

Report of: Interim City Works Business Manager**To: Executive Board****Date** 17th July 2006**Item No:****Title of Report : New Waste Collection and Recycling Scheme for Oxford**

Purpose of report: To request the Executive Board to agree the detailed arrangements for the new waste collection and recycling scheme for Oxford to authorise its implementation.



Key decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jean Fooks



Deputy Responsibility: Environment Scrutiny Committee

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by:

Councillor Jean Fooks, Portfolio Holder
Sharon Cosgrove, Strategic Director



Emily Thomas, Legal Services
Mike Baish, Financial Services



Policy Framework: Section 3.2.5 of the Oxford Plan



Recommendation(s): That the Executive Board agrees



1. That further to the previous in principle agreement of the Board on the 3rd April 2006 to new household waste collection and recycling arrangements, to now agree to the implementation of these arrangements in accordance with the detailed proposals in the report;



To grant major project approval for the scheme as a whole to encompass all elements of expenditure including the procurement of equipment, services and ongoing revenue expenditure to service the scheme;



3. To approve the following proposals for the procurement of the products and services required in the project as detailed in the report:
 - a) wheeled bins to be procured through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation, subject to the most economically advantageous tender being selected from their approved suppliers;
 - b) recycling boxes and lids to be procured through the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation selecting the most economically advantageous tender;
 - c) other materials and services being acquired on the basis of quotes in accordance with the Council's Contract Regulations (subject to 4. below);
4. To approve the putting in place of interim arrangements for outlets for recyclable materials on a temporary basis until 3 months after complete implementation of the scheme, at which date formal tenders will be issued, and in the meantime to agree to a waiver of Contract Regulations in this respect;
5. To authorise the Strategic Director, Physical Environment to take all necessary steps to implement the scheme in accordance with the report.

Introduction

1. At its meeting of the 16th January 2006 the Executive Board considered a report on the options for a new waste collection and recycling scheme, with the objective of significantly increasing the recycling and composting rate in Oxford. The Board resolved that the preferred method of achieving this would be the introduction of a fortnightly cycle of collections to include mixed recyclables (lower grade paper, plastics, and cans), higher-grade paper and glass, and non-recyclable or residual waste. The existing pilot green garden waste collection service would be extended to the remainder of the City. The Council would supply a wheeled bin to each property for storage of residual waste and blue and green boxes for storage of the dry recyclable materials. The existing garden waste sacks would be offered to all properties that required them.
2. The Board further resolved that a sum of £2,175,000 of capital spending be reserved for the new scheme together with £727,000 of additional revenue expenditure for 2006/07 and £210,000 from 2007/08 onwards, subject to final budget setting. This amount was subsequently included in the Council's approved budget for 2006/07.
3. The Executive Board also resolved that these proposed new arrangements should be the subject of a public consultation exercise and a further report with the results of this consultation be prepared for the April meeting.

4. In April, the Board considered this further report and resolved to agree in principle to the scheme as outlined in the report (which introduced some minor modifications to the original proposal following the public consultation) and granted Major Project Approval to allow the ordering of vehicles and other operational costs.
5. In view of the fact that the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership was currently considering a number of options for an integrated waste management strategy countywide, and were expected to make their recommendations in the near future, the Board resolved to put off any final decision in respect of the scheme until the June meeting when a further report with fully detailed implementation and operational proposals would be submitted.
6. At the June meeting of the Board, Members were advised that at the request of the new administration, officers were investigating various programming issues and the possibilities of future enhancements to the scheme as approved. It was also noted that the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership had not finalised its strategy for Oxfordshire as a whole, although the indications were that the Oxford City proposals would conform to the overall objectives of their likely recommendations.
7. This report now makes proposals for the detailed implementation of the scheme that the Board have agreed in principle, together with the requirements that will be placed on residents, to provide for its orderly and effective operation.

Details of the Scheme

8. Members will recall that the scheme provides for the implementation of new arrangements that will mean that properties in the City will receive the following services on a fortnightly cycle:-

Week 1

9. Collection of residual waste from a wheeled bin provided by the Council, along with the collection of higher grade waste paper and glass from the green recycling box already in use in the City. The wheeled bin will be provided by the Council and any households that do not presently have a green box will be issued one.

Week 2

10. Collection of plastics, cans, other paper and textiles from a blue recycling box, and the collection of green garden wastes from a reusable sack. Again, the garden waste sack will be provided by the Council along with a blue recycling box. (Members should note that at the present time the collection of green waste includes cardboard. There are technical reasons to reconsider this policy and these are discussed later in this report.)

