

Executive

Food Waste Recycling

2 March 2009

Report of Head of Environmental Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to launch the rollout of food waste recycling across the district from October 2009

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To note the proposed timescales for the plans in launching a Food Waste recycling scheme using the existing brown bin
- (2) To authorise the launch of food recycling across the district from October 2009 subject to a satisfactory analysis of the financial and environmental impacts of the interim arrangements.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The Executive in October 2008 authorised the preparation of detailed plans for the launch of food waste recycling during 2009/10.
- 1.2 A draft rollout plan taking into account the likely availability of local facilities, operational issues and financial issues has been developed. It involves the launch of a food waste recycling service from early October starting in parts of Bicester, Kidlington and surrounding villages.
- 1.3 In late January 2009 Oxfordshire County Council signed a 15 year contract with Agrivert to provide food waste processing facilities for all Oxfordshire councils. The facility to be used by Cherwell is an In-vessel Composting (IVC) plant at Agrivert's current composting site at Ardley. This site is currently used for all garden waste collected in the south of the district. Consequently no increased travel will occur from food waste collections in the south of the district. For the north of the district the Ardley site does not significantly increase the distances travelled from the current garden waste sites at Helmdon & Swerford.

- 1.4 The new in-vessel composting plant should be ready by late 2009. In the event of the plant not being ready for October 2009 Oxfordshire County Council are offering interim arrangements. There are some concerns about both the feasibility and the possible length of time interim arrangements may be needed and also the location of a transfer station in Cassington. It is therefore proposed that once timescales for the Ardley IVC are established, that the feasibility and full environmental implications of the interim arrangements are reviewed.
- 1.5 For the new scheme to be a success, a total revenue & capital investment of £240,000 is required. Half of this investment has been sourced from the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP). A bid being made by the OWP to the Public Services Board for food waste recycling across Oxfordshire may attract even more funding.
- 1.6 The new scheme will give all households a kitchen caddy with a roll of liners along with comprehensive information on food waste recycling. This should deliver a recycling rate above 55% in 2010/11 and also divert more 3,000 tonnes from landfill.

Proposals

- 1.7 To rollout a food waste recycling collection service from October 2009 – March 2010.

Conclusion

- 1.8 The rollout of food waste recycling collections from October 2009 will raise the recycling rate to beyond 51% in 2009/10 & more than 55% in 2010/11.

Background Information

- 2.1 The Council has been successfully operating an alternate week collection scheme since 2003/04. This scheme has seen the amount of waste being recycled rise from 10% in 2002/03 to an estimated 49.5% in 2008/09. In addition the amount of waste going to landfill has fallen from 54,000 tonnes to an estimated 29,500 tonnes in 2008/09.
- 2.2 The recycling scheme has been embraced by the public. However the one area of concern that remains is food waste going two weeks between collections. This concern has led to a recent small fall in customer satisfaction with recycling services. Also it has meant that customer satisfaction with refuse collection is below the very high levels prior to the launch of alternate week collections.
- 2.3 Food waste makes up an estimated 12,000 tonnes of the 29,500 tonnes in the green bins. Hence recycling food waste can make a big contribution to boosting the recycling rate and reducing further landfill tonnages. Consequently, adding food waste to the range of materials which can be recycled at the kerbside has been an aim for sometime. A pilot Food Waste Collection service was expected to be launched in 2008/09. However the lack of any local food waste processing facilities has meant this pilot has not taken place.

- 2.4 Oxfordshire County Council was requested in Autumn 2007 by OWP partners to provide food waste processing facilities by April 2009. Unfortunately the procurement process has had a number of delays and Oxfordshire County Council only signed the contract with the successful company, Agrivert in late January 2009
- 2.5 The new food waste processing contract provides food waste processing facilities for all OWP partners. These facilities include an In-vessel Composting plant at Ardley and an Anaerobic Digestion plant at Cassington. The In-vessel Composting plant is for the use of Cherwell and possibly Oxford City. The other districts are likely to collect food waste separately and deliver to the anaerobic digestion facility at Cassington.
- 2.6 The new contract will operate from 1 November 2009 although the County Council has given some assurances about offering interim arrangements prior to this date. The full details of these arrangements have yet to be disclosed but at best may involve using Cassington as a transfer station.
- 2.7 This has implications for the rollout of food waste recycling since Cassington is a long distance for waste collected in the North of the district. Consequently the period for any interim arrangements need to be short to minimise additional service cost and the environmental impact of onward transfer elsewhere. This latter point was a key issue which has caused the deletion of the pilot service. However, commencing rollout in the South of the district would minimise transport costs and would be at a time when green waste tonnages are at their lowest.
- 2.8 There are a number of reasons for launching in October which include:
- The peak season of garden waste is starting to reduce, ensuring householders have sufficient space to add food waste
 - Minimises the financial effects in 2009/10 from moving from collecting garden waste separately to collecting co-mingled with food
 - Two months to rollout collections to about half the district before Christmas impacts on collections and two months after for the rest of the district before garden waste tonnages rise in April.
 - Existing garden waste contracts finish at the end of September 2009

However, slippage from this date in October has a number of implications including, financial and operational issues.

