

Notice of Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Angell (Chair), Councillor Virgo (Vice-Chair),
Councillors Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, MJ Gibson,
Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Porter and
Temperton
Tracey Wright, Parent Governor representative
Mark Glanville, Parent Governor representative



Also Invited:

Councillor Birch, Executive member for Adult Social Care, Health
and Housing
Fiona Slevin-Brown, Managing Director - Bracknell Forest Executive
Lead for Urgent and Emergency Care, NHS Frimley CCG
Grainne Siggins, Executive Director: People

Tuesday 3 August 2021, 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Online only - Zoom meeting

Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute Members.	
2.	Declarations of Interest and Party Whip	
	<p>Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests and the nature of that interest, including the existence and nature of the party whip, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.</p> <p>Any Member with an Affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting.</p>	
3.	Urgent Items of Business	
	Any other items which, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.	
4.	Public Participation	
	To receive submissions from members of the public which have been	

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	submitted in advance in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.	
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Strategic Health Scrutiny Committee

Sitting as Strategic Health Scrutiny Committee the Commission has invited guests to address the meeting before considering how well current health provisions meet existing and emerging needs.

5.	Health provision in Bracknell Forest	5 - 6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiona Slevin-Brown, Managing Director - Bracknell Forest Executive Lead for Urgent and Emergency Care, NHS Frimley CCG, will provide an update on the key health issues and an overview of service capacity in Bracknell Forest. <p>Queries and requests for information were submitted by members of the Commission to the Clinical Commissioning Group in advance of the meeting and responses are attached.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Birch, Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board, will explain how these issues are being considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board and any resulting actions. Grainne Siggins, Executive Director: People, will explain how these issues interact with priorities for the People directorate and any plans in place to address them. 	

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Return to sitting as the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

6.	Minutes of previous meeting	7 - 10
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 8 July 2021.	
7.	Membership of Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel	
	To confirm the appointment of Councillor Mrs McKenzie to Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel following the nominations made at Council on 14 July 2021.	
8.	Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report: Food Waste in HMOs and Flats	11 - 24
	To consider the draft Food Waste in HMOs and Flats review report prepared by the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for submission to the Executive on 21 September 2021.	

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9.	Work Programme Update	
	Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairs to provide verbal update on the work programme and highlight any proposed changes such as scope, scheduling or duration.	

Date of next meeting

The next Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting is scheduled for 9 September 2021.

Sound recording, photographing, filming and use of social media is permitted. Please contact Kirsty Hunt, 01344 353108, kirsty.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk, so that any special arrangements can be made.

Published: 26 July 2021

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Item 5

The following queries / requests for information were submitted by members of the Commission to the Clinical Commissioning Group in advance of the meeting:

- Q Please provide data relating to the attendance figures for services at Brants Bridge before the pandemic
- A This would be covered in the presentation for the Commission on 03.08.21.
- Q What were the number of calls into the service, number of referrals, and number of visits without appointments (i.e. people that have been turned away) since the change
- A The latest information collected by the service providers would be shared as part of the presentation for the Commission on 03.08.21.
- Q Could you share the result of the consultation(s) you did as part of their evidence gathering to support your decision re discontinuation of the walk-in scheme
- A There was no consultation process. As shared with the Commission previously the decision to step back the walk in aspect of the service at Brants Bridge was taken at the height of the pandemic as part of the NHS emergency planning response with the intention of minimising the risk of increasing community transmission and putting at risk highly vulnerable patients who were accessing Brants Bridge to access dialysis and chemotherapy treatment. Patients continued to be able to access minor illness provision locally at both Skimped Hill and Crowthorne clinics via their GPs and our minor injury offer was temporarily moved into Frimley Park Hospital. All services have since been reinstated at Brants Bridge.
- Q When were the proposals- now arrangements- discussed with the residents and/or Council members?
- A The Health and Wellbeing Board has been kept abreast of the impact of the pandemic on local NHS services throughout the pandemic both directly and through the Chair. There have also been regular communications with all Patient Participation groups, and directly with the public via Town and Country, local press and online medium including through patients own GP practices.
- Q Why was the Commission not consulted before the decision was made?
- A There was no formal consultation – see comment above.
- Q Did the closure appear on the agenda of the Health and Wellbeing Board and if so what was their comment?
- A See comment above.
- Q Can you please provide the cost of the operation of the facility e.g. the financial costs of the building and its services

A We are unable to provide details of any costs relating to the operation of the facility as this building is owned and run by Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Q What savings that would be made by staffing it as a Nurse lead facility?

A There are no savings. The workforce remains the same as it was pre Covid.

Q Are other Urgent Care centres still functioning?

A The minor injuries services at St Marks Hospital in Maidenhead remains suspended for the time being. Minor illness services continue to be provided.



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
8 JULY 2021
6.30 - 7.49 PM**

Present:

Councillors Angell (Chair), Virgo (Vice-Chair), Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Porter, Temperton and Tullett
Tracey Wright, Parent Governor representative
Mark Glanville, Parent Governor representative

In Attendance:

Councillor Brown

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs McKenzie-Boyle and McLean

Executive Member present:

Councillor Birch, Executive Member: Adult Services, Health and Housing

Also Present:

Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director: Delivery
Ann Moore, Head of Democratic and Registration Services

11. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 26 May 2021 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

The Chair informed Commission members he had written to Councillor Dale Birch, Executive Member: Adult Services, Health and Housing, as agreed at the previous meeting. A response had been circulated to the Commission in advance of the meeting and the Executive Member had been asked to attend the meeting to provide an update.

Councillor Birch, Executive Member: Adult Services, Health and Housing informed the Commission that Brants Bridge Urgent Care Centre would reopen to the public in July. The date was yet to be confirmed, depending on availability of staff. The service would be open for walk-ins but there would be an emphasis on booked appointments. Members of the public were being asked to phone ahead. Communication about this service to the public would take place next week.

Additional questions were raised about what the service would look like in the future and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the Director of East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Executive Director: People and the Executive Member: Adult Services, Health and Housing, in his role as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, had been asked to attend the August Commission meeting to brief the Commission on the current health provision.

12. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest in item 11, Minutes of the previous meeting, as the spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

There were no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

13. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

14. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

15. Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report: Blue Badges Review

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the Panel had followed a good process to conduct this review.

The Chair of the Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel introduced the Blue Badges review report and outlined the reasons for the review, which included an Ombudsman investigation; residents' complaints about the blue badge application process and a press report which found Bracknell Forest Council was in the lowest 10% of local authorities (of those that responded) for blue badge applications submissions.

During the review Panel members found:

- Bracknell Forest was the third highest for non-visible disability applications. It was concluded this did not mean there was a greater need than in other local authorities, but it appeared expectations had been increased.
- Panel members found several areas of good practice.
- An internal, wide-reaching review was currently being undertaken by the team in charge of blue badge applications and the findings from this review would feed into that process.
- Refusal decisions letters could be clearer.
- Resident's expectations could be better managed.
- Understanding complex conditions was key as disabilities changed over time.

Members scrutinised the review report. Arising from the discussion the following points were made:

- Non-visual disability was a term defined in statutory legislation.
- Residents had the right of appeal and a review of the process had been undertaken.
- Most local authorities used the same application form as Bracknell Forest Council, but some local authorities had devised their own form to capture local factors too.
- Panel members received representations during the review about the need for improved communications and concluded local guidance about applying for a blue badge would be helpful as national guidance was open to interpretation. It was also noted the local MP had written to the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work asking for a review of the guidance.

