

Strategic approach to Waste Management

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Briefing Paper in Advance of Presentation about Environment Act 2021 and Waste Changes

Introduction

This paper sets out the challenges that have emerged as a result of:

- The Environment Act 2021 and its challenging recycling targets
- The updated Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy agreed by Project Integra partners that has a key objective about recyclable material management and the introduction of twin stream collections
- The need to change collection methods resulting from twin stream collections
- The dependence on the building of a new material recovery facility (MRF) in order to achieve the above three points
- Hampshire County Councils (HCC) proposals to change financial arrangements with waste collection authorities in relation to recycling and household waste.

Context – Eastleigh Borough Council

- 2021/22 – estimated recycling rate of 45%
- Recycling contamination for 2021/22 was 17.52%
- 33% of black household waste bins have materials that can currently be recycled from the kerbside
- Significant material not recycled and found in black bin is food (21%)
- With a new MRF a further 10% of materials in the black bin could be recycled
- In 2021/22, based on 58,790 households, household waste kilograms (kg) per household was 446.09 tonnes
- HCC would like EBC to achieve 321.01 kg per household by 2029/30, which will be challenging
- Programme in place to continue to phase in food for flats (nearing completion) and remove excess black bins

It is recognised that Project Integra and its authorities, have not achieved the reduction in residual waste levels and an increase in recycling when compared to authorities nationally. There is a need to be more ambitious and aspirational in order for all authorities to improve.

The Environment Act 2021

In November 2021, The Environment Act became law. Its priority areas are air quality; water; biodiversity; and resource efficiency and waste reduction. With regards to waste and recycling, the Act will help transition to a more circular economy, incentivising people to recycle more, encouraging businesses to create sustainable packaging, making household recycling easier and stopping the export of polluting plastic waste to developing countries. These changes will be driven by new, legally binding environmental targets and enforced by a new, independent Office for Environmental Protection.

The Environment Act 2021 will set long-term, legally binding, environmental targets, plans and policies for protecting and improving the natural environment in the UK. With regards to waste and recycling, the Act will allow the Government to:

- (a) Deliver consistent and frequent recycling collections across England.
- (b) Ensure councils operate weekly separate food waste collections, preventing food waste from going to landfill or being incinerated.
- (c) Introduce clearer labelling on certain products so consumers can easily identify whether products are recyclable or not.
- (d) Expand the use of charges on single use plastics, following the successful introduction of the carrier bag charge and introduce a deposit return scheme (DRS) on plastic drinks containers.
- (e) Introduce new extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes to make producers responsible for the full net costs of managing their products when they are ready to be thrown away.

By 2025, the national target for the preparing and re-use and recycling of municipal waste is 55%, with the ultimate target of achieving 65% by 2035.

Twin Stream Collections and MRF

In order for twin stream collections to be implemented effectively, there is a need for the redevelopment of the waste transfer infrastructure and MRF in order for new materials to be managed. HCC is seeking planning permission to build a MRF, based at Chickenhall Lane Eastleigh. EBC will be able to direct access the MRF.

A planning decision is anticipated in October 2022, and if approved a new MRF should be able to commence operation in the summer of 2025. Twin stream would operate as follows:

- Collection of paper, magazines, and cardboard (often called fibres) in a separate container
- Collection of glass bottles/jars, plastic bottles, plastic pots, tubs and trays, cans and tins, aerosols, and cartons in a separate container (increased range of materials that can be recycled)

The twin stream approach has the lowest whole system costs (collection and treatment) and lowest carbon impact when compared to other types of collection systems.

Collection Methods

The Environment Act, twin stream collections and a new MRF would require EBC to modify its waste and recycling service. Key to this would be minimising collection day changes. With the changes already put in place with zonal collections, the waste and recycling would aim to enable residents to retain their current collection day as far as possible. It is possible the frequency and week of collection could change.

An additional container (wheeled bin is the preferred option) would be needed for the collection of fibres and collected separately. The glass box would no longer be required. Food containers would continue to be used and remain a weekly service. Garden waste would continue to be an opt in subscription service. The current green recycling bin would remain in place for plastics, cans, and glass. An 1100 litre communal bin for flats would be required for fibres.

There are a range of collection methods that could be adopted subject to cost, impact on carbon footprint and ability to increase recycling and reduce amount of waste generated.

It is proposed to establish a programme team to review collection options and frequency of collections and bring a paper to Cabinet in January 2023. This team will require support from IT, finance, communications, planning, customer services, PMO office, strategy and internal audit in order to undertake the following:

- Undertake optimisation of collection options in order to better assess the impact on vehicles and crews required to manage fibres collections and cost/carbon implications
- Review current container provision and new container for fibres, procure and deliver containers
- Optimal vehicle provision to manage preferred collection option eg single body, split body
- Assess impact of vehicles on Operator's licence at Hedge End depot
- Audit properties that will have space issues for an additional container, including communals
- Review domestic waste and recycling policy and agree a waste strategy until 2030
- Work with Planning to ensure SPD Quality Places enables appropriate container storage in flats
- Establish workstreams to reduce recycling contamination and encourage greater recycling participation
- Put in place a comprehensive mixed media communications campaign to support behaviour change with stakeholders including consultation and engagement
- Develop optimised rounds with time planned for crew and stakeholder training

HCC proposals to change financial arrangements

HCC is the waste disposal authority for district and borough councils in Hampshire and have a statutory responsibility for the disposal of municipal waste arisings, which includes the costs of disposal. Whilst HCC manage the recycling infrastructure via the service contractor Veolia Environmental Services, they are not required to further invest, develop, or expand recycling facilities.

HCC like many authorities need to make significant budgetary savings. With this in mind, they intend to remodel the financial arrangements in place with district and borough councils in relation to the disposal of residual waste and the contamination of recycling. HCC have decided that rather than pass on the costs of improvements to recycling infrastructure (MRF/transfer stations), which would be significant, to instead focus on working with collection authorities to reduce residual waste and improve the quality and quantity of recycling through financial penalties/incentives.

Unless EBC reduce their residual waste and improve the quality/quantity of recycling, costs to the authority will be incurred. There would also be a reduction in recycling income.

Next Steps

- To establish a project team to support the above key workstreams and by January 2023 have a preferred collection methodology to present to councillors based on restricting waste volumes.

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