

20 March 2019

Environment and Enforcement Committee

Improving the Councils Waste & Recycling Service

Report of: *Greg Campbell*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report considers how the Council can amend its waste collection service to deliver both environmental improvements alongside revenue efficiencies.
- 1.2 It examines the waste service and recommends a method by which this service can be turned from a cost burden to a cost benefit.
- 1.3 The report considers changing the way residents currently present recycled waste, seeking to split the presentation of the mixed dry recycling (MDR) stream to deliver financial and non-financial benefits.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **To agree to a direction of travel for recycling, by separating mixed dry recyclables.**
- 2.2 **Delegate authority to the Director of Operations, in Consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair of Environment and Enforcement Committee, the Leader and the Leaders of the two opposition groups to agree the final scheme, which will be presented to Committee.**
- 2.3 **To implement the scheme during September/October 2019**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Council is under constant pressure to generate income, reduce costs and create new lines of revenue. This report considers a review of the waste collection service and specifically the recycling collection. Waste

collection is a statutory service and a pillar of what local government provides. It is important that it is delivered well and delivered effectively to the residents.

- 3.2 Further, there is a social responsibility that directs councils to provide services that consider the environment not only now but for the future.
- 3.3 The Council has not made any significant changes to its waste service since the introduction of food waste caddies in 2011, and certainly none recently that have affected residents. Any change is therefore subject to careful scrutiny.
- 3.4 This report before Members considers how the Council can change its approach to recyclables collected and increase their value and quality.
- 3.5 In December 2018 the government released a strategy 'Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England' which will impact on all local authorities. The Council will have to align itself with the requirements of this strategy, and in so doing consider how we collect and dispose of waste.
- 3.6 The main overarching objectives of the Strategy 'Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England' are:
 - To maximise the value of resource use; and
 - To minimise waste and its impact on the environment.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Currently residents place paper, cardboard, plastics and cans within the orange recycling sacks. The collected sacks are then delivered to a Material Recycling Facility (MRF) for treatment, where it is sorted and recyclables are then sent onto processors. The delivery of the sacks to the MRF currently attracts a significant gate fee.
- 4.2 The strategy will seek to ensure comprehensive and frequent collection services (including separate food waste collections) and to identify a core set of materials to be collected. This Council needs to meet the new challenges and therefore is undertaking an exercise to consider changing the current collection methodology.
- 4.3 A number of options, along with no change, were considered with the assistance of consultants. The preferred option is separating the mixed

dry recyclables (collected in the orange sack) into two distinct waste streams. This will deliver financial and non-financial benefits.

- 4.4 The separation of waste is not a new concept and one that Brentwood residents are familiar with as they already perform this task with mixed glass, food, residual (black sacks) and combined recycling (Orange Sacks).
- 4.5 By residents separating their dry recycling the material becomes a saleable product, generating a revenue stream: for example, good quality paper could attract a revenue of £25/tonne, as opposed to being charged a gate fee of c.a. £30/tonne, which would be a positive variance of £55/tonne. Prices are market led, however, this example demonstrates what could be achieved.
- 4.6 The Council are already at the vagaries of the market and at present this is reflected in the gate fee we are charged. The material collected, with the new alignment of services, will still be subject to the fluctuations of the market; however, as this material attracts a revenue stream, the Council will remain in a far better position than if it continued to run the combined recycling to the MRF.
- 4.7 In order to make this switch, the Council would require residents to separate the recyclables, already placed in the orange sack, into two discrete waste streams: namely: 'paper & card' and 'plastics & cans'.
- 4.8 Therefore, the collection services for general household waste (black sacks), food waste, garden waste and mixed glass collections would remain the same; with the two new streams (replacing the current single stream) being collected on alternating weeks.
- 4.9 The receptacles required for the new service will cost circa £210k and could be funded by the earmarked reserve for the improvement of waste management. The final costs for the scheme will be reported at the next committee and will be subject by final approval at Policy, Project and Resources Committee.
- 4.10 The timing of the introduction of these changes will be important. Experts in the Waste Service agree that the introduction of a major change to waste rounds is best done during a time that avoids the least disruption and ensures the best take up.
- 4.11 Therefore, it is recommended that the recycling improvements are implemented during September / October 2019. Thus, minimising

disruption by avoiding the Christmas and Easter holiday seasons which would potentially impact adversely on participation.

- 4.12 In order to develop a successful delivery programme, communications will play an important part. Communications will publicise, inform and educate residents and businesses on the revised waste collection scheme and the benefits as to why we have made these changes.
- 4.13 Communications will require a two-month lead time with a well devised plan. The cost of this plan and its implementation will need to be worked up as part of the project and again would be funded from the waste grant.
- 4.14 It is envisaged that delivery of this project will take six months and a planned implementation date will be set for September/October 2019. Attached at Appendix A is a high-level implementation plan. Therefore it is important we get agreement to begin to work up this project now bringing a final report back for agreement to the next committee in order that implementation can begin in September/October.
- 4.15 Regrettably, this scheme at present cannot be rolled out to those with multi-occupancy dwellings (flats) due to the risks associated with communal bin areas where contaminated waste is an issue: i.e. items placed in the wrong bins. However, Officers will consider options as to how this issue can be tackled and the problem overcome. This again will be reported back to the next committee.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The benefits and non-benefits include 'inter alia':
- Potential increase in revenue and a reduction in costs to be quantified.
 - Improvement in the quality of recycling collected.
 - Minimal change in the service provided to residents.
 - Manageable budgetary pressures.
- 5.2 Members are requested to agree to the recommendations as they will enable the evolution of the Council's Waste Management Service to meet current and future challenges.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation with waste specialist – Street Care Support Limited. They have undertaken a waste collection service review and continue to work with the Council.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 The Council will continue to ensure the provision of efficient and effective services.
- 7.2 The eventual implementation of this change of service will enable the Council to continue to work towards minimising waste by collecting waste effectively and increasing recycling rates.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 Prices per tonne are market led and carry a degree of risk due to fluctuations. This can impact the Council's finances favourably and adversely and are therefore closely monitored through the Council's Budget Monitoring process.
- 8.2 The receptacles required for this strategy could be funded from the Waste Strategy Earmarked Reserve. This reserve has an estimated balance of £522k for 2019-20, as reported as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan. However, the preferred option for funding will be reported alongside the final proposed scheme, this will be subject to budget approval at Policy, Projects and Resources Committee.
- 8.3 The proposed recycling strategy potentially could generate savings to the General Fund, however these are dependant on the proposed final scheme being agreed. Therefore, the potential revenue savings will be quantified and reported to the next committee alongside the final scheme.

Legal Implications

Name & Title:

Tel & Email

- 8.4 The Government's latest guidance on waste recycling," Our Waste, Our Resources : Strategy For England" has two overarching objectives: 1. To maximise the value of resource use and 2. To minimise waste and its impact on the environment. The proposed action recommended in this report sits squarely within these objectives.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.5 None.

- 9. Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

- 9.1 None.

- 10. Appendices to this report**

- Appendix A

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