

DEFRA WASTE CONSULTATIONS: CONSISTENCY IN HOUSEHOLD AND BUSINESS RECYCLING IN ENGLAND

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 2021, Government released a consultation on “Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England.”
- 1.2 Officers and Members of the Waste Strategy Working Group have read the consultation document and proposed answers to relevant questions within the consultation. This report will provide some background to the changes proposed by central Government and explain the rationale behind the answers provided by the working group.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Government's National Waste Strategy (NWS), "Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England" was published in December 2018. It contains new objectives for dealing with the nation's waste and suggests how these objectives can be achieved. In the future, the waste streams that the Council collects and the way they are collected will be heavily influenced by the NWS.
- 2.2 The NWS was subject to consultation, and the council responded to the four consultations between February and May 2019. The results of the consultation indicated strong support for many of the objectives suggested in the NWS and this informed the content of the draft Environment Bill 2020, as well as NFDC's own draft Waste Strategy, released in November 2020. This strategy set out the “preferred option” for the waste collection service in the future, as follows:
 - A weekly separate collection of food waste
 - Dry recycling collected in a reusable bag (paper and card) and a wheeled bin (glass, plastic, metal), both of which are collected on the alternate week to general waste
 - General waste collected in a wheeled bin on the alternate week to dry recycling
 - Collection of garden waste every two weeks in a reusable bag or wheeled bin
- 2.3 The Government are now consulting again, to gather more detailed understanding of stakeholder preferences. The changes proposed in this consultation will impact upon NFDC's waste and recycling service both operationally and financially, and therefore it is important that a considered response is submitted.
- 2.4 Three related but separate consultations on Waste Prevention, Deposit Return Schemes, and Extended Producer Responsibility have already been responded to and are the subject of separate Portfolio Holder Decision reports.

3. CONSISTENCY IN HOUSEHOLD AND BUSINESS RECYCLING IN ENGLAND

- 3.1 Creating more consistency in how waste and recycling is dealt with across English local authorities and businesses is a key aim within the National Waste Strategy.
- 3.2 The Government have made proposals for, among other things:
 - What materials should be collected for recycling
 - How they should be collected

- How often they should be collected
- How charges should or shouldn't be applied

3.3 NFDC Officers have discussed this consultation with the Sustainable Waste Management Member Task and Finish Group and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services. A summary has also been presented to the Environment and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel. A summary of the key proposals and NFDC response is as follows:

Area	Govt. Proposal	NFDC comment
Collection of dry recyclables	<p>That the following should be collected for recycling from the kerbside (by March 2024 at the latest, except for plastic film which is 2027):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass bottles and jars • Paper and Card • Steel and aluminium cans and aerosols • Foil and aluminium tubes* • Plastic bottles • Plastic pots, tubs, and trays* • Plastic films* • Food and drinks cartons* <p>*denotes materials not currently collected at kerbside by NFDC</p>	<p>From a collection perspective, the collection of these materials would be relatively straightforward as part of the “preferred option” detailed earlier in this report. The additional materials listed are those which residents want to be able to recycle.</p> <p>However, NFDC does need to consider the impact upon the current/future recycling sorting facilities, which would have to sort these additional materials. Timescales for implementation may need to be flexible to take account of changes in contracts and infrastructure.</p>
Collection of dry recyclables	<p>That the recycling listed above should largely be collected as separate streams, with the mixing of different materials minimised. This is to maintain the quality of materials collected. There may be some exceptions to this, with the mixing of glass with metal and/or plastic with metal permitted. Authorities wishing to mix together other materials may be required to demonstrate their rationale for doing so in order to be compliant.</p>	<p>Overall, the Council supports the proposal regarding plastic/metal and glass/metal, whilst also proposing that glass/metal/plastic is added as a further exemption, because it is felt that mixing glass/metal/plastic (see the “preferred option”) can deliver the same benefits as collecting them separately.</p>
Collection of food waste	<p>Food waste should be collected weekly, and separately from other materials, so that it can be recycled, by 2024-25. This would be classed by Government as a “new burden”, and it is proposed that capital, transitional and ongoing operational costs would be funded by Government.</p>	<p>Overall, the Council supports this proposal but also highlights some of the challenges and suggests flexibility in the target dates. In addition, the Council suggests that further clarity is needed on the extent and longevity of new burdens funding.</p>
Collection of garden waste	<p>That local authorities should be required to introduce a free minimum standard garden waste collection (240 litres, fortnightly collection frequency and throughout the growing season). This would be fully funded by Government and would cover both reduced income and increased operational costs.</p>	<p>Overall, the Council opposes the proposal, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't encourage home composting of garden waste • It would lead to increased vehicle movements • Overall increased burden on all taxpayers, not just those with gardens • Questionable benefit when garden waste only makes up 3.6% of Hampshire's residual waste stream

3.4 The full response to the consultation is shown in Appendix 1 to this report.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Member task and finish group and officers agree that the measures proposed by Government will deliver positive outcomes. However, within the consultation response, concerns have been noted regarding the timeline for implementation, and the mechanisms for funding new burdens placed on Local Authorities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications through the submission of this consultation return. However, consultation outcomes may have significant impact on NFDC services and their cost. This will be considered further as part of the Council's Waste Strategy.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct environmental implications through the submission of this consultation return. However, the measures proposed by Government are designed to increase recycling and reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications through the submission of this consultation return. This will be considered further as part of the Council's Waste Strategy.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the consultation response detailed in Appendix 1 is submitted to DEFRA.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Cllr S Davies

Date: 23 June 2021

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Background Papers:

The Government's consultation page, with full background information provided, is found here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/>

Date on which notice given of this decision – 23 June 2021

Last date for call-in – 30 June 2021