

**FOOD WASTE COLLECTION MEMBER WORKING GROUP - Action Notes**

Meeting held at 6.00 p.m. on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021

In attendance: Councillors Maurice Sheehan, Jonathan Canty, Ken Muschamp, Mara Makunura, Clive Grattan, Sophie Porter

Officers: Ian Harrison (Executive Director), James Duggin (Head of Operational Services), Ruth Whaymand (Contracts Manager), Edward Haversham (Project Co-ordinator), Colin Alborough (Service Manager - Place), Gill Chisnall (Corporate Manager – Comms)

Leadership Group (Officers): Nikki Astill, Sarah Giles, Mary Timmins, Rachael Wilkinson, Justine Davie

Apologies:

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Actions/Decisions Arising</b>
1	<b>Action Notes of last meeting</b>	The Group agreed the action notes from the previous meeting	
2	<b>New Service Structure - Decisions and Recommendations</b>	<p>The Group received a presentation covering the decisions that would need to be made on each aspect of the project, that would form part of the recommendations report to Cabinet...</p> <p><b>Exterior / Kerbside Caddy</b></p> <p>The Group noted the options for size, colour and material for the interior food caddy, and that there was no cost difference or quality issue (e.g. lifespan) with selecting a recycled or virgin material. In an update from previous sessions, any of the colour choices were now available as fully recycled materials.</p> <p>The Group discussed that selecting a colour different from the current bins (green, blue and brown) would differentiate food waste as a new service, and a bright colour might work well. The only unused colours available however were black or silver.</p>	<p>The Group agreed that 23l, black, recycled material bin should be the recommendation to Cabinet.</p>

		<p><b>Interior Caddy</b></p> <p>The Group noted the options for size, colour and material for the interior food caddy, and that there was no cost difference or quality issue with selected a recycled or virgin material.</p> <p>The Group discussed the ‘aesthetic’ option of silver would work better in most kitchens. However, residents could be reminded that they could store their caddy out of sight, decorate them to suit décor or use their own caddy.</p> <p><b>Liners</b></p> <p>The Group noted the options for size, colour, cost and material for the liners. Bio liners were 3 times more costly than PE, and technically take more energy to make and transport, as they need to be made of a thicker material to ensure the same strength. As all bags are removed during processing, PE can also result in a higher food waste yield as food is less likely to stick to this material.</p> <p>The Group also noted that the industry standard is for liners coloured green, and there was potential for future restrictions on the amount of plastic allowed within food waste.</p> <p>The Group discussed that selecting PE liners was the better choice overall looking at a number of options (environmental, carbon footprint, cost, calorific value, etc), especially as in this instance both PE and Bio would be classed as ‘single use’.</p>	<p>The Group agreed that 5l, silver, recycled material bin should be the recommendation to Cabinet.</p> <p>The Group agreed that 7l, green, PE bags should be selected for the initial distribution, as the recommendation to Cabinet.</p>
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	<p><b>Liner Provision</b></p> <p>The Group noted the options for starting and on-going provision of liners, as well as liner policies for residents.</p> <p>The Group discussed that an ‘any bag’ policy and adopting WRAP’s suggestion of an initial supply of one roll of liners at the start of the service was the best option for participation rates. The option of the council supplying liners after the initial distribution for residents to purchase was also an option.</p> <p>The Group also discussed that the messages around liner material and an ‘any bag’ policy was important from an environmental point of view, and that the graphics included on the liner should be clear and understandable for all residents.</p> <p><b>Disposal Options</b></p> <p>The Group noted the options for disposal (AD vs IVC)</p> <p><b>Collection Frequency</b></p> <p>The Group noted the options for collection frequency of the waste streams, and the indicative sequential impact on factors including, yield of food waste, recycling rates, carbon impact, and estimated Serco &amp; HCC costs.</p> <p>The Group discussed the benefits and disadvantages of each frequency (Weekly, AWC and 123), and also the potential views of residents who may take some time to adapt to any new services and changes to existing services.</p> <p>The Group noted the carbon footprint calculations for each option were for the ‘whole system’ (i.e. disposal, emissions from vehicles, etc) and discussed that any carbon reductions would be an important tool to track progress.</p>	<p>The Group agreed that an initial one-off supply of a roll of liners (52 bags) at the start of the scheme, alongside an ‘any bag’ policy, should be the recommendation to Cabinet.</p> <p>The Group agreed that AD processing aligned with the other aspects of the project, but it would be important to mention all factors in the Cabinet report (e.g. site location, recycling credits, etc).</p> <p>The Group agreed that a weekly food waste collection service, alongside a fortnight recycling and rubbish collection (AWC), with the potential for future changes, should be the recommendation to Cabinet.</p> <p>The Group requested that more information on the Carbon Modelling could be shared by the Contracts team.</p>
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		<p>The Group discussed the potential commercialisation opportunities of the project and were reminded that food waste collections for residents cannot be chargeable, but the service could, for example be rolled out to businesses at a fee.</p> <p>The Group also discussed potential savings, by combining rounds and / or using single vehicles collecting multiple streams of waste, but noted that this tends to be a more expensive option, as different streams are collected at different rates, so vehicles have to offload more frequently.</p> <p>The Group then discussed that after the addition of food waste collections and changes to collection frequency, the next step should be to work with HCC to increase the number of items that can be recycled, which would then open the possibility of looking at further changes to the service in Rushmoor to help improve recycling rates and reduce carbon emissions.</p>	<p>The Group agreed that any further commercialisation work should from a 2nd phase of the project, focusing first on household collections, but reference to these opportunities should be referenced in the report to Cabinet.</p>
3	<p><b>Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<p>The Group received a presentation from Gill Chisnall, Corporate Manager – Comms. The content included...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early engagement activities</li> <li>• Major milestone activities (e.g. Cabinet Decision)</li> <li>• Detailed awareness</li> <li>• Pre-launch ideas</li> <li>• ‘At introduction’ activities</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul> <p>The Group discussed residents’ views on any change to services and the potential negative association of using ‘cost savings’ as a reason. The Group noted that countering ‘cost saving’ arguments from residents is almost impossible and it is better to focus on other reasons for change e.g. environmental benefits, carbon reduction or even legislative reasons.</p> <p>The Group also discussed that whatever frequency of collection was finally selected; it was unlikely based on current estimates that any cost savings would be made. It would also be difficult to present this is an ‘easy to understand’ way for residents without potentially creating more confusion.</p>	

		<p>The Group discussed that such a large change to the waste collection service was an ideal opportunity for a 'public service announcement' eg reminding residents of what can and can't be recycled.</p> <p>The Group noted that tangible benefits rather than just 'big picture' information was important for resident engagement. Understanding how local changes fit into the wider system was key for participation. The Group discussed the possibility of using regular (e.g. weekly or monthly) graphics to display how much residents had saved in an understandably way (e.g. car trips / flights, etc)</p> <p>The Group discussed that the ideal advocates for recycling are younger residents and working with schools was an opportunity.</p>	
4	<b>Behavioural Change Project</b>	<p>The Group received an update presentation from the Leadership Group. The content included...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General barriers to adoption</li> <li>• Issues for flats and shared facilities</li> <li>• Barriers for other 'hard to reach' groups</li> </ul>	
5	<b>Caddy Options</b>	<p>The Group were presented with a number of options for Caddy artwork.</p> <p>The Group discussed that it was important for the caddies to be easily recognisable and for it to be obvious what could be included. Large pictures / graphics were better than text.</p> <p>The Group also discussed if similar graphics and text used on the liners could be included on the caddies. The Group noted that due to the 'hot foil stamping' process small graphics and text could become illegible, but additional areas of the caddy (eg the back) maybe able to be included for extra graphics.</p> <p>The Group discussed that including the Rushmoor logo, could discourage residents who are moving out of the area from taking their caddies with them.</p>	<p>The Group agreed Option 'C' (with large info-graphic and Rushmoor logo) should be selected as the recommendation to Cabinet.</p>

6	<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>The Group noted the draft Cabinet report would be shared for comment with the Working Group before being presented on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</p> <p>Depending on the decision by Cabinet, the Group may be required for further post decision activities, but no future sessions were currently scheduled.</p>	
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## Introducing a weekly food waste recycling service

### Proposed communications and engagement plan

#### 1. Context

Addressing climate change is a [key priority](#) for the council and in November 2020, as a major part of our Climate Change Action Plan, our Cabinet [approved the introduction of a food waste recycling service](#) in 2021/22 in order to increase the borough's recycling performance and reduce our impact on the planet, appointing a cross-party Cabinet working group to guide the development and details of the new service.

The working group has concluded its initial work and is recommending to Cabinet (8 June) that the council introduces a weekly food waste collection service in autumn 2021 and spring 2022 for properties with shared bins, ahead of the government's 2023 target for all councils to introduce food waste recycling.

With the current recycling and rubbish collection arrangements, the council achieves a recycling rate of around 29.6%, an increase of only 5% in the last five years and significantly short of the forthcoming national target of 65% by 2035. Analysis of green bin contents showed that nearly 40% (by weight) was food waste – 7% higher than the UK average – and 27% was items that could already be recycled in Rushmoor.

To make the most of the new service in increasing recycling rates, promote waste minimisation, and to reduce carbon emissions, the working group is also recommending that at the same time as introducing weekly food waste recycling, the council should move to fortnightly green bin collections for residual waste. The current fortnightly blue bin, glass and garden waste recycling services will continue as is, along with collection of batteries and small electrical items for recycling.

These changes, if approved, will represent the first major new recycling service to be introduced in Rushmoor in more than a decade and the most significant change to the council's recycling and rubbish collection service in nearly 20 years. It will therefore be important to support these changes with a comprehensive communications and engagement plan.

#### 2. Aim of the communications and engagement plan

The aim of this plan is ultimately to support the council's agreed goal to tackle climate change by increasing household recycling and reducing household waste and carbon emissions.

To do that, however, we need to start with our residents to make sure they understand why we all need to change: that it is no longer feasible to continue as we are; and to support them to shift to weekly food waste collections and fortnightly non-recyclable (green bin) collections, alongside the current fortnightly recycling offer.

It is likely that over the coming years, as a result of the government's Resources and Waste Strategy and other changes, residents will be able to recycle more items at home. So, it is also important that the communications and engagement plan supports longer-term behaviour change in favour of recycling more and wasting less. For food waste, our communications and engagement activities should also encourage residents to waste less food overall.

We should also recognise that many residents are enthusiastic about being to recycle more (70% say they would recycle more with greater choice and 68% say they would be likely to use a food waste recycling service (bin collections survey, June 2020) and therefore share positive messages and celebrate successes along the way.

### **3. Objectives – to be developed alongside the contracts team**

- To support the council and our households to increase recycling performance from 29.5% to 45% by 2023/24
- To support the council and our households to recycle an estimated average of 60kg of food waste per household a year by 2023/24
- To support the council and our households to increase blue bin and glass recycling from 19% a year to 24% a year by 2023/24
- To support the council to reduce the level of carbon equivalent emissions from its recycling and rubbish collection services by –1900 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2022/3

### **4. Overall communications and engagement - how**

This plan covers all households in Aldershot and Farnborough and therefore needs to be wide-ranging. But it also recognises that some of residents will have specific needs, may be harder for us to reach, or may be disengaged with the council and/or recycling and climate change. It therefore takes account of the work carried out by our Leadership group into how to engage with households that may be harder to reach through our normal channels.



To support our overall communications and engagement activities, we will apply the EAST behavioural insights framework of being easy, attractive, simple, and timely and where necessary, draw upon the COM-B (capability, opportunity, motivation) behaviour change model to understand better any barriers to recycling.

We will also draw upon good examples from other councils, with opportunities for additional positive engagement in the new food waste recycling service.

## **5. Audience**

### **Primary audience**

- All households in Aldershot and Farnborough
- Councillors
- Harder to reach/engage households:
  - Flats/homes with shared bins
  - Nepali community
  - Residents for whom English is not a first language or with language barriers
  - Military community
  - Older residents – assisted collections
  - Disengaged residents
  - Households with limited space

### **Secondary audience**

- Customer services and contracts teams
- Council employees
- Contractor employees
- Children in households in Aldershot and Farnborough/schools
- Local MP
- Hampshire County Council
- WRAP – if required
- Media
- Landlords (including social landlords) and letting agents
- Estate agents
- Supermarkets
- Community groups and community leaders
- Garrison community engagement officer
- Wellesley community development manager

## **6. Key messages**

### **Primary messages**

- Climate change is an important priority for the council and one of the easiest ways to help tackle it is by increasing recycling and reducing waste and carbon emissions
- Our bin collection service has not changed very much in the last decade and our recycling rates are lower than many other councils, so it's time now for a major re-launch of a new service that will re-focus on recycling
- A key part of the new service will be a new weekly food waste recycling service for most households in autumn 2021 – ahead of the government's target date of 2023. It's free and simple to use and we'll help you to make the most of it
- Alongside your weekly food waste recycling service, you'll still get your fortnightly blue bin and glass recycling (and garden waste if you're subscribed)
- But we are shifting to fortnightly green bin collections for the items you can't recycle – 75% of councils in the UK already do this (85% collect less than weekly)
- We've found that nearly 40% (by weight) of green bin contents is food waste (7% higher than the UK average) and 27% of it is recycling that we already collect, so we're keen to make sure it's processed in a way that's kinder to our planet
- This is the first major step in increasing our recycling – and being able to collect more items for recycling in the coming years
- We'll support you through these changes with regular information and help
- If you have shared/communal bins, we'll be rolling out your food waste recycling service in spring 2022 - we'll let you know

### **Secondary messages**

- We are investing in the future of recycling in Rushmoor. This is not about saving money, but investing in tackling climate change. Our aim is for the scheme to become cost-neutral
- Updates on how we are doing – how much food waste we've collected, recycling rates, reduction in food waste and recycling in green bins, carbon emissions saved

## **7. Communications and engagement channels**

- Social media - digital artwork, videos, animations, engagement, targeted advertising
  - Facebook – council page, but also local pages and groups
  - Instagram
  - Twitter
  - Nextdoor
  - YouTube
  - LinkedIn
- Digital media
  - Website
  - Email news
  - Emails
  - Partner email news
- Printed material
  - Leaflets to all homes x 2 - plus where required
  - Arena magazine
  - Posters for community noticeboards and community centres/community base
  - Stickers and bin hangers
- Media
  - Local media
  - Local and military magazines
  - Local websites
- Word of mouth (depending on coronavirus restrictions)
  - Senior citizens forum
  - Targeted groups – e.g. Nepali groups, military wives
  - Roadshows – council offices, supermarkets, town centres
- Internal communications
  - Yammer and staff email
  - Councillors – email
  - Briefings

## **8. Additional engagement opportunities – food waste**

There are also additional opportunities for early positive engagement on the food waste recycling service to create a sense of anticipation. This depends on coronavirus restrictions/guidance, but these could include:

- Golden ticket competition – find a golden ticket in your new food waste recycling caddy and win a prize (e.g. tickets to the Princes Hall panto)
- Name the food waste truck competition
- Fun food waste characters and slogans – carried onto the food waste trucks
- Food waste champions – and/or video interviews with champions from elsewhere
- Involving schoolchildren in competitions/photo opportunities to meet the crews
- Personalise your caddy and share your photo on social media

## 9. Timeline – including key milestones

Early activities - preparation					
When	Audience	Activities (how)	Messages	Who	Outcome/notes
September 2020	Residents	Arena – autumn edition	Introducing food waste Nearly 40% of green bin (by weight) is food waste.  We're looking at the best way to introduce a food waste recycling scheme	Comms	
November 2020	Residents	News release  Social media  Email newsletter	Council steps up actions to tackle climate change – including introducing food waste recycling scheme	Comms	
December 2020	Residents	Arena – winter edition	Action to tackle climate change  Food waste – hard on the planet and your pocket	Comms	

March 2021	Residents	Social media Email newsletter	Love food, hate waste – WRAP's food waste action week	Comms	
March 2021	Residents	Arena – spring edition	Food waste – what's happening next  Reducing food waste and new food waste scheme	Comms	
5 June 2021	Residents	Social media	World Environment Day – how you can make a difference	Comms	*check themes and focus of day
<b>Key milestone – Cabinet – 8 June 2021</b>					
28 May	Residents Councillors Staff Media	Publication of Cabinet report – news release (if required)  Email to Councillors  Yammer post	Cabinet is due to consider major re-launch of council's bin collection services with a stronger focus on recycling - including introduction of weekly food waste	Comms	
w/c 31 May	Preparation work	Prep video with Cabinet member – to for completion after decision  Artwork for Cabinet decision	Cabinet decision – what is happening, when and why	Comms	

		<p>Draft news release for completion after decision</p> <p>Prepare and publish web page explaining about food waste</p> <p>Draft FAQs for internal use – social media and Customer Services</p>		<p>Contracts team</p> <p>Comms/contracts team</p>	
9 and 10 June	<p>Residents</p> <p>Councillors</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Media</p>	<p>News release - including councillors and MP</p> <p>Video to share on share media</p> <p>Social media artwork panels</p> <p>Email news</p> <p>Update website</p>	Cabinet decision – why, what happens next and when	<p>Comms</p> <p>Contracts team/Comms</p>	

9 and 10 June	Residents	Finalise Arena content	Cabinet decision, why, what happens next. Stronger focus on recycling.	Comms	
w/c 28 June	Residents Customer services	Publication of Arena Use of FAQs for any queries	As before	Comms Customer Services/Contracts team	
<b>Pre-launch</b>					
w/c 7 June	Residents	Caddy artwork design signed off and ready to go	What you can put in your caddy	Contracts team/Comms	
June	Preparation	Design food waste artwork – for branding and vehicle livery  Decide on vehicle naming competition and launch if required – timings to fit in with livery design and vehicle delivery	Food waste recycling is easy and helps save the planet	Comms/Contracts team  Comms/Contracts team/project group	
w/c 5 July		Main livery design sign-off		Contracts team	



Mid-July	Preparation	Content and design for first household leaflet	Key messages, when the scheme will start and how the scheme will work	Comms/Contracts team	
2 August		Sign-off designed leaflet for print	Food waste specifics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About the scheme</li> <li>• What happens to food waste</li> <li>• What you can recycle</li> <li>• Benefits of food waste recycling</li> </ul>	Contracts team	
2-9 August		Leaflet printing			
21-July to 16 August	Preparation	Arena content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's changing and when – key dates</li> <li>• Why things are changing</li> <li>• Why food waste recycling</li> <li>• Getting started – how to use your food caddy</li> <li>• What you can recycle</li> <li>• Useful tips on storing your caddies</li> </ul>	Comms	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where to go for help</li> <li>• General recycling reminders</li> </ul>		
Mid to late July	Harder to reach audience	<p>Make contact with community groups, community leaders, landlords, garrison community engagement</p> <p>Identify other opportunities, e.g. senior citizens forum</p>	<p>When the new food waste recycling service will start</p> <p>We need your help to spread the word and make the service a success for all</p> <p>How can we help you to help us?</p>	Contracts team/Comms	
26 July	Residents Media Councillors Staff	<p>Delivery of caddies to depot – photo/video opportunity</p> <p>Media release Social media activities Internal comms</p>	Coming to you soon – your new weekly food waste caddies	Comms team	
July/August	Preparation	'How to' videos and animation	How to make the most of new your food caddy and food recycling	Comms/Contracts team	

		Video of food waste community champion from elsewhere	How the scheme is working		
Mid-August	Preparation	Content and design of caddy leaflet  (Print and to depot by 30 August)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection dates</li> <li>• Why things are changing</li> <li>• Why food waste recycling</li> <li>• Getting started – how to use your food caddy</li> <li>• What you can recycle</li> <li>• Useful tips on storing your caddies</li> <li>• Where to go for help</li> <li>• General recycling reminders</li> <li>• Watch out for a golden ticket in your caddy!</li> </ul>	Comms/Contracts team	
Mid-August	Preparation	Golden ticket design and print – to depot by end of	What to do if you receive a golden ticket	Comms	

		August/early September	Are you happy to be photographed with a golden ticket?		
Mid-August	Residents Councillors	Social media Email news Email	Look out for your leaflet coming through your door in the next couple of weeks	Comms	
w/c 23 and 30 August	Residents Councillors Customer services	Delivery of first household leaflet Email Email	As above Copy of leaflet Copy of leaflet	Contracts team/Comms	
Late August/early September	Residents	Photo of golden tickets going into caddies at depot Social media Email news	We're preparing the caddies for delivery – watch out for a golden ticket in your caddy	Comms/Contracts team	
Early September	Residents	Publish 'how to' videos online and promote on social	How to get the most out of your new food waste recycling service	Comms/Contracts team	

		media and email news  Video from food waste community champion elsewhere	How it's worked for us		
Early September	Harder to reach audience	Contact with community groups, community leaders, landlords, garrison, etc	Update on the new service and how we'd like your help  We've produced some 'how to' videos – please can you share	Contracts team recycling advisers/Community development/Comms	
10 September	Preparation	Arena sign-off		Comms	
Mid-September	Residents Media Councillors Staff Community groups	Photo Media release Social media	Meet the new recycling advisers – here to help you	Comms/Contracts team	
Mid-September to early October	Residents Councillors Customer Services Media	Photos of new trucks and caddies at depot Video Media release Social media Email news	The new trucks are here, the caddies are on their way – countdown to the new recycling service  Where to go for help – promote website first	Comms	*trucks due to arrive 20/9 *caddies for delivery 13/9 to 4/10 *Could involve schoolchildren – visit to see the new trucks

Late September/early October	Preparation	Website	Make sure content, calendars and home page carousels are up to date	Comms/Contracts team	
Early October	Preparation	Media release  Video  *Photo taken on first day with crews and Cabinet member	Commitment to tackling climate change  New service set to begin with stronger focus on recycling and food waste recycling  Where residents can get help	Comms team	
Late September/early October	Preparation	Animation	Why we are changing the service  Benefits of new service  What you can recycle in your new food waste caddies  Help save the planet by addressing climate change	Comms team	

**Launch of new service – TBC**

? October TBC	Residents Media Councillors Staff Customer services Community groups, etc	Media release Photo on first day of crews and Cabinet member Video Email news Emails Yammer	The new service is here	Comms team	
<b>Post-launch</b>					
End of first week	As above	Infographic for social media  Email news	How much we've collected – weekly update for first month  We're all making a difference	Comms	
End of first month	Residents	Video	How much has been taken out of the green bin in weight/saved in carbon emission – equate to something	Comms/Contracts team	
13 October to 1 November	Preparation	December Arena magazine content	How the new service is going – how much we've achieved  Rollout of second phase in March	Comms	

			How to waste less food  Christmas and New Year bin collection arrangements		
November	Review of service and comms	Review of how things have gone after first month and what we need to address – update plan		Contracts team/Customer Services/Comms	
w/c 13 December	Residents	Arena delivered		Comms	
13-31 December  Early January	Residents	Social media Email news Website	Christmas and New Year bin collection arrangements  Waste less food this Christmas	Comms/Contracts team	
January to March/April	Residents in flats (Landlords)	Leaflets Social media Website	Rollout of second phase of new service – what it means for you	Contracts team/Comms	
March 2022	Residents	Food Waste Awareness Week campaign		Comms/Contracts team	
22 April 2022	Residents	Earth Day campaign – climate change awareness			



March	Quarterly update of plan			Comms/Contracts team/ Customer Services	
June	Quarterly update of plan			Comms/Contracts team/ Customer Services	
September	Quarterly update of plan			Comms/Contracts team/ Customer Services	
December	Quarterly update of plan			Comms/Contracts team/ Customer Services	

## **10.Resources**

Most of the artwork, videos, animation and content will be produced in-house.

Additional resources will be:

Print cost for leaflets x 2 – approx. £1,600

Social media advertising - £100

Print costs for posters as required – approx. £100

## **11.Evaluation**

The Communications, Contracts and Customer Services teams will meet quarterly to review this plan and the action that needs to be taken to maintain good communications and engagement against which the service objectives can be met.



# **Food Waste Collection & Recycling Service**

**Communication & Engagement Strategy**

***Harder-to-Reach Groups***

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## Executive Summary

As part of the implementation of the Food Waste Collection and Recycling Service (hereafter referred to as '**FWCRS**'), a programme of consultation and exploration of behavioural change has taken place. This report details the proposal of how Rushmoor Borough Council (hereafter referred to as '**RBC**') should best engage with residents to introduce the FWCRS and make changes to its wider waste collection.

Information was gathered from a variety of sources to establish the best way to approach the engagement. Extensive consultation with members of RBC Communications, RBC Contract Services and other key stakeholders was undertaken throughout.

This Communications and Engagement Strategy aims to identify and direct how the FWCRS will be most effectively introduced and promoted to ensure harder-to-reach residents are best informed to make a positive decision - both to **begin** and **sustain** participation in this new service.

Data collection for the report has been severely impacted by lockdown restrictions in place, as consultations could only take place virtually. The number of residents we could gain insights from was lower and meant that those that did engage already had both digital capability and willingness. We acknowledge that this is not a fair and true representation of all RBC residents.

The main message from local authorities, industry experts and focus groups was that messages need to be simple and easy to follow. Leaflets should be visual making it clear what waste can and cannot be include in the FWCRS. Main concerns of residents was regarding potential smell from the bins and animals/insects getting into the bins. The general message that the FWCRS will be a weekly collection and that the bins will have lockable lids will dispel these concerns.

There are some barriers to participation which are specific to some of the harder to reach groups but the majority of issues related to all residents. The strategy document highlights the methods of communication and messages to address the barriers identified.

Residents consulted agreed that as well as communicating on the FWCRS, the opportunity should be taken to also communicate the wider recycling message. The importance of reducing the amount of waste in general by food planning and only buying what you need. Information on the environmental benefits and how the FWCRS process is carried out was also something residents would like to hear in the communications.

## Introduction

RBC, along with all UK local authorities, are required by Government to add separate household food waste collection for recycling as part of the government's landmark Environment Bill and as a means of diverting material from landfill or other residual waste treatment to its waste services by 2023.

According to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), UK households produce around 7 million tonnes of food waste each year, of which 4.2 million tonnes is categorised as avoidable and 2.8 million tonnes as unavoidable.

Additionally, the RBC Climate Promise is a pledge to make the council carbon-neutral and the borough greener and more sustainable by 2030. One of the ways a biggest difference can be made is to introduce a weekly FWCRS with indicative rates showing an increase of between 5% and 10% in recycling.

The introduction of a FWCRS represents the most significant change to the RBC's waste services in many years and presents a real opportunity for a step change in performance in both recycling rates and the council's carbon impact. Cabinet have agreed to bring in this new service in autumn 2021.

A separate FWCRS will for some residents invoke, at best apathetic, and at worst, negative reactions, which if not addressed could lead to low levels of participation.

FWCRS are common-place across the UK now and are currently in place for almost half of households in England, with that number set to rapidly increase following the adoption of the national strategy.

This strategy looks to identify the harder-to-reach groups and consider, through primary and secondary research, the best ways to engage with and encourage those residents to actively participate in the FWCRS. It will take into account:

- what education may be needed
- what motivates these groups
- what potential barriers are in place and if they can be mitigated
- how behavioural change theory can best provide sustained change in practice

## Methodology

Information was gathered from a variety of sources to establish the best way to approach the engagement by:

- Identifying the harder-to-reach groups and how best to communicate with them

- Researching best practice from industry experts on the introduction of a food waste collection services/changes to waste collection
- Researching other local authorities who have recently undertaken similar change to gather evidence and what worked well and what they would have changed and how they tackled harder-to-reach groups
- Researching behavioural change techniques and how these might apply to the introduction of a food waste collection service/changes to waste collection

## Findings

Harder-to-reach groups were identified through the data held on the demographic make-up of the population and from experience around dissemination of previous information:

Harder-to-reach groups			
Flats/homes with shared facilities	Nepali community	Military community	Apathetic residents
Households with restricted space	Mixed business and domestic neighbourhoods	Other ethnic minority groups where English is not their first language	

As a result of the ongoing pandemic and multiple lockdowns during the last 12 months, this strategy will focus on first four groups identified.

- Flats/homes with shared facilities
- Nepalese community
- Military community
- Apathetic residents

## Learning from Other Local Authorities

A key element of the work was to research and connect with other local authorities who have recently undertaken similar change, to gather evidence and what worked well and what they would have changed and how they tackled harder to reach groups.

Sessions were held with Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Portsmouth City Council and Guilford Borough Council to gain insights from their approaches.

All councils spoken to used the implementation of the new FWCRS to make changes to the general waste collection, with many moving to fortnightly collection for general waste and some even moving to three weekly collection. Using the

opportunity to promote the introduction of the new FWCRS, rather than focussing on the reduction of existing other collection and recycling services.

Within their Communication Plans, they focussed attention on advising residents how they could reduce their amount of food waste. They did this by promoting use of leftovers and extolled the benefits of meal planning when shopping. They ran these messages alongside the more general educational message of what can and can't go into their new FWCRS caddy.

Many of the councils used Community Champions to help spread the message and respond to comments and observations on social media based on their lived experience, as well as practically supporting their surrounding neighbours.

Every council consulted took the decision to delay the roll out of the FWCRS to flats/homes with shared facilities, as it was recognised that the approach to each location would have to be tailored to the specific set up i.e. would be dependent on bin stores, managing agents etc. Effort was also made to contact licence holders for houses of multiple occupation (hereafter referred to as '*HMO*') to advise on the FWCRS.

Councils stressed the importance of early communications and continued repetition of key messages using established channels through council magazines, leaflets, social media, bin hangers, bin stickers, local radio, dedicated webpage with 'Do's and Don'ts' along with links to videos that describe the process and the benefits. They have created and updated FAQ documents as common issues have arisen.

Prior to the launch they used livery on FWCRS vehicles and other vehicles to advertise the incoming service. Bracknell Forest Council also ran a competition to name their FWCRS vehicles which proved very popular. They hosted roadshows in town centres and supermarkets to engage with residents and to share practicalities such as what caddies will look like.

### Resident pre-engagement

In March 2020, RBC changed the bin collection service at short notice due to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. This meant weekly collections for rubbish (green wheelie bins) moved to fortnightly. Whilst recycling collections (blue wheelie bins and glass boxes) remained fortnightly.

A survey, Recycling and Rubbish in Rushmoor, was undertaken between July and August and was designed to ask residents for their views on the waste and recycling collections and on introducing a FWCRS.



A total of 5,071 residents completed the survey, an estimated response rate of 12.6% on the assumption that one person per property completed the survey.<sup>1</sup>

Question 13 of the survey asked residents '***How likely would you be to use a food waste caddy and bin for food waste recycling if we introduced it in Rushmoor?***'

There were 4,654 responses to this question in total (those living in flats/homes with shared facilities were not asked this question). 68.0% (3,167) of respondents indicated that they were *very or fairly likely* to use a food waste caddy and bin for food waste recycling if it were introduced. However, 32.0% (1,487) indicated that they were *not very likely or not at all likely* to use a food waste caddy and bin.

## Resident engagement

### Flats and shared facilities focus group

To greater understand the responses above and to hear from residents living in flats/homes with shared facilities, six focus group sessions were arranged. Expressions of interest were requested and the session dates and timings were publicised on RBC social media accounts and as part of a latest news and update emails.

The advert was primarily aimed at those residents living in flats as one of our harder-to-reach target groups. There were 138 expressions of interest submitted with 31 of those made from residents living in flats/homes with shared facilities. These 31 were prioritised and a further 17 spaces were offered to the remaining house types, ensuring representation of all wards within the borough. Two of the sessions were dedicated to those living in flats/homes with shared facilities and the other four sessions were a mix of house types, based on availability.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 focus group sessions were held with 16 residents living in flats/homes with shared facilities.

#### Questions asked were:

1. Tell us what you think of the refuse and recycling options in Rushmoor?
2. What would encourage you to use the FWCRS?
3. What would stop you using the FWCRS?
4. What's the best way to engage with you about the upcoming FWCRS?
5. How likely are you to use the FWCRS? 1 = not at all likely 10 = very likely

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<sup>1</sup> There were 40,360 council tax properties in Rushmoor as at March 2019

For those who were unable to attend, a survey was sent mirroring the questions covered at the sessions to allow those residents to share their views. A further five residents completed the survey.

When asked what they thought of the current rubbish and recycling options many were complementary of the service but saw room for improvement particularly around what they weren't able to currently recycle, despite a desire to e.g tetra pak containers, food plastic containers etc. Some attendees were still unsure what they could and couldn't put in their blue wheelie bins.

When asked what would encourage them to use the service, responses ranged from social norm responses of *"I'm keen to recycle as much as I can"*, *"I want to look after the environment"*, *"understanding my food waste and whether I could be saving money"* to more practical requests such as *"I would like weekly collections"* and I would like to know *"that the communal bin will be cleaned and looked after"*.

When asked what would be a barrier to using the FWCRS, responses mainly focused around the smell and whether the outside caddy would attract animals and/or vermin. There was particular concern around the security of the bins from animals and also from passers-by, as some residents have experienced members of the wider public misusing their bins.

Space was also stated as a barrier, both inside their homes and in communal areas. There was concern from some that there was still confusion from neighbours and themselves as to what can and can't be recycled already, and that an extra bin may cause greater confusion. A greater concern still was around possible contamination issues which has in some cases meant that costs have been incurred by all residents, this has happened in the past when the blue recycling bins have been found to be contaminated. The resultant problem is that fines have left some residents reluctant to participate in recycling at all, meaning they were more inclined to put everything in the residual green bin.

When asked what the best way to engage with them about the service the majority wanted to receive a letter and/or leaflet which explains the process step by step and that they could pin to the fridge or attach to communal notice boards as a reminder. In conjunction with this, they felt that regular feedback/education/tips through social media channels and the Arena magazine would be most effective.

When asked how likely they are to use to the FWCRS based on a rating of 1 = not at all likely 10 = very likely, **86%** (18) scored a 6 or higher with **14%** (3) response 5 or lower with an average score of **8.5**

When explored further, those that scored lower than a 5 stated that this was due to lack of space. Living in a studio flat meant they were unsure how they could accommodate space within the flat to have a caddy at all.

## Nepali community focus groups

We also sought support from our Neighbourhood Development officer to arrange two dedicated focus group sessions with the Nepali community. We approached the Leader of the Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community (hereafter referred to as '**GRNC**') and arranged two sessions on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

8 attended from the 10 invited over the 2 sessions. All attendees were male.

We explored the same questions as with the previous focus groups:

1. Tell us what you think of the refuse and recycling options in Rushmoor?
2. What would encourage you to use the FWCRS?
3. What would stop you using the FWCRS?
4. What's the best way to engage with you about the upcoming FWCRS?
5. How likely are you to use the FWCRS? 1 = not at all likely 10 = very likely

Much of the feedback echoed the earlier sessions, however there were some key differences.

Within the Nepali culture, food is respected and as much of the food product is used as possible, so some within the group felt there would be very little waste produced for the service. Food is reused, given out within the community or dehydrated during warmer weather for longer use. Food waste is often recycled within the home through composting as gardening and home produce is also a big part of the Nepali culture.

The participants were positive towards the scheme and could see the environmental and practical benefits of the scheme.

Many of the barriers were the same as the other focus groups: pests, frequency of collection, smells and possible additional costs. However, there was more emphasis on making the scheme simple and easy to follow.

In terms of engagement with the community, the recurring themes throughout the two focus groups was education and simple clear messages. Messages should be visual and any translations need to be correct and there were offers of help from the GRNC. There appeared to be a split based on the age of the audience towards use of social media - the younger participants felt the use of social media, especially Vibe and emails etc. would be effective for their community.

