

To: **Executive**
21 September 2021

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

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Executive the findings of the Environment and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel's review into Food Waste in Flats and HMO's and ask them to consider their recommendations.
- 1.2 To provide the advice of the Executive Director: Delivery in his role as Statutory Scrutiny Officer (SSO) to inform the Executive's decision whether to agree the Panel's recommendations.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Executive considers whether to agree the Environment and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel's recommendations 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 Recommendations

- 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 and Executive on whether the recommendations within review reports are robust, taking account of resource, legal, climate change, equalities and strategic risk implications.

4 Alternative Options Considered

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

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission directed The Environment and Communities panel to conduct a review into food waste collections in flats and HMO's following the successful implementation of food waste in households.
- 5.2 The review aimed to assess what type of food waste scheme would be most successful in Bracknell forest for Flats and HMO's through speaking to experts and conducting site visits. The review aimed to do this by understanding lessons learnt from other local authorities, determining what criteria and facilities were required for success, and analysing the benefits to the environment comparative to the costs.
- 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 The Environment and Communities Panel concluded their findings based on the evidence considered and speaking to several witnesses as part of the review.
- 5.5 The Commission considered the Panel's recommendations and endorsed them for referral to the Executive. The reasons for making these recommendations are set out in the Panel report. These recommendations are:

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.

5.5 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.

6 Commentary from Environment and Communities Overview & 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 area's 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 this 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 An Equalities Impact Assessment initial screening has been completed and is 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.

- 8.5 Climate Change implications

The recommendations in Section 5 above are expected to reduce emissions of CO₂ by 58 tonnes of CO₂e per annum if collection targets of 1 kg per household per week from 1800 flats are met.

The reasons the Council believes that this will reduce emissions is because food waste would be processed at an anaerobic digestion plant rather than going to landfill.

Background Papers

Appendix A – Report

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Contact for further information

Kevin Gibbs, Statutory Scrutiny Officer – 01344 355621

kevin.gibbs@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Emma Young, Governance & Scrutiny Officer - 01344 352269

Emma.young@bracknell-forest.gov.uk