

**20<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**Environment Committee**

**Free Food Waste Bags**

**Report of:** *Roy Ormsby, Head of Street Scene*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council introduced the food waste collection in December 2011 to further enhance the recycling service offered to our residents. The service is funded by ECC as part of the 28 year Inter Authority Agreement that was agreed in 2009, with the 2014/15 grant being £371,414.
- 1.2 The current service was agreed in June 2011 at the Environment, Health and Housing Board, with a recommendation to collect kitchen waste with residual waste without the ongoing supply of liners.
- 1.3 A further report was presented at the Environment Panel on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012, after additional funding was agreed with ECC to pilot a scheme for free food waste bags. The panel approved a one year pilot scheme of distributing two free rolls of liners to all households from April 2013, with an additional two rolls to be redeemed from local collection points via a token system if they wish to participate.
- 1.4 It was evident that the delivery of free bags to all households was not an efficient use of funds, as it was clear from the monitoring by crews, and the tonnage being collected that participation across the Borough was reducing, despite the free delivery of the bags. This was confirmed through a recent user survey, which identified that only 35% of residents used the service.
- 1.5 In February 2014 Members were informed, via their newsletter, that a more efficient delivery system would be piloted, and that residents who wish to have free bags delivered would need to register. This attracted over 1,400 households, and two free rolls were delivered in June 2014.

- 1.6 The Council currently provide free food waste bags from the Town Hall, Brentwood Library, Shenfield Library, Ingatestone Library and West Horndon Horticultural Society. Residents also have the option to purchase bags for £1 from a number of local retailers.

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

**2.1 That Members approve the option of providing free food waste bags, through retailers that are prepared to distribute them free of charge, and at no cost to the Council.**

**2.2 That additional outlets are identified to distribute free food waste bags, such as Parish Halls and community groups, and publicised through media outlets.**

## **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 The food waste service has been operating across the Borough since December 2011, and provides a valuable service to a number of our residents.
- 3.2 Since its introduction the service has seen a steady decline in the tonnage that is collected, despite the introduction of free food waste bags being available since April 2013.
- 3.3 This could be for a number of reasons:
1. That people do not wish to store food waste in the house
  2. That people identify the amount of food being wasted and change their habits
  3. That there is a perception that it is not being recycled
- 3.4 There is evidence, via feedback from the crews that households have been disposing of their caddies in the residual waste, therefore not wishing to participate in the scheme any longer.
- 3.5 All residents will have one roll of bags delivered in March 2015, which will inform them of where to collect additional free bags. They will therefore have a choice on how they get food waste bags, which is:
1. Collect bags free of charge from the outlets noted in 1.6
  2. Purchase bags for £1 from a range of retailers

- 3.6 To provide more opportunities to collect free food waste bags it is proposed that retailers be approached to distribute them free of charge. There are currently 22 retailers selling food waste bags, and since April 2014 5000 bags have been purchased from the Council, producing an income of £3,167.

#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 The proposal is for the Council to identify retailers who are prepared to provide food waste bags free of charge, and at no cost to the Council, to local residents.
- 4.2 One of the key concerns would be the audit process that would need to be in place. It would be very difficult to monitor who the bags were being given to, residents or non-residents, and how many were being given out. The process would be dependent on the honesty of the retailers.
- 4.3 The proposal would result in a loss of income for the Council, which in 2013/14 was £3,167.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 That it provides an opportunity for Members to identify additional outlets for distributing free food waste bags.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 No consultation has been carried out regarding this proposal.

#### **7. References to Corporate Plan**

- 7.1 The wider distribution of free food waste bags may increase recycling, which is a key priority for the Council.

#### **8. Implications**

##### **Financial Implications**

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- 8.1 As outlined in paragraph 4.3 the proposal in this report could result in a loss of income to the Council which, in 2013/14, was around £3,000 as this will increase the number of outlets for BBC residents to collect free food waste bags. It is not possible to quantify what income will be lost in

2015/16 through the implementation this proposal. Any costs related to the setting up and implementation of this proposal will be contained within the current budget.

**Legal Implications**

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8.2 None.

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

8.3 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 - List of current outlets distributing food waste bags – TO FOLLOW

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