11. For operational reasons the scheduling of the various elements of the scheme may vary. Some may be varied between Week 1 and Week 2 from the example described above, but it is intended that all properties will receive all elements on a fortnightly cycle, although in a different mix.
12. Under the new arrangements (particularly the fortnightly collection of residual waste) residents will find it difficult to manage their waste unless they take advantage of the new services on offer and the appropriate containers. It is proposed that in general, waste or recyclable materials will not be collected unless they are put out for collection in a container that has been provided by the Council, and in particular that waste contained in black bags will not be collected. This arrangement will mean that all households will have a wheeled bin for storage of their residual wastes, unless they have been identified as unable to use them in the recent survey carried out by technical officers. If any other householder believes that there are physical circumstances that would make the use of a wheeled bin impracticable or unsafe at their property, then these will be investigated on an individual basis. Where bins cannot be used, other arrangements will be provided and these are discussed later in this report.
13. In general, there will be only one wheeled bin issued to each property, except where there are special circumstances (large families etc.) which are discussed in the detailed aspects of container provision in Annex 1 to this report. The standard bin that will be issued will be a 240 litre capacity, but residents will also be offered smaller alternatives and will be encouraged to take the minimum size that they feel will suit their circumstances.
14. It is important for the success of the scheme that the facility for disposing of unseparated waste should be limited and that each household is treated equally. Members will appreciate that this approach is fundamental to the success of the scheme. There is clear experience elsewhere that this type of scheme, with all its constraints, will at least allow the doubling of the present 19% recycling rate in Oxford. With high levels of co-operation and support from householders it is hoped that levels of over 40% can be achieved.
15. A further general requirement is that the collection service will be from the edge of the householder's property or curtilage. This arrangement may have to be varied in certain areas where this would prove impracticable or unsafe.
16. There may be exceptions to the approach described above for varying types of properties e.g. blocks of flats, and special arrangements will be made dependant upon the particular circumstances. But again, the intention is to offer as many recycling opportunities to residents as possible.
17. Later in this report, the proposed communications strategy will be discussed, the main theme of which will be to encourage households to play their part in the new scheme by managing their waste differently from the way they do now.

Implementation Timetable

18. Following the review requested by the incoming administration, it is now proposed that the green garden waste element of the scheme will be implemented ahead of the dry waste recycling element. At the present time some 13,000 residents currently enjoy fortnightly collections of green waste and cardboard, and it is intended that this service will be extended to the remainder of the City during September 2006.
19. The dry waste recycling services along with wheeled bins and fortnightly collections of residual wastes will be introduced in phases of a minimum 7,000 properties beginning in November 2006 with completion anticipated by or before May of 2007.
20. The detailed timetabling for the dry waste services has yet to be finalised by officers and may alter as planning progresses, but it is expected that any changes will be minor in nature.
21. A Project Board consisting of the Portfolio Holder and senior technical officers has been formed and will be meeting monthly to oversee the implementation. A Project Team of consisting of appropriate technical officers and managers is also meeting regularly and addressing relevant issues.
22. Prior to the commencement of the scheme it may be necessary to change some collection days in order to prepare for the new system. In addition, once the implementation has been completed, it may also be necessary to undertake a review of the collection rounds with a view to rationalisation and the best use of resources. These reviews may result in some collection day changes for some properties, but should not involve any major changes in the service provision.

Communications and Public Relations

23. One of the critical success factors with the new scheme will be the extent to which it receives public support. In order to achieve this, residents will need to have a clear understanding of the scheme and what materials should be separated, where they should be stored and when they should be placed out for collection. Residents will also want to be convinced of the need for the scheme, where and how materials will be recycled and later, to have reassurance and feedback on the achievements in terms of tonnages recycled and so diverted from landfill.
24. It is essential then that a Communications Strategy should be prepared in order to achieve this. Following representations from City Works, specialist support has been awarded to the Council by the Waste & Resources Action Programme, a Government funded organisation set up to encourage local authority recycling schemes. This support will initially be available to provide

for the creation of a suitable strategy, and details of this strategy are attached at Annex 3. (to follow)

25. A further application submitted by City Works will, if successful, provide funding for the implementation of the Strategy. Failing this, provision has been made in the project budget for this work, and officers have recently interviewed a number of organisations that will be able to provide this support.

