

Cherwell District Council

Executive

5 July 2021

Changes to the Waste Collection Service

Report of Assistant Director Environmental Services

This report is public

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to update the Executive on the proposed changes to the Waste Collection Service commencing from autumn 2021

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the policies relating to separate food waste collection & chargeable garden waste (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 To approve the proposed rollout plan for the introduction of separate food waste collection and chargeable garden waste (Appendix 2).
- 1.3 To approve the proposed charges for the garden waste collection service (Appendix 3).

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In the budget for 2021/22, which was approved in February 2021, the introduction of separate food waste and the move to chargeable garden waste was set out.
- 2.2 This is a major change to the waste collection service which moved to its current format in 2010. The aim of the changes will bring many benefits including increases in the amount of food waste being recycled, reduction in the amount of waste going to the Energy from Waste plant at Ardley and bringing customer benefits including food waste being taken away on a weekly basis.
- 2.3 Food waste is an expensive material to collect so moving to a weekly collection of food waste will require nine additional vehicles, extra staff and will increase operating costs by around £850k/year.

- 2.4 Around 2500- 3000 tonnes of additional food waste which is currently in the green bins will be collected. This along with food waste which is currently in the brown bin will mean around 6000 tonnes of food waste will be composted and be used to generate 'green' electricity. This change should increase the recycling rate to around 60% in 2022/23.
- 2.5 The brown bin was initially for the collection of garden waste but since 2010 the brown bin has contained a mixture of food waste & garden waste. This is treated at an in vessel composting (IVC) plant near Ardley, no electricity is produced in this aerobic process but the output is a soil improver for surrounding fields.
- 2.6 The removal of food waste from the brown bin following the introduction of separate food waste collections will mean the brown bin will only contain garden waste. Increasingly councils charge for this service. Currently over two thirds of councils across the country charge. In Oxfordshire, all other councils make a charge for the garden waste service. The charges for 2021/ 22 are as follows
- Oxford City £57/year
 - South Oxfordshire £51.50/year
 - Vale of White Horse £51.50/year
 - West Oxfordshire £35/year
- 2.7 The aim is to introduce a reasonable charge for those wanting to use a garden waste collection. This will mean that those properties which want to use the service will be pay a good value and competitive charge. This new charging service will be introduced late in 2021/22 so that residents can make full use of the service from the early spring in 2022.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 Cherwell District Council provides a high quality waste collection service to all 70,000 properties. The service has a green bin for residual waste which is collected one week and on the other week a blue bin for comingled dry recyclables and a brown bin for garden waste & food waste is collected. The service has remained largely unchanged apart from the introduction of battery collections (residents put them in a clear bag on top of their bins) and small electrical appliances such as kettles, toasters & irons (in a carrier bin also on top of their bin) since 2010. Over the last few years, the recycling rate has fluctuated between 55% -57%
- 3.2 Of the waste remaining in the residual waste the largest proportion is food waste. By moving to a weekly collection of food waste the amount of food waste recycled will increase and the overall waste in the residual waste bin will be reduced. Many other authorities operate a weekly separate food waste collection service. Changes in legislation due to be implemented in the Environment Bill will mean the Council would have to move to introducing separate food waste by 2023. Hence the Council is introducing a new service ahead of legislative change. Food waste is expensive to collect but since food waste can be treated to produce gas and then electricity the disposal cost is much lower than the costs of using the Energy from Waste facility at Ardley. The increase in costs from launching separate food waste fall to this Council but the reduction in disposal costs benefit the County Council.

- 3.3 To launch separate food waste collections households will receive a new 23 litre food waste container which should be stored outside the house. The householder should store food waste indoors in their existing smaller 7 litre caddy and empty that into the external 23 litre caddy. The 23 litre caddy should be placed outside for collection each week along with other bins. The caddy will be silver in colour and a handle which has a locking position, so animals cannot access the caddy.
- 3.4 To collect food waste requires eight additional rounds each with a specialist vehicle. The vehicles should start to be delivered during late September and into the autumn. Some preparation work has been required at each depot due to new space requirements to ensure these vehicles can safely be accommodated.
- 3.5 The roll out of food waste collection will commence in October in eight tranches. By early January the whole district will have a weekly food waste collection. For each area moving over to food waste collections a new 23 caddy will be delivered with the relevant information to operate the new system. The first collections will then commence the following week. The proposed rollout plan is set out in Appendix 2
- 3.6 The introduction of separate food waste collections should take the recycling rate in 2022/23 to around 60%. It will mean that food waste will be collected from the customer on a weekly basis for recycling. Once separate food waste has commenced householders must not put food waste in the brown bin, the brown bin will be for garden waste only.
- 3.7 The three months to rollout food waste will mean the change in service will be gradual and any customer concerns or queries can quickly be addressed. It is important that householders minimise food waste but for any the food waste produced it is recycled to produce the lowest impact on the environment.
- 3.8 The brown bin service will change to a chargeable service. Residents will have to pay an annual charge for each brown bin. Currently around 65-70% of council's charge for the garden waste service with all other councils in Oxfordshire charging. The charge will be at £40/year (Average across councils nationally is £51/year) during 2022/23 but if householders decide to purchase the service before 01February 2022 the charge will be £36/year. The service will be for 12 months from the date residents signed up to the service. Hence anyone signing up on 31 January 2022 will have a service until 31January 2023 Plans are also being developed so that households may possibly be able to set up a direct debit.
- 3.9 For households which want more than one brown bin, more bins can be supplied at a small discount. The proposed prices for the service are set out in Appendix 3. Households will receive a licence to fit on their bin once they have paid and the collection staff will only empty brown bins with a licence attached from 01 February 2022.
- 3.10 Households will be expected to use their existing brown bin for the new revised garden waste service. If households do not want to use the new service, they can ask for their brown bin to be removed but only after June 2022. Customers can retain their brown bin even if they do not wish to use the new service, however the bin will not be emptied unless a garden waste licence is attached.

