

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE**

**30 MARCH 2021**

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**Title:**

**Review of Refuse and Recycling Bin Provision**

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**Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Steve Williams Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability**

**Head of Service: Richard Homewood, Head of Environmental & Regulatory Services**

**Key decision: Yes**

**Access: Public**

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### **1. Purpose and summary**

- 1.1 To seek the Executive's support for the recommendations arising from the review the current policy on domestic waste bin provision and the environmental and budget implications thereof.
- 1.2 Having reviewed the current position regarding the bin provision policy, the report details a proposed new policy and charging mechanism for all bins and waste and recycling containers. In addition, there is a proposal for moving to smaller bins for residual waste in order to encourage a reduction for waste that goes for disposal, in support of both the Council's environmental aspirations and likely future Government waste strategies.
- 1.3 The proposal includes a phased approach to implementation, with an associated communication strategy, in order to maintain residents' support of the Council's efforts to maximise reuse and recycling and to minimise residual waste.

### **2. Recommendation**

1. That the Executive approve the revised bin provision policy as set out in paragraph 8 of this report.
2. That as part of the procurement of any new Bins, consideration is given to the purchase of containers which maximise the use of recycled materials.
3. That delegated authority is given to the Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, to implement the Policy and its operational management as soon as practicable.
4. That if the Policy is adopted as laid out in 2.2 above, the s151 Officer uses his delegated authority to approve any fees laid out in this report, which are inconsistent with the schedule of fees and charges previously approved in the Council's Budget for the 2021-22 financial year.

### **3. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.1 To provide for suitable and sufficient bins to meet the Council's statutory and customer requirements for waste collection.
- 3.2 To contribute to the financial needs of the Council within the current financial environment, through an appropriate charging policy for waste and recycling containers.
- 3.3 To help meet the Council's climate change emergency response, as laid out in its Carbon Neutrality Action Plan; specifically, the commitments to moving toward zero waste, through ongoing reductions in residual waste arising from domestic collections and further improvements in the amount of collected waste which is reused, composted or recycled.

### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The provision of waste collection is one of the only services the Council provides to every residential property. It therefore maintains a very high profile in terms of customer service and importantly, provides a key link into the Council's aspirations regarding environmental issues. Importantly, this link to residents' lifestyles often makes issues related to waste understandably emotive.
- 4.2 With around 130,000 waste bins, and 110,000 food caddies out, with almost all most of our households, our waste and recycling containers have a combined value approaching £2.5m. Many of these need replacement from time to time and the Council historically, has only charged for the replacement of some containers.
- 4.3 Across 2020 and ongoing, we have seen significantly increased demand from residents for additional refuse and recycling bins which is not sustainable. A review of our current practices and policy has therefore been undertaken.
- 4.4 It is evident from this that there is no formal policy at present relating to bin provision and, as a result, the lack of necessary controls has led to demand outstripping supply and available funds within the current budget for bin purchase.
- 4.5 The review has also identified weaknesses in our processes of taking customer orders and requesting contractor delivery of them. In addition, the review highlights the opportunity to consider the wider environmental aspirations of the Council in relation to bin provision and reducing the proportion of residual waste in the Borough's household waste arisings.
- 4.6 From a financial perspective, in the 2020/21 budget, £85k was allocated for bin purchases of which £52k was ring-fenced for the purchase of brown garden waste bins.
- 4.7 However, with 12,466 bins required by customers to date this year, at a cost of £118,264 compared to the budget of £85k (and an increase of 33% on the previous year's budget of £88,728), bin stocks would have run out well before the end of the year. Virements have therefore been made within the wider budget, to meet the demand for bins and food caddies.

- 4.8 However, with at least a nine-week manufacturer's lead-in, many customers have had a very long wait for delivery. Quite understandably, this position has given rise to significant numbers of customer complaints and has led officers to implement informal prioritisation, wait list and delivery arrangements around requests for bins. It has also meant that some developers have sourced their own bins, losing some income for the Council, and some control on bin numbers.
- 4.9 The current situation has also highlighted the risk of a claim from the Council's waste contractor for an increase in contract fees, due to the increase in overall bin numbers being collected and the knock-on effect this has on collection round working times.
- 4.10 The budget allocation for bin procurement is being dealt with separately, in the 2021 budget report. In addition, however, there is a real need for a revision of the policy and operating processes around bin provision.

## **5.0 Current Policy**

- 5.1 In spite of considerable searching it has not been possible to identify a clear existing policy on bin provision at Waverley.
- 5.2 The Recycling Improvement Plan 2014 does however make several references to a policy going as far back as 1987 and more recent references to policies for certain aspects of bin provision. Some of these are set out in Annexe A to this report.
- 5.3 A review of other Councils reveals a broadly similar policy throughout, although some have indicated they too, are reviewing their policies.
- 5.4 The current approach in Waverley appears to be as follows:
- Blue recycling bins – The Council will provide as many bins as the household requires, free of charge in order to encourage recycling behaviour.
  - Green food caddies - The Council will provide as many bins as the household requires, free of charge, in order to encourage recycling behaviour.
  - Silver food caddies - The Council will provide as many bins as the household requires in order to encourage recycling behaviour.
  - Black / grey residual waste bins – Householders are required to provide or replace these at their own cost where they are damaged, stolen or not fit for purpose, in all circumstances other than where the damage is proven to be the fault of the contractor.
  - Second bin exemption - Properties with six or more residents have historically been, upon request, granted permission to use an additional bin for their residual waste.

The 2014 Recycling Improvement Plan stated that residents would have to buy the smaller second bin (140litres) rather than the 240-litre bin. It would appear however, that there is limited explanation required by the customer and minimal follow up to review the circumstances, or if the property is later reoccupied, etc.

In addition, current practice is that they can have the smaller bin free of charge but must pay if they want the larger bin. It is not clear when this policy change happened and a clearer policy is required.

- Brown bins – These are provided as part of the subscription service for garden waste collections, which currently provides a surplus to the Council of just over £500k p.a. The householder pays for the bin in addition to the first year’s subscription.
- New developments – historically, it would appear that for new developments, provision was made in the S106 agreement to pay for the first bins provided for each household. More recently, it would appear that developers are required to pay for the first bins when the houses are ready for occupation.
- Bin ownership – all bins provided by Waverley should remain the property of the Council, with customers being charged, where appropriate, for the use of the bins rather than for their ownership. There have however, been some instances historically, where residents have purchased their own bins and these have then been collected. The problem with this is that a) the collection crews can pick up additional bins assuming they are authorised and that b) the privately purchased bins may be of poor quality compared to the main municipal suppliers, leading to bins breaking during use.

## 6.0 **Bin Demand**

6.1 The cost of bins of each type issued to householders over the past four years is set out below.

	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21 spent - and committed - to year end</b>
Waste and Recycling Containers	57,675	42,352	64,025	76,019
Garden Waste Bins (brown)	27,804	49,440	24,703	42,245
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85,479</b>	<b>91,792</b>	<b>88,728</b>	<b>118,264</b>

6.2 Of the 1,246 blue recycling bins requested at the time of writing, in January 2021, the vast majority have been a request for an “additional bin”, most likely due to the Covid-19 restrictions keeping people at home for extended periods with an increased waste production as a result. Whilst there is no doubt these bins help

with recycling, the Council does collect side waste (i.e. not contained in the bin) for dry recyclable material, so this is an unnecessary cost for the Council to bear.

- 6.3 For food caddies, of the 4977 requests, the majority of orders were due to “damage” (not specified), and for “damaged by contractor”. “Missing bin” was the second highest for green kerbside caddies, often allegedly due to the containers not being satisfactorily replaced by the contractor after collections. We are working with our contractor to ensure crews replace bins correctly, but anecdotal evidence suggests that many food caddies are actually being used for other purposes in households, hence the additional requests.
- 6.4 For grey bins (almost all of which should be paid for), of the 964 requests so far in this financial year, the most significant reasons are “damaged by contractor”, “moving into a previously occupied house” and “new build property”. However, only around half the refuse bins issued to residents have actually brought in an income.
- 6.5 This raises a concern regarding the ordering arrangements for bins and the processes for requesting bin delivery by the contractor. Therefore, in order to support the proposed change to the policy around bin provision, there will be a review of bin ordering. This will focus on, especially, the questioning of customers as to damage and also stock control processes.
- 6.6 The 140 litre refuse bins are less popular, but in most cases were issued to residents moving into a previously occupied property, with the next most common reason for ordering being a swap from a 240-litre bin to a 140 litre, for which there would have been no fee by way of encouraging reduction in residual waste.
- 6.7 Brown garden waste bin subscription numbers have gradually risen over time and there is a need to continually increase the numbers of subscribers to drive income from the service. Bins are therefore provided to households who wish to participate in the service as an additional cost to their first annual subscription. The income from bins is used to fund the Council’s purchase of further brown bins.
- 6.8 With the historical drive to increase recycling rates, the Council took the logical approach of providing blue bins and recycling caddies free of charge, but restricting the size and number of grey residual waste bins by charging, with policies on numbers of residents in a household, in order to restrict residual waste. This was especially the case when there was a financial incentive to increase recycling through recycling credits, to support the national policy to increase recycling.
- 6.9 The loss of recycling credits and the national emphasis changing to overall waste minimisation as opposed to increasing recycling, would seem to give further reasons to now update the policy. Given the significant reduction in income that arose from the loss of recycling credits (c£900k p.a.), the Council should be expected to take a more commercial approach to waste management issues and this will be reflected in both bin provision and other, forthcoming work in this area.

