

TO: EXECUTIVE
28 JANUARY 2020

**GREENING WASTE COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS -
INTRODUCING FOOD WASTE COLLECTION: ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN
BRACKNELL FOREST**

Executive Director: Delivery

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline how Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) could make changes to its waste collection arrangements to address climate change – reduce, reuse and recycle.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To reduce Bracknell Forest Borough’s impact on Climate Change, to introduce, from 5 October 2020, a weekly food waste collection service**
- 2.2 To launch a programme of communication to maximise the participation of residents and business to reuse and recycle their waste, minimising residual waste going to landfill**
- 2.3 To maximise performance of the food waste collection service, the refuse capacity is reduced by changing collection frequency to once every three weeks (from two weeks).**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 DEFRA published their Resources and Waste Strategy in December 2018 and this was followed up with consultation on potential changes between February and May 2019. On 23 July DEFRA published an executive summary and government response to the consultations, food waste collection was addressed in this and DEFRA have said ‘We will be mandating weekly separate food waste collection’, their intention is to do this by 2023.
- 3.2 Food collection should enable Bracknell Forest to achieve the Government target of 50% recycling by 2020 and move towards the much higher recycling rate of 65% by 2030 that DEFRA have set as their ambition in the Resources and Waste Strategy.
- 3.3 Reducing the refuse collection frequency will improve the performance of a food waste service as well as increasing the use of the current recycling services compared to if the refuse service remained the same as currently.
- 3.4 Reducing the refuse collection frequency will pay for the food collection service and generate a saving of £219k over the life of the contract.
- 3.5 Recycling food waste would have a positive climate change impact that includes a potential reduction of almost 4,000 tonnes of landfill waste.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Keep the waste collection service the same as now; without the addition of food

collections. BFC would fail to meet DEFRA's requirement for having a weekly food waste collection service by 2023 and also fail to meet the national 50% recycling target. Failure to meet the 50% target could lead to fines from DEFRA.

- 4.2 Add a weekly food collection to the existing service and make no other changes; this would cost in the region of £2.29million more than the current service over the remaining 7 years of the collection contract term.
- 4.3 Add a weekly food collection to the existing service and downsize refuse bins from 240 to 180 litres; this would come at a high capital cost of £1.4m and ongoing revenue cost and have a negative climate change impact due to the need for a bin changeover.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

