
Separate Food Waste Collections Update

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	2 September 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	12 August 2021
Report Author:	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4009

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report aims to:

- (a) Update decision makers about progress being made towards the introduction of free, weekly separate food waste collections from households in the district;
- (b) Flag potential opportunities, risks and issues identified for the project; and
- (c) Recommend that approval is granted so that separate food waste collections can be introduced in the district on a free, weekly basis.

2 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Executive considers the proposals in this paper and grants approval for the introduction of separate food waste collections in the district.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	Capital funding of £900,000 has already been approved for this project in the Council's latest budget. This Capex has been allocated from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds and will be used to procure food waste trucks and bins/caddies. The project can achieve revenue savings of c. £50k to £130k per annum, depending on the householder participation levels achieved and the amount of food waste diverted from the black general refuse bin. A savings target of £100k from the waste revenue budget in 2022/23 has already been agreed corporately.

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	Finance Manager engaged in preparing this report: Ian Wigginton; Date: 09 August 2021.
Human Resource:	Not applicable.
Legal:	Not applicable.
Risk Management:	<p>Selected risks that the Executive need to be aware of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vehicle procurement lead time: the new service is anticipated to go live in May 2022. This is subject to the prevailing lead time for food waste truck orders placed around September 2021, when a final decision from the Executive is expected. The Council's waste contractor has recently notified us that latest lead time estimates are increasing significantly to c. 10 – 12 months. This is likely to be due to the high number of councils who are planning to introduce similar services in the near future. To mitigate this risk, the contractor has suggested that the Council could provide an "instruction to order" letter at the earliest opportunity which will help them to secure production slots early and avoid long delays. <i>Operations Board agreed on 12 August 2021 that a letter of intent could be provided to the contractor at the earliest opportunity, so that an order can be placed for food waste vehicles.</i> 2. General refuse volumes: there is a risk that as food waste is diverted from the general refuse bins, householders could fill the void created with other waste materials. Many councils try to mitigate this risk by reducing the capacity or collection frequency for general refuse bins when they introduce separate food waste collections. However, that approach is not being recommended at this time. The Council will aim to mitigate this risk using communications but there are limitations to what can be achieved. This has to be closely monitored in the months following rollout to see if further interventions will be needed in future.
Property:	Not applicable.
Policy:	The UK government is legislating for food waste to be collected separately from all English households in the forthcoming

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	Environment Bill ¹ . Local authorities will have a legal duty to comply with this requirement by c. 2023/24.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		√		<p>No potential impacts on individuals with protected characteristics are anticipated. The proposed service will be offered to all eligible households in the district.</p> <p><i>The Council's Equality and Diversity Officer was engaged during the preparation of this paper to confirm there are no significant concerns with equality impacts.</i></p>
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		√		Not applicable.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/10-march-2020-waste-and-resource-efficiency-factsheet-part-3>

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Environmental Impact:	√			The project will have a positive impact on the environment. Sending food waste to composting or anaerobic digestion facilities is better for the environment than using incineration or landfill. It will help the Council to improve its recycling performance and make a contribution to the achievement of the Council's net zero carbon emissions target. The new food waste trucks will also be fuelled using Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) ² . HVO use can help to improve local air quality because it generates lower emissions of air pollutants compared to diesel.
Health Impact:		√		Not applicable.
ICT Impact:		√		Not applicable.
Digital Services Impact:		√		Not applicable.
Council Strategy Priorities:	√			The introduction of separate food waste will make a positive contribution to the achievement of the objectives in the Council's <u>Environment Strategy</u> . In particular, it will help deliver on the commitment to introduce: <i>"Separate food waste collections to all eligible households by 2025, subject to the availability of funding from the Government".</i>
Core Business:	√			The project will have positive impact on the Council's core business. It will help to deliver on the following Council priority:

² HVO fuel is one of the cleanest fuels on the market. It's a second-generation, synthetic, advanced renewable diesel alternative that eliminates up to 90% of net CO₂ and significantly reduces nitrogen oxide (NO_x), particulate matter (PM) and carbon monoxide (CO) emissions (Reference: https://www.crownoil.co.uk/faq/hvo-fuel/#What_Is_HVO_Fuel)

