

Draft Waste Strategy 2019 – 2029.

Cabinet

Date: 5th December 2018

Author:	Interim Head of Streetsmart and Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment
Wards:	All Wards
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report presents the Council's ten year Waste Strategy – 'Sustainable Swindon: Waste Less, Recycle More' to Cabinet Members for approval.
- 1.2 A clear strategy is necessary to plan and deliver effective and efficient waste collections that reduce both the environmental and financial impact of the waste generated in Swindon as well as enabling the Council to achieve its statutory obligations with regard to waste collections and disposal.
- 1.3 This report links to the following updated Council vision and strategy;
 - 1.3.1 Priority 3: Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture
 - 1.3.2 Pledge 13: Find new ways to engage communities and neighbourhoods to increase the cleanliness of their local areas.
 - 1.3.3 Pledge 14 (NEW): Encourage Swindon residents to increase recycling and reduce their waste in line with the Council's Waste Strategy. Swindon Borough Council to reduce the use of single use plastics with the intention to stop using such plastics by 2019/20 and encourage local businesses to do the same.
 - 1.3.4 Value & Behaviours: Connected, Resilient and Brave

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Waste Strategy and implementation of the associated year one action plan to achieve a Council recycling rate of 60% by 2029.
- 2.2 Agree a twenty year extension (until December 2045) of the disposal contract with Public Power Solutions.
- 2.3 To support innovation and investment in new and emerging technologies for example pelletisation, thermal cracking and back-end sort technology in order to deliver as flexible approach to future changes in waste management as possible. And by doing so aim to make Waterside Depot an environmental hub pioneering technical innovation in waste management solutions.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian James, IJames@swindon.gov.uk.

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3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 EU Legislation requires the UK to recycle at least 50% of household waste by 2020, 55% by 2025 and 60% by 2030. It also requires Local Authorities to prioritise waste reduction, reuse and recycling above energy recovery, and to use landfill as a last resort. The Government published the 25year Environment Plan in February 2018 which set targets to minimise waste and is expected to publish a national Waste and Resource Strategy by the end of 2018.
- 3.2 The cost of collecting, recycling and disposing of waste costs the Council around £14million annually. The following services are currently provided to households;
 - 3.2.1 Fortnightly collection of general household waste from black wheelie bins, or weekly collection from blue sacks for properties assessed as unsuitable for wheelie bins, or weekly collection from 1100L bins for communal properties.
 - 3.2.2 Fortnightly collection of clean paper, card, glass bottles and jars, tins and cans, aerosols, foil and textiles from recycling boxes
 - 3.2.3 Fortnightly collection of mixed plastics from clear/white sacks
 - 3.2.4 Optional, chargeable, fortnightly collection of garden waste from green wheelie bins (circa 18,800 subscribers 2018/19)
 - 3.2.5 Ad hoc clinical, bulky waste (chargeable) collections on request and use of the Household Waste Recycling Centre
- 3.3 In 2017/18 the Council collected over 54,000tonnes of non-recycled waste costing the Council more than £6.5million. All general household rubbish collected is processed through the Councils unique Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) Plant which turns waste into an alternative renewable fuel for the cement industry displacing the use of fossil fuels. Only a small amount (4%) of waste which cannot go through the SRF plant is landfilled.
- 3.4 Swindon Borough Councils recycling rate has fallen from 48% in 2011/12 to 38.4% in 2016/17. Even though general household waste is not landfilled, every tonne that is not recycled costs £122 in disposal costs. In 2017/18 over 1500tonnes of metal cans were extracted from the SRF plant, if placed in the recycling boxes it would have saved almost £190,000 in disposal costs as well earning an income as a valuable material.
- 3.5 This long term Waste Strategy (Appendix A), from 2019 to 2029, is intended to provide the overarching principles to improve waste collection services to reduce both the environmental and financial impact of the waste generated in Swindon and to enable the Council to achieve its statutory obligations. It is likely that these

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principles will be in line with the Governments imminent Waste & Resource Strategy but they will be reviewed in consultation with the Portfolio holder in light of any changes in Government Strategy.

- 3.6 The Strategy will be underpinned by annual action plans so it remains flexible and adaptable to change and reviewed on at least an annual basis for the first 3 years with progress and further recommendations reported back to Cabinet Members.