- More than 90 local authorities responded to a press enquiry about blue badge applications. This information was used to grade Bracknell Forest Council in the bottom 10% of Councils for approving blue badge applications. The statistic was based on the variation of applications between non-visual disabilities and visual disabilities so, while it appeared the distinction was not happening in Bracknell Forest the report did not compare on demographics or other differences.
- This review had helped to dispel potential reputational damage.
- Members acknowledged the review provided a greater depth of information than before but queried if people with disabilities and carers still required a lot of support to complete applications and what support was available locally. It was noted members had been mindful of that issue during the review and had received contrasting evidence from witnesses, as some found the application process easy, while others did not. The review concluded help was needed at different levels within the application process and that the use of technology; trained customer care staff, a process for learning from mistakes and an empathetic approach would all contribute to a smoother process.
- Panel members were conscious of fraudulent claims and the team were looking at how to deal with these efficiently too.
- Voluntary sector organisations, such as The ARK, raised the issue that support around the process was crucial and said that some medical professionals reported finding the process tricky too. The recommendations included developing local guidance that encapsulated national guidance, but local nuisances too, as that should make the process smoother.

The Commission endorsed the recommendations within the Blue Badges review report for submission to the Executive on 21 September and agreed to review the implementation of these recommendations within a year.

16. **Work Programme Update**

Each Panel Chair provided a verbal update on work programme progress.

Wellbeing and Finance

Work had begun with stakeholders to agree what would be in scope for a review of mental health services as it was recognised this was a vast topic. There was a suggestion the review could focus on how easily customers navigate referral pathways; success rate and self-help as customers move up the chain of support across all providers including statutory, third sector, primary and secondary health settings. It was queried whether Panel members had considered a separate review into the effect of lockdown on residents and the Chair of the Wellbeing and Finance Panel explained the focus on mental health was due to several factors, including looking at the rise in need for mental health support for residents since the pandemic began. It was agreed the final scope would be brought to a future Commission meeting.

Education, Skills and Growth

On 14 June 2021 Panel members held a meeting with lead officers, the Executive Member: Children, Young People and Learning and Care Leavers to review the implementation of recommendations which came out of the Care Leavers scrutiny review. Panel members were pleased to note five of the six recommendations had been implemented in full and significant progress had been made against the final recommendation, which had already led to a positive impact on outcomes for Care Leavers in the borough. As this was the first time any Panel had formally held key personnel to account on the implementation of recommendations arising from a

scrutiny review the final report template was currently being devised. The final review of recommendations report would be available at the next meeting.

Several meetings had already taken place as part of the Panel's current review into Community Infrastructure Levy and a survey to Parish/Town Councils had been circulated. The next meeting would take place on 13 July with parish council representatives attending. Commission members asked if there could be an issue with Parish/Town Councils receiving funding which the borough could allocate to different projects and were informed the review was looking at joint working between the two organisations and if Parish/Town Councils were working together to deliver projects and make best use of resources.

County Lines and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities were topics the Panel were considering as future reviews. The Chair of the Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel had attended a County Lines workshop on 6 June and a SEND workshop on 29 June and been able to identify good practice and expert witnesses in preparation for the reviews. Members queried if Panel members had considered looking at how schools had coped with remote learning since the pandemic began. It was noted this was not on the review programme but was an issue that had arisen at the School Improvement Accountability Board, of which the Panel Chair was a member, and could be considered for the future.

Environment and Communities

The Food Waste in Flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation scrutiny review had been completed and was awaiting officer responses and completion of risk assessments. The final report would be presented at the next Commission meeting and, if supported, to the Executive in September.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Commission reflected the Commission work programme was continuously being reviewed and considered so requested it would be a separate agenda item at the meeting on 9 September 2021.

CHAIR

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Commission**
3 August 2021

Overview and Scrutiny Review of Food Waste in Flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel's report to the Commission following the Panel's review into food waste in flats and HMO's
- 1.2 To provide the advice of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer (SSO) to inform the Commission's decision whether to endorse the Panel's recommendations to the Executive.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers whether to endorse the Environment and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel's recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the Panel report (attached as Appendix A) and paragraph 5.5 of this report, taking into account the comments of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 It is the role of the SSO to advise the Council on any issues or concerns that may arise about the operation of the scrutiny function and the SSO may on occasion be required to make a determination about what the law says and how this should be applied to any particular situation. In carrying out this statutory role, there is a need to have a nuanced and meaningful understanding of the scrutiny function in order to accurately make judgments about its operation when disagreements or other issues arise.
- 3.2 The SSO is responsible for ensuring that the scrutiny function is adequately resourced and that service departments are contributing sufficiently to reviews to ensure that they are effective.
- 3.3 The SSO is also responsible for providing advice to the Commission on whether the recommendations within review reports are robust, taking account of resource, legal, climate change, equalities and strategic risk implications.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Commission could decide:
 - to endorse both recommendations to the Executive as set out in the Panel's report
 - to endorse the recommendations in part
 - to ask for further work to be undertaken before the report is submitted to the Executive recognising that this would delay the Panel's next piece of work

