

# Council's Waste Strategy: Year 2 Proposals

**Cabinet**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

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Author: Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services  
Director of Operations

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

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## **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the next steps in the delivery of the Council's waste strategy (agreed by the Council in 2018) as the Council has an obligation to make every possible effort to achieve the national Government target of achieving a 60% recycling and composting rate by 2030. This is also complimentary to the Council's ambition to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- 1.2 Essential to the Council's ability to deliver to that target is the borough wide roll-out of the successful food waste trial and this report outlines the Council's commitment to deliver that roll-out as soon as is practicable for the service as detailed in the report.
- 1.3 The approach outlined in this report also supports the Council's Pledge Fourteen, which is to encourage Swindon residents to increase recycling and reduce their waste in line with the Council's Waste Strategy.

## **2. Recommendations**

### Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 In accordance with the year 2 action plan of the Council's Waste Strategy, agree to the immediate commencement of an end to end review of waste operations, both collection and disposal, the outcomes of which will be reported back to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Management, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills. This will be informed by a soft market testing exercise to understand the options available to the Council in relation to co-mingled recyclates, disposal options for recycling and general waste as well as a full review of our current collection regime.
- 2.2 Authorise the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Management and the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills, to determine the preferred options for the waste and recycling service providing that those options can be accommodated within the current budget for the service.

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- 2.3 Authorise the Director of Operations to q`then implement the preferred options for the waste and recycling service provided that they can be accommodated within existing budget.
- 2.4 Agree to include the rollout plan for borough wide food waste collection in the review so that, following the successful trial with 11000 households, it can be rolled out across the borough as and when capacity in the waste team allows, providing it can be done within the current budget of the service.
- 2.5 Authorise the Director of Operations to extend the current food waste trial for households on the trial until the point at which a full scale food waste collection service can be rolled out across the borough.
- 2.6 Authorise officers to produce a comprehensive and proactive communications campaign and action plan which includes further public engagement to gauge resident and stakeholder appetite and understanding of any potential changes to the service that may be considered in order to support a smooth transition to any proposed new service.

## **3. Detail**

### Waste Strategy: background and context

- 3.1 In December 2018 the Cabinet approved Swindon Borough Council's Ten Year Waste Strategy based on European legislation requiring the UK to recycle at least 50% of household waste by 2020, 55% by 2025 and 60% by 2030 and underpinned by annual action plans which allow the strategy to flex in accordance with national guidance, emerging industry thinking and any new legislation.
- 3.2 Year 1 of the Action Plan (April 2019 to March 2020) focussed on the introduction of a trial Food Waste Collection Service which was successfully delivered with year 2 (March 2020 to April 2021) intended to focus on the Borough wide roll out of a Food Waste Collection Service and the end to end review of the entire waste service to provide a fully integrated waste solution with supporting business case and project plan.
- 3.3 In March 2020 a global pandemic was declared and the Council declared a major incident. This has meant that special measures have had to be put in place to ensure that staff and residents are protected while waste continued to be collected. Swindon Borough Council has succcesfully delivered core waste services as normal during this time while adhering to social distancing measures which have required use of additional resources. The management of this has had to be the focus of officer and manager time and so there has been some slippage in the commencement of actions within the year 2 action plan.

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## Update on roll out of Food Waste Collection Service

- 3.4 The trial of the weekly collection of food waste from c. 11,000 properties has been running since September 2019 and is due to end in August 2020.
- 3.5 The feedback from the residents is that the service is well received and that any previous concerns around flies, odours and vermin have not materialised. A summary of the survey results is attached at Appendix One. The vast majority of residents want the trial to become permanent. This is in line with the previous Waste Strategy engagement conducted in Summer 2018 which showed a desire for food waste collections as 70% respondents said they would use a food waste service.
- 3.6 Around 450 tonnes of food waste has been collected over a 6 month period, which based on the 11,000 properties in the trial equates to around 1.5kg per household per week, which is in line with the WRAP (Waste Resources and Action Programme) estimated yield of food waste per property per week.
- 3.7 The introduction of a Borough wide weekly food waste collection is essential to helping achieve a 60% recycling rate by 2030 as well as supporting waste reduction "*Love Food Hate Waste*" in line with the Waste Strategy.
- 3.8 The introduction of a Borough wide weekly food waste collection also helps to reduce disposal cost (c.£45 per tonne compared to c.£129 per tonne through the Solid Recovered Fuel plant for as much as 7,000 tonnes plus of food waste) and the anaerobic digestion (composting) of this waste stream creates renewable energy and agricultural soil improver as a result of this process. It would also contribute an estimated 4% annual increase in the Council's recycling rate.
- 3.9 The full roll-out of a weekly food waste collection is therefore essential and supports residents' appetite for further recycling opportunities and supports the delivery of council and national recycling targets. However, there is not sufficient capacity to roll this service out at this time given the increased capacity required to continue the business as usual waste service across the borough as a result of Covid 19. It is therefore recommended that the current pilot is further extended so to ensure there isn't a gap in service to those residents who are currently recycling food waste and that the timetable for rolling out the food waste collection service to the rest of the borough is worked up in the coming months and delivered at a time when it is possible for the service to do so safely.

## Business case development

- 3.10 While the rollout of weekly food waste collections across the borough will undoubtedly support the Council's ambitions to achieve a 60% recycling rate by 2030, it is anticipated that this will only increase the rate by 4% and comes with a significant cost implication for the service. In order to further improve recycling

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rates and provide a full waste collection and disposal service which is affordable to the Council in the longer term, further measures must be taken.

- 3.11 It is therefore proposed, as per the year 2 action plan within the Waste Strategy that a further review is undertaken to identify and explore a range of options for the collection and disposal of general waste and recyclates. The Council has already identified a partner to help us with this work and to provide additional capacity to the service, during this time of significant demand and upheaval for the service.
- 3.12 As part of this work, a series of options appraisals will be carried out in relation to the collection and disposal of recyclates, the collection and disposal of general waste and the best means of delivering full borough food waste collection. Subsequent recommendations will be made in order to provide the council with a fully integrated waste service that meets the environment and economic obligations of the Council.
- 3.13 Officers will consult with the relevant Cabinet members as these options are developed and final recommendations will be determined by the Cabinet Member for Climate Change in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services and the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills providing that they can be delivered within the current budget for the service and that any changes do not constitute a Key Decision for the Council.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Any alternative options will be considered as part of the end to end review of waste operations for both collection and disposal, as highlighted in paragraph 2.1 above.

## 5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The cost of extending the current food waste trial service is estimated to be £16,500 per month. The costs for the extension of the food waste trial can currently be met from within existing budgets.
- 5.2 The cost of full roll out of the food waste service is estimated to be £1.4m. A key part of the development of the business case will be to ensure the total cost of the complete end to end waste service is at least cost neutral and can accommodate the costs of the roll out of food waste collections across the borough.

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## Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 Swindon Borough Council recycling rate is currently 40% (2019/20). The E.U. Waste Framework Directive (2008) sets a legal requirement to recycle at least 50% of household waste by 2020 which the Council is not currently meeting. The EU's Circular Economy Package came into force in July 2018 and is due for adoption post-Brexit. 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 There are no other anticipated legal and human rights implications in respect of this decision.

## Climate Change Impact

- 5.5 The recommendations would likely bring about a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint as the review proposes the composting of collected food waste through Anaerobic Digestion where the arising that would otherwise have been disposed of through the Solid Recovered Fuel route, will instead be composted and biogases captured for energy use. This option is a better option in the Waste Hierarchy.

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

- 5.6 Staffing numbers may be affected by the above changes. This will be made clear in the final options appraisal to be determined by the Cabinet Member for Climate Change in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services and the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills.

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.7 A DIA has been carried out as part of the Ten Year Waste Strategy of 2018 and a copy is available from the report author.
- 5.8 A fuller, bespoke DIA will be compiled as part of the overall review

## Risk Management

- 5.9 A comprehensive risk log including mitigations will be compiled as part of the overall review and presented as part of the options appraisal consideration.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

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**7. Background Papers**

7.1 None

**8. Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1 – Resident feedback on the Food Waste Collection trial

**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 June 2020 (under Food Waste collection service - Borough rollout and Changes to collections methodologies of dry recycling to a semi-comingled collection).