Waste Strategy Ambitions, Objectives and Targets

- 3.7 The overarching aim of this Strategy is to deliver waste collection services that achieve the best environmental and economic outcomes for Swindon and to increase the Councils recycling rate to 60% by 2029, a year ahead of the national target.
- 3.8 Section 3 (Pg. 5) of the draft Waste Strategy Document sets out the principles for how the Council plans to manage waste produced in Swindon and drive behavioural change with regard to how waste is considered.
- 3.9 The key objectives are to:
- 3.9.1 Place waste reduction at the heart of all services and communications with residents, businesses, and communities.
 - 3.9.2 Support innovation in recycling and disposal treatment technology by extending the contract with Public Power Solutions until 2045 and encouraging the investigation of new and emerging technologies, such as the pelletisation of SRF and converting low grade plastics to Plax (wax).
 - 3.9.3 Lead by example ensuring all Council departments encourage waste reduction and are offered similar recycling opportunities to those offered for domestic properties.
 - 3.9.4 Enable residents to recycle more of the household waste they generate by offering easy to use services and opportunities to recycle a wider range of materials.
 - 3.9.5 Ensure, as far as possible, the end use of materials collected for recycling are dealt with in the best environmental option available.
 - 3.9.6 Take responsibility for Swindon's waste, dealing with it as close to home as possible in line with Localism agenda and ensuring a robust duty of care is applied to any waste exports.
 - 3.9.7 Work with local business to encourage greater waste reduction and recycling practices both within their own business activities and in facilitating desired consumer behaviour.
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- 3.10 Table 2, in section 3 of the Strategy document (Pg. 6) identifies a number of key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate progress against the Strategy objectives. These include among others the Council recycling rate, amount of general household waste collected per property and the amount of Bulky waste sent for re-use/recycling.

Actions, Timescales and Year One Implementation

- 3.11 The document will be underpinned by annual action plans so that the strategy can remain flexible and adaptable to change, particularly in relation to any changes to national policy and legislation and to any advances in technology for e.g. the thermal cracking of plastics, or advances in sorting technologies.
- 3.12 Section 6 of the Strategy outlines the delivery plan by identifying several areas for strategic action throughout the life of the Strategy. A number of actions, detailed below, have been prioritised for immediate implementation and form the focus of the Year 1 Action Plan (appendix A of the Strategy document) as they represent a pragmatic and practical approach to immediate pressing challenges.
- 3.13 The details of implementation, including exact timescales, policy and communications will be developed during the first half of year one, with proposed communication and implementation of any service changes taking effect from Summer 2019 onwards. Potential adverse impacts and suggested mitigation measures are detailed in section 5.8 to 5.11 below.

Education and communications

- 3.14 Education and communication will be at the heart of all services. All service changes will be well notified, publicised and practical advice and help offered via additional Waste Wardens to see the changes are implemented smoothly.

Compulsory recycling

- 3.15 Following sufficient notice and lead in time black bins/blue bags presented containing recyclable paper/card, glass bottles and jars, tins, cans and aerosols will be offered advice and support via communications and Waste Warden visits to enable them to recycle, and ultimately enforcement action will be taken to not collect persistently 'contaminated' general waste bins/bags.
- 3.16 These items can be easily recycled via the recycling box collection however large amounts are still found within the general household rubbish collected costing the Council in disposal costs rather than earning an income as recycling.

Charges for recycling boxes

- 3.17 The implementation of charges for additional or replacement recycling boxes from. New properties will be provided with a standard allocation of one black bin

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and two recycling boxes and allowances will be made for new residents moving into the area.

- 3.18 It costs the Council more than £90k per year providing recycling boxes. The number of boxes supplied does not directly link to an increase in the recycling rate. In fact the recycling rate has been falling and it is suspected that many boxes are not used for recycling at all. A fee for each additional or replacement box will help cover some of the costs allowing budget to be better spent elsewhere.

Food waste recycling

- 3.19 The options for food waste recycling collections will be presented to Cabinet and Officers will subsequently start the procurement process for the necessary vehicles, staff, treatment facilities and containers.
- 3.20 This is likely to have the single biggest impact on helping SBC to achieve the statutory 50% recycling rate by 2020 as food waste accounts for around 25% of the weight of general household waste. There was strong support for a separate food waste collection shown through the engagement with over 70% of respondents indicating they would use a food waste service.

Plastic recycling collections

- 3.21 SBC will continue to give consideration to the collection method and treatment of plastics recycling in order to provide the best operational and economic outcome for Swindon and the environment, for the following reasons;
- 3.21.1 The ability to recycle mixed plastics in light of China's ban on imported plastic waste in January 2018 and the increasing difficulty and cost's involved to find a market for the materials collected.
- 3.21.2 The risk highlighted by the National Audit Office Report that not all mixed plastics may be recycled and that a portion could end up in overseas landfill or the environment.
- 3.21.3 The availability of SBC's unique SRF plant to take plastic and to turn it into a fuel for industry that will avoid the use of fossil fuels such as coal.
- 3.21.4 The emergence of new technology, within Swindon, which has the potential to turn waste plastic into other useable products, although this is likely to be at least 2 years away.

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3.21.5 The likely impact of promoting waste reduction and increased glass, cans and paper/card recycling that will result from the communications to residents on how to implement the service change.

Public Engagement and Feedback

3.22 A public engagement campaign was conducted from 12th September to 19th October 2018 to gather feedback on the short term proposals above and longer term options available to manage waste more sustainably. 3183 responses were received, a summary of which is provided in Appendix B, and have helped inform and shape the strategy.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The proposed Strategy is ambitious and seeks to drive the behavioural change necessary to achieve legislative targets and to manage growing demand on the Council waste collection service. It is recommended that this Strategy has the best chance of helping SBC meet statutory recycling targets whilst simultaneously reducing waste management costs.
- 4.2 The alternative of having a less ambitious Waste Strategy in place would lead to poorly planned collection services that would ultimately result in less economically and environmentally effective Council service delivery.
- 4.3 Three weekly collections

5 Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 Implementation of the Year 1 Action plan is expected to have the following financial implications;

Annual savings

- 5.1.1 Additional income from charging for additional and replacement recycling boxes circa £6k
- 5.1.2 Reduced waste disposal costs and additional recycling income due to residents recycling more glass, tins/cans and paper/card and not putting these items in wheelie bins, circa £185k

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Annual expenditure

- 5.1.3 Recruitment of two additional Waste Wardens to help residents through service changes and facilitate behaviour change and purchase costs of additional recycling boxes £57k

One off expenditure

- 5.1.4 Additional communications budget to ensure adequate notice and advice relating to service changes is provided to residents (target of **minimum** £1 per household), £114k
- 5.1.5 Additional Waste Warden to help residents through service changes and facilitate behaviour change for 1 year £24k
- 5.2 Further costs/savings for example via the implementation of food waste collections will be presented to Cabinet Members at a later date with an estimated savings figure of £50k.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 SBC recycling rate is currently 38.4% (2016/17). The E.U. Waste Framework Directive (2008) sets a legal requirement to recycle at least 50% of household waste by 2020. Earlier this year the EU's Circular Economy Package came into force in July 2018. It includes a new directive amending the Waste Framework Directive 2008 which sets out further targets for recycling of 55% by 2025 and 60% by 2030.
- 5.4 Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended, permits the Waste Collection Authority, subject to notice being served on occupiers, to;
 - 5.4.1 specify the number and kind of containers to be used for the purposes of separating waste and recycling
 - 5.4.2 specify which items can and cannot go into each container
 - 5.4.3 introduce a charge for containers
- 5.5 All occupiers must be given notice of any changes to the above specifications for example when introducing compulsory recycling and box charges.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.6 There are currently no intentions of pursuing SBC staff redundancies with the proposals outlined above.

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- 5.7 Waste wardens. The proposal to employ a number of Waste Wardens throughout the Borough will help to ease the implementation of the strategy and assist residents in its understanding. Advice around practical ways to reduce waste and increase the amount of materials residents recycle will form an integral part of the work of the Waste Wardens

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.8 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been completed for the proposals for immediate implementation, the potential adverse impacts and mitigating actions are outlined below.

Compulsory recycling

- 5.9 Introducing compulsory recycling will not adversely affect any groups in particular. There may be barriers to overcome pertaining to understanding of recycling services either due to language or cognitive ability. The mitigating measures to help overcome these barriers are;
- 5.9.1 To provide clear visual communications that explain how to present waste & Recycling
- 5.9.2 To provide initial non punitive help and support to struggling residents via visits from Waste Wardens to show and explain.
- 5.9.3 Not collecting residual containers containing recycling will be the final step after offering notification, advice and recycling capacity to enable residents to adhere to the requirements.
- 5.9.4 Include in the policy a degree of flexibility where Waste Wardens assess there are cognitive or comprehension difficulties that prevent the ability to separate recycling sufficiently

Charges for recycling boxes

- 5.10 Introducing a charge for additional or replacement recycling boxes may adversely affect low income families or individuals. However, the need for a replacement or additional box is an infrequent ad-hoc requirement and should not place an undue financial burden on any one. Mitigating measures proposed for inclusion in the revised policy are;
- 5.10.1 To provide extra training and inspections of crews to ensure boxes are handled correctly to reduce damage
- 5.10.2 To require staff to report any loss or damage caused during collections and for a replacement to be arranged automatically and free of charge
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5.10.3 To encourage residents to personalise their box to reduce the likelihood of theft

5.10.4 Where lack of recycling capacity affects the ability to adhere to the compulsory recycling proposal then it will be within the Waste Wardens power to supply additional boxes free of charge

Plastic and food waste collections

5.11 No specific service changes are planned at this time, a Diversity Impact Assessment will be carried out as required if and when options are put forward to Cabinet at a later date.

Risk Management

5.12 Political. The Government strategy, when published, may be unclear or may not align with the Swindon Strategy, however the implementation of annual action plans allows flexibility within the SBC strategy to accommodate changes in national policy.

5.13 Penalties. It is as yet unclear whether penalties, financial or otherwise for failing to meet statutory recycling targets are being considered by National Government.

5.14 Resource levels. The potential shift of materials from one service to another i.e. waste / refuse collections / outlets to recyclable collections / outlets has been accounted for in modelling for the strategy

6 Consultees

6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Interim Director of Law (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all Cabinet reports.

7 Background Papers

7.1 None

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Draft Waste Strategy Document

8.2 Appendix B: Waste Strategy Engagement Feedback

9 Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for December 2018.