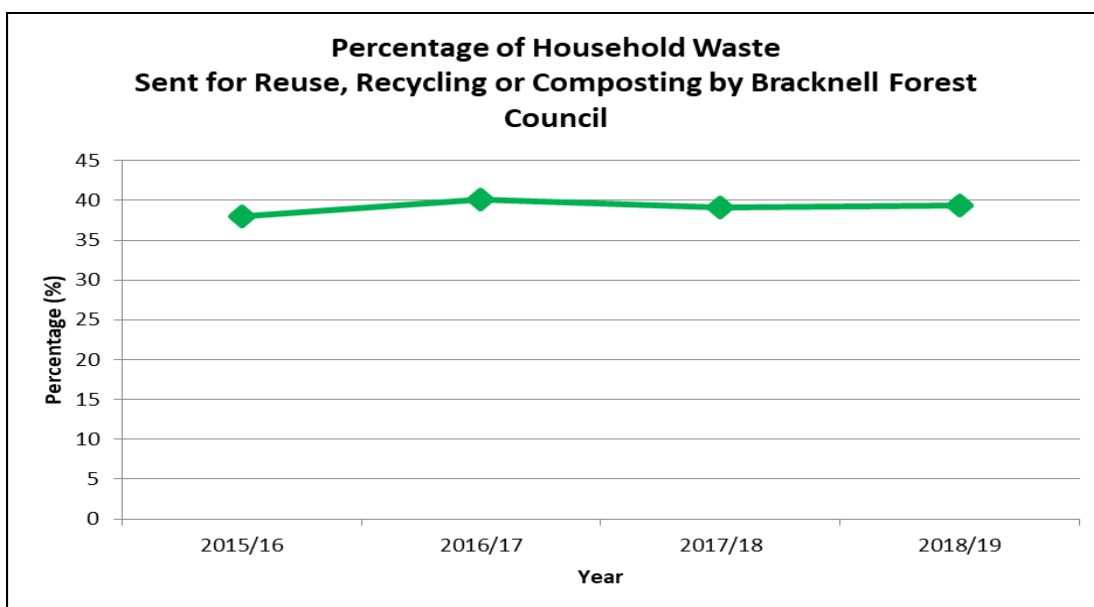
Background

- 5.1 In October 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a Special Report. The IPCC concluded that the Climate Change problem was getting worse. The IPCC concluded that the world needed to limit global temperature increases to no more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre industrial levels, in order to have any chance of reducing the risks of dangerous and irreversible climate change in the future.
- 5.2 In Motion 02/2019, on 17 July 2019, a climate change motion was agreed at Council. This stated that

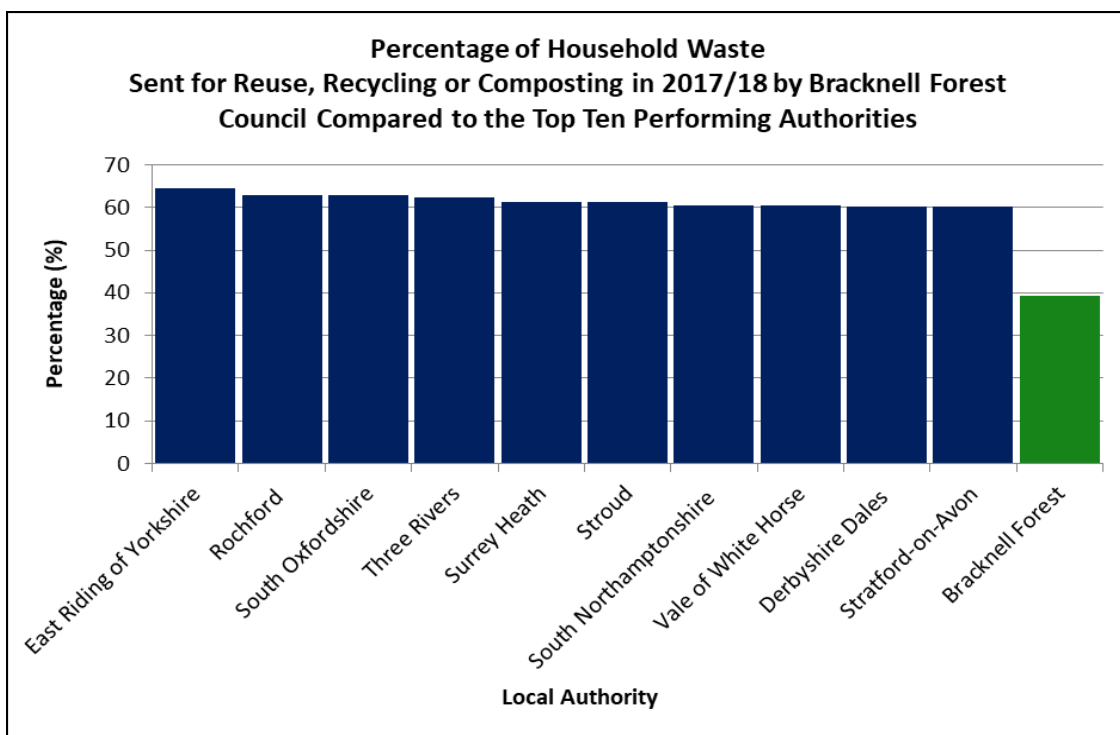
“This Council strongly believes in the need to continue its work to address the impact of man-made Climate Change on our local communities. To this end, this Council asks the Executive to develop detailed action plans with measurable ambitious annual targets and an annual report to address this pressing matter to ensure that the Council meets the government target of eradicating its net contribution to climate change by 2050”
- 5.3 Therefore, in order to address this climate change objective, the Council needs to make changes to its services, in support of this Climate Change objective.
- 5.4 Addressing man-made climate change isn't a new policy area for the council, or the council's thinking and planning around waste management. However, this new mandate must now be clearly linked to the new objective, detailed in the council motion.
- 5.5 “Greening” the council's waste management arrangements has been at the heart of the council's strategy and was factored into the waste collection contract extension with SUEZ. Last year, the SUEZ collection contract was extended for 8 years, to 31 March 2027. The contract cost is £1.93 million per annum, excluding fuel. The contract allows us the flexibility to make changes to the service including the addition of new materials such as food waste and changes to the frequency of collections.
- 5.6 Twelve new, more fuel efficient, waste collection vehicles were purchased in July 2019 that are single bodied. This enables all the trucks to be used across all three of the current services (refuse, dry recycling and garden waste) which allows easier round adjustments as the number of households in the borough increases and better use of the fleet. Before purchasing the new fleet, consideration was given to the future addition of food waste and whether Bracknell Forest should consider