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			<p><i>“Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships”.</i></p>
<p>Data Impact:</p>		<p>√</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>The following key stakeholders/organisations have been consulted in the preparation of this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and ongoing: Executive Member briefings. • 26 April 2021: Environment Audit Group attendance. • 29 April 2021: Environment Board attendance. • 14 June 2021: workshop with officers from selected key Council departments including Customer Services, Finance, Corporate Communications, Environment Delivery Team, Digital etc. • 27 July 2021: Corporate Board attendance. • 12 August 2021: Operations Board attendance. • Ongoing: engagement with other councils who have recently introduced similar services to learn relevant lessons e.g. a comprehensive discussion was held with officers from Bracknell Forest Council on 04 May 2021. • Ongoing: the Waste Manager has been actively liaising with officials from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme (WIDP) about this project. DEFRA and WIDP are key stakeholders because the waste PFI contract benefits from Government PFI grants. A Variation Business Case will be shared with them in due course for agreement. <p>Planned activity (August to November 2021): Public consultation involving residents and wider community stakeholders.</p>		

4 Executive Summary

4.1 A summary of the key discussion points and the recommendations made in this report is as follows:

- The proposal involves collecting food waste separately from all eligible households in the district on a free, weekly basis. It is anticipated that the new service will cover both street-level (i.e. single household) properties and flatted dwellings or households with multiple occupancy (HMOs).
- About a quarter of the contents of the black general refuse bin in West Berkshire is currently made up of food waste. The Council made a commitment at the Full Council meeting held during January 2020, to explore the introduction of separate food waste collections in the district. The collection of food waste on free, weekly separate basis by all English local authorities is part of emerging UK Government policy measures and this will be legislated for in the forthcoming Environment Bill;
- The proposed service will be similar to those already provided in many council areas and will involve providing households with a 5-litre (l) kitchen and a 23l kerbside caddy for presenting food waste for collection. The Council would also supply a single roll of compostable kitchen caddy liner to households at the beginning of the service. The separately collected food waste will be sent to the Council's in-vessel composting (IVC) facility at Padworth near Reading, where it will be used to produce an organic soil improver. The IVC facility has suitable spare capacity and the Council is already paying for its operation within the monthly contract unitary payments.
- Negotiations between the Council and Veolia, the Council's waste contractor, about the proposed changes have progressed sufficiently well and most of the key potential sticking points have been resolved. The few remaining discussion points are relatively manageable and are anticipated to be resolved in a few weeks and well ahead of the final decision by the Council (target date: September 2021); and

4.2 **It is recommended that approval is granted by the Executive for separate food waste collections to be introduced in the district.** As indicated, the implementation of separate food waste collections in the district will help the Council to comply with emerging legal requirements. Additionally, the project will help the Council to increase its recycling performance and make a contribution towards the achievement of the Council's net carbon zero ambitions.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 This report is seeking to explain the rationale for the proposed introduction of separate food waste collections in the district. A recommendation is being made in this paper for the Council to approve these proposals.

Background

- 5.2 The Council made a commitment at the Full Council meeting held during January 2020, to explore the introduction of separate food waste collections in the district; this was during the debate about a petition that the Council should collect additional plastic waste types.
- 5.3 About a quarter of the contents of the general refuse bin in West Berkshire is currently comprised food waste (see Appendix A). Although residents can present food waste for collection even without a garden waste subscription, uptake has been very low (i.e. estimated below 10%). This is partly because the current collection of garden and food waste is undertaken fortnightly. Separate weekly food waste collections will help the Council to capture a significant proportion of this material from the general refuse bin and away from landfill and incineration (i.e. energy from waste facilities).
- 5.4 Separate food waste collections is part of emerging policy measures that all English local authorities will be required to implement by c. 2023/24 (see Section 5.7 for further details).
- 5.5 The Council's waste team has been considering a range of collection service change options for over two years (these options have been identified under Section 6). The Council's Waste team has been engaged in advanced negotiations with representatives from Veolia since February 2021, to develop proposals for separate food waste collections. Negotiations have progressed sufficiently well and most of the key potential sticking points have been resolved. The remaining discussion points are relatively manageable and it is anticipated that they will be resolved by the end of September 2021.
- 5.6 Further information on the key drivers and benefits associated with the project has been set out below.

Key Drivers and Benefits

The key drivers and benefits associated with the introduction of the separate food waste project include:

- 5.7 Compliance with emerging government waste measures: The UK Government indicated its intention to require all local authorities in England to collect food waste separately in the Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS)³. This requirement was further stated in associated consultations on consistent collections and recycling. This policy measure will also be legislated in the forthcoming Environment Bill. The Council's proposal to collect food waste separately is consistent with this requirement.
- 5.8 Contribution to achievement of Council priorities: During summer 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency with the main objective of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The Council's Environment Strategy sets out a number of measures

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765914/resources-waste-strategy-dec-2018.pdf

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that will help deliver on this ambition. The introduction of separate food waste collections is one of the measures outlined in the Strategy. An excerpt from the Strategy states:

“In order to work towards the aim of carbon neutrality by 2030 and to ensure that we are mitigating the effects of waste and resource management on our natural environment, we will: • Reuse, recycle and compost at least 60% of municipal waste we handle by 2030; • Implement a kerbside collection system that is fully compliant with the minimum service standards required by the UK Government by 2025. This commitment includes:

• Separate food waste collections to all eligible households by 2025, subject to the availability of funding from the Government...”

5.9 Increased recycling and resource efficiency: the Council's recycling performance has plateaued over the past three years at around 49 – 50% and improvements will be challenging without a significant service change such as the proposed introduction of separate food waste collections. This project will help us to capture more food waste from households and convert it into compost for use as an organic soil improver.

The introduction of separate food waste collection is anticipated to lead to a significant increase in the Council's recycling performance to c. 56% in 2022/23. That will position the Council to possibly aim for 60% recycling by 2030.

5.10 Increased financial efficiency: it is anticipated that the introduction of separate food waste collections could help the Council to achieve financial efficiencies through a reduced use of landfilling and energy recovery. Appendix B sets out the expected recycling and financial performance of the proposed service change.

Potential Future Funding Opportunity

5.11 The UK Government has indicated in the Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) and subsequent consultation documents that it is committed to funding net new burdens associated with the requirements imposed on local authorities e.g. separate food waste collections. Details around the eligibility for funding are yet to be confirmed by the UK Government. There is no guarantee that the UK Government will be able to make good on this funding. If realised, the possible new burden funding will be an opportunity for the Council.

Proposals

5.12 The proposal involves collecting food waste separately from all eligible households in the district on a free, weekly basis. It is anticipated that the new service will cover both street-level (i.e. single household) properties and flatted dwellings or households with multiple occupancy (HMOs).

5.13 The proposed service will be similar to those already provided in many council areas and will involve providing households with a 5-litre (l) kitchen and a 23l kerbside caddy for presenting food waste for collection. The Council would also supply a single roll of compostable kitchen caddy liner to households at the beginning of the service. The separately collected food waste will be sent to the Council's in-vessel composting (IVC) facility at Padworth near Reading, where it will be added to garden waste and used to

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produce an organic soil improver. The IVC facility has suitable spare capacity and the Council is already paying for its operation within the monthly contract unitary payments, so its use for food waste treatment is the most economically advantageous approach. It is worth noting that in the recently published recycling consistency consultation⁴, the UK government has indicated it will support separately-collected food waste being sent to IVC plants where practicable to do so.

- 5.14 It is expected that by collecting food waste weekly, more householders will be encouraged to participate in the new service than those who currently present food waste as part of their garden waste collections. Chargeable garden waste will continue to be collected by the Council on a fortnightly basis.
- 5.15 The Council has allocated £900,000 in its recent capital budget to be used to procure new food waste vehicles and receptacles. The Council will also fund the operational costs associated with the scheme. As set out under Appendix B, it is anticipated that the Council will achieve some efficiency savings relative to the existing operational cost baseline. This will depend on how much public participation and food waste diversion is achieved by the scheme.
- 5.16 At this advanced stage of negotiations, the Council and Veolia have agreed in principle to most of the commercial terms of the food waste proposals. The intention is to include an addendum to the previously-agreed Garden Waste Supplement and formalise this in a formal contract variation after the Executive decision in September 2021.
- 5.17 The Waste team appointed external technical advisors (SLR Consulting Ltd) to undertake due diligence of the technical and cost proposals submitted by Veolia. As shown in the due diligence report (Appendix C), the proposals are in line with good practice and will achieve suitable value for money for the Council's rate payers.
- 5.18 The following table shows the proposed allocation of risks and responsibilities between the Council and Veolia.

