Cllr Simons is looking at all options to reduce our CO2 including through mitigation with tree planting, looking at new low CO2 vehicles, and energy production.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

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