

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

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## **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 CO<sub>2</sub>. 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

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