

**FUTURE STRUCTURE OF REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS**

Report of the: Head of Operational Services  
Contact: Jon Sharpe  
Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No  
If yes, reason urgent decision required:  
Annexes/Appendices (attached): Annexe1: Detailed proposals and rationale  
Annexe 2: Summary of current arrangements  
Other available papers (not attached):

**REPORT SUMMARY**

Current refuse and recycling collection arrangements continue until March 2017. This report proposes that they should be replaced with new, streamlined collections arrangements from April 2017 (exact date to be confirmed).

**RECOMMENDATION (S)**

- 1) That from April 2017 (exact date to be confirmed) the Council should adopt the new refuse and recycling collections structure that officers have called 'Weekly Premium Recycling', as outlined in Annexe 1.
- 2) That 'Weekly Premium Recycling' should be launched in phases:
  - a) Officers to be authorised to enter into negotiations with the Council's transport fleet provider for the temporary, short-term extension of some existing vehicles to facilitate this, and that Contract Standing Orders be waived to enable this on the grounds as set out in CSO 23.1 (i) and (j).
  - b) Detailed launch and communications plans, timings and funding requirement to be presented to the Committee at a future date.
- 3) That, with the launch of 'Weekly Premium Recycling':
  - a) Green and black bins are switched i.e. green 240-litre bin becomes for recycling; black 180-litre bin becomes for refuse. Detailed operational plans and funding requirement to be presented to the

*Notes*

<p><b>Committee at a future date.</b></p> <p><b>b) Lost, stolen or damaged black 180-litre refuse bins are replaced with 140-litre versions, funded from within existing annual bin replacement budgets.</b></p> <p><b>c) The Council's missed bin return timescales are rationalised i.e.:</b></p> <p><b>i) No return for missed weekly collections of dry recycling or refuse (2 sacks of excess refuse collected on next collection, no limit to excess recycling).</b></p> <p><b>ii) Retention of the existing two-working-day return for missed food and garden waste recycling.</b></p> <p><b>d) The Council's policy on additional refuse bins at houses is amended i.e.:</b></p> <p><b>i) A free black 240-litre refuse bin in replacement of the black 180-litre bin, available to households of 10 or more on request, subject to an officer visit to confirm need and establish the proper use of recycling services.</b></p> <p><b>ii) Removal of the existing option of charged, additional refuse bins.</b></p> <p><b>iii) Maximum one refuse bin per house, with no refuse bin larger than 180-litres unless agreed as above.</b></p>	
--	--

## **1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy**

- 1.1 Recycling supports the Council's key priorities of Sustainability and Managing Resources.
- 1.2 Refuse and recycling is a flagship service that the Council provides to every household.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 In June 2015 the Committee was presented with a background report and presentation that advised:

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**27 OCTOBER 2015**

- 2.1.1 The Council now recycles c.45% of its collected household waste compared to the average Surrey councils' rate of c.52%. Epsom & Ewell's rate has remained more or less static since 2009. Recycling rates are stagnating or declining across Surrey and the whole of the UK. Pressure remains to recycle more to save money and help the environment.
- 2.1.2 The Council's current refuse and recycling collection arrangements will run until March 2017, at which point vehicle leases will expire and the Council will need to acquire new vehicles.
- 2.1.3 At that point, 'Kerbsider' vehicles (currently used to collect paper, glass, cans and textiles) will no longer be available. Therefore, some change will be inevitable.
- 2.1.4 The Committee must, by October 2015, decide on the future structure of refuse and recycling collections after March 2017 in order that suitable, new vehicles can be acquired within the replacement of the Council's overall transport fleet contract, for the provision of services thereafter.

**3 Proposals**

- 3.1 That from April 2017 (exact date to be confirmed) the Council should adopt the new, streamlined refuse and recycling collections structure that officers have called 'Weekly Premium Recycling' (see Annexe 1).
- 3.2 That 'Weekly Premium Recycling' should be launched in phases:
  - 3.2.1 Officers to be authorised to enter into negotiations with the Council's transport fleet provider for the temporary, short-term extension of some existing vehicles to facilitate this.
  - 3.2.2 To do this, Contract Standing Orders would need to be waived. It is considered that this can be done on the grounds set out in CSO 23.1 paragraphs (i) and (j), which provide that:
    - (i) Other reasons where there is no genuine competition;*
    - (j) The work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied constitute and extension of an existing contract.*
  - 3.2.3 It would not be feasible to source alternative vehicles simply to cover the phased implementation of the proposed 'Weekly Premium Recycling' arrangements.
  - 3.2.4 Further, detailed launch and communications timings, plans and costings to be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.
- 3.3 That, in line with the launch of 'Weekly Premium Recycling':

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**27 OCTOBER 2015**

- 3.3.1 Green and black bins are switched i.e. green 240-litre bin becomes for recycling / black 180-litre bin becomes for refuse. Further, detailed operational plans and funding requirement to be presented to the Committee at a future date.
- 3.3.2 Lost, stolen or damaged black 180-litre refuse bins are replaced with 140-litre versions, funded from within existing annual bin replacement budgets.
- 3.3.3 The Council's missed bin return timescales are rationalised i.e. no return for missed, weekly collections of dry recycling or refuse; retention of the existing two-working-day return for food and garden waste recycling. It may be noted that the proposed return times are equal to, or better than existing timescales.
- 3.3.4 The Council's policy on additional refuse bins at houses is amended i.e. black 240-litre refuse bin in replacement of the black 180-litre bin, available to households of 10 or more on request, subject to an officer visit to confirm need and establish the proper use of recycling services; removal of the existing option of charged, additional domestic refuse bins; maximum one black refuse bin per house; maximum 180-litre refuse bin unless agreed as above.

