

## **PROPOSAL FOR AN ENHANCED RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICE FOR TEXTILES AND SMALL WASTE ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

REPORT OF: Divisional Leader for Commercial Services and Contracts  
Contact Officer: Jo Reid  
Email: [jo.reid@midsussex.gov.uk](mailto:jo.reid@midsussex.gov.uk) Tel: 01444 477203  
Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision Yes  
Report To: Scrutiny for Community, Customer Services and Service Delivery

---

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to:

1. Recommend the roll out of the enhanced collection of textiles and small WEEE service across the District.

### **Summary**

2. Following a report to Scrutiny on 23 January 2019 which reported on the outcome of a pilot textiles and small WEEE collection service in a portion of the District it was agreed that Officers would review three options for providing an enhanced collection service of textiles and small WEEE across the whole District. The options to be explored were:
  - a. The provision of a kerbside collection service for textiles and small WEEE through Serco; for recycling;
  - b. A kerbside collection service for textiles and small WEEE through a charitable partner; for resale and;
  - c. The development of an increased network of bring banks.

### **Recommendations**

3. The Committee are asked to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery:
    - a. The progression of a kerbside collection service provided through the Council's existing waste and recycling collection contractor, for recycling;
    - b. The introduction of a collection of textiles and small WEEE, for resale in partnership with a charity.
- 

### **Background**

4. The Scrutiny Committee for Community, Customer Services and Service Delivery will be aware that Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) worked in partnership with Serco and The British Heart Foundation (BHF) between November 2017 and September 2018 to trial a kerbside collection of reusable (second-hand quality) textiles and small waste electronic and electrical items (WEEE). This pilot successfully met the objectives to:

- a. Increase the amount of textiles and small WEEE reused in the trial area and;
  - b. Reduced the amount of reusable textiles and small WEEE in the residual waste stream.
- 5. Discussions with BHF following the close of the pilot have resulted in them confirming that due to operational challenges they would be unable to replicate the service delivered in the pilot across the whole District.
- 6. Following the trial the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 23 January 2019, agreed to review the respective business cases for providing an enhanced recycling collection service for textiles and small WEEE comprising;
  - a. A kerbside collection service for textiles and small WEEE through Serco, the existing waste and recycling collection contractor, for recycling;
  - b. A kerbside collection service for textiles and small WEEE through a charitable or commercial contractor, for resale and;
  - c. The development of an increased network of bring banks located at mini recycling sites across the local authority area.

### **Context**

- 7. In October 2018 a composition analysis of residual (black bin) waste in Mid Sussex revealed almost 4% and 1% (by weight) of the waste sampled was potentially reusable and/or recyclable textiles and small WEEE respectively (West Sussex Waste Partnership 2018).
- 8. Customer consultation carried out in October 2018, as part of the quarterly customer satisfaction survey undertaken by Serco demonstrated that over 55% of respondents wanted to be able to recycle textiles, small WEEE and batteries at the kerbside.
- 9. It is likely that the introduction of kerbside collection services for recyclable and reusable textiles and small WEEE could lead to an increase in 1% on the Council's current recycling rate (which was 43% for 2018/19).
- 10. Enhancing kerbside recycling services, by extending the range of materials collected at the kerbside, has also been shown to increase the capture rate of other materials.

### **Policy Context**

- 11. All local authorities in the UK are required to meet the target of 50% recycling by 2020. This target has been driven by European Legislation that will remain in place following the UK's exit from the European Union.
- 12. The recently published Waste and Resources Strategy outlines the Government's intention to legislate further and introduce new statutory responsibilities.
- 13. This includes consideration for the separate collection of textiles and hazardous waste (including small WEEE) by the beginning of 2025.
- 14. It also includes the potential for strengthening TEEP (the method by which local authority collection systems are deemed technologically, environmentally and

economically practical) with a view to improving the quality of dry recycling collected.

15. Given this strengthening of national legislation and the commitment to adhere to existing European legislation, changes to the way in which MSDC collect recycling from householders need to be made.

### **Options Proposed**

- 16. Kerbside collection services provided through Serco:** It is proposed the Council work with Serco to provide households in the District with a kerbside collection of recyclable textiles and small WEEE (for recycling, not resale) alongside existing waste and recycling services. This would remove the need for Mid Sussex residents to transport their textiles and small WEEE items to another location and reduce the likelihood of them entering the residual waste stream.
17. It is possible to modify all the current collection vehicles by installing a small cage on the near-side undercarriage, in front of the rear wheel. The costs for this are outlined in Table 2 and the suggested funding method is noted in paragraphs 35 and 36. The current lead time from order to installation is six weeks. It is anticipated collections could begin in spring 2020.
18. Based on the experiences of other local authorities who run similar kerbside services there is potential to generate a modest income from the sale of textiles. However, likely income is driven by market conditions and is subject to variation.
19. Therefore, in order to determine what MSDC's experience might be, and to better forecast the impact to revenue budgets it is recommended a Soft Market Test should be undertaken. This will allow organisations with appropriate experience to outline their views on how the materials can be best recycled and whether this would be at cost to the organisation.
20. The Council will seek to licence the existing waste depot (located at Bridge Road in Haywards Heath) to store textiles and small WEEE in appropriately secure containers. This will allow Serco to dispose of these items when they return to the depot at the end of the day and allow the Council to work with off takers to recycle these items.
- 21. Kerbside collection services provided by a charity or commercial contractor:** The success of the pilot has demonstrated the Council should explore the potential of working with the charity sector to provide a kerbside collection service for reusable textiles and small WEEE.
22. In order to replicate the successful service offered by BHF, Serco and the Council during the pilot collections of reusable textiles and small WEEE would take place up to three times per year.
23. All households would be notified of the collection dates by a bin hanger, placed onto the handle of their wheelie bin by Serco.
24. The Council would seek to operate this service at as low a cost as possible. All income from the sale of textiles and small WEEE would be retained by the charity to be sold in outlets within the UK.

25. Discussions with BHF immediately following the end of the pilot indicated that they could not accommodate the extension of the service District-wide. Undertaking a procurement exercise to secure a partner is therefore recommended to ensure the Council can minimise any risks and guarantee service continuity. The aim would be to introduce a service in early 2020.
26. **A network of bring banks located at mini recycling sites across the local authority area:** During the pilot, tonnages collected at mini recycling sites increased in comparison with previous years. It was therefore considered sensible to explore the option of increasing the range of materials collected at these sites to include more textiles banks and introducing containers for the collection of small WEEE.
27. Of the 77 bring sites the Council are aware of (it is important to note not all mini recycling sites are located on Council-owned land) over 50% support textiles banks. Given the prevalence of these banks it is not suggested the Council invest significantly in the installation of further banks. It is likely the number will grow over time in response to market demand; especially given the potential for income from the sale of textiles is attractive to charity providers.
28. Three potential Council-owned mini recycling sites were identified in each town (Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath) which could support the addition of bring banks for small WEEE. Contractors were contacted based on providing a monthly collection service at these locations.
29. In all cases, the Council would be required to purchase bring banks suitable for the containment of small WEEE. Subsequent monthly charges would then be applied to support the emptying of these banks and the recycling of the items within them. These charges are outlined in Table 1, below. No income from the onward sale of the small WEEE would be received.

Table 1: Costs to provide a bring bank service for small WEEE

<b>Container cost (payable once)</b>	<b>Emptying charge</b>	<b>Sorting charge</b>	<b>Hazardous waste inspection charge</b>	<b>Hazardous waste handling charge</b>	<b>Total charge (excluding container purchase)</b>
£500 each	£395 per month	£148.50 per month	£285 per month	£120 per month (minimum)	£663.50
£1,500 total	£4,740 per annum	£1,782 per annum	£3,420 per annum	£1,440 per annum (minimum)	<b><u>£11,382</u></b>

30. During the consideration of this option the following issues were noted by contractors and other local authorities providing bring banks for small WEEE:
- Contamination within the bring banks can be high, leading to increased charges for emptying;
  - Increases in fly-tipping of larger electrical items (e.g. fridge freezers) have been reported where bring banks have been installed;
  - The costs of providing the service are high when compared with the yield in tonnage;

- d. Several local authorities had installed CCTV following the abuse of these bring banks by commercial operators.
31. Whilst there is no doubt of the environmental benefit of collecting small WEEE; the issues faced by collection contractors and other local authorities rightly give the Council cause for concern. The provision of a kerbside collection service with both Serco and a charitable partner will provide the residents of Mid Sussex with sufficient opportunities to recycle or reuse small WEEE without these negative consequences (and at a comparatively lower on-going cost).
32. It is therefore proposed that this option is not pursued any further at this stage.

### Financial Implications

33. MDSC has previously received payments from West Sussex County Council (WSSC) for the amount of waste diverted from landfill and energy from waste (known as recycling credits). Historically, this has totalled over £800k per annum. WSSC are not obliged to pay recycling credits and considering their current challenging financial situation, they have proposed, among a range of other savings options that these payments are either significantly reduced or are ceased altogether. A significant reduction in funding is therefore expected over the next 12 to 24 months.
34. As part of the Council's contractual arrangement with Serco an Improvement Fund was created in order to support continuous improvement in waste and recycling services. The Improvement Fund receives £30,000 per annum. The use of the Fund is agreed, following the submission of written proposals, at the quarterly Partnership Board attended by senior managers at both the Council and Serco and the Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery.
35. In the past, MSDC would have used recycling credit payments to enhance waste and recycling collection services. It is therefore anticipated that, should the Committee approve these proposals, the introduction of these services is funded through a combination of the Improvement Fund and existing revenue budgets.
36. It is also possible the Council could secure some funding towards the introduction of a kerbside collection service via the recently announced 'Small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Fund' (applications for which close on 25 October 2019); although success in this could not be guaranteed.
37. The cost of retrofitting the existing refuse collection fleet (19 vehicles in total) is tabled below. MSDC would seek to fund the purchase and installation of the cages from The Improvement Fund (if an application to the 'Small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Fund' were not successful).

Table 2: Costs to retrofit cages for the collection of textiles and small WEEE

Container cost	Installation cost	Total
£657 each	£180 per vehicle	£837
£12,484 total	£3,420 total	<b>£15,904</b>

38. There will be no additional contract costs for adding this service into the waste and recycling collection contract with Serco.

39. The pilot collection service cost the Council £5,200 to support the advertising of the collections (there were three collections in the pilot area). It is therefore anticipated the Council would incur costs related to communication when developing similar collections in the future. It is estimated these costs would be £10,500 per annum if the exact same service were replicated.
40. As noted in paragraphs 29 and 30 the revenue costs of providing a bring bank service for small WEEE are significant when compared with the likely issues and benefits; and it is therefore not recommended the Council progress this service at this stage.

### **Risk Management Implications**

41. In order to develop the kerbside collection of textiles and small WEEE for recycling space would be sought at the Bridge Road Depot to accommodate suitable containers for the storage of these materials. Space is currently at a premium.
42. In order to ensure these services (and any other future service) can be accommodated an exercise in rationalisation of the use of the Bridge Road Depot footprint should be undertaken. In addition, it is suggested consideration be given to the re-establishment of the Imberhorne Lane Depot site as an ancillary location for the storage of wheelie bins and the operation of the Council's bin delivery service. It is proposed that the options and potential costs of this are explored as the new service is developed.
43. This would also assist with any potential future service developments (the introduction of food waste as an example) which would see an increase in the number of containers supplied to householders; and therefore an increase in the amount of stock held at the Depot and the space this stock will require.
44. As noted in paragraph 26; there is a risk associated to working with a charity partner who may not be able to operate the service consistently. This would be directly mitigated by the introduction of a kerbside collection service in partnership with Serco.
45. The Council offers a chargeable bulky waste collection service; which allows for the collection of small WEEE, at cost to the householder. These items are not currently reused or recycled. There is the possibility that a slight reduction in income from this service might occur as a result.

### **Equality and customer service implications**

46. Serco's entire fleet would be retrofitted with cages. This will allow for all households to take part in this service. Existing collection points would be maintained.
47. Those residents in receipt of an assisted waste and recycling collection would also receive an assisted collection for textiles and small electricals.
48. Those c.8,000 properties who share wheelie bins will be, initially, omitted from the kerbside service provided with Serco although (as noted) all refuse collection vehicles will be fitted with cages. This will enable the Council and Serco to work towards a suitable way of collecting recyclable textiles and small WEEE from these properties.

49. Initial discussions with BHF highlighted they would be unable to accommodate those properties where access is restricted and properties which share wheelie bins, a total of 15,000 properties. The Council would seek to reduce the likelihood of these properties being unable to take part in the service through the procurement process.

### **Background Papers**

Report to Scrutiny: BHF Pilot Project Report (September 2017)

Report to Scrutiny: Future proposed approach for the collection of textiles and small electricals and electronic equipment (January 2019)