

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted *N/A*

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: PLACE

1. DECISION TAKEN

To introduce a pilot in the Knebworth ward to trial kerbside collections of plastic film and wrapping (soft plastics) for approximately 2500 households in support of future services already agreed for 2025 implementation.

2. DECISION TAKER

Sarah Kingsley, Service Director Place, in conjunction with Cllr Amy Allen, Executive Member for Waste and Recycling.

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

16 October 2023

4. REASON FOR DECISION

4.1 The aim of the project is to give insight into the types and quantities of soft plastics available. Participating in the trial will give the Council an opportunity to test and better understand the operational implications of collections and processing requirements which will inform the new service roll out in 2025. Currently soft plastics are not accepted in the kerbside recycling service.

4.2 The trial does not wholly mimic the 2025 services and will inform appropriate soft plastics collection methodology for 2025.

4.3 The data will inform our future MRF contract procurement or extension needs for 2025 and provide data for the wider industry to better prepare for the anticipated mandated collection of soft plastics.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 To not participate in the trial, however this has been discounted due to the benefits of soft testing and gathering information on likely participation levels, collection methods, and tonnages. Not participating would also be a missed opportunity to better negotiate future MRF contract procurement / extension with improved data.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

6.1 The Knebworth Ward Members, Cllrs Nash and Cllr Tandi, have been informed and invited to a meeting to explain the project brief. Briefings to the Executive Member for Waste and Recycling Cllr Amy Allen and Cllr Tom Tyson have been provided, in conjunction with Cllr Tim Hoskin, East Herts Council Executive Member as part of the shared waste service.

7. FORWARD PLAN

7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 FlexCollect is a national project to trial the collection of flexible soft plastics from households. This service is not currently offered to households, as a kerbside collection. Knebworth has been identified as the pilot area due its proximity to the materials handler so collections can be delivered direct, making it efficient and cost neutral. The trial properties offer a distinct conurbation of standard housing types, where the trial collections can be undertaken by existing crews on established rounds. The project is fully funded to cover costs and presents negligible to no-risk. Any risk that may arise in unforeseen operational challenges would already exist in existing collection operations (weather, strikes, covid).

8.2 Participating properties will receive an information leaflet 2 weeks in advance of the collection bag deliveries explaining the trial and what will be happening. The collection bags with instructions will arrive 2 weeks before first collection. There is current guidance on the website as to how to recycle soft plastics at supermarkets.

8.3 There is a full partnership for the trial – funders (Flexible Plastic Fund, Defra / UKRI's Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge (SSPP), our existing collection contractor Urbaser, and MRF contractor Pearce Recycling, with a wider project team which includes WRAP, SUEZ, RECOUP, and Ecosurety working towards the success of the project.

8.5 The project is expected to go live by November 2023 and will run until 2025.

8.6 Based on the experience of other authorities taking part we anticipate between 20 and 60% participation by residents.

8.7 Data will be available to inform our future MRF contract procurement or extension.

8.8 Data will inform appropriate collection methodology for 2025 should processing on soft plastics in the commingled stream remain problematic.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Paragraph 14.6.5 of the constitution details the specific delegation of authority to the Service Director: Place. Within that delegation (except those matters reserved to the Council, Cabinet or a Committee), the Service Director exercises functions, powers and duties in relation to (viii) Waste collection and waste management, including recycling and waste minimisation under any enabling legislation (including waste-related enforcement: littering, graffiti and waste receptable offences).

9.2 The Executive member for recycling and waste management has overall responsibility for leadership, strategic planning and development, partnership working and decision making. In the exercise of his functions within the service area, under 14.6.17 the Executive Member is responsible for (o) approving use of specific grants and/or funding from non-governmental sources, and any annual delivery plans and agreements in relation to such funding and also q) the continuous improvement of the Council's services through a programme of work.

9.3 Following the decision taken by Cabinet on 25 October 2022, item 4 'Future Service Design of Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services, resolution 12 this trial is a precursor to the introduction of kerbside soft plastics collections in 2025. By participating in the trial, data and information can inform new service 2025 roll out and soft test methodologies. The trial has full cost recovery and no risk. The operational elements of the decision fall to the Service Director and to the extent this

is a follow-on decision of Cabinet from 25 October 2022, this falls to the Executive Member for Waste and Recycling.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The financial implications of the project are nil. The full cost of the trial is covered, financed by DEFRA UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) SSPP, and the Flexible Plastic Fund (FPF), costs will be managed directly with Future Recycling UK. Internal resource costs are low, as data gathering, sampling and project oversight are conducted by the project sponsor.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The trial is designed to provide data and information on participation rates, capture rates and tonnage information. These will provide valuable insights ahead of 2025 service changes. The risk of not participating means going into 2025 with no soft testing to iron out possible issues.
- 11.2 The only low risk potential for the trial as outlined above is confusion amongst residents not in the target area putting soft plastics out for collection. We will manage this within our existing collection procedures and mitigate with targeted communications in the trial area and surrounds.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 All operational services are available to the trial area participants and will continue to receive standard services as usual. If any resident is designated as an assisted collection (AC) property, the trial materials will be collected under AC requirements, so all services provision remains the same.
- 12.2 There are no equalities implications.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known negative impacts, and the positive impacts of the trial will be increased awareness around plastics recycling, a greater understanding of potential advantages of collection, handling and markets for a difficult but often requested material for recycling. These are single use plastics and the recycling of them will decrease litter and reduce resource use as if recycling this saves materials going for disposal. All these things prime us and markets for effective soft plastics collection and recycling / recovery ahead of 2025.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 The project is being managed within existing resources with any additional resources funded by the project. We do not anticipate any impacts on existing resources once the trial project has commenced; the initial set up resource requirements are considered manageable within the existing team resources.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Other than those identified above, none.

17. APPENDICES

N/A

NOTIFICATION DATE

Signature of Decision Takers



Sarah Kingsley

Signature of Executive Member



Cllr Amy Allen

Date 19/10/2023

Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS