

TO: EXECUTIVE
14 JULY 2020

GREENING WASTE COLLECTION UPDATE
Executive Director: Delivery

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Executive on the progress of phase 1 of greening waste collections and outline the challenges, caused by the coronavirus being faced by Officers and SUEZ to get the waste collection service changes ready for 5 October 2020.
- 1.2 To ask the Executive for a decision on if the service changes should go live in October 2020 as planned or be delayed until 1st March 2021.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Executive agrees to postpone the introduction of food waste and the move to three weekly refuse collections for households until the 1st March 2021 as a result of the Coronavirus.**
- 2.2 **To pause communications related to the changes and restart them in October 2020 with a refreshed and revised communications plan**
- 2.3 **That the Executive agrees to postpone the introduction of food waste collections to flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation with communal bins until the Autumn of 2021 following work being completed by Overview & Scrutiny after roll out of the household service.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Following approval by The Executive on 28 January 2020 work began on communicating with residents on the changes however as a result of the Coronavirus since early March online and social media communication has stalled. This means our residents are not as informed about the changes as planned at this time.
- 3.2 One of the crucial elements of the summer communication focussed on face to face advice and support. Coronavirus restrictions have meant face to face interactions with residents have not been possible.
- 3.3 The five vehicles to be used for collecting food waste have been ordered, but production has been paused so at the time of writing there is no confirmed delivery date.
- 3.4 A service change of this scale requires a significant amount of preparation, a critical element is the new collection rounds for the service and the subsequent adjustments for the refuse collections. This process is running behind schedule as a result of the additional service pressures within Suez due to efforts of keeping existing collection services going during the pandemic.
- 3.5 The recommended 1 March 2021 start date avoids being too close to Christmas and New Year. Caddy deliveries and final roll out communications will take place in January and February.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Continue with the original October 2020 date; this carries a significant risk as vehicles may not arrive in time, new vehicle rounds may not be completed, and residents would not be as informed about the changes as planned.
- 4.2 Delay until October 2021, a full year delay is an option, however this would see an even larger reduction in the estimated savings and BFC would be lagging behind re3 partners.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Communications

- 5.1 The communications focus has moved to coronavirus; messaging around council service availability, health awareness, keeping the community safe and how they can obtain additional help and support. As a result of the planned campaign online and on social media for the waste collection service changes has been paused, no messages have gone out since early March.
- 5.2 One of the elements of our communications plan was face to face conversations with residents at community events, the planned community events that were due to be attended by the waste team have been cancelled through the spring and summer months.
- 5.3 From the end of May home visits to support and advise residents of how to maximise recycling, manage their waste effectively and to offer solutions for dealing with AHP (absorbent hygiene product) waste were to be available to residents. An online form to allow residents to request and make appointments for a member of the waste team to visit them was due to be published on the council website mid-May. Given current restrictions and social distancing guidance this is on hold.
- 5.4 Christmas craft fayres do offer us some potential events to attend to still allow the face to face advice and support to be available.

Operations

- 5.5 The food waste collection vehicles are being purchased from a company in Scotland, but the bodies of the vehicles are being made in Italy and are currently in the production stage and still in Italy. At the point of order, delivery to SUEZ was predicted to be mid-August, at this stage there is no confirmation of a revised delivery date and there will be a delay as a minimum of two months production time has been lost due to factory shut downs.
- 5.6 Creating round lists and new routes is a complex process managed by SUEZ. The early work on the new routes for the food waste rounds and the adjusted routes to change refuse collection to three weekly did begin towards the end of February. Some of the work is done using computer modelling but on the ground working knowledge is also a big part of getting the routes right. The Bracknell Forest SUEZ team would have fed into the work, however staffing pressures and adjusted ways of working have meant that this part of the work has not yet begun. The routes need to be complete by the end of June for the start-up packs to be delivered to all houses in the borough from mid-August and this is now extremely unlikely to be achieved.
- 5.7 Caddy production is on track for us to receive the delivery in early August. The

distribution company are currently operating business as usual. The caddies were due to be delivered to households over a six-week period from mid-August onwards. Caddies will be delivered as part of the start-up pack that includes the black 23 litre external caddy, silver/grey 5 litre internal caddy, a roll of liners and a service leaflet and collection schedule.

Although we may have the caddies and liners in time for a mid-August delivery the collection schedule leaflet will not be complete because of the route and round planning delays.

To delay until 1 March, as recommended, the deliveries to households would need to begin mid to late January and these arrangements would need to be firmed up with the distribution company to make sure they have the capacity for this. We would also seek to delay delivery of the caddies to us so that we are not having to store them for six months.

- 5.8 From 5 October the plan was to have four food waste rounds running 5 days a week, each round needs a driver and two loaders. Although the refuse collection is going to drop from being four main household rounds down to three SUEZ still needed to recruit at least three new drivers and six new loaders. Recruitment at this time is proving very difficult, agencies have been inundated with requests for temporary staff while many organisations struggle with staffing levels.

Budget

- 5.9 A delay in the service start date by the recommended five months will influence the estimated savings that the changes can deliver. The summary chart in confidential appendix 1 shows the saving, when compared to the as now service, is estimated at just under £185k until the end of the contract term (31 March 2027). This is a reduction in £34k compared to the estimated saving of £219k for an October start.
- 5.10 The main reason for the reduction in saving is during the five months from October 2020 to 28 February 2021 an estimated 2000 tonnes of food waste and dry recyclables were going to be recycled rather than being disposed of in landfill.

Flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

- 5.11 Flats and HMOs with communal bins are planned to be phase 2 of service changes, with food waste recycling bins potentially being introduced from April 2021. An Overview and Scrutiny review is planned for Autumn 2020 on this, which will put forward recommendations to the Executive on how roll out to properties with communal bins would be best achieved.

To allow time for the roll out to households to become business as usual and get through the service start up phase 2 is likely to need to be put back until Autumn 2021. Some learning is required on round capacity so that a judgement can be made on whether the communal properties can be added to the four food waste rounds for households or whether a fifth round would be required.

- 5.12 Flats and HMO's with communal bins will all need to be assessed for space in the bin storage areas and suitability for food waste collections. Contact will also need to be made with management agents, housing associations and landlords to ensure they are on board with the introduction of food waste collection. They will need to accept responsibility for ensuring the food waste is not contaminated and for keeping the food bin clean.

This will take up considerable officer time to implement and monitor, delaying the introduction at properties with communal bins will allow time for household enquiries and complaints to reduce closer to usual levels so allow the officers time to do bin store assessments and manage the roll out more effectively.

The alternative option of combining the start of phase 1 and phase 2 would mean increased start up costs as temporary staff would be required to carry out bin store assessments, liaise with agents and advise and support the public through the changes.

As such in consultation with the chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission it is recommended that the O&S work on phase 2 doesn't begin until after the household waste changes have commenced with a roll out of the service in the Autumn of 2021.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

6.1 Financial Implications section

The financial implications of the proposed change in start date are set out in the report and are not material in the context of the Council's overall finances

6.2 Borough Solicitor

There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6.3 Equalities Impact Assessment

N/A

6.4 Strategic Risk Management Issues

It is considered a significant risk to 'go live' with a food waste collection and reduction of residual waste on the 1st October 2020. A rushed or underprepared collection service would negatively impact on 46,000 households across the Borough.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Principal Groups Consulted

The cross party Food Waste Member steering group reviewed and commented on this paper at their last meeting.

7.2 Method of Consultation

Teams meeting

7.3 Representations Received

N/A

Background Papers

Not applicable

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