## **7.0 Managing Demand, Increasing Income and Helping the Environment**

- 7.1 The current situation is unsustainable given the Council's overall financial position but needs to be balanced against a wider environmental aim to increase recycling, whilst reducing overall residual waste being produced, along with its resulting carbon footprint. The provision of bins therefore has to be managed more effectively, through both a more rigorous process for ordering and the use of charges for bins to manage demand and raise income to offset the procurement and delivery costs.
- 7.2 In addition and very importantly given both the Council's environmental aspirations and financial position, the proposals which follow also give the Council the opportunity to bring some pressure to bear on residual waste capacity if this is considered desirable. The highly respected sustainability charity, WRAP, in its 2020 survey advises that such pressure is one of the key factors in reducing residual waste and increasing recycling in council waste collection services.
- 7.3 The proposed charges for waste and recycling containers compare reasonably with our neighbouring councils' charges for similar bins and services. An absolute comparison is difficult because every council has a slightly different approach. However, the table at Annexe B shows that the proposals contained here broadly align with the majority. Given too, that the comparison considers our neighbours' 2020 prices and we are considering here setting 2021 price levels, it suggests there is currently scope for the proposed price of any bins we sell to generate additional income and or suppress demand and residual waste capacity.
- 7.4 We also need to ensure that as many as possible of the grey bins issued are paid for by the recipient or costs recovered from the Council's contractor, where damage by the contractor is proven.
- 7.5 Whilst many councils do not charge for recycling containers other than initial provision by developers, four out of our seven direct neighbours already charge for all types of bin, sometimes at much higher cost for developers than for residents.
- 7.6 Introducing a charge for recycling bins might appear counter productive but the Council simply cannot afford to keep giving out more bins free of charge, especially when everyone is now used to the "normality" of two bins and a food waste caddy.
- 7.7 In addition, if the number of bins continues to increase unreasonably, then there is a real risk that the contractor will seek an increase in the contract payments due to the number of bins being collected on each round.
- 7.8 Whilst introducing charges for additional or replacement recycling bins would offset the expenditure, it might be thought this could lead to increased fly tipping across the Borough, if households have too much recycling to fit in one bin and are not prepared to pay for another. However, in reality, this has never really been a problem, as the Council has always collected material alongside the recycling bin, as long as it is clearly identifiable as such and such additional waste must then be collected by the contractor. However, those residents who want extra bin capacity are able to pay for it.

- 7.9 Likewise, charging for food caddies may prove unpopular with some and again appear potentially counter-productive, as people might simply revert to putting food waste in their grey bin. However, from the requests for replacement bins, it would appear that further work can be done to better understand how many are genuinely damaged by the contractor or just “go missing” with householders. This may help reduce the number of alleged damaged bins.
- 7.10 Importantly, it is essential that the Council’s policy going forward builds in better customer engagement and information gathering before the provision of any additional bin capacity is allowed, in order to minimise potential costs.
- 7.11 It should be noted, that the costs of increasing residual bin capacity do not just fall to Waverley. With residual waste bins, whilst we can charge the customer on a one off, or even annual basis, for the additional bin, additional waste then has to be disposed of at a cost to the County Council on an ongoing basis.
- 7.12 Likewise, additional pressure will build on our contractor in terms of waste collection and we need to take a reasonable approach to increases in bin numbers to help avoid financial challenges.
- 7.13 In addition, there is the environmental cost arising from additional waste transport and processing, at a time when the Council is seeking to reduce its direct and indirect carbon emissions. It is essential therefore, that we test clearly, whether or not additional capacity is actually required, or is merely just being requested by customers.
- 7.14 It is also important that, especially in the current financial climate, the Council completely covers its own costs of administration, purchase and delivery of any new bins. In simple terms, if recycling and food containers were chargeable just at bin cost, then in the current year, the Council would have taken approximately £45k in additional income and, if the costs as proposed were applied, this would have risen to c£80k. Such full cost recovery will however, also help in reducing frivolous claims for additional bins but will have an impact on numbers being sold.
- 7.15 There is a view that we should now start to limit the size of residual waste containers, in order to encourage greater recycling, as well providing some reduction in residual waste arisings. The dimensions of the various sizes of wheeled bins and their approximate capacities are shown in Annex C to this report.
- 7.16 Whilst there has been limited research specifically in Waverley, experience in many areas suggests that 240 litres capacity for residual waste is significantly more than is actually required by the vast majority of households.
- 7.17 This is borne out by the Surrey Waste Partnership’s 2016 survey of waste collections in the county, showing Waverley’s residents producing some 18441 tonnes of residual waste per year, at an average of just 14kg of residual waste per household per fortnight. Quite clearly, the 240 litre standard bin can accommodate far more than just 14kg.
- 7.18 Likewise, Norfolk councils’ report by Eunomia Consultants in 2016, showed that most councils could accommodate a move to three weekly collections and in one

case, four weekly, based on the weights and volumes of residual waste arisings against the normal 240 litre bins.

