

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>8 February 2021</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Response to the public consultation on waste collections</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Tim Whelan, Director of Service Delivery</b>
<b>Ward(s):</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<b>To provide Scrutiny with the report from the recent public consultation.</b>
<b>Officer recommendation(s):</b>	<p><b>That Scrutiny Committee considers the report and agrees any recommendation it may wish to make to Cabinet and</b></p> <p><b>(1) Notes the report attached at Appendix 1</b></p> <p><b>(2) Notes the Equality and Fairness Analysis at Appendix 2</b></p>
<b>Reasons for recommendations:</b>	<b>This report from the recent public consultation will be presented to Cabinet as part of the report ‘Adaptations to the waste collection service’.</b>
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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The report to Scrutiny Committee, 3 February 2020: ‘Improving recycling’ provided data and information on recycling performance for Scrutiny’s consideration. Scrutiny Committee was invited to provide commentary and make recommendations for policy development on how best to adapt the waste and recycling service to meet challenging national targets.
- 1.2 Defra’s Resources and Waste Strategy 2018 set out the UK Government’s ambitions for higher recycling rates and increased resource efficiency at a time when rates across the country have plateaued. Scrutiny had requested a report to help inform policy development to improve recycling locally.

- 1.3 Eastbourne's recycling rate is circa 35%\* against a national target of 50% for 2020 and moving to alternate weekly collections (AWC) is a well-established route for a local authority to improve performance in this respect.

\*Provisional national indicator rolling 12-month recycling rate to November 2020 - 35.1%, to be confirmed by Defra.

- 1.4 The report to February Cabinet 'adaptations to the waste collection service' seeks approval for waste collections to become predominantly alternate weekly (with flexibility as required in the town centre and for most large blocks of flats) in order to improve the town's recycling rate and to contribute to meeting carbon reduction and financial objectives.

## **2 The consultation**

- 2.1 A public consultation exercise ran from 28 September to 21 December 2020 inviting responses to potential waste collection changes. The aim of this consultation was to learn how the changes would affect people in Eastbourne and what measures might be needed to help residents under the new arrangements.
- 2.2 We received 1,578 responses which was one of the highest response rates of any council-run consultation in recent years. Please see the report at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The consultation was carried out in-line with the Gunning Principles which the Consultation Institute recommends public bodies follow to ensure best practice in public consultation. These principles consist of four rules designed to make consultation 'fair and a worthwhile exercise':
1. That consultation must take place at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage
  2. That the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response
  3. That adequate time is given for consideration and response
  4. That the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision.
- 2.4 In usual circumstances, when the council carries out a public consultation, the officers directly involved in delivering the service in question are supported by the Business Planning and Performance Team in the planning and implementation of the consultation exercise. In the case of this consultation, the Business Planning and Performance Team took lead responsibility for all elements of the consultation, led by the Communications and Engagement Lead. This was to ensure the council adhered to the best practice required for a consultation of this importance and potential impact on residents. It also helped ensure the consultation was carried out with complete impartiality and that analysis of the consultation feedback was completed without the risk of bias (conscious or unconscious) which may have been present if completed by officers involved in the future delivery of the service itself.

### **3 Response summary**

3.1 Most respondents are single, older couples or live in 3 person households. Of the 57% of respondents who chose to answer the equality monitoring questions in the survey:

- 36.08% (328) of respondents were male, 62.38% (567) were female.
- 14.88% (135) of respondents identified themselves as having a disability or long-term health condition.
- 15.49% (140) of respondents identified themselves as having a caring responsibility.
- 84% of respondents were aged between 35 and 75.

3.2 When asked 'How important do you think it is to recycle?' 84.83% (1336) stated they considered it to be very important

3.3 When asked 'What positive or negative impacts would moving to fortnightly waste and recycling collections have on you and your household?' the following themes emerged:

- Concerns about hygiene, mess, smell or vermin: 463 comments
- Concerns about bins being too full or overflowing: 514 comments
- The changes would have no or very limited impact: 266 comments
- More refuse bin capacity would be needed: 137 comments
- It would cause issues with properties with shared bins: 112 comments

3.4 We then asked what would help people under the proposed new arrangements and the most frequently cited examples were:

- More information about what I can recycle from home: 33.75% (464)
- A bulky waste collection: 32.07% (441)
- An additional recycling bin 33.53% (461)

### **4 Further information**

4.1 A thorough Equality and Fairness Analysis of the proposals has been conducted, see Appendix 2.

4.2 The volume of concerns about constrained communal bin facilities in flats confirmed the view of those running the operational service that weekly collections should continue for many of the larger blocks of flats in the town.

4.3 In response to issues raised: provision will be made for additional recycling bins requested; the council runs a bulky waste service; communications and engagement about what materials can be recycled is ongoing. Indeed, every household received a leaflet from East Sussex County Council at the end of 2020 with detailed recycling information.

4.4 While many residents have expressed concerns about these proposals, the experience of neighbouring authorities where AWC was introduced several years ago is that these fears are not realised.

- 4.5 It is encouraging to note the comments of some residents who have moved to Eastbourne from areas where alternate weekly collections were the norm, that the change in service they experienced in their previous locality had very quickly become accepted once implemented and that the process was straightforward.

## **5 Corporate plan and council policies**

- 5.1 The Eastbourne Borough Council Climate Emergency Strategy - Baseline Report and Action Plan (November 2020) vision for waste is: 'We have a clean town that enables residents and visitors to reduce waste, our recycling rates put us in top 25% of authorities nationally and we have reduced non-recyclable waste'.
- 5.2 A key performance indicator is to 'increase the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting'.

## **6 Financial appraisal**

- 6.1 The proposal to move to an alternate weekly collection is estimated to save up to £250k in a full year.

## **7 Legal implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report, as its purpose is purely to assist with policy development. It is a proper function of Scrutiny Committee to consider the policy issues and to make any recommendations it thinks appropriate to Cabinet.

Waste collection authorities such as EBC are required by section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to "arrange for the collection of household waste" in their areas. However, there is nothing in the Act or any regulations relating to it that impose any particular frequency of collection on authorities. Frequency is therefore a policy matter to be decided by individual authorities.

The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (made under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999) require a reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill and an increase in recycling, in order to help address the economic and environmental impacts of waste. The recommendations set out in this report should, if approved, help to achieve that objective.

Lawyer consulted 21.01.21

Legal ref: 008889-EBC-PWB

\* NB collected residual waste goes to the East Sussex Energy Recovery Facility

## **8 Risk management implications**

- 8.1 This report is to inform Scrutiny of proposals to Cabinet, and no risks arise as a direct result.
- 8.2 Risks and issues associated with proposed changes are catalogued in the Cabinet report, 'Adaptations to the waste collection service'.

## **9 Equality analysis**

- 9.1 An Equality & Fairness Analysis has been undertaken for this report. It concluded that while it is hoped that increased recycling, decreased noise and improved air quality will positively impact the local population generally, potentially negative impacts have been identified for those households generating non-infectious personal waste (carers, disabled people, older people, women and households with children requiring nappies). Any negative impacts and experiences by these groups may indicate that aims 1 (Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation) & 3 (Foster good relations) of the PSED may not have been met.

## **10 Environmental sustainability implications**

- 10.1 There are no direct environmental or sustainability implications arising from this report. The environmental and sustainability implications of moving to alternate weekly collections are reflected in the report to Cabinet.

## **11 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Report on the response to the public consultation on waste collections
- Appendix 2 – Equality and Fairness Analysis

## **12 Background papers**

- [Scrutiny Committee, 3 February 2020: 'Improving recycling'. Agenda Item 10](#)
- [Cabinet, 16 September 2020: 'Improving recycling – public consultation' Agenda Item 13](#)