Residual Wastes

26. Some residents will see the introduction of the fortnightly cycles as a reduction in service, or will be concerned that they will not be able to manage under the new arrangements – particularly in respect of residual waste. When a similar system was introduced in a neighbouring authority, calls to the Council on waste issues increased from an average of 800 per week to a peak of 2,600. Many of these calls required a visit by an officer to the householder, or a return telephone call by a technical officer or manager. In addition, hundreds of emails and written letters were received, all of which required similar attention and subsequent replies.
27. Experience elsewhere demonstrates that this public activity is triggered by the delivery of the residuals bin (in Oxford's case the 240 litre wheeled bin) and the first "missed" collection under the new arrangements. The advance publicity that normally precedes this, does not usually give rise to high levels of public reaction.
28. In order to maintain public confidence and support for the scheme it is important that these enquiries/complaints are responded to as promptly and constructively as possible, and the following arrangements will apply:-
- i. Implementation of this part of the scheme will be carried out in manageable phases, with a minimum 3 week period between tranches, to limit the number of queries received at one time
 - ii. Tranches will not be introduced during periods of disrupted collections due to public holidays – in Oxford's case we should avoid periods immediately before and after Christmas, New Year & Easter.
 - iii. Telephone and email handling facilities at City Works are being reviewed with a view to increasing capacity and avoiding unacceptable delays and subsequent "dropped" calls;
 - iv. IT systems for capturing and handling complaints and queries, and for processing these will be developed;
 - v. Additional staff (particularly telephone answering staff) will be provided. Training will be provided for staff in answering likely queries and dealing effectively with difficult and aggressive customers;

- vi. "Field Officers" who will visit customers to offer advice and assistance will be appointed and trained;
29. Members will appreciate that they are also likely to be contacted by members of the public, and information packs will be provided in order for Members to respond appropriately. Briefings and seminars will also be provided if required.
30. Experience gained by other local authorities in implementing similar schemes shows that following a period of initial doubt and concern, residents are able to cope under the new arrangements, and in a recent public survey in Cherwell some 12 months after the implementation of their scheme 86% of residents expressed satisfaction with it.
31. Much has been made in the local media of the enforcement powers that the Council may invoke to ensure the operation of the scheme. Whilst there are powers available to the Council to require the separation and separate storage of materials for recycling, it is envisaged that these will only have to be used as a very last resort, and experience at other authorities has confirmed that they are rarely if ever necessary.
32. The essence of success for the scheme is to win the support of the public by giving clear and practical guidance, which is one of the prime objectives of the communications strategy. This needs to be followed by prompt and constructive responses to questions and objections to the scheme and practical advice & help.
33. Once the scheme is operational, there needs to be a graduated response to households that are not conforming to its requirements and this approach is detailed in Annex 2. In general this will provide householders with the time to have working experience with the new arrangements and for officers to have contact with households that are having difficulty. During the introductory period, there will be occasions where additional collections will be provided to "clear out" households that are experiencing problems. However, as mentioned above there will be systems to capture the history of collections for individual properties, so that officers can approach any difficulties with a full knowledge of the facts and act accordingly.

Provision of Containers - General Issues

35. Members will appreciate that there is a balance to be struck between providing containers to residents so as to encourage and enable them to recycle, and to ensuring that containers are not used for other purposes. The blue or green recycling boxes are particularly attractive as storage containers for general household use and it is inevitable that some will end up being used for purposes other than recycling. The imposition of a relatively small charge for additional containers over & above the initial free supply together with an upper limit on the total number of boxes is proposed to assist in striking this balance. (see Annex 1)

36. Similarly, the 110 litre sacks intended for green wastes are likely to be misused, but the charges proposed for additional sacks and conditions for replacing sacks should hopefully prevent widespread misuse.
37. It is also proposed that householders may purchase a blue wheeled bin, if they prefer to use this rather than the blue boxes for their co-mingled recycling.
38. In deciding whether to sell additional wheeled bins to individual households, account will be taken of local circumstances to ensure that these bins do not become the source of an obstruction to footpaths etc. or other nuisance.

Blocks of Flats

39. Larger blocks of flats present a problem with recycling schemes and do not generally fit the operational design of a citywide service. Many flats require an individual, tailor-made service either because of physical factors (lack of storage space) or most commonly the absence of anyone to take overall charge & responsibility for ensuring the proper separation of waste & recyclates where there are communal storage systems. It is however important to ensure that residents are offered the opportunity to recycle both in order to achieve higher overall levels of recycling and to meet their demands.
40. Because there are differences of approach it is likely that not all flats will be offered a full range of recycling facilities at the outset of the scheme, and there will need to be a separate action plan to ensure that all flats are eventually included in the recycling initiative as soon as practicable. City Works has already implemented individual arrangements to allow recycling at a majority at flats, and these will be reviewed to provide for additional collections where possible.
41. Because of the restricted waste storage arrangements that are usually available at flats, many will continue to receive collections of residual wastes on a weekly basis (and some even more frequently where circumstances dictate).

