

Report to the Economy Environment & Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Recycling service



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Introduction

The Council has a legal duty under the Waste Framework Directive 2012, to provide collection services for non-recyclable waste, and to collect separately four streams of recycling, namely, paper/card (fibre), metal, plastic, and glass all free of charge.

The Council has no statutory responsibility to provide garden waste collection services, and can make a charge for doing so if it so wishes.

The council currently provides a weekly dry recycling collection service, incorporating a separate collection for food waste, and fortnightly collections for residual and garden waste.

Background

The Council has been operating its current recycling collection service since July 2016, and although dry recycling rates have increased, the service is under pressure from the demand on the collection service and the resources available. This is largely a result of volumes of material, vehicles having to tip more than once during a working day and, over time, increased numbers of houses built, which was not adequately reflected in the original service modelling.

A budget saving of £500,000 was envisaged at the commencement of the new service in 2016, however although savings have been achieved in comparison to the previous service, they have not achieved the level of savings expected. A major factor in this has been the inability to achieve income levels for the high quality materials produced through the service, following global crashes in prices.

Markets for collected recycled material have suffered major volatility over the last couple of years and in particular the last nine months or so, following China's stringent restrictions on imports of materials which do not meet their high quality criteria. Much of the material going to China came from commingled collection operations, and they have encountered large amounts of contamination. This has

resulted in oversupply into other markets which has had an impact on prices for materials, particularly plastics. The situation is unlikely to improve greatly moving forward, until investment within the UK can deliver higher quality materials for recycling and reprocessing.

As a result of these challenges, at its meeting on 4th January 2018, in response to a request from the Portfolio Holder, authority was given by Cabinet for the establishment of a politically balanced Cabinet Panel Task and Finish Group (the Group) to examine the problems arising from the operation of the waste and recycling service and for the group to bring recommendations to a future Cabinet meeting. The group have looked at a number of collection options, and undertaken visits to look at alternative collection systems, and have reviewed alternative collection systems which have been modelled and costed to inform their recommendations to Cabinet.

In considering the recycling collection service, the Group has considered two options, with the existing system used for cost comparison purposes.

- Twin Stream – where either paper or paper and card are kept separate and everything else is comingled in a single wheelie bin and collected fortnightly (with food collected separately).
- Fully Comingled – where all materials are mixed together in a single wheelie bin and collected fortnightly (with food collected separately)

The Group were asked to consider and express a preference for how to integrate continuing the provision of a separate food waste collection service, as this has a significant impact on the design and provision of a new service moving forward as well as the option to collect recycling on a fortnightly or weekly basis in the future.

Following consideration of all the options, at the last meeting of the Group it was resolved to recommend a twin stream collection system, on a fortnightly basis, with separate paper and card, along with continued collection of separate food waste as the preferred service model for the kerbside collection of dry recycling material and food waste.

Questions to be Addressed

Recycling rates.

Overall the Councils Recycling rate at Quarter 1 (2018/19) is 50.03% this figure includes dry recycling, garden waste and food. This continues to place the Council in the top quartile of performance. Dry waste recycling rate on its own is 16%

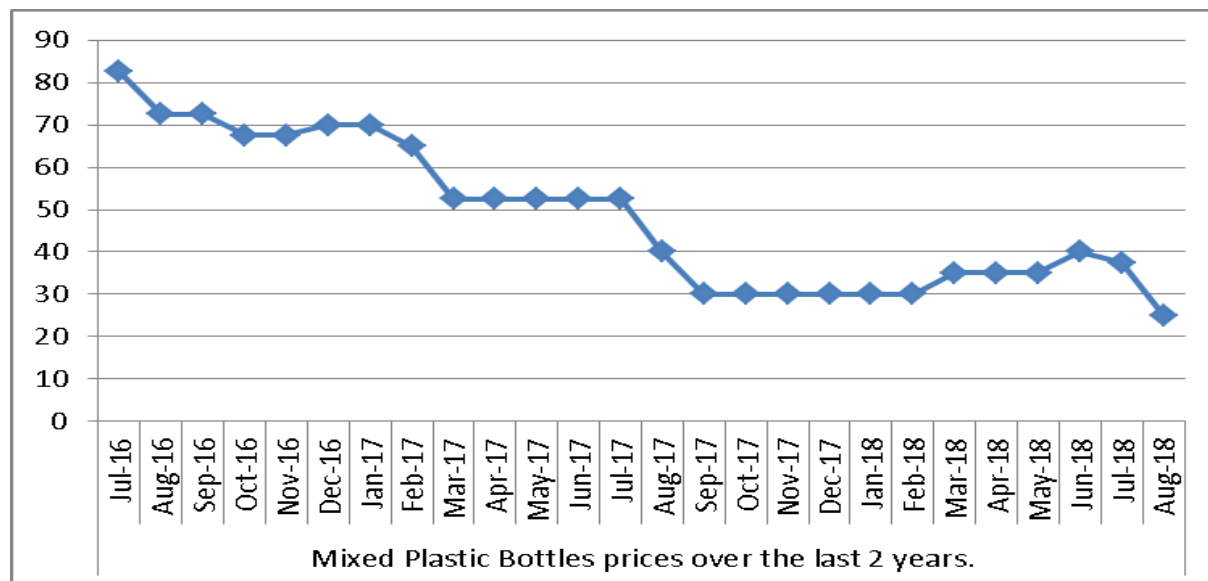
Although the Council has no statutory recycling targets currently, the government will be publishing its 'Resource and Waste Strategy' in the next couple of months, which could include mandatory targets being reintroduced, as recycling rates nationally have stalled over the last few years.

