

# Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Chief Executive

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To: CABINET

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## Revised joint waste collection policy

### Recommendation

To approve the new waste collection policy attached at appendix one to this report.

### Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for a new waste collection policy attached at appendix one.

### Corporate Objectives

2. The service contributes to the council's strategic objective of building thriving communities, making communities clean and safe by increasing the recycling rate to 70 per cent and maintaining our position as one of the top ten authorities for recycling.

### Background

3. The council adopted a wheeled bin policy to support the roll out of the current refuse and recycling collection service when it was introduced in 2009 in South Oxfordshire and 2010 in Vale of White Horse.
4. We have now reviewed the policy and updated it to reflect changes to the service since it was last updated in 2012. The new waste collection policy provides more information for service users in a more logical format. It reflects the full range of collection services the councils provide, expands on the areas covered by the current policy and incorporates some changes in legislation.

5. In addition to reformatting and updating the existing wheeled bin policy, five substantive policy changes or additions have been included and Cabinet are asked to approve these changes. The changes are summarised below;

- a. To amend the existing policy to reduce the size of a household that automatically qualifies for an additional free recycling bin from six to five. An additional bin will only be provided if the resident requests one. At the moment we do not charge for the delivery of additional wheelie bins. However, there is a cost to us to supply and deliver each additional bin which is currently £25.

Requests for additional recycling capacity for households of under five residents will be considered on a case by case basis as currently happens. Where an additional bin is approved, included in the new policy is the provision for the council to make a charge to cover delivery and administration costs (see Policy Statement 1).

The councils already allow residents to put out any additional recycling alongside their recycling bin in clear sacks or cardboard boxes. Although this ensures all extra recycling can be collected, it may be a barrier for some households who do not want to put out side waste. In addition, collecting additional recycling in sacks may sometimes result in littering if the bags split open.

- b. To include a new policy for households with five or more residents to automatically qualify for an additional free food waste caddy (23lt) as an incentive to encourage more food waste recycling. This will increase our recycling rate and reduce the amount of waste sent for incineration. An additional caddy will only be provided if the resident requests one.

At the moment we do not have a policy to provide additional food waste caddies. There would be a cost to us to supply and deliver each additional bin which is currently £12.

Requests for additional food waste capacity for households of fewer than five residents will be considered on a case by case basis. Where an additional bin is approved, included in the new policy is the provision for the council to make a charge to cover delivery and administration costs (see Policy Statement 1).

The councils currently collect food waste weekly and this is a major contributor to the very high recycling rates achieved by both councils. Although residents can already put out additional food waste for collection on top of their food waste caddies, this is not desirable as the waste is easily accessible to scavenging vermin.

A study completed in 2015 showed that, despite the councils' very successful food waste collection scheme, more than 20 per cent of the refuse bin is food waste. Allowing households with five or more residents to automatically qualify for an additional food waste caddy will assist to further increase the councils' recycling rates.

- c. To add a new policy enabling the councils to request residents who require an assisted collection to make an application in writing and to include a regular review of the assisted collection list. This will enable us to contact all residents

who have previously been approved for an assisted collection to confirm that the service is still required (see Policy Statement 1).

The councils currently provide an assisted refuse and recycling collection service to elderly and infirm residents. There are 1,300 households in South and 1,600 in Vale who are currently registered for the service. Requests are administered over the phone and whilst this is acceptable, allowing web-based applications will increase the number of channels that residents can use to contact us and will give us a written record of the request.

There is no formal mechanism for residents to inform us that an assisted collection is no longer required and so the removal of properties from the assisted collection list is ad-hoc. Providing for the waste team to periodically write to all properties on the assisted collection lists will ensure they are kept up to date. As the costs of providing an assisted collection are greater than the standard collection costs, removing properties where assistance is no longer required will reduce the councils contracted collection costs.

- d. To add a new policy that requires the housing association/managing agent/landlord of properties with communal recycling collections to take more responsibility for removing contamination from their recycling bins.

Where they are unable to remove the contamination and it becomes a regular occurrence, the policy will give the councils the option to invoice the managing agent for the costs incurred in emptying and disposing of the contaminated bins (see Policy Statement 2).

Work recently undertaken to address contamination in recycling bins focussed predominantly on individual households. Where a resident is directly responsible for their own bins and they have not been collected because of contamination or because the wrong sacks have been used, it is clear which resident is responsible for rectifying the situation.

For communal collections, the situation is more complex. It is impracticable, costly and often impossible to identify which individuals within a block of flats are putting the wrong items in the recycling bin. The proposed policy therefore passes more responsibility for dealing with contamination to the managing agent. There are 550 known bulk bin stores of various sizes across the two districts.

Currently, if communal recycling bins are contaminated, the collection crew empty the bin the following week for residual waste disposal. This does not address the root cause of the problem and leads to some good recycling also being disposed of. Implementing a policy to make the managing agent responsible for removing items or to be responsible for any costs incurred by the council, will motivate them to work with their tenants to improve performance. There is however a risk that the managing agent will simply pass on any cost incurred to their tenants.

In advance of introducing any charge for removal of contamination, which will only be implemented as a last resort, officers will ensure that the managing

agents and residents have received all necessary information relating to the recycling service they receive.

- e. To add a new policy, consistent with the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, to categorise waste produced by non-domestic premises as either household or commercial waste.

The Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 changed how waste produced by some non-domestic premises should be categorised by local authorities. It also amended and clarified where charges could be made by district councils either for collection only or for collection and disposal.

The councils will cease any collections they currently make and refuse any future requests where the waste is now classified as commercial waste. A list of the types of property that will be affected are shown in annex 1 Table 4 in the policy. This is not optional as we should not collect commercial waste as part of our household waste collection service.