When asked about the wider community, different ideas were brought forward. The older members of the community may not be as literate or have access to a smart phone for access to social media. Means of engaging would need to be different, with word of mouth being the most effective. It was suggested that getting the messages to the younger members of the community and asking them to spread the messages to family members would have a positive impact.

Before the pandemic, fortnightly meetings were organised by GRNC for the community to come together. It is hoped that these will restart as lockdown eases and these were also recommended for circulating information, making presentations and talking with residents.

The use of local Nepali radio was also suggested, as it is often on in the background in Nepali homes, so if the messages were repeated, it would be heard.

There is a high level of support throughout the community and those in the focus groups showed a willingness to help with translations and spreading the word.

When asked how likely they were to use the FWCRS based on a rating of 1 = not at all likely 10 = very likely **100%** (8) scored a 6 or higher

A full breakdown of the data from each group above can be found in the appendices.

## Behavioural Change

### Behavioural Change Theory

When considering how to effect behavioural change, defining the **intended behavioural outcome** is the beginning of taking a behavioural approach. This involves defining **what people need to do differently**, which is often much harder than it sounds. It requires a great deal of reflection, discussion and consultation and consideration of **what practice would look like** if the engagement and communication has 'worked'.

The definition should include **TACTA** – **T**arget (with/for whom), **A**ction (what and how), **C**ontext (where), **T**ime (when) and **A**ctor (who) to be comprehensive and clear.

Behaviour change is reliant upon the presence of three factors:

- **Capability** – is physical in terms of the practicality and ability as well as psychological i.e. knowledge required to achieve the intended behavioural outcome.
- **Opportunity** – is both physical in terms of whatever is needed i.e. time, space etc and social in terms of what people think i.e. “the way we do things around here”. The best way to explore opportunity or lack thereof is to ask people what would get in the way of them doing the intended behavioural outcome and then to follow up with observing practice once the behaviour change has been introduced.
- **Motivation** – if reflective in terms of weighing up the pros and cons and automatic in terms of cues or habit. Reflective motivation is best explored by asking people what they think of doing the behaviour, whether they are confident and whether they think it is worth it. Automatic motivation is best

explored by asking them about their existing habits and whether they think much about the process of their behaviour.

Behaviours are almost always more likely to happen if there are **prompts** and **cues** or if they are **habitual**. Where motivation is low, engagement that encourages thinking and reflecting about why the intended behavioural outcome would provide personal and wider social benefit is required. A good way to approach this is through highlighting consequences of participation/non-participation but always with **positive reinforcement** rather than any form of negative threat as this is shown to promote disengagement very quickly.

In terms of the messages to share, how they are shared and what you are actually asking people to do in order to achieve the intended behavioural outcome, these should be worked up using the **EAST Framework** (**Easy, Attractive, Social** and **Timely**):

### **Make it Easy**

- Harness the defaults. We have a strong tendency to go with the default or pre-set option, since it is easiest to do so. Making an option the default makes it more likely to be adopted.
- Reduce the 'hassle factor' of taking up a service. The effort required to perform an action often puts people off. Reducing the effort required can increase uptake and response rates.
- Simplify messages. Making the message clear often results in a significant increase in response rates to communications. In particular, it is useful to identify how a complex goal can be broken down into simpler, easier actions.

### **Make it Attractive**

- Attract attention. We are more likely to do something that our attention is drawn towards. Ways of doing this include the use of images, colour or personalisation.
- Design rewards and sanctions for maximum effect. We all know that financial incentives can be highly effective but alternative incentives can work in just the same way so selling what is positive about the intended outcome is key.

### **Make it Social**

- Show that most people perform the desired behaviour. Describing what most people do in a particular situation encourages others to do the same. It is key not to inadvertently reinforce problematic behaviours by emphasising its high prevalence.
- Use the power of networks. We are embedded in a network of social relationships, and those we come into contact with shape our actions. Organisations can foster networks to enable collective action, provide mutual support and encourage behaviours to spread peer-to-peer.

- Encourage people to make a commitment to others. We often use commitment devices to voluntarily 'lock ourselves' into doing something in advance. The social nature of these commitments is often crucial.

### **Make it *Timely***

- Prompt people when they are most likely to be receptive. The same offer made at different times can have drastically different levels of success. Behaviour is generally easier to change when habits are already disrupted.
- Consider the immediate benefits. We are more influenced by benefits that take effect immediately than those delivered later.
- Help people plan their response to events. There is a substantial gap between intentions and actual behaviour. A proven solution is to prompt people to identify the barriers to action, and develop a specific plan to address them.

In order to sustain behavioural change, it is critical to ***test, learn*** and ***adapt*** communications for success against the desired behavioural outcome in a way that can be easily measured. Feedback of successes in terms of positive reinforcement can then form part of the ongoing encouragement of further and/or continued engagement.

### **Behavioural Change Practice**

The ***intended behavioural outcome*** is to encourage less waste, measurable by the tonnage of waste which does not get recycled in any way.

***What people need to do differently*** is to ensure that all food waste, including plate scraps and surplus, goes into the food waste caddy/kerbside food waste bin rather than in the general waste bin.

***If it 'worked', practice would look like*** less surplus food waste being created through better food planning and greater utilisation of surplus and leftovers with only necessary food waste then entering the FWCRS.

**TACTA** for the purpose of this strategy is as follows:

**Target** – harder-to reach groups of residents

**Action** – engage in the intended behavioural outcome above

**Context** – in their own homes

**Time** – before the FWCRS even begins, to start thinking about planning for the new service in advance

**Actors** – RBC Contracts Team, RBC Communications Team, RBC Customer Service and the SERCO operatives who are all key conveyors of the message to the target groups

**Capability, Opportunity** and **Motivation** have all been explored through the questions asked to the Focus Groups/Survey and have informed the conclusions and recommendations.

### **Make it Easy**

- The roll out of the FWCRS is happening, there is no possibility for opting out.
- All properties will receive a caddy to use and be provided with a kerbside bin.
- Messaging will be clear, informative, simple and give easy, clear instructions.

### **Make it Attractive**

- Communications will be bright and eye-catching.
- Rewards are in the incentive of feeling accomplished in making a positive impact on improving our environment.

### **Make it Social**

- Celebrate how we are part of a bigger national move to introducing a FWCRS, share how many other councils have already engaged and that we are ahead of the imposed government deadline.
- Use Community Champions wherever possible for peer-to-peer encouragement of participation, rather than 'Big Brother' simply imposing participation.
- Set a target for the borough to achieve and ask people to sign up to the commitment – share progress against targets as part of that shared commitment to one another.

### **Make it Timely**

- Services have already been disrupted through the pandemic which is an ideal time to utilise an advantage to introduce the new habit before the FWCRS even begins – set the mindset in preparation.
- Focus on immediate benefits through possible money saving tips and positive environmental impacts.
- Be clear about the gap between current behaviours and the desired target intentions and lay everything out in terms of timescales for introduction, set stage by stage targets and when any identified barriers will be addressed.

**Test, learn** and **adapt** will be an ongoing process of review, obtaining feedback from users and provision of support to users through publishing of regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Most importantly, identification of and specific engagement with residents who do not engage in the FWCRS at all or very little will be required to identify any further barriers beyond apathy not already identified in the preparation of this strategy.

## Conclusion and recommendations

In delivery of the strategy, it is important that a positive and supportive approach in all communications is maintained with universal, comprehensive and clear messaging – as well as some specifically targeted messaging for the harder-to-reach groups.

Messaging should be started as early as possible and be repeated regularly to achieve familiarity and confidence across the wide range of associated information that needs to be provided about, and that is connected with, the FWCRS.

Methods of feedback should be encouraged at all stages of the process and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet should be created, updated and published as an ongoing support to the service introduction.

Methods of message delivery should be tailored in accordance with best coverage and reach for the identified harder-to-reach groups.

There were a number of barriers identified through the focus groups that could prevent residents from participating in the FWCRS which are set out in the slides in the appendices. Mitigation against the concerns that residents raised could all be addressed through clear messaging.

## Messages

The FWCRS will:

- be easy to use
- include all food waste including cooked foods, meat, bones etc
- provide you with an indoor caddy or you can use your own
- not necessarily create smells – you can use a liner if you wish
- include free liners at roll out to try
- recycle plastic bags is used as liners
- provide you with a kerbside bin with a lockable lid to prevent vermin/insects and smells
- be collected on a weekly basis from the kerbside
- compliment what you may already be doing to compost
- compliment the wider recycling service
- be an opportunity to remind around all recycling
- take the opportunity to explain why plastics, tetra packs and foil cannot be recycled currently
- celebrate the potential positive environmental impact of less waste
- reduce the amount of food waste in general if food planning/buying is given further consideration
- provide personal savings if less food waste is created



- be part of a whole process that can be explained

### Delivery of Messages to Harder-to-Reach Groups

The general response around delivery of messaging was that information should be provided in a hard copy leaflet drop to all households with clear and visual instructions about how the FWCRS actually works and what households need to do for it to work. This should be complemented by peripheral messaging delivered through as wide a range of media as possible including radio, Arena, social media and on posters on Community Notice Boards etc

Reaching the specific groups entailed some differences in suggested best delivery.

### Flats and Shared Facilities

- Posters in and around the bin store and on noticeboards in flat entrances areas showing what can be included in the various bins.
- Personal visits when food waste bins are introduced to educate residents what waste goes in each of the bins provided.
- Seek out residents in flats to become **waste champions** to help with the education of other residents and advise new residents.
- Approach managing agents to provide regular cleaning of bin store and cleaning of food waste bins
- Educate residents when recycling bins are contaminated rather than fining.

### Nepali Community

- Provision of leaflets and videos translated into Nepali will help overcome language and cultural barriers with the use of visual pictures on leaflets and posters - need to ensure the translation is done correctly so that the message given is understood
- Word of mouth is an important way of cascading messages throughout the Nepali community – provision of leaflets and posters to community groups to hand out, put in GP surgeries and through the CAB
- Likely to have less food waste but leaflets on what can be composted and what can go in the food waste to help with understanding the process
- Videos on the website and available on social media translated into Nepali – need to ensure the translation is done correctly so that the message given is understood
- Seek out residents in the community to become **waste champions** to help with the education on the process
- Staff and waste champions to attend community groups to hand out leaflets and speak directly to residents – identify waste champions from within the Nepali community

### Military Community

- Provide leaflets to the Community Engagement Officer to include in welcome packs for new residents
- Label all bins showing what waste can be included to help new residents understand the process
- Attend Welfare Officer Forums to cascade information to pass out to military residents on recycling and food waste
- Attend coffee mornings at the Connaught Centre to share information, hand out leaflets and speak to residents

### Apathetic Residents

- Making the process simple to follow will encourage all residents to participate in the FWCRS
- Leaflets delivered to all households with an easy-to-follow guide on what can be included which also highlight the environmental benefits and potential cost savings
- Once lockdown restrictions are lifted attendance at supermarkets and town centres to speak to residents and hand out information
- Introduction of alternate weekly or 3-weekly residual waste collections is an incentive for residents to participate in FWCRS
- Identify areas where participation is low and look to engage local **waste champions** to raise awareness and encourage participation through local community groups e.g. Parent Toddler groups, Neighbourhood Watch networks, community centres etc

**Food waste recycling service implementation schedule**

<b>Phase 1 (those with individual bins) – commencement October 21</b>	
<b>Property type</b>	<b>Approx. number of households</b>
Detached houses	6047
Semi-detached houses	11,421
Terrace houses	11,554
Maisonettes	To be identified (no. included in flats)
Mobile homes	207
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29,229 (+ maisonettes)</b>

<b>Phase 2 (those with shared bins) – commencement spring 22</b>	
<b>Property type</b>	<b>Approx. number of households</b>
Flats	11,430
HMOs	227
Sheltered accommodation	365
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,022 (minus maisonettes)</b>

The above figures are approximate and this schedule will be fluid, due to some “Phase 2” property types having individual bins and some “Phase 1” property types having shared bins. However, the property types listed represent the majority falling into each phase.