- 3.11 The current brown bin service will continue until the first two weeks in January. At that point all properties will be receiving the new separate food waste collection service and the Christmas trees left out will have been collected. The service will recommence as a paid for service from 01 February 2022.
- 3.12 The proposed changes to the overall waste collection will be significant and customer interest in these changes is likely to be high. The new food waste collection service will take away any food waste on a weekly basis. The renewed garden waste service will still be on a frequency of a two weekly service but it will charge those who want the service a competitive charge which is much lower than many councils both in Oxfordshire & beyond. The proposed policies for the two schemes are set out in Appendix 1
- 3.13 These changes are likely to be the first in a number of potential changes which will result from the government's new Waste Strategy. Changes will result from new requirement which will include Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) & Consistency of Collection. These changes have been out for consultation and the government's decisions will become clearer later in the year. The possible implications are set out below:
- Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) – a deposit scheme where a 20p deposit is placed on drinks containers including cans, plastic & glass bottles. The 20p is refunded when the drinks containers are returned.
 - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – a scheme which puts the costs of collecting & recycling or disposing of packaging onto the producers of the packaging. Currently packaging companies pick up 15% of the costs with the rest falling on local authorities. The new arrangements aim to put 100% onto the producers to encourage minimisation and innovation to ensure less packaging is used and that which is used is easy to recycle
 - Consistency of collection – all local authorities will collect in a similar manner with the same materials being collected. It is unlikely to include changing the colours of wheeled bins but wherever in the country people visit, very similar schemes will exist.
- 3.14 The earliest date of any of the changes brought about from the government's waste strategy is October 2023. However, the proposed changes regarding introducing separate food waste & chargeable garden waste are not at odds with future possible changes. Any new costs from introducing changes resulting from the new waste strategy are classed as new burdens and the government has indicated a willingness to fund them.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The changes to the Waste & Recycling will be significant and should increase the recycling rate to around 60% in 2022/23. The costs for this new scheme are significant.
- 4.2 Charging for garden waste will cover the costs of garden waste collection and will generate sufficient income to pay back the capital costs needed for this change. Those households who use the garden waste service will pay for the use of the

service. There may be some initial resistance to the charges however, all other Oxfordshire authorities have been paying for garden waste service for several years.

5.0 Consultation

Public Consultation to the Business proposal to review charges in 2021
Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To adopt the recommendations which will lead to a higher recycling rate with the introduction of separate food waste and a revised garden waste service.

Option 2: To ask officers to reconsider the proposed charges and/or amend the proposed policies but any significant delays are likely to increase the cost of the service changes

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial and Resource Implications

The waste collection budget is in excess of £3.5 million/year and there has been a net increase in the waste revenue budget of £115k in 21/22 to recognise the increased costs associated with implementation. In addition to purchase the vehicles & the caddies a £1.2 million capital budget was added to the capital programme in 21/22. In 22/23 there will be a net financial benefit to waste collections costs from the income from chargeable garden waste which will make a contribution to cover the costs of delivering the garden waste collection service and help repaying the significant capital investment.

Comments checked by
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Legal Implications

7.2 The Council is legally able to charge for collection of garden waste. The policies and terms associated with the chargeable garden waste have been considered by the legal team.

Comments checked by:
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Risk Implications

- 7.3 Waste Collection is a service used by all residential properties and is a high profile service. Changes to the existing service need to be carefully managed to ensure customer satisfaction levels remain at high levels. There are risks associated with the delivery of the scheme including staff recruitment, IT systems and communication of the change of service to the community. These risks are actively monitored and the mitigations implemented are managed as part of the services operational risk register and escalated to the leadership risk register when necessary.

Comments checked by:

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Equalities & Climate Implications

- 7.4 An equalities and climate impact assessment has been carried out on the proposed changes. The changes have no negative impacts with support available for those with mobility issues that have difficulty moving waste containers.

Collecting food waste and diverting food waste from the residual waste bin to produce compost and renewable electricity is beneficial to the environment. The new separate food waste service should further enhance the overall recycling rate

Comments checked by:

Emily Schofield, Acting Head of Strategy, Emily.schofield@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: Yes

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Leading in Environmental Sustainability

Lead Councillor

Councillor Dan Sames Lead Member for Clean & Green

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 - Garden waste & Food waste Policies
- Appendix 2 - Proposed rollout plan
- Appendix 3 - Garden waste scheme charges

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

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