Classification: Public
Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to:	Operational Services Cabinet Committee
Date:	Wednesday 23rd September 2020
Reporting officer:	Stuart Alford, Assistant Director (Operations) Joel Simons, Waste Projects & Compliance Officer
Subject:	Litter Bin Replacement & Recycling on-the-go Trial

Purpose and summary of report:

To provide members with an overview of plans to replace the litter bins and trial recycling 'on-the-go' at St Andrew's Gardens. The report includes proposals for the further introduction of recycling 'on-the-go' at the Riverside Leisure Area and Woodlands Park, subject to the success of the trial.

Recommendations:

1. For information only.

1. Summary

1.1 The existing litter bins at St Andrew's Gardens litter bins are not fit for purpose as they lack capacity and lids which can cause litter problems. The litter bins at the Riverside Leisure Area along the Gordon Promenade are dilapidated and are in need of replacement with a uniform style of litter bin.

1.2 WRAP studies suggest that typically, 60% of the contents of litter bins is recyclable. Introducing recycling 'on-the-go' is a pledge in the council's '*Carbon Neutral Gravesham: 2030'* action plan (*Objective 1, Item 5*). Recycling 'on-the-go' (RotG) would lower residual waste arisings and would increase recycling performance, as well as helping to promote and reinforce recycling behaviours at home and at work.

1.3 Feedback from counterparts at seven Kent Districts suggests that contamination of street recycling bins is very high, particularly in town centre locations or near to fast food establishments. This has often resulted in recycling bins being emptied and the contents disposed of as residual waste.

1.4 A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is likely to be introduced in England from 2023 as part of the Environment Bill and will probably take the form of Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs) in town centre shops where consumers can return drinks containers for recycling in return for the deposit added to the purchase price of the item.

1.5 Such an initiative is likely to deprive town centre bins of recyclate such as plastic bottles and drinks cans, rendering on-street recycling in Gravesend town centre unviable.

1.6 In this context, to facilitate RotG the optimal solution will be to introduce 'split' recycling bins in Gravesham's parks and open spaces, away from urban areas where DRS is likely to deprive council recycling bins of high quality recyclate.

1.7 It is proposed that RotG is trialled at St Andrew's Gardens as the site is relatively small and can be actively monitored and the waste collected could be controlled. This would enable the Waste Management Team to discern the fill-rate of 'split' recycling bins (*as shown below*) in order to develop an effective emptying regime. Types of contamination could also be identified to improve bin signage to minimise recycling contamination.

1.8 If the trial is successful, this model could be replicated and incorporated in to the litter bin replacement programme at the Riverside Leisure Area and Woodlands Park by the spring of 2021.

2. Current Litter Bin Provision

2.1 At the three sites identified, there are currently 12 different types of litter bins in service of varying size and condition. None of the 85 litter bins across the three sites offer any sort of dry mixed recycling provision.

2.2 The 'Compass' litter bins at Gravesend Promenade are currently in a very poor state of repair and require replacement. A photograph of an example is shown below (*left*).

2.3 The ‘Ruthin’ 55L litter bins at St Andrew’s Gardens do not have lids and so litter is often blown out of the bins by the wind. Also, the current sacks are a poor fit and parts of the metal bin liner tend to split the sacks as they are lifted out of the bin, creating additional work for the Operatives. The photo above (*right*) shows one of the bins early in the morning as it typically appears, having been filled up since being emptied the previous day, indicating insufficient capacity.

3. Research

3.1 While the national Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) plan is not yet finalised, including the materials and drinks containers to be included, the proposed scheme will be developed further and will be presented in a second consultation in 2020.

3.2 Following the second consultation, a DRS could be implemented from 2023, either as an ‘on-the-go’ DRS geared towards town centre on-the-go recycling of smaller beverage containers, or as an ‘all-in’ scheme which could involve scaling the scheme to incorporate larger beverage containers, which could also remove recyclate from local authority kerbside collections.

3.3 Recycling ‘on-the-go’ could deliver advantages for local authorities as more recyclate will be captured from litter bins while simultaneously reducing residual waste arisings; thus improving council recycling performance. However, there is a risk that the capture rate could be lower than anticipated and contamination may be too high to yield any acceptable recyclate.

3.4 Our research suggests that a Deposit Return Scheme will have advantages for local authorities:

3.4.1 A DRS can increase beverage container recycling rates, improve the quality of the material that is collected and reduce littering.

3.4.2 DRS could reduce demands on Street Cleansing crews by incentivising behaviour change. This could in turn enable detritus, weeds, gulley sweeping and deep cleansing to take place; resulting in enhanced street cleansing provision.

3.4.3 To mitigate lost revenue, extra money could be made available to councils through a full cost recovery EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) system charged packaging manufacturers to offset any lost revenue from materials captured by RVMs.

3.4.4 Even if containers are dropped as litter by the initial consumer, the deposit acts as an incentive for them to be picked up and returned by someone else, so that the deposit can be claimed.

3.5 However, there are some potential disadvantages of a DRS scheme which may disadvantage local authorities:

3.5.1 An 'all-in' DRS, valuable materials that are already collected at the kerbside by local authorities and then sold on to markets would be diverted away from the kerbside and into the DRS, thus depriving councils of revenue streams.

3.5.2 Modelling carried out by South Staffordshire Council found that a DRS would remove 29 per cent of the council's recycling yield by weight, but would only reduce residual waste arisings by two per cent (*Eunomia*).

3.6 A survey was sent out via email to ten other Kent districts to ask a variety of questions about their provision of recycling 'on-the-go' bins and their views on the prospective impact of DRS on the viability local authority RotG schemes. Responses from seven of the ten districts contacted have been received. The feedback from these districts are as follows:

- Folkestone & Hythe District Council have installed the most street recycling bins; 25 to date with more planned. The contamination of recycling is reported to be low, particularly in parks and less urban areas and where four-stream recycling compartments are fitted to the bins, although they did comment that these bins were very costly to purchase.

- Dover District and Maidstone Borough Councils have installed a limited number of street recycling bins. Maidstone Borough Council has reported high contamination.

- Ashford Borough Council have single street recycling bins in Ashford town centre which experience high levels of contamination, so a project is being prepared to ensure that recycling bins and litter bins are side-by-side to reduce contamination levels.

- Dartford Borough Council has begun to install street recycling bins in their town centre, so could not comment on contamination levels yet.

- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council stated that the street recycling bins in town centre locations were frequently contaminated, misused and damaged and have now been replaced by general litter bins.

4. Methodology for the Pilot at St Andrew's Gardens

4.1 Having visited each site to map out the current bin provision, it is now possible to visualise the current bin provision at each of the three sites (see Appendix 2) in order to identify gaps in litter bin provision.

4.2 An additional visit with the Street Cleansing Manager enabled the rationalisation of current litter bin provision as well as the identification of locations at each site for the installation of recycling 'on-the-go' bins and the installation of larger 1100L refuse bins at two of the sites.

5. Proposals

5.1 The trial of recycling 'on-the-go' at St Andrew's Gardens will enable the quality of recyclate collected to be monitored and bin signage to be refined before expanding the scheme to other Gravesham parks and open spaces, if successful.

5.2 By conducting a small-scale trial, Street Cleansing Operatives will be able to keep sacks of acceptable recycling segregated from other waste to be deposited at the Brookvale Depot for monitoring, prior to being tipped off at the Pepperhill Household Waste Recycling Centre.

5.3 The trial at St Andrew's Gardens may provide an opportunity for bin fill level sensors and enhanced routing technology to be trialled for the purpose of monitoring bin usage and fill-rates of different types and applications of litter bins in real-time.

5.4 As well as daily inspections by Street Cleansing Operatives when emptying the bins; the Street Cleansing Manager and the Waste Projects & Compliance Officer will also conduct weekly checks of the recycling compartments to assess the level of contamination and any interventions which may need to take place.

5.5 If the RotG trial is successful, alternative emptying, collection and segregation solutions can be further explored for the expansion of the scheme to the RLA and Woodlands Park.