- 2.9 To launch food waste recycling successfully requires approximately £240,000 in revenue & capital. These funds are to provide each household with a kitchen caddy, an initial roll of liners for each household, publicity material, promotion and other launch costs. For food waste recycling to be a success as much food waste as possible needs to be removed from the green bin. This will only be achieved by a well planned and executed launch.
- 2.10 Two bids have currently been made to minimise launch costs to Cherwell. The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) have developed a bid for approximately £1m from the PSB to launch food waste recycling across the County. The element for Cherwell is around £200,000. In addition to this bid, an application has successfully been made to the OWP New Initiative Fund

for £120,000. This second bid has been approved in the event of the first bid not being successful. The result is that Cherwell can be certain that a minimum of £120,000 external funding will help fund the launch

- 2.11 The new scheme will involve the collection of food waste co-mingled with garden waste. No additional bins will be needed but all households will receive a kitchen caddy and a role of liners to encourage taking part in the scheme. This caddy will capture food waste in the kitchen and then will be emptied into the existing brown bin.
- 2.12 Provision of a caddy and a free role of liners are seen as important to encourage participation in the scheme. Liners do not need to be used as food waste can be added and left loose or wrapped in newspaper. However, the use of biodegradable corn starch liners does make food recycling very easy. To provide all households with free liners is likely to cost up to £180,000 per year. Consequently, it is not intended to supply future liners free. However making liners freely available at a low cost is important to encourage maximum participation by making the recycling of food waste as clean as possible.
- 2.13 The initial aim is to capture a minimum 3,000 tonnes of food waste in 2010/11. The diversion in food waste is expected to increase to around 5,000 tonnes by 2011/12. 3,000 tonnes recycled will add 5% to the recycling rate and a recycling rate of 55% is expected to be exceeded in 2010/11. 55% is the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Waste Strategy target for 2020.
- 2.14 Operational staff have been to visit a range of councils which currently collect food waste co-mingled with garden waste. These councils include
- Lichfield District Council
 - South Hams District Council
 - Huntingdonshire District Council
 - Wycombe District Council
- 2.15 At outline rollout plan for food waste recycling has been developed based upon the need to deliver the food waste/garden waste mixture to Cassington. The scheme starts in some areas of Bicester, Kidlington and some of the villages around these two urban centres. Each new area comes on line in two to four week gaps. By Christmas 2009, half the district should be on the scheme with the other half coming onto the scheme during February & March 2010. By April 2010 all properties with the exception of some blocks of flats will be on the scheme. This of course is assuming facilities are available from the beginning of October.
- 2.16 Large blocks of flats will present a particular difficult challenge and consequently the implementation to large blocks of flats will be delayed until 2010/11. The detailed rollout plan and the policies associated with the food waste recycling scheme are expected to be completed by June 2009.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 Residents concern about food waste is the main barrier to increasing customer satisfaction on the refuse collection service. Launching food waste

will address this concern as well as substantially increasing the recycling rate and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.

- 3.2 Launching a food waste service does require some one off expenditure. It will also increase waste and recycling costs from 2010/11 due to the loss of a £20/tonne benefit on composting garden waste. However, this increase is substantially reduced due to payments made for out performing landfill targets. These payments could reduce the increase to around £100k/year from 2010/11.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- Option One** To start rolling out across the district of food waste recycling collections from October 2009.
- Option Two** To roll out food waste recycling collections over a longer timescale

Consultations

- Oxfordshire Waste Partnership** The proposed plans have been discussed with the OWP Co-ordinator and other OWP partner councils

Implications

- Financial:** The revenue implications in relation to collecting food waste within 2009/10 will be met through funding received from the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership. The capital implications are incorporated within the existing approved Capital programme

Comments checked by Karen Muir 01295 221545

- Legal:** Agreement to the financial arrangements with the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership was approved by the Executive in October 2007. The County Council is seeking an agreement with each district to provide minimum tonnages of food waste. Even though it is not intended that this is legally binding nor commits to any of the County Council's liability, this does take us forward to meeting the commitment which the County is looking for and needs.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett 01295 221686

- Risk Management:** The introduction of a new recycling service does introduce risks regarding the successful implementation. However a project team and a well resourced plan minimises the risks in implementation.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

Cleaner Greener Cherwell

Executive Portfolio

Councillor George Reynolds
Portfolio Holder for Community, Health & Environment

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
Contact Information	01295 221902 ed.potter@cherwell-dc.gov.uk