It is recommended that scrutiny continue to look at the performance of the service in terms of recycling rates being achieved.

Markets – values of materials

The global market for recyclable materials is volatile, particularly with plastics, and this has a knock on affect for the value of the materials the Council sells on for recycling.

The graph below illustrates how over the last couple of years the value of mixed plastic bottles, which the Council collects as part of its recycling collection service, has fallen. The Council is often criticised for not collecting pots, tubs, and trays (PTT) as part of its collection service. If PTT were included the Council would now have to pay to get the material recycled.



Some materials which the Council collects and sells are stable, glass and newspaper being the predominant ones with significant tonnage being collected. Steel and Aluminium cans are also of high value, aluminium in particular being currently worth £950 per tonne. Unfortunately the quantity of cans collected is not great when compared to other materials, but provides an opportunity through targeted communications with householders to increase tonnage of certain materials.

Recommendation for change of service to a Twin stream recycling collection service.

The Councils Cabinet Task and Finish group have recommended that the Cabinet consider adopting and undertake further planning and modelling work in order to move to a twin stream collection system with paper and card separate, along with continued collection of separate food waste.

A twin stream kerbside collection system will incorporate use of a wheelie bin with a blue lid, denoting its use for recycling only, together with a suitable receptacle (or use of existing box) to contain paper and card, while the other materials, namely, glass, cans and plastics bottles would be placed in the body of the bin.

A split body refuse collection vehicle would be used to make the collections from householders. Paper and card will be loaded in one side of the vehicle utilising a

wheelie bin, and the other materials would be loaded into the other side of the vehicle in the same way as emptying a normal wheelie bin.

Twin stream collections allows the Council to separate at source the higher value material, paper and card (known as fibre), which can then be sold directly to re-processors. Keeping fibre out of the other materials means the cost of sorting through a material recovery facility (MRF) are also lower in terms of a cost per tonne as fibre is difficult to separate from other materials, particularly if it becomes wet, and therefore increasing processing costs. Further the paper and card industry are reluctant to purchase paper and card from MRF's due to the poor quality of the material as it gone through the collection and sorting process, leading to this material largely going to export markets.

Further detailed planning and modelling will inform the potential timescales and costs for introducing a major service change. This will be dependent on a number of key factors such as service design, procurement and financing to implement the change.

Outcomes

As further planning work takes place, there will be a number of issues which need to be considered and would potentially benefit from the scrutiny committees input.

As an example the Council will need to consider policy decisions for various aspects of the service, for example additional wheelie bins being presented on streets, therefore clarification on how and when bins should be presented for collection, and when we expect them to be taken back into the curtilage of the property. The Council then needs to agree a process for bins being permanently left out, and how these issues can be resolved with residents.

Supporting Information

There is no supporting information for this report.

Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents

None invited as part of this report.

Constraints

N/A.

Conclusions

The proposed new recycling service will be easier for residents to use, and will be more efficient in terms of operation due to it being a variation of a standard bin collection system. Emphasis will still need to be placed on providing high quality materials for re-processing in order to minimise the risks of the global market. Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to receive the report and agree to have a part in the development of the nw recycling collection service as it develops towards full implementation.

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

Portfolio Holder for Environment & Recycling – Councillor Trevor Johnson.

Local Ward Member (if applicable)

All Wards are affected by this service.

Background Materials

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

None