

## **PORTFOLIO – ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY**

### **PLACE & SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL – 15 JUNE 2023**

## **WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION POLICY**

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Panel recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the proposed waste and recycling collection policy and new garden waste terms and conditions for the roll-out of new collection services as set out in the Waste Strategy 2022-2027.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Waste and recycling is the only council service that is delivered directly to every household, every week. The council has an obligation to provide a service that encourages waste prevention and minimisation, and the most effective way to do this is to change the frontline collection services.
- 2.2 In December 2018, the UK Government released 'Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England' (known as the Resources and Waste Strategy, or RaWS). The strategy set out key objectives for dealing with waste and paved the way for legislative changes set out in the Environment Act 2021.
- 2.3 New Forest District Council recycling rates are currently 32% (2021-22), significantly below the national average of 43%. The current national target has been set at 55% by 2025, rising to 65% by 2035. The current collection system will not meet these national recycling targets or be in line with forthcoming legislation.
- 2.4 In response to national and regional changes in the approach to management of waste and resources, as well as a desire to ensure that local goals are met, the Council approved a new Waste Strategy 2022-27 in July 2022.
- 2.5 Approved changes to the waste and recycling collection system as set out in the Strategy include:
- 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 wheeled bin.
- 2.6 A new collection policy must be developed to ensure efficient and safe practices are implemented on the rollout of these new collection services. It is important that the expectations for both the Council and the resident are clearly set out and that the policy is written in line with government legislation and health and safety best practice.
- 2.7 This report provides some background to the development and proposed implementation of the new collection policy and sets out the two new policy documents for approval in Appendices 1 & 2.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 New Forest District Council is committed to tackling climate change. Key to this commitment is the introduction of measures to reduce the environmental impact of waste in the New Forest. The most effective way to do this is to make changes to our frontline collection service and introduce policies that support and encourage waste reduction and recycling practices.
- 3.2 The decision has been made to change the collection system to support positive environmental outcomes as outlined in 2.5. Full background on the rationale for these changes can be found in the Waste Strategy itself, which is included in the background papers. If the Strategy's aims are to be met it is vital that we create a collection policy that supports these service changes. Some example drivers in the development of the policy can be seen below:
- **Contamination** - the new collection service will help to reduce contamination of recycling by collecting more materials and separating them differently. That means we will need a clear policy in place to inform and encourage residents whilst also dealing with contamination of recycling that occurs.
  - **Reducing general waste** – the new collection service will help reduce general waste and encourage more recycling, by restricting the amount that can be added to the general waste bin and the provision of more comprehensive recycling services. For this to be effective we need a clear policy to deal with additional general waste, whilst also accounting for households with additional waste capacity needs.
  - **Presenting waste** – the move to a containerised collection system brings changes to the expectations on both our residents and operatives in the presentation and collection process. A clear policy is needed to outline where and when waste containers should be presented and returned, whilst also accounting for those residents that need additional support presenting their waste.
- 3.3 The collection policy is written with the intent of maximising environmental benefits and operational efficiency, improving health and safety, and ensuring that the future service is as easy for residents to use as possible.
- 3.4 The collection policy was written in consultation with best practice from other Councils. Numerous policy documents were examined from across Hampshire but also from other high-performing authorities. However, the policy also needs to meet the needs of the New Forest and so current working practice, local knowledge and the diverse landscape of the New Forest have also been fully considered.
- 3.5 The development of the waste strategy was informed by the views of a full range of stakeholders including residents, elected members, town and parish councils, business owners, partner/local organisations, landowners and council waste and transport employees. The engagement process showed an appetite for change but also illustrated the need to do this with sensitivity to the local environment and with the needs of residents in mind. The new collection policy has considered the consultation response and aims to ensure as many households as possible can access the core collection services, whilst introducing alternative arrangements for certain property types, container sizes and allowances for larger households. Additionally, the Customer Equality Impact Assessment undertaken to consider the impact of the new service on protected groups highlighted that assisted collections are an important part of the existing service and therefore this has been included in the proposed collection policy.

- 3.6 For the environmental benefits of the new waste strategy to be realised it is important that the council is clear in its policies. The policy sets out the legislation that will allow the council to follow an enforcement process to deal with issues such as persistent contamination, side waste and containers being left on the public highway. However, the council will develop a strong communication plan with increased resource. Before any enforcement action is taken, an education and engagement approach will be adopted to ensure residents can fully participate in the new service. Additional resource in this area will be particularly important during the phased rollout of the service ensuring residents are supported during the period of change.
- 3.7 The waste and recycling collection policy can be read in full in (**Appendix 1**), and covers the following:
- Containers offered to households
  - Recycling and waste capacity
  - Materials collected
  - Storage and collection points
  - Collection times and presentation of waste and recycling
  - Additional general waste and recycling
  - Ownership and replacement of containers
  - Assisted collections
  - Weather and bank holidays
  - Access issues
  - Other services
  - Charges and costs.
- 3.8 An additional document has been created to update the terms and conditions for the garden waste collection service (see **Appendix 2**). This document reflects the policies set out in the main waste and recycling collection policy document, accounting for the move to wheeled bins for this service and the new ways of working. These terms and conditions are separate because the garden waste service is a subscription based service (with around 1 in 4 households subscribing).
- 3.9 The new garden waste terms and conditions will be implemented in line with the service change to wheeled bins in April 2024. The main collection policy will not come into effect until the service changes to the core collections service are implemented, currently planned for summer 2025.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are elements of the policy documents which relate to charges and income. These policies are in line with common practice in other local authorities and are designed to cover certain costs relating to service provision.

#### **5. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are none.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The implementation of new waste collection service, will increase recycling rates and reduce overall waste, thus reducing environmental impact. A strong and clear collection policy is key to the successful implementation of the new collection service.

## **7. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The public sector equality duty requires the council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying due regard in its decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
- 7.2 In the development of the waste strategy 2022 -2027, a public engagement exercise was undertaken to better understand any comments and concerns that could arise through a changed service design. Two comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments were also undertaken to fully consider the impact on protected groups and other service users.
- 7.3 Assisted collections are an important part of the existing service to support those with physical disabilities and mobility issues in accessing the service. These arrangements will continue to ensure assistance is available to those who need it.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The waste and recycling collection policy is a key document that will be used over the coming years to support the implementation of a safe, efficient, and effective collection service.
- 8.2 It is important that the collection policy is agreed ahead of the implementation of the new garden waste collection service (introducing wheeled bins) so that policies and working practices are aligned across waste streams.

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### **Background Papers:**

[Waste Strategy 2022-2027 FINAL WEB.pdf](#)  
([newforest.gov.uk](http://newforest.gov.uk))