**4 Financial and Manpower Implications**

- 4.1 Financial and manpower implications are summarised in Annexe 1.
- 4.2 Increased vehicle costs since the Council acquired its current vehicles in 2009 mean that no option can provide a saving versus today.
- 4.3 The proposed arrangements offer the lowest operating costs of various structures evaluated – including if the Council were (theoretically) to continue its current arrangements.
- 4.4 The proposals also provide future sustainability through consideration of the recyclable materials markets, which have proven volatile in 2015.
- 4.5 Officers consider that the proposed structure would require six fewer operational staff than now. It is hoped to minimise the impact of redundancies through the use of agency staff in the run up to launch.
- 4.6 In addition, officers will, following the normal procedures, consider the possibility of a restructure of operational management in line with the proposed, new collection structure.
- 4.7 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:**
  - 4.7.1 No option represents a saving when compared to our current budget. Due to the increase in vehicle costs and downturn on income from recyclable materials all options represent an increase in the Council's budget for waste collection. The cheapest option from 2017 onwards is the Co-mingled excluding glass ('Weekly Premium Recycling') as demonstrated in section 7 of Annexe 1.

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**27 OCTOBER 2015**

- 4.7.2 The impact of volatile market forces on income has been detailed in this report. It should be noted that the most up to date market prices have been used across all options for financial comparisons.
- 4.7.3 This report does not include any one-off costs that may occur during the phased launch as mentioned in Annexe 1.
- 4.7.4 The estimate of £60,000 for advertising is a one-off and is not included in the model for costs. This amount is not in the current budget and has no resources set aside and will therefore be reviewed as part of the budget setting process. Given the current financial climate a detailed breakdown of proposed advertising will be required.
- 4.7.5 Any additional cost attached to the phased launch will be reviewed as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process once timings of the launch have been finalised.
- 4.7.6 The proposed introduction of, for example smart-phone apps (see Annexe 1) currently has no resources set aside. This would be subject to a separate review.

**5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)**

- 5.1 Officers consider that the proposed new services are compliant with the current Waste Regulations as outlined in Annexe 1.
- 5.2 Standard rules will apply for any procurement actions – such as the acquisition of vehicles through the transport fleet contract – required to support future services.
- 5.3 **Monitoring Officer's comments:**
- 5.3.1 It is important that proper consideration is given to the requirements of the Waste Regulations, and other legal obligations, in determining the best option for waste and recycling collection arrangements. It is considered that this report deals with the relevant issues.

**6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications**

- 6.1 Recycling supports the Council's Sustainability Policy. The proposed new service structure is forecast to lift the Council's recycling rate from c.45% to c.53% or higher.
- 6.2 Safety and protection of the environment are at the forefront of the legislation with which any collection arrangements must comply:
- 6.2.1 Safety is enhanced by this proposal. Co-mingled recycling has been shown to have a superior safety record to kerbside-sort. Further, the reduction of numbers of vehicles and crews operating will have a commensurate effect on the potential for both vehicle and staff accidents.

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**27 OCTOBER 2015**

6.2.2 The environment is further protected by these proposals, which will increase recycling, reduce residual waste treatment and require fewer collection resources.

## **7 Partnerships**

7.1 While the Surrey Waste Partnership supports the introduction of co-mingled recycling, its current strategy advocates the adoption of alternate-week, fortnightly refuse and recycling collections. The Partnership Officer Chair has therefore expressed his concern over the proposal for weekly refuse collections in Epsom & Ewell.

7.2 However, as detailed in Annexe 1, officers consider that the various elements of this proposal, such as the simplified service, weekly recycling collections, increased recycling capacity and other measures, will have a balanced, positive effect that will be welcomed by residents and lead to higher recycling rates comparable to, or better than, fortnightly systems.

7.3 The proposed new service structure will be underpinned by the provision of vehicles under the Council's transport fleet contract, which is in the process of being tendered for replacement coincident with the launch of new services.

## **8 Risk Assessment**

8.1 The risk of weekly refuse collections offering an incentive against recycling are countered by the measures described above and in Annexe 1.

8.2 The risk of fluctuations in the market values of recyclable materials has been countered as described in Annexe 1 by:

8.2.1 The separate collection of glass. Even modern sorting plants cannot fully remove glass shards from pure co-mingled recycling. This hurts material values. Keeping glass separate keeps the remaining co-mingled recycling cleaner, improving its value whilst providing a separate income stream from the glass itself. The option remains, should technologies and markets make it desirable, to co-mingle glass in the future.

8.2.2 The adoption of co-mingled recycling creates, for the first time, the potential to jointly sell recyclables with other Surrey councils. This is being actively pursued within the Surrey Waste Partnership. However, the final value of such an endeavour will be influenced by whether other councils are also persuaded to make separate glass collections.

## **9 Conclusion and Recommendations**

9.1 For the first time, 'Weekly Premium Recycling' places simple, weekly, high-capacity recycling collections at the disposal of the entire Borough – houses, flats and businesses. It will increase recycling while being the cheapest to operate, and will provide resilience to the materials markets.

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
27 OCTOBER 2015**

9.2 In order to maximise the potential of 'Weekly Premium Recycling' it will be necessary to undertake clear comprehensive launch communications, and to agree the proposed actions to restrict refuse capacity.

9.3 This report fully recommends the proposals.

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL**