

Committee: Waste Strategy Panel

Agenda Item

Date: 9 February 2015

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Title: Compliance with the Waste Regulations in relation to separate collections of dry recyclables

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Item for decision

Summary

The Waste Regulations require that all waste collection authorities collect materials such as glass, metal, paper and plastics for recycling separately. However they may be collected on a different basis where it is not technically, economically or environmentally practicable to make separate collections. The council collects dry recyclables on a co-mingled basis, and this report invites the Panel to consider the attached assessment which concludes that the council's current system has been chosen because it is seen as more technically practicable, environmentally and economically beneficial than collecting the four materials separately.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends to Cabinet that it approves the attached assessment.

Financial Implications

1. The council's current budget and the budget proposals for 2015/16 are based on co-mingled collection arrangements for the collection of dry recyclables. The attached assessment considers the financial implications of switching to separate collections of materials. In summary, the assessment is that this would incur an increase in costs of over £1.8m a year, excluding further costs to the Essex tax payer from lower recycling rates than at present resulting in increased landfill.

Background Papers

2. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

3.

Communication/Consultation	
Community Safety	
Equalities	
Health and Safety	
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Council needs to show that it is acting in accordance with the Waste England and Wales Regulations 2011 with particular reference to Regulation 13.
Sustainability	Addressed in the assessment
Ward-specific impacts	
Workforce/Workplace	

Situation

4. The council's collection system is designed to deliver an economic solution that minimises waste arisings, and maximises the capture rate of dry materials for recycling. It features separate collections of food and garden waste.
5. The council's chosen system recycles considerably more than a system that collects materials separately. By reference to benchmarking with other comparable authorities, the council is collecting 2,870 tonnes a year more than it would with fortnightly collections of recyclables in separate streams, and 2,154 tonnes more than it would if it introduced weekly recyclables collections.
6. The high tonnage of recyclables collected under the current system has an economic benefit in terms of recycling credits (up to an additional £174,180 a year based on £60.69 per tonne) and additional payments in terms of the overall recycling/ composting rate. ECC as the disposal authority also benefits by an estimated £85,000 a year over and above the payments to UDC.
7. If recyclate was collected as separate streams, and there were still fortnightly collections, the council would require an arrangement whereby those rounds continued to collect food waste. Where kerb side sort is used along with food waste collections, vehicle capacity constraints result in much lower productivity, and collections costs would increase starkly. If as is likely, weekly collections of dry recyclables would be required to meet the council's commitments under the Inter Authority Agreement to achieve tonnages the costs would be even starker.

Risk Analysis

8.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Challenge in the courts to the council's current system of collecting dry recyclables	2 The Government's interpretation of the EU Waste Framework Directive into the England and Wales Regulations was subject of a judicial review. The application was dismissed and no challenges to the regulations are outstanding.	3 Depends on the outcome of any court action. Moving from a co-mingled system to separate collections would be at a significant cost to the council that would have implications for all its services	Approve the TEEP assessment

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.