Annex 1 Table 2 in the policy, lists types of properties where the district council could if it chose to, make a charge for a collection. This would be based on the cost incurred by the council as set out in the table below.

Refuse		Recycling		Food Waste	
Bin Size litres	Annual collection cost	Bin Size litres	Annual collection cost	Bin Size litres	Annual collection cost
180	£31.80	240	£28.81	23	£14.90
660	£61.77	660	£61.77	140	£23.18
1100	£66.24	1100	£66.24		

The main type of properties affected in our districts are parish and village halls used mainly for public meetings. The majority currently receive a standard set of bins which are collected free of charge. If a charge is introduced for collections this will cost approximately £75.51 per annum for a standard set of bins.

Annex 1 Table 3 in the policy lists types of properties where the district council could if it chose to, make a charge for collection or collection and disposal. This would be based on the costs incurred by the district council. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), who are the disposal authority already charge us for disposal, in the region of £10,000 per council per annum so as a minimum we should be recouping these disposal cost. The costs for collection and disposal are set out in the table below, please note that there are no disposal costs associated with recycling.

Refuse			Recycling		Food Waste		
Bin Size litres	Annual collection cost	Disposal Cost	Bin Size litres	Annual collection cost	Bin Size litres	Annual collection cost	Disposal cost
180	£31.80	£63.34	240	£28.81	23	£16.55	£4.04
660	£61.77	£177.62	660	£61.77	140	£25.65	£26.91
1100	£66.24	£296.04	1100	£66.24			

There are two main types of property affected in our districts; schools and residential homes. In Vale, there are 16 residential homes and 15 in South. These residential homes are not currently charged.

The councils do already charge, and have done for many years, for collections from approximately 30 other non-domestic premises and 13 schools in South. Schools are still classed as producing household waste for which we can now charge for collection and disposal, although this cannot be applied retrospectively. At the moment, we only charge for collection.

Under the latest regulations 21 of the 30 non-domestic properties are now classified as producing commercial waste and so we can no longer collect their waste. The waste team will contact the 21 properties concerned and inform them that collections must cease. The other properties will then be charged based on the rates shown in the table immediately above.

There are likely to be several other premises where collections are currently provided as part of the household collections which fall within the new regulations. The waste team will contact each of these as they become aware of them, to advise whether the collections can continue and what if any charges are applicable.

## Options

6. Options considered were:

- retain the existing wheeled bin policy with no changes, other than the required legislative change to stop collecting from non-domestic properties producing commercial waste
- to include within the policy, the requirements of the Controlled Waste Regulations but not to make any charges for collection or collection and disposal.

## Financial Implications

7. Reducing the size of households who automatically qualify for an additional free recycling bin from six to five is likely to generate requests from residents. The cost associated with providing an additional bin is currently £25. It is difficult to calculate the full financial implication of reducing the threshold as we do not know how many residents may request an extra bin. We do know that based on national census data the number of households that would automatically qualify for a second recycling bin is approximately 2,500 in each district. Many of these already have more than one bin and others will not wish to have a second bin. Some of the cost associated with this may be offset by an increase in recycling credits which we receive for every tonne of recycling collected.
8. Introducing a policy which allows residents to automatically qualify for an additional food caddy if there are five or more residents in a household is likely to generate requests. The cost associated with providing an additional bin is currently £12. It is difficult to calculate the financial implications of introducing such a policy as we do not

know how many residents may request an extra bin. We do know that based on national census data the number of households that would automatically qualify for a second food bin is approximately 4,000 in each district. This figure is higher than the 2,500 eligible for a recycling bin because we have not previously provided a second food caddy even if a property had six or more residents.

9. Depending on the level of demand, funding for additional bins for those residents who automatically qualify for an additional recycling bin or food caddy will be met from existing resources. If demand is higher than anticipated and existing resources are not sufficient, officers will request a virement from the Capital contingency fund for 2017/18 and submit a growth bid for subsequent years. To offset some of the potential costs the council could introduce a delivery and administration fee for residents requesting an extra bin.
10. The revised policy provides for the councils to charge for collection from non-domestic properties where the controlled regulations allow it. It also provides for the councils to charge for collection and disposal from certain types of premises. The costs will be based on actual costs incurred by the councils plus a 15 per cent administration fee.

## **Legal Implications**

11. The changes set out in the report paragraph 5(e) will ensure the councils' policy is compliant with current legislation.

## **Risks**

12. There is a risk that the managing agents will put up costs to their tenants if they incur costs for disposing of contaminated bins. To reduce this risk, officers will work closely with the managing agents to ensure they have all the information they need to give to their tenants, as well as ensuring the bin stores get new posters and stickers indicating what goes in each bin. We will only consider imposing any charges as a last resort.
13. There is a risk that some of these changes could result in some negative publicity for the council, although the number of properties affected is very small. We will have a communications plan in place to address this
14. There is a risk that everyone who is entitled to an additional recycling or food caddy requests one. We do not think this is likely, as we know that a lot of properties with five residents already have an additional recycling bin and others do not want to store a second bin. If a lot of requests for additional bins are received this could be managed through the introduction of delivery charges and administration costs. This is not something we have done in the past but could be considered.

## **Other implications**

15. There are no other implications associated with this report.

## **Conclusion**

16. The new joint waste collection policy reflects changes that have been made to the service since the previous policy was last updated. It identifies the full range of collection services the councils provide while incorporating some changes to legislation with the aim of:

- a) improving recycling and food waste collections for larger households and increasing the quantity of recycling collected
- b) reducing the amount of contaminated bulk recycling bins and offsetting the financial impact on the councils of disposing of contaminated bulk recycling bins
- c) ensuring the councils only collect refuse and recycling from non-domestic premises where the legislation classifies it as household waste and to recover all costs where possible.

## **Background Papers**

None

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