- to note the Panel report and not make any recommendations to the Executive

5 Supporting Information from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 5.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Commission commissioned the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to carry out a review into how food waste disposal could be implemented in flats and HMO's as part of the overview and scrutiny four-year work programme, which has been developed to track themes within the new Council Plan.
- 5.2 In support of this review a broad range of witnesses gave evidence putting the Panel in a good position to use this intelligence to frame the review and produce insightful recommendations.
- 5.3 The Panel was supported by Emma Young, Governance & Scrutiny Officer who supported the Panel to draw up the scope of the review and prepare an evidence pack of relevant information; to facilitate a number of Panel sessions to interview a range of contributors; to draw out findings from the Panel's investigation; and to prepare a review report. This involved in the region of 68 hours of scrutiny officer time and ten hours of Panel meetings.
- 5.4 In summary it is the Statutory Scrutiny Officer's view that this review activity had adequate resources and the service department contributed effectively to the review. The bulk of review activity took place between mid-April and mid-June 2021 and the review was completed within the timescales agreed by the Commission when the review work was commissioned. The comments from the relevant officers set out below do not indicate any concerns with the proposed recommendations.
- 5.5 That the Executive implements a progressive roll out of food waste collection for up to 20% of properties (up to 1800) with officers developing the criteria for suitable flats. This should also take into account good practice which has been identified within the report and the panel to be consulted on the draft criteria. The implementation of the scheme to begin in Spring 2022.**

Subject to recommendation 1 being agreed, that in order to make the roll out effective that the Executive commits to undertaking the following proposed actions:

- **individual kerbside food waste caddies be distributed to residents in appropriate flats with blocks that have demonstrated a willingness to recycle and fit within the strict criteria to begin in Spring 2022**
- **ongoing communication and engagement with residents in flats is undertaken and where possible, give presentations to interested parties.**
- **bins are provided with apertures to minimise contamination where no individual kerbside caddies are issued.**
- **all new HMO licences and renewals will have inserted into them the mandatory condition regarding waste storage and disposal.**

Any breach could result in enforcement action by Environmental Health.

That the Executive produces a report reviewing the roll out after 1 year along with a report on the effectiveness and cost by Spring 2023.

6 Commentary from Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chair, Councillor John Porter

- 6.1 The global response to the threat of climate change is a persistent focus for world leaders, national government and local authorities and Bracknell Forest is no exception. Protecting and enhancing our environment is one of six strategic themes listed in the Council Plan (2020-2023) with the key objectives detailed in our climate change strategy. One of these themes is to divert waste from landfill which was realised by introducing a household food waste collection. The implementation of which, has been successful with residents being really engaged and recycling considerably more food waste than expected.
- 6.2 Initially, the panel were keen to implement a food waste collection in all flats within the borough to ensure an equitable service for all residents, regardless of property type. However, after speaking to a range of experts, it became clear that challenges outside of the council's remit would prevent a full roll out of any scheme being possible.
- 6.3 The panel identified flats where residents were diligent in ensuring their dry recycling was sorted correctly and where managing agents had provided adequate facilities and had good working relationships with the council's Waste and Resources Team. These were considered the areas most likely to have a high participation rate and high food waste yields to make the scheme a success.

7 Response from Assistant Director: Contract Services

- 7.1 An additional truck to support the significant tonnages on the household food waste collection will be delivered in early 2022. This truck, and associated crew, could support the proposed collections of up to 20% of flats without incurring additional costs. Subject to the flats food waste collection producing 1kg per flat per week for recycling a small saving could be produced.

8 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 8.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in the Panel's report.

Financial Advice

- 8.2 Approval for the purchase of a sixth food waste vehicle through the 'Invest to Save' scheme has recently been given. This will provide sufficient capacity to enable the collection of food waste from the 20% households in flats at a minimal cost whilst generating a saving of approximately £10k per annum

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.3 The review scope, activities and recommendations were all considered in the initial equalities screening attached at Appendix B.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 8.4 Sustainable waste and recycling provision is detailed in the Council' local plan policy LP1 to "minimise and manage waste and respond to climate change." In relation to waste management, there is a strategic risk of not utilising opportunities to increase recycling and reduce waste going to landfill.

Climate Change Implications

- 8.5 The recommendations in the Panel report are expected to have a positive impact on emissions of CO₂. Any reduction in refuse would have a positive impact on climate change.

Background Papers

Appendix A: Food waste in flats and HMO's report

Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment.

Contact for further information

Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director of Delivery (acting as Statutory Scrutiny Officer) - 01344 355621

kevin.gibbs@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Recommendations Report

REVIEW TITLE	O&S PANEL	DATE
Food Waste in Flats and HMO's review	Environment and Communities	3 August 2021

“Protecting and enhancing our environment is one of six strategic themes listed in the Council Plan (2020-2023) with the key objectives detailed in our climate change strategy. One of these themes is to divert waste from landfill which was realised by introducing a household food waste collection. The implementation of which, has been successful with residents being really engaged and recycling considerably more food waste than expected.

This review aims to assess whether the council's desire to have food waste collection from every property was feasible and particular consideration was paid to what impact these additional collections would have on Bracknell Forest's recycling rate and the financial viability of an extended scheme.”

**Councillor John Porter, Chair:
Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel**



Recommendations

1 – That the Executive implements a progressive roll out of food waste collection for up to 20% of properties (up to 1800) with officers developing the criteria for suitable flats. This should also take into account good practice which has been identified within the report and the panel to be consulted on the draft criteria. The implementation of the scheme to begin in Spring 2022.

2 – Subject to recommendation 1 being agreed, that in order to make the roll out effective that the Executive commits to undertaking the following proposed actions:

- individual kerbside food waste caddies be distributed to residents in appropriate flats with blocks that have demonstrated a willingness to recycle and fit within the strict criteria to begin in Spring 2022
- ongoing communication and engagement with residents in flats is undertaken and where possible, give presentations to interested parties.
- bins are provided with apertures to minimise contamination where no individual kerbside caddies are issued.
- all new HMO licences and renewals will have inserted into them the mandatory condition regarding waste storage and disposal. Any breach could result in enforcement action by Environmental Health.

3 – That the Executive produces a report reviewing the roll out after 1 year along with a report on the effectiveness and cost by Spring 2023.

AVERAGE FOOD WASTE

Each household / per week*



1.5 kg

NATIONAL AVERAGE



2.8 kg

**BRACKNELL FOREST
AVERAGE**



0.3-0.5 kg

**NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR
FLATS**

*Data provided by WRAP



18% OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE FLATS IN BRACKNELL FOREST

There are currently 9300 households who live in flats including those in sheltered housing. This number is rising, particularly in the town centre

Residents in flats often have small kitchens and space to keep a food caddy is limited



Councillors completed site visits to assess the waste and recycling facilities

Key findings

- The panel's findings were that food waste should only be implemented in flats and HMO's which meet the agreed criteria.
- Any properties that did not meet the criteria, were likely to have low participation and low yields which would impact the environmental benefits,
- A partial scheme targeting properties with adequate facilities was considered most effective.

“I was surprised to learn the national average of food waste collection in flats was so low and that in many places, bin stores were not adequate”

Cllr John Porter

Introduction

Following the successful implementation of food waste collections in households in March 2021, the panel has been investigating how food waste collection could be implemented in flats and houses of multiple occupation (HMO's).

The panel spoke to key stakeholders and experts including Julia Bragg, Local Authority Technical Consultant from Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), Gemma Scott, Senior Advisor from RE London and Cllr Dorothy Hayes MBE, Executive Member for the Environment. Damian James, Assistant Director for Contract Services and Claire Pike, Head of Environmental Services also contributed to the review. Kim Shaw, Regional Manager for Suez, a waste contractor, also spoke to Councillors and written evidence was provided by Reading Borough Council and a local managing agent.

What approach have other councils taken in implementing food waste in flats? What were the challenges and lessons learnt?

The panel spoke to a technical consultant from WRAP who explained about the issues faced by residents who lived in flats. The problems identified included inadequate bin storage which was poorly lit, overflowing or unhygienic, and bins being located a long way from the resident's home. The food waste collected from these locations was often contaminated and therefore all the waste would be unsuitable for recycling. It was recommended that apertures were used on bins to help prevent this issue. Participation rates for food waste recycling was also poor amongst residents living in flats and the accumulation of these challenges contributed to lower food waste yields. Where food waste collection had been implemented in all flats, the national average yield per property per week was approximately 0.3-0.5kg. A holistic approach which included assessing whether residents were already successfully dry recycling was recommended before introducing a more complex scheme.

These challenges were also highlighted by the senior advisor from RE London. RE London had completed extensive behavioural insight research which looked at residents in flatted properties. This included installing cameras in resident's homes to observe their lives and conducting interviews. The research found that residents needed to be particularly motivated to recycle food waste through positive experiences. The ease of disposing of waste was critical and any dirtiness or overflow was demotivating. Again, low participation rates of around only a third of residents, affected overall food waste yields.

What type of flats would be suitable for a food waste scheme?

After hearing about the experiences of local authorities in London and across the country, councillors were keen to understand the situation for flats in Bracknell Forest and conducted site visits to three typical blocks of flats. Whilst on the site visit, councillors saw a waste disposal area where space was limited. This was considered one of the main barriers identified when speaking to a local managing agent. Whilst at the site, the head of environmental services, advised that dry recycling at that location was often contaminated. On occasion, the rubbish was so contaminated that the waste crews had been unable to make a collection and the managing agents had paid an additional fee to have it collected separately once they had sorted the waste. It was acknowledged that introducing food waste in that location, and those similar, would be challenging and councillors questioned whether there was any way of enforcing better recycling at these sites. It was explained that this was challenging as they were communal bins, so it was difficult to apportion accountability.

Particular concerns about health and safety were raised and officers advised that if the waste and recycling became a health hazard, then Environmental Health would investigate and had powers of enforcement.

Councillors visited two other sites including sheltered accommodation where dry recycling was already at a high standard. The waste recycling facility at this location was well lit and had sufficient space and clear recycling signage. Residents and managing agents at the location were also engaged and had an interest in ensuring their waste was correctly disposed of. This was considered an ideal location to have a food waste collection.

Councillors also visited a small flat block where residents had individual general waste and recycling bins identical to houses in the borough. It was observed that at these locations there was sufficient room to add food caddies to kerbside collections. The head of environmental services advised that residents in these flats had requested their own caddies and the panel agreed that this would be an ideal starting point for implementing food waste in Bracknell Forest.

The regional manager from Suez also shared this view and added that there could be an option to add some of these types of properties to existing collection rounds if capacity allowed.

“The visit to sheltered accommodation showed a genuine commitment to correct recycling where the bin area was clean with good lighting and a drainage area for bin washing by the managing agent”

Cllr Michael Brossard

What scheme would be recommended, after considerations have been made for the cost and the environmental implications?

Throughout the review the panel considered what options would be most successful in Bracknell Forest.

Initially councillors questioned whether a door to door collection would be feasible. However, as the senior advisor from RE London explained, this would be prohibitively expensive and was only seen in London in flats with a private concierge service.

The panel spoke to the Assistant Director for Contract Services regarding the effect on recycling rates for the borough should food waste be implemented for all properties and he confirmed that it would only result in a 0.5% increase on the overall recycling rates. This was because it would include flats where it was expected that participation would be low or non-existent due to inadequate facilities, lack of engagement or a high turnover of residents. By contrast, rolling out to 20% who met the criteria needed for success would result in a 0.2% increase.

Practical considerations were also made by the panel regarding the additional resources required to collect food waste. Implementing a full roll out would require significant additional resources including a new food waste truck, equipment and additional staff.

The purchase of an additional food waste truck in Spring 2022, to support high tonnages on the household scheme would increase capacity and allow collections from 20% of the most suitable flats. This would make the additional costs significantly lower.

Although at the start of the review, there was an appetite for a full roll out to all flats, every expert spoken to, talked about the challenges in implementing food waste in flats and the correlation between poor facilities and either contaminated food waste or poor participation.

Where facilities were not adequate, the council did not have the responsibility to make the necessary changes and in some locations, it would be challenging even if the managing agent or property owner were willing. Without meeting the minimum criteria, there would be little to no benefit to the environment.

Without a positive environmental impact, implementing a full roll out would not contribute to the Council's strategic theme of 'protecting and enhancing the environment' and therefore the substantial cost could not be justified.

For those flats who did meet the suitability criteria, councillors discussed various bulk bin options with RE London, WRAP and Suez and the conclusive evidence was that a 140l bin with an aperture would be the most practical option. Food waste is particularly dense and larger bins would be too heavy to be picked up by the waste trucks. Apertures were also considered important to avoid contamination and fly tipping.

For blocks of flats, the review concluded that officers would need to undertake individual assessments to determine whether a food waste scheme would be viable. The senior advisor for RE London, advised this was something which was already happening in London Boroughs and shared with the panel the criteria that they were using. The panel identified some specific examples of good practice which officers should use to inform the flat selection criteria.

The regional manager for Suez emphasised the importance of good communication with residents prior to launch including social media engagement starting several months before implementation. Generally, the more engagement with residents the better the participation rates, although this wouldn't overcome major waste facilities problems.

Following consideration of what could be done for the current flats in the area, the panel considered if there were any actions which could be taken to 'future-proof' new developments and ensure the residents would have adequate facilities. Although there were currently no houses of multiple occupation with bulk bins in the borough, the panel were concerned about the consequences of not providing adequate recycling facilities. They recommended that all new HMO licences require landlords to provide adequate recycling facilities, supported by relevant information for tenants. The Council's Local Plan also made provision for adequate waste and recycling provision in new developments

Good Practice

The panel found that recycling food waste in flats was most successful when the following conditions were met. These should be considered when identifying suitable flats:

- Good lighting
- Adequate space,
- Sufficient signage
- Residents already had a good dry recycling record
- Clean recycling space and bins including regular bin cleaning
- No problems with vermin
- Convenient location
- Managing agents had good working relationships with the council.

In addition, the panel noted the good practice of officers continuing to consult with Environmental Services where planning permission is required for new properties to ensure there is enough space for waste and recycling.



I would like to thank the members of the panel, and the organisations that have spoken to us for their frank, open and honest opinions as well their expertise. They have been invaluable in creating our recommendations. I also extend my thanks to Emma Young who supported the review.

Councillor John Porter, Chair: Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Contributors to this review

Councillor Bob Angell	Councillor Ian Kirke
Councillor Michael Brossard	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Ray Mossom
Councillor Moira Gaw	Councillor John Porter
Councillor Sandra Ingham	Councillor Mary Temperton
Councillor Gaby Kennedy	
Julia Bragg	Waste and Resources Action Programme
Mike Haines	Local Managing agent
Councillor Dorothy Hayes MBE	Executive Member for the Environment
Damian James	Assistant Director: Contract Services
Claire Pike	Head of Environmental Services
Gemma Scott	RE London
Kim Shaw	Suez
Reading Borough Council's Waste Team	
Emma Young	Governance & Scrutiny Officer

“So far, residents’ response to food waste collection has been superb. Flats have not yet been included and many flat dwellers are also wanting to join the scheme and help reduce land fill and methane release. Experience has shown that where there is a will, then there is a way. When residents want this to succeed it does.”

Cllr Mrs Mary Temperton

Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: April 2021 and updated following the review recommendations in June 2021	Directorate: Delivery	Section: Democracy and Governance	
1. Activity to be assessed	Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Environment and Communities review into Food Waste in Flats and HMO's. The review will consult with expert witnesses, key stake holders, property owners and council officers to decide how food waste in flats can be implemented.		
2. What is the activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change		
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New		
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Emma Young, Governance & Scrutiny Co-ordinator		
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Emma Young, Cllr John Porter, Cllr Ian Kirke, Cllr Mary Temperton		
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	The purpose of the activity is to identify which flats and HMO's may be suitable for food waste collection.		
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	Residents who live in Flats and HMO's		
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact?	What evidence do you have to support this?
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.	Y	Possible positive impact identified for residents who receive food waste collection.	The Health Survey for England predicted that in 2020, 6113 people living in Bracknell would have a moderate disability and 1823 ¹ residents will have a serious disability. Detail was not given about what type of housing residents with a disability might be living in, however it would be expected that people with additional needs could live in any type of housing with those in sheltered accommodation more likely to have additional needs. Any recommendations could have an impact on those with physical and mental disabilities. However, it is

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¹ [Physical disabilities and sensory loss - Public Health Portal - Bracknell Forest Council | \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/physical-disabilities-and-sensory-loss)

				<p>important that residents with additional needs receive service equality where possible.</p> <p>There will not be a negative impact as there will be no reduction to the waste and recycling services currently offered. Although, it is accepted that those residents will not have an equitable service in terms of food waste, they will still have the best waste and recycling solution for the facilities available where they live.</p>
9. Racial equality		N	No impact identified	<p>The 2011 Census data showed that 15.1% of Bracknell residents described themselves as BME or 'White other' however it is not known what percentage live in flats and HMO's. However, we know from the English Housing Survey 2017-2018² Residents from Black, Asian and minority ethnic households are more likely to live in flats and HMO type accommodation³.</p> <p>There will not be a negative impact as there will be no reduction to the waste and recycling services currently offered. Although, it is accepted that those residents will not have an equitable service in terms of food waste, they will still have the best waste and recycling solution for the facilities available where they live.</p>
10. Gender equality		N	No impact identified.	Research suggests that all genders occupy flats at roughly the same percentage.
11. Sexual orientation equality		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact sexual orientation specifically.
12. Gender re-assignment		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact gender reassignment specifically.
13. Age equality		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact age equality specifically.
14. Religion and belief equality		N	No impact identified	The recommendations will not impact religion and belief equality specifically.

² [EHS Households Report 2017-18 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

³ [EHS Households Report 2017-18 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact pregnancy and maternity specifically.
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	N	No impact identified	The recommendations will have no impact on marriage or civil partnerships.
17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.	The English Housing Survey 2017-2018, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government details the national average demographic for residents who occupy flats. "Certain groups are more likely to live in high rise flats than others, e.g. renters more so than owners, younger people more so than older people, black, Asian and minority ethnic households more so than white households, and those who live in the most deprived areas." ⁴ Consideration in the review was given to the best methods in which to engage with residents in these particular demographics.		
18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A		
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	N/A		
20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?	N		
21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?	We considered a wide range of data from local and national sources. This was collated in an evidence pack which is available on BFC website.		
22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?	N		
23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria

⁴ [EHS Households Report 2017-18 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

See recommendations contained in report.	August 2021	Cllr John Porter	Recommendations are endorsed by the O&S Commission and agreed by the Executive.
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	Overview & Scrutiny Commission work plan		
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	Please see recommendations contained in the report.		
26. Assistant director's signature.	Signature:	<div style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> APPROVED <i>By AnnMo at 11:08 am, Jul 16, 2021</i> </div>	Date: