

Report of the Strategic Director

IMPROVING THE BOROUGH RECYCLING RATE AND PROVIDING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS TO RECYCLE1. Purpose of report

To inform Members of the opportunities and ways to improve recycling in the Borough and seek approval for a change in the delivery of the kerbside textile collection service.

2. Background

The Council currently provides a number of different opportunities for residents to recycle. The Council's recycling rate in 2019/20 was 38.75%. This was below the Council's target of 41% as set out in the Environment Business Plan 2020-2023.

The trend over recent years has been a stagnation of the recycling rate. However, in March 2020 Members approved a new role within the recycling team to help meet the Corporate Priority of increasing recycling and composting. The new role will engage with and educate residents on recycling and good waste management practices.

In 2018 the Government published Our Waste Our Resources: A Strategy for England. The strategy sets out a number of different measures aimed at increasing recycling and promoting good waste management practice. The Environment Bill which will legislate the measures within the strategy is currently at its second reading in the parliamentary process.

Further information is contained in the appendix on the opportunities for recycling in the Borough and how the Borough's recycling rate may be improved.

3. Financial implications

Any financial implications of current services can be met within existing budgets. Any financial implications resulting from The Environment Bill will be brought to Committee for Members to approve.

Recommendation**The Committee asked to:**

- 1. NOTE the information relating to the ways recycling will be improved, and**
- 2. CONSIDER the adoption of Option 1 or Option 2 with regards the kerbside textile collection service and RESOLVE accordingly.**

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

The appendix provides information on the current opportunities in the Borough for residents to recycle and how this will be improved.

New Recycling Role

Increasing the recycling rate is a priority for the Council. One route to achieve an improved performance will be through a campaign of communication and education. Recent waste analysis shows that 15% of the residual waste stream could be recycled through existing kerbside collection schemes.

If all this material was collected for recycling the residents of the Borough would achieve a recycling rate in excess of 50%. Therefore, the initial focus on any campaign should be on educating and encouraging residents to recycle all the materials which the Council can currently collect.

The Council showed its commitment to the corporate priority of increasing recycling and composting in March 2020 when Members approved the creation of a new recycling role. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 emergency the appointment to this role has been delayed. However, with a relaxation of the lockdown measures it is envisaged that the role will be advertised in the near future.

It is intended to appoint to post for an initial two-year and monitor the progress towards achieving the Council's target of increasing the recycling rate.

Whilst COVID-19 may have affected the appointment to role, and, also potentially how we achieve improvements in recycling under the new normal conditions, it has not affected the over-arching purpose of the role.

The remit of the role will be to work with existing members of the environment team, both office and frontline employees, as well as engaging with residents. The role will work closely with the new Communications Officer on promoting the Green Future agenda with the aim of:

- An increased presence within schools (either virtually or face to face).
- COVID secure face to face interaction with the public in order to improve awareness of recycling and contamination
- Target resources to low performing areas to improve recycling and waste management practices. This will include working with Housing Associations, Nottingham University and the Housing Department
- Work with the front line collection crews with regards to the reporting of recycling and contamination issues. This will involve provision of on-site advice and assistance to enable residents to improve recycling behaviour
- Look to improve methods of communication that will yield improved recycling performance

Kerbside Textile Collection Service

In November 2014 the Council introduced a kerbside collection of textiles. The service requires residents to put out their unwanted textiles in plastic bags. The bags are then picked up by the glass collection team and put in a separate compartment on the vehicle.

As shown in Table 1 the tonnage of textiles collected each year has historically been low. However, despite the low tonnage the operatives still need to check for bags being left out which delays operations.

Table 1: Tonnage of textiles collected

Year	Annual Total	Monthly average
2014/15	3.6	0.72
2015/16	7.7	1.18
2016/17	9.02	0.75
2017/18	3.74	0.31
2018/19	6.56	0.55
2019/20	5.78	0.48
2020/21 (April to June)	0.58	0.19

Residents are provided with other opportunities for recycling their textiles such as donating to charity. Such charities often rely on these donations in order to generate their income.

In contrast to textiles the amount of glass collected each year has grown year on year. Table 2 shows the amount of glass collected in the corresponding years since the kerbside textile collection was introduced.

Table 2: Tonnage of glass collected

Year	Annual Total	Monthly average
2014/15	1567	130
2015/16	1694	141
2016/17	1697	141
2017/18	1218	143
2018/19	1810	150
2019/20	2016	168
2020/21 (April to July)	888	222

When analysed further, the average amount of glass collected each month between April and July 2019 and April and July 2020 is 154 tonnes and 222 tonnes respectively. This is an increase of 44%.

Whilst the increase in the amount collected is positive in terms of income generation, an increase of this magnitude is difficult to sustain within the existing infrastructure. Consequently, in order to be able to complete collections within the working day it has been necessary to deploy additional resources to assist the team as well as use a different vehicle from within the fleet. The different vehicle has a quicker bin lifting system and can hold more glass before needing to be emptied.

Unfortunately, as a result of having to change the vehicle it was necessary to suspend the kerbside textile collection service; the vehicle does not have any designated textile storage compartment. The service remains suspended.

Glass collection is a popular service and even if tonnages reduce to pre COVID-19 levels, due to the operation complexities, a change in the collection method for textiles will be necessary.

Two options are therefore proposed: -

Option 1:

Make the service a bookable service with a monthly date being available for collections. The benefits of this option are as follows:

- It will allow the kerbside textile service to continue
- It will give residents a dedicated collection day
- In time this can become an automated booking service
- It will allow the compartment to be removed from glass collection vehicle thereby enabling more tonnage to be collected and the reduction in vehicle mileage and associated emissions
- It will provide a more efficient and robust textile service in that it the service would not need to be suspended should a similar COVID-19 type scenario arise again
- Will reduce missed collection reports and associated back office and front office time dealing with these reports

The negative points of this option are as follows:

- There would be a cost to change the back office systems to make the booking service automated but this can be accommodated within existing budgets.
- There would be a possible delay in implementation pending the availability of the back office service provider to undertake the necessary upgrade work

Option 2:

Cease the kerbside textile service allowing resident to recycle their textiles through other available means. The benefits of this option are as follows:

- There are already multiple charities that provide kerbside collections
- It will potentially allow charities to receive additional items which may potentially increase the income they rely upon for their sustainability

- Will reduce the associated back office and front office time dealing with the administration of the service.

The negative of this method are as follows:

- Would have a small negative impact on the Councils recycling rate. However, this is expected to be negligible due to the amounts collected

Residents would be informed of any change in the collection system in November 2020 when the new collection calendars are distributed. Any change would also be supported with associated press release, social media and website promotion.

Kerbside collections

The recyclables collected through the kerbside collections schemes form the bulk of the opportunities for residents to recycle. During COVID-19 the amount of material collected through the schemes has increased significantly.

Table 3 below shows the tonnages collected between April and June 2020/21 compared to the respective months the previous year.

Table 3: Tonnage of materials collection between April and July 2019/20 and 2020/21

Material	April – June 2019/20 (tonnes)	April – June 2020/21 (tonnes)	Percentage Increase
Dry Recyclables	1411	1523	7.9%
Garden	2195	2631	19.8%
Glass	447	644	44%

The increase is undoubtedly as a result of COVID-19 measures, such as residents being at home during lockdown and having a good clear out or the temporary closure of the County Councils Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

The number of garden waste subscribers has already surpassed the previous year by 929 (as at 3 August 2020).

It is anticipated that maintaining this positive position will be a challenge and will require the Council to increase its marketing and promotion of the service. The new recycling role in partnership with the Corporate Communications team will help to deliver this requirement along with additional educational material.

The recycling rate between April and June 2019/20 was 41.39% compared to 42.09% for the corresponding period in 2020/21. Whilst the improvement is welcomed there are a number of operational impacts that need to be noted. For example, the increase in garden waste and in particular glass has resulted in the need for additional resources to support the collection team. Should Members agree to approve the change to the textile service the removal of the textile compartment will help allow additional tonnage to be collected. In addition, the residual waste collected through the black lidded bins has also increased by 13.48% when

comparing April to June 2019/20 and 2020/21. This is an increase of 811 tonnes, though it has been noted that the tonnages have started to reduce to pre COVID-19 levels.

Our Waste Our Resources: A Strategy for England

In 2018 the Government published Our Waste Our Resources: A Strategy for England. The strategy contains a number of measures with the aim of improving recycling. Some of measures could have a direct effect on the Council and the delivery of its services

The Environment Bill which will legislate for the measures within the strategy is currently in the House of Commons within the parliamentary process. The main measures which will influence recycling and effect the Council are outlined below.

Collection of common set of recyclables including food waste

The strategy aims to improve recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of dry recyclable materials are collected from all households and businesses across the Country. This common set of materials also extends to food waste.

A consultation on the implementation of a common set of dry recyclables is due in 2020 with an expected timeline for implementation of 2023. From the information provided, the Council appears to already collect the items listed in the common set of materials although clarification is still required with reference to what plastics would be included in the common set of items.

The expected timeline for the implementation of weekly food waste collection is 2023. A consultation with regards to food waste is due in 2020.

A weekly collection of food waste will have significant implications for the Council in terms of the budget and resources needed to deliver the service. Members will be informed of the consultation and updated accordingly including on how the Government proposes the additional burden of introducing such scheme will be met.

Research undertaken by Measurement Evaluation and Learning in 2014 suggested that around 38.7% of the black lidded residual bin is food waste. Assuming all this food waste could and was collected as part of a food waste collection then based on 2019/20 figures the Council's recycling rate would be in the region of 61%.

As indicated at the last Committee home composting can also play a part in addressing food waste. The new National Waste and Resources Strategy is in the final stages of consultation; it is likely that national guidance will be published in early 2021 and a further report will be brought to Committee at that stage.

Drinks Return Scheme

A drinks return scheme entails consumers being charged a deposit up-front when they buy a drink in a single-use container. This can be redeemed when the empty container is returned. In international schemes consumers can either return

containers through a reverse vending machine or manually to a retailer/outlet to redeem the deposit value.

A consultation on the implementation of a drinks return scheme is due in 2020 with an expected timeline for implementation in 2023. The proposal is to include cans, glass bottles and plastic bottles.

It is not currently known how the scheme will be implemented and whether local authority involvement will be part of the process. However, this could have an implication for the Borough in terms of materials taken away from the kerbside collection currently provided resulting in a negative impact on the income of the Council.