Public Holiday Periods

42. Missed collections due to public holidays provide particular problems with a fortnightly cycle of waste and recycling collections. The majority of holidays are Mondays and it will be necessary to move all collection days forward by one day in the week of the holiday (and so to provide Fridays collection on Saturday) to avoid unacceptable delays between collections, particularly residual collections. Special arrangements have to be made at Christmas and New Year to ensure reasonable collection schedules. It is important to reassure householders that they will not be required to go 4 weeks without collections if they miss one due to a public holiday.
43. City Works are presently considering different working arrangements that are being trialled at other Councils, that avoid the effect of Monday public Holidays.

Assisted Collection Services

44. The Council has an existing policy to provide assisted collections to elderly or disabled residents who have difficulty in placing waste out for collection and it is proposed that this should be continued. With the introduction of further boxes for recycling, instances where this service is required may increase.

45. Residents who may be able to handle wheeled bins, but not boxes will be encouraged to purchase wheeled bins for their recyclables so as to reduce as far as possible the number of assisted collections.

Recycling Banks

46. There are no proposals at the present time to remove any of the public bring banks that have been provided throughout the City. However, following the completion of the scheme and a period of consolidation, it would be appropriate to undertake a review of this service and, if required, to rationalise it based on the demand from the public.

Fly Tipping

47. Where similar schemes have been introduced in other areas, there have been some reports of increases in the incidence of fly tipping. This is likely to be localised and temporary. City Works has operated a rapid response crew for several years and will attend to clear up such incidents.

Since November 2005 they have been working closely with Environmental Health and Legal Services to co-ordinate the investigation, clean up and enforcement action of these occurrences. The teams have jointly investigated, cleared and where appropriate taken action, in over 80 cases. Feedback received from the public indicates that this action is starting to have a positive impact and reduce fly tipping.

Members will be aware that enforcement generally is a priority for the Council and that an Enforcement Group chaired by the Strategic Director- Physical Environment is co-ordinating a realignment of activities in this respect.

Green Wastes.

48. As mentioned earlier in this report it is intended that the green waste & cardboard collection service presently supplied to parts of Oxford, should be extended Citywide. The provision of a combined cardboard and green waste collection requires re-examination for two main reasons:-

a) The contractors operating the composting site that is being used for waste from the present scheme has raised concerns in respect of the inclusion of cardboard. During the winter months the bulk of the material delivered will be cardboard and it is difficult to compost this due to the lack of other organic material at that time of year. At other times of year there are also quality problems in that much of the cardboard has plastic and other materials attached which do not readily compost, and the inclusion of cardboard tends to encourage other forms of contrary materials to be included in the bags. It may be that when the present arrangements are extended and enlarged, and when formal tendering takes place at a later date, the inclusion of cardboard may lead to higher costs.

b) Additionally and in the longer term, one possibility for extending the recycling scheme will be the collection of kitchen waste. This could be collected separately at significant cost, or much more cheaply by mixing it with green wastes. Due to regulations designed to prevent foot and mouth outbreaks, kitchen waste must be composted in a specialised, enclosed process which is expensive and therefore it would not be cost-effective to provide this capacity for cardboard which can be recycled more cheaply, and perhaps more appropriately, through recycling with other dry materials such as paper & cans etc.

49. The Executive Board will need to consider these points and to decide on their policy in this respect. There are three options:-

- i) to extend the present combined collections to all areas until such time as the new dry recycling material collections are introduced (i.e. beginning in November 2006);
- ii) to extend the present combined collections to all areas until such time as a specialised disposal system becomes available, at which time this policy should be reviewed;
- iii) to introduce green waste only collections with effect September 2006 to the new areas that do not presently enjoy the combined collections. When dry recycling material collections are introduced into those areas currently enjoying the combined garden waste/cardboard service, householders will be required to place cardboard in the blue box.

It is the officers view that there would be little point in allowing cardboard to be included with green waste in the areas new to the service, and then to withdraw this within the next few months – this is likely to lead to confusion amongst the public and to contamination of green waste for some months ahead.

If the Members are minded to continue with the combined collections then it is likely that this policy will have to be changed in the future. The County Council have indicated that specialised food processing facilities could be available by 2009, so there would be a need to review the issue prior to then. As mentioned above, there are likely to be implications in terms of quality and may be additional treatment costs under this policy.

It is the officers recommendation that the change in service is best made now, so that only those properties currently enjoying the combined service will need to change, and the likelihood of householder confusion, increased treatment costs and contamination of green waste would be avoided. Members are asked to consider these matters and advise accordingly.

50. It is proposed that the green waste service will be rolled out during September and presently anticipated that a leaflet will be issued in August to all areas that are to be offered the new service.
51. In September, delivery of the bags will commence accompanied by another leaflet reinforcing the details of the scheme and giving further information, advice and contact details for queries. Collections will be scheduled to begin approximately two weeks following delivery of the bag.
52. Sufficient staff members from City Works will be made available during this period to visit members of the public who have questions or concerns in respect of the new service and to offer advice and assistance.

