

## REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES COUNCILLOR TONY AUSTIN

The Lancashire Waste Partnership Meeting at Preston on 16<sup>th</sup> November was very informative.

Two presentations were given relating to possible ways of reducing CO2 emissions from the next generation of refuse wagons. The average cost of these vehicles continues to spiral - £200K currently for diesel propulsion, £400K for electric and £600K for hydrogen (H2).

The Assistant Director from St. Helens discussed their trial evaluation of a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle. They had looked at H2, partly because the adjacent Merseyside bus station was going to use H2 and the Council would be able to share the fuel dispensing equipment. They also believed that H2 propulsion could be better for some heavier vehicles than electricity. Another advantage is that a complete H2 refill can be finished in 10 minutes, compared with electric battery recharging ! One tank of H2 gives a longer range also. Running costs were slightly lower.

Hyndburn Council had voted to reduce their CO2 emissions, but were daunted by the problems of installing supporting electricity infrastructure and the significantly higher capital cost of electric vehicles over diesel. They found out that they could save 90% of CO2 emissions by using Hydro Treated Vegetable Oil (HVO), instead of ordinary diesel. This fuel is readily available commercially. It is 22% more expensive than ordinary diesel, adding £55,000 to Hyndburn's annual fuel bill, BUT it could be used in existing vehicles without any modification. Our Engineering Manager tells me that some of Ribble Valley's lorries would work similarly, but that some are too old.

Another speaker at the meeting gave a short talk on Digital Waste Tracking, to be fully operational from April 2025. This will give more up-to-date information and aid in reducing criminal disposals by fly-tipping and illegal incineration.

Jo Oliver from Tameside (and on LARAC) outlined many current recycling issues. We will be obliged to collect glass, metal, plastic, paper and food waste, but there will be flexibility as to what is collected separately and what is commingled, though because of the potential extra costs for the disposal authority (LCC) there will need to be some mutual discussion. Food waste will now need to be collected weekly from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Garden waste can be charged for, but if collected commingled with food waste, that proportion cannot be chargeable. There will be New Burdens Funding for weekly food collections – some capital costs and some revenue, but no specific figures yet (in answer to my question !) It is suggested that garden waste could be collected from March to October, as some authorities currently do. Government expect residual waste to be collected at least fortnightly.

Extended Producer Responsibility will be introduced based on amount sold by packaging producers. The funds collected will be allocated to LAs, based on efficiency, size and other factors (like rurality important for Ribble Valley). A Deposit Return Scheme will be introduced for PET bottles, steel and aluminium cans, but not glass; reverse vending machines are currently envisaged. This should reduce littering, but the impact on kerbside collection tonnage is problematic.