5.5.1 **Phase One (October 2020):** St Andrew's Gardens Recycling 'On-the-Go' Trial

5.5.1.1 The site currently has a provision of 14 bins, with a total capacity of 740 litres. The current litter bin locations are plotted on Figure 1 in Appendix 2.

5.5.1.2 By re-assessing the location of the litter bins on site, replacing the current litter bins and installing 6 RotG bins at strategic locations, a total of 12 bins will be provided. The suggested litter bin locations are plotted on Figure 1 in Appendix 3.

5.5.1.3 The proposed litter bins will deliver an enhanced total capacity of 2,020 litres - an increase of 173%.

5.5.2 **Phase Two (April 2021):** Riverside Leisure Area Bin Replacement

5.5.2.1 The site currently has a provision of 52 litter and dog waste bins, with a total capacity of 4,910 litres. The current litter bin locations are plotted on Figure 2 in Appendix 2.

5.5.2.2 By re-assessing the location of the litter bins on site, replacing the current litter bins, installing 13 RotG bins and four 1,100L residual waste bin housings at strategic locations, a total of 55 bins will be provided. The suggested litter bin locations are plotted on Figure 2 in Appendix 3.

5.5.2.3 The proposed litter bins will deliver an enhanced total capacity of 11,655 litres - an increase of 137%.

5.5.3 **Phase Three (April 2021):** Woodlands Park Bin Replacement

5.5.3.1 The site currently has a provision of 19 bins, with a total capacity of 1,895 litres. The current litter bin locations are plotted on Figure 3 in Appendix 2.

5.5.3.2 By re-assessing the location of the litter bins on site, replacing the current litter bins, installing 5 RotG bins and an 1,100L residual waste bin housing near the Dashwood Road entrance, a total of 19 bins will be provided. The suggested litter bin locations are plotted in Figure 3 in Appendix 3.

5.5.3.3 The proposed litter bins will deliver an enhanced total capacity of 3,665 litres - an increase of 93%.

5.6 On 30th July 2020, five 1,100L bins were deployed to strategic locations at the Riverside Leisure Area and at Woodlands Park to assess the usage and fill-rate in order to inform future decisions about the permanent deployment of 1100L bin housings at Gravesham's parks and open spaces.

5.7 Initially, the larger bins were inspected and emptied 5 days per week. Our analysis indicated that the bins were utilised most at Woodlands Park (being emptied on 42% of visits) and at the Promenade (being emptied on 50% of visits). As a result, the emptying frequency has been decreased to 3 days per week and continues to be monitored.

5.8 The permanent deployment of 1,100L bins within housings could look like the example below at Mote Park in Maidstone.

6. Summary

6.1 RotG will be trialled at St Andrew's Gardens as the site is relatively small and can be actively monitored and the waste collected could be controlled.

6.2 This will enable the Waste Management Team to discern the fill-rate of 'split' recycling bins in order to develop an effective emptying regime. Types of contamination could be identified to improve bin signage to minimise recycling contamination.

6.3 If the trial is successful, this model could be replicated and incorporated in to the litter bin replacement programme at the Riverside Leisure Area and Woodlands Park by Spring of 2021.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has a duty to keep land in their area clear of litter and refuse (including dog mess), as far as is practicable.
Finance and Value for Money	The funding required to purchase the litter bins for the trial will be funded from the Carbon Neutral Reserve. It should be noted that additional funding which may be required to complete equivalent works at the other two sites identified, although the case for this funding will be made separately in a supplementary report.
Risk Assessment	Living in a littered environment can make some people feel less safe in their communities, and can discourage some people from going outside. Poor local environment quality also discourages inward investment and may suppress property prices, damaging local economic growth.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	*A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.*
	a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.
	b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A
	c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk.
Equality Impact Assessment	a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No.
	b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. N/A
	In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above
Corporate Plan	#1 People: a proud community; where residents can call a safe, clean and attractive borough their home. To create clean, welcoming neighbourhoods and parks, and delivering projects and initiatives to further increase recycling.
Climate Change	Objective 1 / Reference 5 - Introduction of recycling bins in public areas such as high streets, public spaces.
Crime and Disorder	A cleaner environmental reduces the fear of crime.

Digital and website implications	There are no implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	There are no implications arising from this report.