- 7.19 Amongst our direct neighbours, Horsham DC produced similar evidence to support their move to a 140 litre standard bin and Horsham now has the lowest residual waste level in West Sussex and the highest recycling rate in Sussex as a whole.
- 7.20 Runnymede BC has also taken the decision that standard residual waste containers provided will be 180 litres and have implemented this policy borough wide. They have advised that, because of this move, along with other measures, recycling rates went up by 7% and residual waste arisings fell by 4% within a few months of the changes being implemented last year.
- 7.21 Whilst Waverley could now move to such provision in one stage, there would no doubt be a negative reaction from some customers. Waste collection is the highest profile service provided by the borough council, affecting every household. Many residents' perceptions of the council and of the value-for-money of council tax depend on their experience of waste collection. There is likely to be resistance to any perceived curtailment of this service at a time when council tax is having to increase at rates that are higher than inflation.
- 7.22 In addition, and although this does not appear to have been the case in other councils locally, who have gone down this route, (Reigate and Banstead, Horsham, Runnymede), there may be some additional flytipping enforcement required and side waste (presented additional to the bin) to be dealt with. Therefore, a careful communications campaign would be required to reflect the extent of any changes made to service.
- 7.23 However, a change to the standard size of bins for residual waste could be phased in, with a number of options available in such an approach:-
- an initial move to limit container size could be in defined smaller households and specific properties
  - this could also be extended to all new properties, through requirements on developers
  - then additionally, for replacement of existing bins as customer requests came forward
- 7.24 It should be noted, that residential flats, which make up around a quarter of Waverley's households and often have communal waste facilities, will be the subject of separate, but linked work to encourage and enable better recycling in any case, the implementation would be a gradual one for existing customers and such a change would quite clearly need to be well planned and communicated but is achievable, as some councils have already shown.

## **8.0 Proposed Policy for Bin Provision**

- 8.1 On balance, it would seem that a combination of different sized bins for residual waste, a more rigorous management policy and the introduction of new charges for bins is required to improve recovery of costs and reduce demand for bins. It is therefore recommended that the following Policy be adopted:

## Bin Provision Policy

- **Blue recycling bins –**
  - The standard provision will be one 240 litre bin per household
  - The council may provide an additional or a larger bin in order to encourage recycling behaviour.
  - However, the step up from 240 litres will be to a single 360 litre bin and not an additional 140 litre bin
  - Any existing or damaged bins will be taken back by the Council for re-use where possible.
  - The charge for replacement or additional bins will be £20 for 180 litres, £30 for 240 litres and £40 for 360 litres capacity.
  - Rationale:
    - This will have the benefit of only one bin needing to be stored and collected, rather than two, as would be the case with an additional 140-litre bin with an existing 240-litre bin.
    - The council maintains some bin stocks for future use
    - The charge is to cover the cost of the customer's wish for a larger bin when the Council will continue to take identifiable side waste for dry mixed recyclates collections.
  
- **Green and silver food caddies –**
  - The Council will provide additional bins if the household can show why they are needed
  - The charge for either green or silver food caddies is £7.
  - Rationale:
    - Whilst the Council wishes to encourage recycling of food waste, the number of additional food caddies being given away, and the resulting cost, is simply too high.
  
- **Black / grey residual waste bins –**
  - The standard provision will be one 240 litre bin per household for existing bins, but there will be a phased move to replace any damaged or otherwise non-required 240 litre bins with 180 litre bins.

It should be noted that this 25% reduction in capacity, should still be more than adequate for the vast majority of Waverley household, given that the average weight of residual waste produced is just 14kg per household per fortnight.

- 180 litre bins are provided for one/two bedroom properties/single person occupancy properties.
- Householders are required to provide or replace these at their own cost where bins are damaged, stolen or not fit for purpose, or in all other circumstances, except
  - where the damage is proven to be the fault of the contractor
  - if the resident wishes to voluntarily downsize their undamaged bin from 240 to 180 litres, there is no charge, as this encourages waste minimisation, as per the WRAP 2020 Survey mentioned elsewhere in this report.
- Other than above, the charge for replacement residual waste (grey) bins will be higher than recycling bins: £40 for a 180-litre bin and £50 for a 240litre bin (if the 240-litre option is kept).

- Except for the exemption below, households are only permitted to have one grey residual waste bin of either 180 or 240 litres capacity.
- Rationale:
  - To encourage the reduction in residual waste by limiting bin capacity, where this is reasonable
- **Second bin exemption** - Properties with six or more residents may be granted permission to use a larger bin for their residual waste and also their dry mixed recyclates collection.
  - These will be 360 litre bins
  - The charge for replacing these bins will be £60 unless it is proven that the damage was the fault of the contractor.
  - Any existing bins will be taken back by the Council for re-use
  - An initial assessment and annual review will be made to ascertain that all such households are or remain at six or more residents
  - Rationale:
    - To provide for the needs of genuinely large households
    - to minimise the number of bins requiring storage by the resident and collection by the Council's contractor
    - The council maintains some bin stocks for future use
    - To encourage reduction in residual waste from the current 380 litre (240 litre + 140 litre) capacity to 360 litres.
- **Brown Garden Waste Service bins –**
  - There is a subscription service for garden waste collections. The householder is required to pay for the bin in addition to the first year's subscription.
  - Subscribers can have as many bins as they wish
  - The charge for the 240 litre bin is £40
  - As a commercial service however, promotional pricing may be used to encourage additional customers to join the service or to take further bins.
  - Rationale:
    - To help divert garden waste from the residual waste stream which would otherwise then have to be disposed of by the Waste Disposal Authority at wider cost to the public purse.
    - To provide a commercial service for residents that returns a surplus for the Council
    - To reduce garden waste transport mileage and the resultant carbon emissions that would accrue from many individual trips by householders to community recycling sites
- **Bins for new developments –**
  - The developer is required to purchase the first set of bins from the Council before residential properties are occupied.
  - These will normally be one Blue recycling bin 240 litres capacity and one Black/grey residual waste bin, of 180-litre capacity, except where different capacity has been required and agreed during the Planning Application process.
  - Specific arrangements will be priced separately as necessary, for example, where it is proposed to use communal waste collection bins. However, these will provide for similar capacity as for non-communal containers
  - Rationale:

- To ensure that new occupants have waste and recycling arrangements in place as soon as they take ownership of newly developed properties
  - To ensure that new properties' waste arrangements do not encourage additional waste arisings over that which is considered reasonable
- **New occupiers –**
  - If a new occupier; i.e. when moving into the property; requires new or additional residual waste and recycling bins or food caddies, they must be purchased from the Council at the prices above on the evidence of new ownership.
  - Rationale:
    - to ensure that waste and recycling containers are provided for new occupants
    - to ensure that the council has control over its bin stocks
- **Providing second hand bins at lower cost.**

There is little doubt that some residents will only wish to pay for a new bin and indeed, that may be the reason they wish to change. However, others may accept a pre-used bin at a lower cost, which would provide a re-use option for damaged bins once repaired, cleaned out, etc.

This makes administration slightly more difficult, but may save complaints from residents receiving a second hand bin at the full charge. There could be a delivery/administration fee of £10 for this service.

## 8.2 Supporting Policy Recommendations

It is also recommended that:

- the verification checks set out in Annex D are applied when requests for replacement or new bins are received:
- where damage is alleged to have been caused by the contractor and there is corroborative evidence, every effort is made to recover the cost from the contractor.
- an in depth review of ordering, delivery and stock control arrangements is undertaken and improvements made as required

## 9. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 9.1 Waverley's Corporate Strategy (2020-25) suggests that Waverley will promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley with infrastructure and services fit for future, high quality public services accessible for all, a thriving economy, responsible planning and development supporting place-shaping and local engagement in planning policy and a sense of responsibility for our environments, and protecting our planet.

The strategy highlights promotion of reduction and re-use as well as recycling. It also proposes a more financially sustainable approach to the provision of bins.

## **10. Implications of decision**

### **10.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)**

10.1.1 Whilst in the immediate short term, virements to enable forward orders for bin delivery at the start of the new financial year have been made, the overall budget for waste bins needs to be regularised going forward, to ensure that the required bin stocks are available. This is formalised in the Full Council Report for the 2021-22 Budget.

10.1.2 A revised policy and associated operational processes are required to manage demand for waste and recycling bins more effectively which should provide a better financial position as well as an improved service in terms of supporting recycling and bringing pressure on residual waste arisings.

10.1.3 There are a number of transformation and business processes already progressing in this service area based on digital change, which need to be completed to support the policy above and help ensure the timely allocation and control of waste and recycling container resources.

10.1.4 A revised policy for bin provision is recommended earlier in this report, to manage demand more effectively.

10.1.5 If the Council wishes to implement significant change, as is proposed here, to something, which may affect many residential properties in the Borough, there are likely to be impacts from dissatisfied customers, which will require significant additional support from technical waste management staff, at least in the short to medium term.

### **10.2 Risk management**

10.2.1 If demand is not managed effectively, by a revised policy on bin provision, which is then strictly applied through the Council's business processes, demand for bins will continue to outstrip resources, leading to both financial risk, and reputational risk through unfulfilled customer demand.

10.2.2 Given the cost of bins, and additionally, potential wider costs, a more robust system of ordering and stock control is required to ensure bin resources are effectively managed.

10.2.3 Continued growth in the number of bins could result in a request from the contractor to increase the contract core prices, over and above normal inflationary rises, to reflect the higher numbers of bin lifts required.

### **10.3 Legal**

10.3.1 The Council has a legal duty to collect household waste under section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA).

10.3.2 In accordance with section 46(3) EPA it can require residents to place refuse and recycling in bins of a specified type and size and may provide those bins free of charge or charge a one off or periodic fee for providing them. Alternatively, the Council can require an occupier to provide them.

10.3.3 It should be noted that the bins provided by the Council in Waverley, even if they are charged for, remain the property of the Council at all times; i.e. the charge is to allow the bins to be used, rather than to be owned, by the customer.

There are a small number of bins which were historically purchased privately by residents and which have since been accepted for collections. These will be identified via future audits of bins presented and maintained as such, but any replacements must be purchased from the Council.

## **10.4 Climate emergency declaration**

10.4.1 Surrey County Council's Climate Change Strategy includes a section on waste, resources and circular economy. The ambition is 'to rethink our current approach to waste, to create a system centred on circular economy principles that seeks to prioritise the reduction of waste creation, encouraging innovative approaches to waste reutilisation and recycling - throwing away will become a last resort'. Whilst this Strategy was not formally consulted upon, it does nevertheless, seek to align to the likely forthcoming changes in waste and recycling, which will flow from the new National Waste Strategy. A target has been set for 70% of all local authority collected waste in Surrey to be reused, composted or recycled by 2030 and preliminary work has started on potential options for delivering this.

10.4.2 Waverley's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy aims to embed the "reduce, reuse, recycle" theme into everything Waverley does around waste and aims to ensure that waste and recycling services are conducted in a sustainable way and include campaigns to encourage an overall reduction in waste arisings.

10.4.3 Waverley's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan seeks to develop a plan for becoming a zero waste Borough, through waste reduction and reuse, as well as recycling. The proposals in this report will assist in moving Waverley towards that position.

10.4.4 At an operational and service delivery level, at this point in time, this translates into:

- maintaining delivery of the statutory and the discretionary parts of the waste collection service
- reducing capacity available for residual waste
- encouraging reuse, recycling and composting
- reducing the Carbon footprint of waste operations, through
  - efficiencies in vehicle use through route optimisation
  - using bins with a lower carbon footprint where possible

10.4.5 The Policy detailed in this report will help the Council to:

- continue to decrease residual waste arisings and increase the already high proportion of collected material being reused, recycled or otherwise diverted from waste disposal
- move towards a service that gives residents additional choices as to how they can recycle their material, such as:
  - additional kerbside collections for specific waste;
  - investigating community composting schemes instead of using the garden waste service, or possibly combining both

- give residents further encouragement, through the pricing of our services and in what we make available, to modify behaviour:-
  - so, whilst we believe that most residents try and recycle what they can, we are proposing here to phase in smaller bins for residual waste, which should further encourage residents to waste less and recycle more.
  - in addition, whilst we know that composting one's own garden waste at home is the "best" option, we also know that, if we do not offer a compost service, such waste is often fly tipped or placed in residual waste streams, or taken on a long car journey to a community recycling centre. Therefore, a district-wide kerbside collection, whilst not perfect, is a step in the right direction environmentally and, at the same time, makes a profit for the Council to reinvest in or support other services.

## **11. Consultation and engagement**

- 11.1 The proposals in this report were considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15 March. There was unanimous support for the proposals. There was a suggestion that an option for a 140 litre residual waste (grey bin) is made available to residents who wish to have an even smaller bin than the proposed new standard 180 litres. This can be accommodated within the revised policy and will further support the overall objective of reducing residual waste.
- 11.2 No consultation has been carried out with residents. However, consultation with other local authorities and organisations has been undertaken in terms of the practicalities of introducing the proposal contained within this report.

## **12. Other Options Considered**

### **12.1 Allowing developers and residents to source their own bins**

- 12.1.1 Discounted on the basis that we need to be able to identify WBC bins to avoid trade waste abuse and additional waste arising from domestic properties from "unofficial" bins. In addition, the Council can better control the quality of bins through the use of recognised municipal suppliers, to help avoid broken bins.
- 12.1.2 Linked to this, it is proposed that officers and the Council's contractor undertake a review of any properties with additional or unmarked bins, remove any unauthorised additional Waverley bins and provide identifying stickers for any bins which do not have the Council's logo, but which are currently, legitimately being used for waste collection.
- 12.1.3 The Council will also have to maintain a small stock of specialist bins to ensure adequate service for new developments with communal waste collection arrangements.

### **12.2 Charging for food caddies**

- 12.2.1 Officers recognise that this may appear controversial, on the basis that the caddy value is much smaller and that the Council wishes to encourage food waste

minimisation. However, with almost 5000 caddies being given away this year, on balance, it is felt that the Council should implement a small charge.

### **12.3 Lower or no costs for bins and services**

12.3.1 Not recommended, due to the Council's financial position.

### **12.4 Maintaining the 240 litre and 140-litre additional bin for dwellings with six or more residents.**

12.4.1 Discounted on the grounds that the proposed 360-litre bin is better value, for the reasons stated earlier.

### **12.5 Not moving all replacement or new property residual waste (Grey) bins to 180 litres capacity and staying with the current arrangements.**

12.5.1 Whilst there is no absolute evidence available that suggests there is enough capacity available in such bins to allow every Waverley household to cope with such a move, other councils have started this change with few problems. In addition, the 2016 survey of Surrey councils showed that the average residual waste arising from Waverley households was only 14kg a fortnight.

12.5.2 The "easy option" therefore might be to leave the current arrangements in place. However, not moving to a phased implementation of smaller bins for residual waste, misses an opportunity to positively start to address waste reduction

All councils which have introduced schemes which in some way limit residual waste collection capacity have seen improvements in recycling levels and or reductions in residual waste arisings.

*According to WRAP's 2020 Survey, "Fewer items are disposed of incorrectly by households who have services with the following scheme characteristics: a restricted residual waste capacity, higher numbers of materials collected for recycling and multi-stream recycling schemes. By contrast, more items are disposed of incorrectly by households in areas where fewer items are collected for recycling and there is less restriction of residual waste capacity.*

Likely national strategy will require this in any case and the gradual reduction in packaging, and other collection options for textiles and electrical goods, will also help to support the need for smaller bins.

### **12.6 An immediate compulsory rollout of smaller bins**

Discounted on the grounds of immediate cost (c£1.3m) and upheaval for too many residents and, importantly, the need for the Council to encourage and support residents in making this change.

### **12.6 Moving to a three weekly collection for residual waste**

Discounted at this time due to likely additional upheaval for residents and likely changes in collection arising from future national waste strategy.

### **13. Governance journey**

- 13.1 Management Board - 9 February 2021
- Executive Briefing – 23 February 2021
- Overview and Scrutiny Environment Committee – 15 March 2021
- Executive – 30 March 2021

#### **Annexes:**

Annexe A – Extracts from Recycling Improvement Plan 2014

Annexe B – Price comparison with neighbouring councils

Annexe C – Bin Dimensions and capacities

Annexe D - Verification checks to determine the need for a bin and level of priority

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#### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Name: Richard Homewood

Position: Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services

Telephone: 01483 523411

Email: [richard.homewood@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:richard.homewood@waverley.gov.uk)

Name: Nick Baker

Position: Interim Environmental Services Manager

Telephone: 07980 259958

Email: [nick.baker@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:nick.baker@waverley.gov.uk)

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: date 3 Feb 2021

Head of Finance: date 3 Feb 2021

Strategic Director: date

Portfolio Holder: date

**Policy references in the Recycling Improvement Plan 2014**

***“Black Bin Replacement Policy***

*Waverley initially introduced black refuse wheeled bins (primarily of 240L capacity) to all households in 1987. Since this time, there has been a deterioration in the condition of the bins due to the age and the level of ‘wear and tear’, which is inevitable in this type of operation.*

*Since 1987 it has been the policy of the Council to require residents to replace (at their own cost) wheeled bins which are damaged, stolen or generally not fit for purpose, in all circumstances other than those where the damage is the fault of the contractor.”*

***“Second bin exemptions***

*Properties with six or more residents have historically been, upon request, granted permission to use an additional bin for their residual waste. In 2013, an exercise was carried out to review all second bin customers, and numbers were reduced from over 400 to just 231 properties in Waverley. The procedure now in place ensures that all residents requesting a second bin must ‘apply’ for it, and if granted they are given a sticker to identify the second bin as being permitted. Veolia diligently report any additional bins that are not permitted, and do not empty these.*

*It is proposed that this procedure should continue, and that in future, residents requiring a second bin must buy a smaller sized (140L) residual waste bin, rather than the full sized bin that they can purchase at present.*

*In respect of blue recycling bins and food waste caddies, it is the Council’s approach to provide as many receptacles as required by a household in order to encourage positive recycling behaviour. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that this fact is not widely known and as a consequence, it is proposed to do further work to make this clear in any future communication campaigns.”*

*“Looking forward, this report identifies opportunities for the Council to achieve further improvements in recycling performance – both through a reduction in the overall volume of waste being collected, and an increase the proportion of waste being recycled or reused. Some of these improvements must inevitably be focused on encouraging more residents to make full use of the recycling services that the Council is already providing, as this is where some of the largest gains can be achieved. Other improvements focus on the introduction of new recycling services such as textiles and electrical goods, where there is a clear and compelling business case.*

*This report, and the detailed Action Plan at Annexe 1 sets out a range of evidence-based opportunities to achieve and then surpass the Council’s agreed target of recycling over 60% of the borough’s waste by 2014.”*

*Included in Annexe 1:*

*“Improve communications regarding the availability of unlimited recycling containers (both food waste caddies and blue recycling bins)”*

## Annexe B:- Bin Price Comparison with Neighbouring Councils

<b>Waverley Proposed Bin Costs and its Neighbours' 2020 Bin Prices</b>									
	Residual 140 litre bin	Residual 240 litre bin	Residual 360 litre or similar for large families	Recycling 180 litre bin	Recycling 240 litre bin	Recycling 360 litre bin or similar for large families	Food Caddy	Garden 240 litre bin	Ownership
<b>Waverley 2020</b>	£25	£25	140+240 litres so £50	Free	Free	140+240 Free	Free	£30	Confused position
Guildford	£30	£30	6+ people 240+140 litres so £60	Free	Free			£30	
Mole Valley	£30.75	£51.25		Free	Free		Free		Council owns
Chichester	£34.50 1-2 people	£38.00 standard	£58.20 5+ people only	£34.50	£38.00	£58.20 5+		£38.00	Resident owns
Horsham	Only use 140 litre for residual £40.50			£17.50	£43.40			£43.40	Resident owns
East Hants	£30	£30	6+ people only 240+140 litres so £60		£30		Glass caddy £8		Resident owns
Rushmoor	33.87 Developer	36.87 Developer		NC	NC	NC		In service cost	
Hart	£39.92  £47.91 New property	£39.92  £68.44 New Property		£34.22	£33.22		Glass crate or 140 bin £34.22	£34.22	
Runnymede	Only use 180 litre for residual £56		£76 6+ people only		Free		Free		Council owns
Neighbours' Average	£38.60	£40.81	£63.55 4 of 7 councils	£27.71 4 of 7	£36.15 4 of 7			£36.40 4 of 7	
<b>Waverley Proposed</b>	£40	£50	£60 6+ people only	£20	£30	£40 6+ only	£7	£40	WBC owns bins

## Annexe C



All measurements are in millimeters.

## Wheelie Bin Dimensions

- ★ 140 Litre Wheelie Bin: **1060 x 480 x 550mm** (H/W/D)
- ★ 180 Litre Wheelie Bin: **1060 x 480 x 730mm** (H/W/D)
- ★ 240 Litre Wheelie Bin: **1060 x 575 x 730mm** (H/W/D)
- ★ 360 Litre Wheelie Bin: **1080 x 580 x 875mm** (H/W/D)

## How Much Rubbish Does Each Bin Hold?

- ★ 140 Litre: 2-3 refuse bags
- ★ 180 Litre: 3-4 refuse bags
- ★ 240 Litre: 4-5 refuse bags
- ★ 360 Litre: 6-7 refuse bags

## **Annexe D: Verifying Need and Priority and Ensuring Delivery of Bins**

### **Verification checks to determine the need for a bin and level of priority**

#### **Recycling Bins**

- If a resident is reporting that their blue recycling bin missing, they will be asked:
  - if they have checked along their road to see if the bin has been misplaced
  - for the date when it went missing

Note: Replacing a bin where there should be one is top priority for delivery.
  
- If a resident is reporting their bin as damaged they will be asked:
  - what the damage is
  - to provide a photograph to show the damage
  
- If a resident is alleging damage to or loss of the bin by the contractor, they will be asked:
  - what the damage is
  - to provide a photograph of the damage
  - the date it happened so that we can ask the contractor to check with the crews and review video evidence.

Note: Damaged bins are second priority
  
- If a resident is requesting a new bin because they have moved into a new property, we need to know:
  - if it is a newly built property, so we can charge developers for the first set of bins
  - or if its just 'new' to them
  - if there is no bin present
  - if there is a bin present but it is not to their liking.
  
- If a resident is simply asking for a second bin to increase capacity then they can receive one, as long as there are sufficient in stock to meet the other priorities listed above and can wait, as they can present side recycling in cardboard boxes or clear sacks. (lowest priority).

#### **Green Food Caddies**

- If a resident is reporting that their green food caddy is missing, they will be asked:
  - if they have checked along their road to see if the bin has been misplaced
  - for the date when it went missing

Note: Replacing a bin where there should be one is top priority for delivery.
  
- If a resident is reporting their caddy as damaged they will be asked:
  - what the damage is
  - to provide a photograph to show the damage
  
- If a resident is alleging damage to or loss of the bin by the contractor, they will be asked:
  - what the damage is
  - to provide a photograph of the damage

- the date it happened so that we can ask the contractor to check with the crews and review video evidence.

Note: Damaged caddies are second priority

- If a resident is requesting a new bin because they have moved into a new property, we need to know:
  - if it is a newly built property, so we can charge developers as above
  - or just 'new' to them
  - if there is no caddy present
  - if there is a caddy present but it is not to their liking.
- if a resident is simply asking for a second caddy to increase capacity then they can receive one, as long as there are sufficient in stock to meet the other priorities listed above and they can wait (lowest priority).

### **Silver Food Caddies**

- If a resident is reporting their silver food caddy as damaged they will:
  - be asked to send in a photograph to show the damage. (3<sup>rd</sup> priority)
- If a resident is requesting a new silver food caddy because they have moved into a new property, they will be asked
  - if it is a newly built property, so that we can charge developers as above
  - or if its just 'new' to them
  - is there actually a caddy present
  - if there is a caddy present but not to their liking.

### **Grey Bins**

- If a resident is reporting that their grey bin is missing, they will be asked:
  - if they have checked along their road to see if it has been misplaced
  - for the date when it went missing.

Note: replacing a missing bin is our top priority for delivery.
- If a resident is alleging damage, they will be asked:
  - how the damage occurred
  - to supply a photo of the bin
- If a resident alleges damage by the contractor they will be required:
  - to describe the damage
  - to supply a photo of the bin
  - to confirm the date it happened, so that we can ask Biffa to check with the crews and review video evidence.

Note: Damaged residual waste bin is our second priority for replacement.
- If a resident is requesting a new bin because they have moved into a new property, we need to know:
  - if it is a newly built property, so we can charge developers for the first set of bins
  - or if its just 'new' to them
  - if there is no bin present

- is a bin present not to their liking (grey bin change request)).
- Whether they are a smaller household – if so, offer 140 litre bins

Note: A request for any additional grey bin capacity will only be accepted if the property has six or more residents and does not already have an additional or larger bin.

### **Brown Garden Waste Bins**

- A resident may have as many brown bins as they require. There is a subscription service for garden waste collections. The householder is required to pay for each bin in addition to the first year's subscription.

### **Delivery of Bins**

In the future, requests and orders for bins will be encouraged via the Council's website wherever possible, rather than through a direct call to the Council, although the call option will be maintained.

An automated digital process is being developed to ensure that the order for the bin is dealt with in an accurate and timely manner in order to drive customer service improvements. The full digitisation of these processes is due to be completed by summer 2021.

Delivery of bins to customers is undertaken by the Council's waste contractor. Such deliveries will be made as soon as possible and, in any case, within the prescribed timelines prescribed in the waste contract.

Where the bin is a replacement for a reusable bin, the previous bin will be collected and will be cleaned out for re-use.