purchasing collection vehicles with a food pod mounted behind the crew cab. The pod vehicle was tested and due to large areas of the borough being too tight for manoeuvring it was decided a pod vehicle was not suitable.

- 5.7 Due to the significant increase in the number of properties in the borough in recent years the waste collection fleet was increased to thirteen waste collection trucks (previously twelve) from April 2019. Currently the fleet is made up of the twelve new vehicles detailed in 5.2, and the thirteenth truck is one of the 2011 fleet that was retained while a decision is made on the future service.
- 5.8 If the change to a three weekly refuse collection is made there is no need to buy a new thirteenth truck at this stage because a fleet of twelve will be sufficient. If refuse collection is to remain fortnightly, then a thirteenth truck is required, and the 2011 vehicle will need to be replaced. The purchase of the thirteenth vehicle (if required) has previously been approved by the Executive in September 2018 as part of the contract extension.
- 5.9 Bracknell Forest's recycling and composting rate for 2018/19 was 39.4%, this was a 0.3% improvement on the previous year, however the recycling and composting performance has plateaued over the last four years as shown in the graph below:



For comparison the top performing local authorities are recycling more than 60% of their waste, the difference in the levels of performance is shown in the graph below;



All of the top ten authorities collect food waste and eight of them have refuse capacity of less than our 120 litres per week.

Refuse Composition and capacity

5.10 A refuse analysis for Bracknell Forest Council was carried out in February 2019 and the headline findings were;

- 41% of the refuse from houses and 35% from flats is food waste
- 19% of refuse collected from houses and 25% from flats is recyclable
- In houses 3% of refuse is garden waste and in flats as expected much lower at less than 1%.

5.11 Based on the refuse analysis findings residents are managing with the current capacity of their refuse bins and have enough spare capacity to put some recyclables and garden waste in. If a food waste collection is added to the existing service with no change in the refuse capacity that could lead to further increases in recyclable material in the refuse bins.

The diagram below shows the contents of the average 240 litre refuse bin in Bracknell Forest. The red section shows how much could be left in the refuse bin if a food waste collection was introduced and use of the other recycling facilities were maximised;

Average Contents of Bracknell Forest's Household Refuse Bins by Weight



From looking at the diagram it is evident that there would be enough spare capacity with the food waste removed for refuse capacity to be reduced.

6. Options for **Potential Challenges to service delivery**

As with all waste collection services there are potential challenges to overcome. The following paragraphs are based on experience already gained with the current contract and from other Councils that have introduced a three or four weekly refuse collection.

Large families

- 6.2 Large families (6 or more) or those with a medical need for more capacity (incontinence pads) qualify for a second refuse bin under the current waste collection policy. The second refuse bin they are issued with is a 140 litre, this policy would remain to enable them to manage if refuse bin size or collection frequency was reduced. There is the potential that the number of households taking up the second bin option will increase, there are currently 507 households that have been authorised second refuse bins. Households that do not meet the criteria are given the option to pay for a second bin, currently there are 179 households taking up that option. In the experience of SUEZ on other contracts take up of second bins doesn't increase hugely in these circumstances.

Nappies and medical waste

- 6.3 Nappies and incontinence pads will be problematic waste streams if refuse collection

frequency is reduced to three weekly. To reduce the impact of this a weekly absorbent hygiene product collection service would be introduced alongside a three weekly refuse collection, this would be for those residents that have a significant need. From looking at current records there are 125 households with second bins due to incontinence or other medical waste related reasons. These are the most likely households to apply for the extra weekly collection service, however as with the previous point the experience SUEZ have had in other areas is that take up of the extra service is extremely low and other authorities state that with three weekly refuse service families with children in nappies manage well with the decreased collection frequency without the need to use the extra weekly service.

Flats – a phased introduction

- 6.4 Flats are more problematic than houses when it comes to waste storage and collection. There is no ownership of the bins or the storage area and as a result there is often excess waste, fly tipping of bulky items and large amounts of contamination (wrong items) in communal recycling bins. Implementation of a food waste collection just for houses to begin with would be advisable.
- 6.5 Flats could then be phased in. The first flats to have food waste collected for recycling would be from April 2021. The rest of the flats could be phased in over a two year period. From looking at challenges with food bins in communal bin areas faced by other local authorities it is highly likely there will be some blocks of flats that food waste collections are not suitable for. All food waste bins in flats would be introduced on a trial basis. During a three month trial the service would be monitored, not only for its use but also for how the management agent/housing association maintain cleanliness and quality.
- 6.6 Management agents or housing associations would need to be fully supportive of trials in flats, they would need to take responsibility for dealing with contamination and regular cleansing of communal food waste bins. Roll out of the service to flats is something that will be supported by a review with the Overview and Scrutiny panel.

Collection frequency

- 6.7 Residents are likely to be concerned about issues such as; odour, vermin, maggots and increased fly tipping. Once food is removed weekly from refuse then these concerns significantly reduce. There is no evidence from other local authorities that reduced collection frequency does increase fly tipping.

There are nineteen local authorities collecting refuse less than fortnightly (some once every four weeks) across England, Scotland and Wales. Those that have made the change have seen improved recycling rates as a result. There are some additional authorities currently planning to reduce refuse collection frequencies to three weekly, including Somerset County and Exeter City, also North Devon and West Devon currently have trials taking place.

7. Service Risks

Any additional collection or change in frequency carries risks. This section of the paper highlights some of them and possible mitigation.

DEFRA

- 7.1 DEFRA are considering whether a minimum service standard of two weekly

collection for refuse (alongside a weekly food waste collection) is appropriate. This is subject to an assessment of affordability and value for money. DEFRA plan to consult during 2020 on including a minimum refuse collection frequency of fortnightly in the proposed statutory guidance on minimum service standards for rubbish and recycling. If a minimum service standard was introduced a roll back to current refuse collection frequency could be introduced.

Longshot Lane waste transfer station

- 7.2 The waste transfer station at Longshot Lane is currently used by both Bracknell Forest and Wokingham vehicles. The addition of food to the waste service is going to mean increasing numbers of vehicles using the site. The Longshot Lane site is limited in terms of space, alternative access options may need to be considered to improve traffic flow. This increase in commercial traffic does not impact on the residential disposal area.

Costs and implementation

- 7.3 For a weekly food waste collection all houses would be provided with an internal 5 litre caddy to keep in their kitchen and an external 23 litre caddy that they would present for collection. These caddy sizes are the most common sizes used by English local authorities that have a food waste collection service.
- 7.4 For the initial service roll out all properties would be given a roll of 50 caddy liners, the average usage in other areas is two liners per week. Once the bags run out residents can use any other plastic bag or some newspaper to line their caddy.
- 7.5 The ongoing supply of liners would be costly, approximately £35k per annum. Studies of other local authorities with food waste collection services have shown mixed results in participation with and without liners, some authorities report no impact on participation by not supplying liners while others say that supplying liners helps maintain participation levels. This is something that can be reviewed as part of service roll out.
- 7.6 Dedicated twelve tonne food waste vehicles would need to be purchased, these take seven months to be delivered from the point of order, Bracknell Forest would need five vehicles to run a borough wide household food waste collection. Assuming BFC would fund these vehicles with SUEZ purchasing them appropriate capital funding would be required in 2020/21.
- 7.7 The estimated costs are shown in the confidential annex 1. The cost for introducing food waste and changing refuse collection frequencies allows extra revenue in year one for communications and extra staff to assist with service changes.
- 7.8 The cost for introducing a food waste collection and reducing the refuse collection frequency to three weekly is based on estimates of how much waste may be collected. The estimated food waste to be collected is 1.5kg per household per week and comes from the experience of our contractor SUEZ and the performance of food waste collection services at other local authorities with similar demographics and the reduced refuse capacity that has been proposed. The estimate is also in line with the lowest estimated performance, there are authorities that collect close to 2.5kg per household per week of food waste so there is the potential to see greater savings in landfill disposal than those shown. In reality the average refuse bin in Bracknell Forest contains more than 3kg of food waste per week.

- 7.9 When changing the service and reducing refuse frequency an improvement in performance of any existing recycling is seen in other areas so a 15% increase in recycling being put in the blue bins is also predicted, equating to 0.29kg per household per week. The baseline used for kerbside refuse weight is 8.5kg per household per week and is the actual figure from 2018/19. This weight of refuse per household has been relatively stable for the last 5 years as has the composition of the refuse.
- 7.10 Waste trends are affected by external factors that may influence future waste composition and affect the estimates, for example changes in packaging that are made by the manufacturing sector change the composition of waste so have the potential to increase or decrease the waste that can be recycled in the blue bin. Changes to the economic situation also affect waste, during 2008/09 there was a decrease in overall waste as a result of the recession, if this was to happen in the future there may a reduction in the amount of food being thrown away.
- 7.11 The new service start date of 5 October 2020 is proposed. This allows enough time for ordering the food waste collection vehicles, which take seven months to arrive from the point of order. It also allows time for ordering the food waste caddies, a lead time of 6 months is advisable to guarantee stock and to allow for distribution. This time scale also allows the final service launch communications to be done in September 2020 and outside of the peak holiday season.
- 7.12 A two-part communications plan has been drawn up (annex 2) to support the implementation of the changes to the waste collection service. The first part will deliver the message that a food waste collection service will soon be in place for Bracknell Forest residents and the second part will provide information on the changes to the refuse collection service. The strapline will be 'As Easy as 1, 2, 3' to reflect the following information that demonstrates a better service offer for Bracknell Forest residents.

Table 1: Waste Collection Frequencies Under the Proposed Changes

	Collection Frequency
Food	Weekly
Recycling/garden waste	Two-weekly
Refuse	Three-weekly

Proposed communications material:



8. Re3 and food waste processing

- 8.1 There is public pressure for Bracknell Forest to introduce a food waste service and

this pressure has increased since Wokingham's service was announced. Reading Borough Council have also now put their intention to introduce a food waste service from October 2020 into the public domain.

- 8.2 The re3 waste disposal partnership has negotiated a gate fee for food waste with Severn Trent Green Power. The deal commenced on 1 April 2019.

9. Strategic Climate Change Implications

- 9.1 Recycling food waste has several positive environmental impacts that contribute to the climate change agenda –

- It could prevent almost 4,000 tonnes of Bracknell Forest's waste going to landfill;
- It reduces the percentage of Bracknell Forest's waste being sent to landfill to less than 10% thus avoiding 1,950,000 kg of carbon emissions;
- The processing of food waste produces a nutrient-rich liquid fertiliser which reduces the need for farmers to use fossil fuel-driven chemical fertilisers on their crops;
- The methane produced by the breakdown of food generates electricity – the plant to be used generates enough to power 4,800 homes;
- The Council will have one less 26 tonne collection vehicle on the road;
- The entire waste collection fleet will meet the Euro 6 emission standards

10 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 10.1 The recommendation in this report reflects the Authority's statutory duty under Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area. However, this is subject to frequency of refuse bin collections meeting DEFRA requirements. In this regard the reference in paragraph 5.11 to DEFRA mandating minimum fortnightly refuse collections in the future is noted.

Borough Treasurer

- 10.2 The estimated costs of the different options identified for the future Waste collection and disposal service are set out in detail in the annex, together with the assumptions that they are based on. While the cost of collection is felt to be accurate and has been estimated by working with the contractor, costs of disposal will depend on the mix of different waste and recycling tonnages, which are impossible to accurately predict. The estimates are shown until 2026/27, which is the end of the current Waste Collection contract. Some costs will continue beyond this period, since the capital financing costs of wheeled bins and caddies will be written off over a longer period to reflect their estimated useful lives.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 10.3 See annex 3 attached.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 10.4 The introduction of a weekly food waste service and the move to a three weekly refuse collection is a significant change to the service offering to residents. With such a change, communication and project management are key in order to deliver a successful service. A project team will need to be set up to manage the implementation and a Member working group will monitor the work of this group.

11 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 11.1 Conservative Group

Method of Consultation

- 11.2 Meeting

Representations Received

- 11.3 Included within the report

Background Papers

Not applicable

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