Selected Risk and Responsibility Allocation

Risk Item	Responsible Party/Risk Owner	
	West Berkshire Council	Veolia
Seeking approval of proposals from the Council and Defra, and encouraging public acceptance	Yes	
Capital funding for vehicles and caddies	Yes	

⁴ https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/supporting_documents/Recycling%20Consistency%20Final%20Consultation_May%202021.pdf

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Vehicle and container procurement		Yes
Communications ahead of roll out	Yes	
Successful mobilisation and implementation of the service		Yes
Public participation and food waste capture rate	Yes	
Vehicle maintenance, insurance and servicing		Yes
Operational costs funding	Yes	
Treatment process and capacity		Yes

Risk Associated with Vehicle Procurement Lead Time

Many English councils are planning to introduce separate food waste collections before 23/24. This means that the market for food waste trucks will likely see increased demand. One consequence is that the lead time for truck deliveries is expected to increase significantly in the coming months. Veolia has recently notified us that the lead time around September 2021 is likely to be 10 – 12 months. It has been suggested that if the Council wants to commence the new service in May 2021, then a letter can be provided to the contractor to place an order at the earliest opportunity.

5.19 Selected next steps for the project are as follows:

- September 2021: Executive decision;
- September to October 2021: Formal contract variation with Veolia;
- August to November 2021: Public consultation; and
- May 2022: Separate food waste service commences.

6 Other options considered

6.1 The following alternative options have been considered:

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Option	Recommended?	Comment
<p>Option 1: Do Nothing</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Not introducing separate food waste collections means the Council will not be compliant with emerging UK Government legislation which will require all English councils to offer separate food waste collections to households.</p>
<p>Option 2: Introduce separate food waste and reduce the size of household residual waste bins from the standard 240-litre (l) capacity to 140l.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Some councils reduce the general refuse bin capacity when they introduce separate food waste collections. Reduction in general refuse bin capacity is not considered to be necessary at this stage and could lead to significant stakeholder opposition. A recommended approach is to roll out the separate collection of food waste first, then review the situation c. 12 – 18 months after implementation. If the project results in significant reduction in the black bin capacity usage by householders, then it could be an option to consider in future years.</p>
<p>Option 3: Introduce separate food waste and reduce the collection frequency for general refuse.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>An alternative to Option 2 is to maintain the black bin capacity but reduce the collection frequency for general refuse from fortnightly to once every three weeks. This option is not being recommended at this stage. However, it could be actively considered following a post-implementation review about 12 to 18 months after the introduction of the food waste service. Between the two, Options 3 would be preferable to Option 2 because the existing 240l bins can continue to be used, whilst Option 2 will involve a complete replacement of bins.</p>
<p>Option 4: Introduce separate food waste collections.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>This is the Recommended Option. It will achieve the project objectives and is also likely to be supported by a broad range of local stakeholders.</p>

6.2 Option 4 (i.e. the introduction of separate food waste collections) is the recommended option. The Do-Nothing option will mean that the Council could be in breach of emerging legal requirements. The option to reduce black bin capacity or collection frequency is not being recommended at this time but could be considered in future depending on prevailing circumstances.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The introduction of separate food waste collections in the district will help the Council to comply with emerging UK Government legislation and also contribute to the Council's Environment Strategy objective of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Negotiations with the waste contractor have progressed relatively well and it is anticipated that a variation agreement can be formalised after the Council Executive has taken the final decision to approve the project in September 2021.

7.2 It is recommended that approval is granted so that separate food waste collections can be introduced in the district on a free, weekly basis.

8 Appendices

Appendix A – Composition of the General Refuse Bin in West Berkshire

Confidential Appendix - Not for Publication: Appendix B –Projected Performance and Financial Calculations

Confidential Appendix - Not for Publication: Appendix C – SLR Consulting Technical Due Diligence Report

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

Wards affected: All

Officer details:

Name: Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

Job Title: Waste Manager

Tel No: Ext. 2216

E-mail: Kofi.Adu-Gyamfi1@westberks.gov.uk

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