Outlets for Recyclable Materials

53. Members will be aware that currently green wastes and cardboard collected via the pilot scheme are delivered to Agrivert Ltd at their facility in Crowmarsh Gifford Nr Wallingford where it is being composted using the windrow system. Dry recyclates such as glass and paper and cans are being bulked at Marsh Road Depot and marketed through specialist recyclers. Glass is delivered to a recycler in Swindon, and high quality waste paper sold to a paper mill in Aylesford in Kent.
54. With the advent of the new scheme it is proposed that the green waste will continue to be delivered to Agrivert under an extended temporary agreement. Once tonnages of this type of waste have been proven, and any quality issues quantified, then it will be necessary to issue a formal tender for a longer period, both to conform with the Council's procurement policies and to ensure continuity and reliability of outlet.
55. Officers of City Works are currently investigating potential outlets for co-mingled recyclables, and again it will be necessary to make temporary arrangements until such time as tonnages are accurately determined and quality issues addressed. Following this it will also be necessary to issue a formal tender for this material.
56. Under the new scheme, glass will be collected and marketed as a colour mix. Once tonnages are determined and experience gained, then more permanent arrangements will need to be put in place.
57. High grade paper is the subject of an existing contract with Aylesford Newsprint that runs until August 2008, with an option for a further 2 year extension
58. The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership has a brief to provide for integrated waste management policies for Oxfordshire as a whole, and has developed a convergence point of 2010/2011 for many of the waste management contracts

in place Countywide. It follows that any longer term measures mentioned above should be capable of termination at that time.

59. The proposals for more permanent arrangements will be reported to the Board at the appropriate times.

Areas for Further Development

60. Members will appreciate that although the scheme proposed for Oxford is comprehensive, and will provide for the recycling of the mainstream of materials, it cannot hope to provide answers to all recycling needs and to answer all the demands that schemes such as this throw up.
61. Officers are working in a number of other supplementary areas such as schemes for providing facilities for the separation of household batteries, tetrapacks and the sourcing of suitable sealable bags that could be offered to the householder for food waste prior to it being placed in the residuals wheeled bin.

Procurement Issues

62. The major items that have to be procured are some 45,000 wheeled bins, 65,000 recycling boxes and lids and additional and replacement vehicles (i.e. vehicles that would have been replaced as part of the Council's normal replacement programme).
63. It has been the Council's practice for a number of years to source new vehicles through a purchasing consortium, and it is proposed that this should continue.
64. It is proposed that the wheeled bins should be purchased through The Yorkshire Purchasing Agency (YPO), a local authority based purchasing consortium that already has in place a framework arrangement for various sizes of wheeled bins. This will shorten the lead time required for tendering, and since they have undertaken a thorough product and supplier evaluation procedure, will give confidence on the suitability of both the suppliers and the products. This will require a tender to be issued to their appointed suppliers and officers have prepared the required documents and tenders should be received shortly. The most economically advantageous tender of those submitted will be selected. The value of this tender is likely to be in excess of £700,000.
65. It is intended that the bin supplier will also undertake delivery of the bins and the recycling boxes to the individual households, and the ability to adhere to the Council's timetable for this will be a factor when evaluating tenders. Bins will be permanently marked with the Council's logo, will be serialised and will have a chip embedded. The chip will allow City Works to gather operational performance data, and will "future proof" the service should the Government ever introduce charging schemes for residual collections. It is expected that bins will be supplied with a minimum guarantee of 5 years, although the

expected working life will be up to 15 years. Small amounts of bins will be required in the next few years to replace damaged and lost units, with increasing numbers in the latter years of the 15 year period.

66. The recycling boxes and lids will be purchased through the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation, which has previously held competitive tenders for these items, and orders will be placed as soon as possible. The value of this order will be in excess of £250,000. Additional supplies will need to be arranged in the future following a similar pattern to the wheeled bins, although the expected life of a recycling box is shorter than a wheeled bin.
67. Orders for these two high value items will be authorised by the Strategic Director – Physical Environment.
68. The value of other items (sacks for green garden waste and sacks for use where wheeled bins will be unsuitable) are below the Council's thresholds for tendering and orders will be placed following the receipt of quotations, or from consortia that have call off arrangements. Media services will be arranged in conjunction with the Council's media team and existing contractual arrangements for printing etc.
69. In a previous section of this report, the need for temporary arrangements to be made for outlets for the recyclable materials was mentioned. It is difficult at this time to estimate the likely value of these arrangements until such time as there is working experience of the performance of the scheme. It is likely that some of these arrangements will exceed the limits set in the Council's procurement regulations, and the Executive Board are requested to grant an appropriate exception to the regulations to formalise these arrangements. It is expected that formal tenders for outlet arrangements can be advertised some 3 months following complete implementation of the scheme in April/May of 2007, but until then the temporary arrangements will apply.

Risk Assessment

70. The major risks facing the Council in considering this scheme are set out below, together with the controlling factors that mitigate the level of risk. It is useful to consider these risks in the context of how commonplace this type of scheme now is. Although schemes across the country vary in detail, the concept of fortnightly cycles of collection has been shown to work and to achieve high levels of recycling.
 1. **Risk** - that for financial, political or other reasons, the Council decides against implementing the scheme. A failure to implement the scheme would severely undermine the Council's credibility and would be in opposition to the clear wish of the majority of people in Oxford to improve recycling rates. In addition, Oxfordshire as a whole faces heavy financial penalties if it fails to divert significant amounts of waste from landfill by 2010, and these penalties will have to be met by Oxfordshire authorities and may well be reflected in Council Tax bills.

Controlling Factors – Oxford City has agreed in principle to the introduction of the scheme which generally appears to have all party support and is fully funded. The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership is working towards an overall strategy that provides for high levels of recycling and all its constituent authorities have committed to taking steps to avoid the situation where targets will not be met and fines incurred. In addition, the Government is presently considering the introduction of statutory targets (particularly in the case of authorities who are currently low performers) that will require authorities to boost their rates, and under these circumstances the Council will have little choice but to implement the scheme. The Council is also one of the signatories to the present Local Area Agreement with one of the targets being a Countywide recycling target of 38%. If this achieved there will be a “reward” payment to Oxfordshire of some £1.5 million, which provides some incentive.

2. **Risk** – following introduction, the scheme does not achieve the anticipated levels of recycling.

Controlling Factors – the scheme is based on a number of other schemes implemented throughout the country, which with very few exceptions have proven workable and have achieved the objectives that were set. After initial periods of objection, experience shows that the population at large will support such schemes, and will very often press for even more comprehensive services. There is a clear desire amongst Oxford’s population to recycle more than at present, as evidenced by the recent public consultation exercise. The LAA mentioned above will also provide an incentive for a successful scheme.

- 3 **Risk** – that the scheme becomes financially burdensome due to increases in gate fees or reduction in income for recycled materials.

Controlling Factors – Through the implementation of the landfill tax regime, the Government is intending to make the cost of landfill as, or more expensive than other means of disposal. In the longer term then, the costs of waste disposal are set to rise significantly. The issue of fines for failure to achieve landfill diversion targets also exacerbates this situation. The costs of collection will not rise so steeply, and it is likely soon that the situation will arise when it is cheaper to recycle than to dispose.

To date, the market for recycled materials has been in an immature stage with little choice of outlets for materials (within reasonable distances) and volatility of prices. However this situation appears to be changing and gate fees appear to be moderating due to competition. Government has set up the waste Resources & Action Programme and one of its objectives is to stimulate and stabilise markets for recycled materials.

At the moment, the costs of recycling by collection authorities are subsidised by the recycling credit system, and although changes have

been proposed to the present system of payment, there is also acknowledgement from them of the importance of these payments in underpinning the present recycling drive in this country.

Staffing Implications.

73. An additional 13 staff will be employed in order to provide the additional services associated with the scheme.

With the introduction of the scheme, the management structure of City Works will require review in order to provide a focus on the new services and their continuous improvement.

New services will need to be explored (e.g. kitchen food waste collections and commercial waste recycling). Under the present policies of the Government there are a variety of funding opportunities available, usually involving a bidding process and we need to be able to respond promptly and professionally to these opportunities. It is also likely that public interest and activity in recycling will increase as a result of the scheme, and there will be a need for the Council to be more outward looking in its approach to services.

Alternative Means of Providing the Service

74. Members will recall that a number of options for providing a recycling scheme that will significantly boost Oxford's recycling rate have been proposed and considered, and the scheme described in this report was agreed following consideration of these alternatives. The scheme as proposed is very comprehensive and notably provides for the collection of glass from households. This is a service that Oxford residents have enjoyed for some years, but is not a feature of all recycling schemes.

Some other local authorities have opted for green waste collection schemes that require payment by the householder, rather than the free collection proposed for Oxford.

These features of the scheme will provide for higher recycling rates, but also higher costs. It is estimated that the green wastes collection element of the scheme adds some £500,000 to the annual cost of the scheme. Glass is a more difficult material to isolate in terms of cost, since it is collected along with other materials that presently generate a substantial income, and an alternative means of collection would have to be considered for these. Members will be aware that these two materials form an important element of the overall recycling rate and these services are either provided now to all or part of the city area, or are in demand by householders.

75. Given the imperatives that are driving the early introduction of this scheme and the local knowledge and capabilities of City Works to provide them, alternative means of servicing the scheme have not been considered at this time. There will be a settling down or consolidation period following implementation, before the scheme can be considered in and working. Experience from other local authorities shows that with the benefit of working

knowledge, arrangements have sometimes to be adjusted and these changes require the flexibility that can best be offered by an in-house service.

76. However, in 2010/11 the majority of contractual arrangements in respect of waste management in the Oxfordshire district Councils and the County Council will come up for review. This raises the possibility of co-operative arrangements and potential economies of scale that may well be advantageous, and it is suggested that the question of service provision should be reviewed at that time.

Financial Implications

77. Provision was made in the approved budgets for 2006/2007 onwards for the introduction of the scheme. The detailed proposals outlined in this report can be implemented within the approved budgets. In order to proceed with the scheme major project approval is required for the scheme.

Recommendations

1. That further to the previous in principle agreement of the Board on the 3rd April 2006 to new household waste collection and recycling arrangements, to now agree to the implementation of these arrangements in accordance with the detailed proposals in the attached report;
2. To grant major project approval for the scheme as a whole to encompass all elements of expenditure including the procurement of equipment, services and ongoing revenue expenditure to service the scheme;
3. To approve the following proposals for the procurement of the products and services required in the project as detailed in the report:-
 - (a) Wheeled bins to be procured through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation, subject to the most economically advantageous tender being selected from their approved suppliers;
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4. To approve the putting in place of interim arrangements for outlets for recyclable materials on a temporary basis until 3 months after complete implementation of the scheme, at which date formal tenders will be issued, and in the meantime to agree to a waiver of Contract Regulation in this respect;

5. To authorise the Strategic Director, Physical Environment to take all necessary steps to implement the scheme in accordance with the report.

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Background papers:



WASTE & RECYCLING CONTAINER SUPPLIES

The following gives details of the proposed facilities that will be offered to householders to enable them to take full advantage of the scheme:-

Wheeled Bin for Residual Waste

Each household will be issued with a wheeled bin, which will be green in colour and marked with the Council's logo (a sample will be available at the meeting), except where a property has been previously identified from surveys that it would be unsuitable for a bin. Residents who believe that a bin would be unsuitable for their property will be visited and will not be required to use a bin if there are physical or safety concerns. Householders will be encouraged to choose the smallest bin they need, which could be 140 litre (and possibly a 180 litre) in place of the 240 litre standard bin.

In situations where bins would be unsuitable, households will be issued with a supply of plastic sacks each of approximate and nominal 80 litre capacity which will be branded with the City logo. It is intended that a delivery of 104 sacks will be made to affected households every 6 months, which equates to a similar usable capacity (some sack capacity is lost in tying them off) that would have been provided by a wheeled bin.

Only officially supplied wheeled bins and these branded sacks will be collected, and loose or bagged side waste will not be collected – see implementation and lead-in regimes in Annex 2.

Additional bins will not be allowed.

Where a family consists of 6 or more persons permanently residing in the home, then householders will be offered a larger size (360 litre) wheeled bin in lieu of the standard size. Where a family of less than 6 consists of 2 or more children in nappies, then a 360 litre bin will also be offered in lieu of the standard.

Households who wish to apply for larger bins under this arrangement will be required to provide written details of their family details, including the dates of birth of any children they claim are in nappies. Periodically, the circumstances for such households will have to be reviewed and confirmation obtained that they still meet the parameters for issue of larger bins.

Each bin supplied will have a sticker giving information on the scheme and advice on the proper use of the recycling boxes that will help to avoid recyclable waste being placed in the bin.

There will be occasions where unusual circumstances require the issue of larger bins outside of these parameters, and special arrangements will be agreed based on

individual cases. This facility should be used sparingly, where there are no reasonable alternatives and in order to prevent obvious hardship.

Re-usable Sacks for Green Garden Wastes

It is proposed that all properties (with the exception of blocks of flats that do not have gardens) will be offered 1 re-usable sack for the collection of green garden waste (apart from those properties that are already included in the present scheme). Householders will be given the opportunity of opting out of this service, but no other forms of garden waste collections will be provided.

Householders may purchase additional sacks at a cost of £7.50 (inclusive of VAT & delivery). This cost may seem high, but is pitched in order to provide for an incentive for households with larger gardens to consider home composting, and for meeting part of the costs to the Council taxpayer of providing the additional collection service. The maximum number of sacks allowed per property will be 5 (inclusive of the first free sack).

Replacement sacks will be provided free of charge where originals are damaged or worn, on production of the old sack.

For those households that would prefer, a brown wheeled bin of either 140 litre or 240 litre capacity in which to store green garden waste may be purchased at a cost of £20 (inclusive of delivery & VAT). A maximum of 2 bins will apply unless there are special circumstances.

The proposals outlined in this report vary the present conditions that apply to the existing green waste collection service, but will apply to both existing households on the scheme and households joining the scheme for the first time.

Bags will be marked with information on their use.

Blue Recycling Boxes

It is proposed that all properties (again with the exception of blocks of flats where the use of boxes would not be suitable) will be offered 1 blue 55 litre recycling box (with lid) in which to store separated recyclables such as cans, plastics, and lower grade paper. Householders may decide how well they wish to use this service, but in any event will have to manage their wastes within the constraints of the fortnightly residuals collection.

Householders may request an additional box (over and above the initial issue) free of charge and then may purchase additional boxes up to a maximum of 4 (inclusive of the 2 issued free of charge) at a cost of £5.00 each (delivered & inclusive of VAT).

The upper limit of may be varied where there are circumstances to warrant additional containers, and that they are/will be used for recycling purposes.

A sticker will be supplied with each box detailing the materials that may be placed in the box.

For those households that would prefer, a blue wheeled bin of either 140 litre or 240 litre capacity in which to store these materials may be purchased at a cost of £20 (inclusive of delivery & VAT). A maximum of 2 bins will apply unless there are special circumstances.

Green Recycling Boxes.

Most properties in the City have been issued with a green recycling box for use under the current recycling scheme, but under the new arrangements this will be used for the storage of glass and higher quality paper. One additional box (with lid) will be available free of charge upon request and any further boxes over and above the first two will be supplied at a charge of £5.00 each (inclusive of delivery & Vat).

The maximum number of boxes per household will be 4 unless in the opinion of City Works there are circumstances to warrant additional containers, and they are satisfied that they are/will be used for recycling purposes.

A sticker will be supplied with each box detailing the materials that may be placed in the box.

The use of lids is likely to be an issue with some residents, since whilst they will prevent windblown litter and keep materials dry, their use limits the capacity of the boxes. Other local authorities that have issued lids have reported ongoing problems with damage and losses, but on balance it is proposed that boxes should be issued with lids and householders requested to use them.

INITIAL COLLECTION ISSUES – CONFORMITY WITH THE SCHEME

In order to give the opportunity for residents to become accustomed to the scheme, during the period immediately following implementation and the first few weeks of collections the following approach will be taken to non-conformity:-

Recycling Boxes/Garden Waste Sacks containing Contaminants

1. It is proposed that at the time of the first recycling collections, all material placed out for collection will be taken unless contamination is so severe that it would threaten the whole vehicle load. A sticker will be left on the empty box/bag advising the householder that contaminants were found and repeating the information (that would previously have been issued to all householders) on the materials that should be placed in each type of container. The opportunity would be given in the sticker for the householder to contact the Council for advice & if necessary to arrange for a visit by an officer.
2. At the second collection day, any property that had previously been issued with an advice, and had still not conformed would receive a sticker to inform them that it had not been possible to collect their container due to contaminants and asking them to contact the Council to arrange its collection. This would give the opportunity for officers to speak with the householder again to offer advice.
3. At the third collection day (i.e. 6 weeks from introduction of the scheme) any property that had previously been issued with a second stage advice would be visited by an officer. The Householder would be advised that no further collections from the recycling container(s) can be made if the contamination persists and they will have to consider managing their waste through the fortnightly residual collection system.

Experience has shown that by and large householders respond to this regime. It is also important to recognise that the quality of recyclate placed out for collection is unlikely to be of best quality immediately upon introduction of the scheme. The objective is to bring about a gradual acceptance of the scheme by the householder, which will be coupled with a gradual improvement in quantity and quality.

Residual Waste Containers Overloaded & Excess (or Side) Waste

Mention was made earlier in this report of the importance of ensuring consistent and equitable application of the arrangements that provide limits on the amounts of unseparated waste that will be collected.

It is suggested that the same general 3-stage approach detailed above should also be applied to households that place excess waste out for collection. In the early stages, It will be necessary for some households to be cleared of residual wastes because they have failed to operate the scheme, but what is important is that any of these occasions are accompanied by a visit or letter from City Works, which gives the opportunity to educate & inform.

Again, experience has shown that this approach will encourage the vast majority of households to operate the scheme properly.

It is in only very isolated cases that householders deliberately misuse the scheme, or where there may be more serious hurdles to overcome in gaining co-operation, but it is believed that if these are approached in a constructive fashion, then most of them can be resolved.

Only as a very last resort would it be necessary to consider the use of legal powers requiring the householder to conform to the scheme.