

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Operational Services Cabinet Committee
Date: Tuesday 8 June 2021
Reporting officer: Stuart Alford, Assistant Director (Operations)
Subject: Update on the Current Environment Bill Consultations

Purpose and summary of report:

To provide Members with an update on the current Government Consultations which relate to the Waste & Recycling Service.

Recommendations:

1. None - This report is for information only.

1. Overview

- 1.1 The Environment Bill aims to improve air and water quality, protect wildlife, increase recycling and reduce plastic waste.
- 1.2 The Waste & Resources Strategy has been developed to deal with the waste and resource efficiency parts of the Bill which is what this report will cover. The main sections of the Bill that the Government have been consulting on are;
 - 1.2.1 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
 - 1.2.2 A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)
 - 1.2.3 Consistent recycling collections
- 1.3 On 24th March 2021, the Government released consultation papers on Extended Producer Responsibility and the Introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme. The consultations lasted for 10 weeks and closed on 4th June 2021.
- 1.4 The consultation on consistent recycling collections was launched on Friday 7 May 2021 with a closing date of 4 July 2021.
- 1.5 The Assistant Director (Operations) has been leading on the responses to these consultations for the Council and also for the Kent Resource Partnership as part of his role as Chair of the Partnership's Officer Group.

- 1.6 To ensure that any response is in line with other Local Authority Bodies, discussions have been had with ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport), NAWDO (The National Association of Waste Disposal Officers), CIWM (Chartered Institute of Waste Management) and LARAC (The Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee)

2. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

- 2.1 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) reforms will be the most significant change to the Packaging Waste Regulations since they came into effect in 1997.
- 2.2 Currently the regulations require packaging producers (businesses that perform an activity on packaging) to take responsibility for their environmental impact and they must pay a proportion of the cost of the recovery and recycling of packaging.
- 2.3 The money paid helps reprocessors (recycling plants etc.) of packaging waste to finance improvements and projects that will increase the amount of packaging waste they can recycle year on year.
- 2.4 The proposed changes, which are due to come into force in 2023 goes a step further and will shift the full cost of collecting household waste from the taxpayer to producers.
- 2.5 Local authorities that operate 'efficient and effective' collection systems will have their full net costs recovered via a modelled approach based on the tonnage collected which will be administered through a Government approved scheme administrator or compliance scheme.
- 2.6 The changes will benefit the environment, as they will help to foster a more circular economy for packaging. We should see more recyclable waste being reprocessed into valuable, high-quality secondary resources.
- 2.7 The consultation also proposes that producers of commonly littered packaging items be made responsible for the costs that are directly attributable to their management, both as bin and ground litter. This includes costs incurred by local authorities, other duty bodies, litter authorities and statutory undertakers.
- 2.8 It is also proposed that this extends costs incurred by charities, not-for-profit organisations and representative bodies for prevention and educational activities, litter picks, and provision of bins on land that is accessible to the public free of charge.
- 2.9 The scheme would be managed by an independent body.
- 2.10 The government intends to have the first phase of EPR established in 2023 which would enable payments to local authorities to be made from October 2023.

3. Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

- 3.1 A DRS is intended to encourage the return of the packaging to collection points through the incentive of a refundable deposit paid by consumers at the point of purchase. The deposit level added to the price of a drink acts as an incentive

against improper disposal of the empty drinks container, increasing the recycling rate and reducing the incidence of litter for these materials.

- 3.2 Retailers will be required to ensure the deposit price is added to the purchase price of an in-scope drink at the point of purchase and accept all deposit return scheme containers returned to their store and.
- 3.3 The consultation sets out what materials will be within the scope of a DRS. This will be based on materials and not the type of product. It is proposed that the scheme will include plastic drink bottles, glass bottles, steel and aluminium cans. These will either be drinks containers up to 3 litres for the “all in” scheme or drinks containers under 750ml for the “on the go” scheme.

The four options proposed in the consultation are:

- 3.3.1 Do Nothing
 - 3.3.2 All-in (drinks containers up to 3 litres)
 - 3.3.3 On-the-go (drinks containers under 750ml)
 - 3.3.4 All-in without glass
- 3.4 The Government currently anticipates that a DRS could launch in late 2024

4. Consistency of Collections

- 4.1 Consistent recycling collections will entail the government specifying a core set of materials to be collected from households by all local authorities and introducing non-binding performance indicators for the quantity of materials collected for recycling and minimum service standards. The extent to which some of these reforms will be funded by central government is not yet clear.
- 4.2 The Waste & Resources Strategy will have an impact on the services and the funding for Local Authorities including the potential requirement to collect glass, metal, plastic, paper, card, food waste and garden waste for recycling from all households.
- 4.3 Defra are proposing that local authorities provide a free minimum fortnightly collection service of equivalent to a maximum capacity of 240-litre (either garden waste bin or sacks). Local authorities would be able to charge for more frequent collections and/or additional capacity.
- 4.4 Although the Council already collects food waste from domestic properties the impact of this policy change could be;
 - 4.4.1 Require the Council to collect glass from the kerbside and separate certain material types such as paper and card from glass, which may require a change to the current recycling collection method.
 - 4.4.2 Food waste recycling will need to be collected from properties including flats.

4.4.3 A universal, free garden waste collection service which if enacted would result in an increase in demand, increased numbers of collection vehicles and the loss of subscription income.

4.4.4 The proposed changes would also apply to business waste so the Council's trade waste service will also have to offer separate food waste and recycling collections to businesses.

4.5 It is proposed that all local authorities will collect these materials from October 2023.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

5.1 None.

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	N/A
Finance and Value for Money	The changes detailed in these consultants will change the way that Local Authorities are funded for the collection of the waste & recycling in the future
Risk Assessment	It is essential that the Government provided a robust response to these consultations as they will set out the targets for waste & recycling industry for years to come.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<i>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.</i>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? s</p>
	<p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. N/A</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>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. N/A</p>
	<p>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</p>
	<i>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</i>
Corporate Plan	#1 People: To create clean, welcoming neighbourhoods and parks, and delivering projects and initiatives to further increase recycling.
Climate Change	Under Objective #1 (cleaner environment) a pledge has been made to increase recycling in Gravesham.
Crime and Disorder	N/A
Digital and website implications	N/A
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	N/A