

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	27 August 2024
Subject:	Future Waste and Recycling Options
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Josh Wright, Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement
Responsible Officer:	Darren Beer, Operations Manager – Street Scene and Open Spaces Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance and Waste
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All – District Wide
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report considers the following:

- It sets out future options regarding the provision of the Waste and Recycling service to the residents of Mid Devon.
- The list is not necessarily exhaustive but a starting point for further discussion.
- It builds upon the previous report that sets out the performance of the Bin-It 123 scheme.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. To review the contents of this report**
- 2. Make recommendations regarding the potential further investigation of the financial and practical feasibility of introducing the following practices in the District:**
 - a. Soft plastic (flexibles) collections**
 - b. Nappy waste collections**
 - c. Collecting used coffee pods**
 - d. Collecting unwanted metal pots and pans**
 - e. A chargeable scheme to allow residents the ability to place extra waste out for collection**
 - f. Charging new house builders for new bins and containers to each property**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A review of the current waste and recycling scheme was presented to the Environment PDG in August 2023 and a further update in November 2023 on the performance of Bin-It 123.
- 1.2 A review of Bin-It 123 was also requested by Members and the contents of that report should be read in conjuncture with this one.
- 1.3 This report outlines the possibilities for the service to further reduce residual waste along with an increase in the recyclate collected from the residual waste in order to meet our net zero aspirations. It outlines future proposals and pathways to raise further awareness of good recycling practice in line with the waste hierarchy to reduce, reuse and then recycle.

The Waste Hierarchy diagrams



- 1.4 The Government released its intentions with regards the Collection and Packaging Reforms (CPR), around Simpler Recycling on 09 May 202. These reforms also includes Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).
- 1.5 At the time of publishing this report, the Government announced the broad future direction of travel regarding Waste and Recycling services with legislation that is due to come before parliament in the following areas:
- By 31 March 2025, businesses (excluding micro-firms) must recycle metal, glass, plastic, paper, card, and food waste
 - By 31 March 2026, local authorities must collect these six waste streams (excluding plastic film) from households, with weekly food waste collection
 - By 31 March 2027, micro-firms must recycle all except garden waste, and plastic film collection will extend to all households and premises.

- By 31 March 2027, local authorities must collect plastic films and flexibles
- 1.6 MDDC are already delivering in areas such as weekly food recycling and regular garden waste collections along with collecting the core recycling materials; paper, card, glass, plastic, steel and aluminium. The Council already exceed this legislative minimum as we also collect and recycle textiles, batteries and small electricals (small WEEE).
- 1.7 A discussion group was facilitated as part of the State of the District debate held in March 2024 to consider how to further increase our recycling rate. Ideas were presented by attendees and, along with District Councillors input, has helped form this report.
- 1.8 There is now a need to review recycling and refuse collections in order to meet our target 65% recycling rate by 2035 but available budgets will need to be considered when considering future proposals.

2.0 Next steps and what is possible

2.1 Recycling and collection of flexible plastics

- 2.1.1 As stated earlier in the report, Government have mandated collections of soft plastics from March 2027. There is no current detail on how this is going to be achieved and whether new burdens will pay for this.
- 2.1.2 Currently soft plastics can be taken to supermarkets in the District, which is supported by the FlexCollect scheme.
- 2.1.3 FlexCollect are trialling a series of flexible plastic household collection and recycling pilots between 2022 and 2025, which is managed by a consortium of stakeholders and involvement from other industry stakeholders. A small number of Local Authorities are working with FlexCollect to introduce and trial collections in their own District. This includes Somerset who began a small-scale trial in May 2023 to 3,600 households in Frome. This is being expanded to a further 20,000 properties later this year along with other Local Authorities in the scheme. The authorities in the trial have different collection schemes and demographics, so that FlexCollect can review the data for presentation and analysis. FlexCollect are not expanding this trial to other Districts.
- 2.1.4 Mid Devon along with other Devon authorities visited Somerset's waste depot in Shepton Mallet on the 29 May to observe and understand the process they use in collecting soft plastics at kerbside for processing and recycling.
- 2.1.5 Points for future consideration would include how the product will be collected along with the potential volume of material. The configuration of the current

fleet of recycling vehicles would only allow it to be collected in one of the existing stillages such as the ones used for paper. The current processing configuration would not allow the material to be compacted while being stored and transported on the vehicle.

2.2 Recycling and collection of nappies

- 2.2.1 Priority with regards to nappies in the Waste Hierarchy is given first to reuse then recycling and finally disposal. Therefore, reusable nappies should be promoted as the first avenue for parents when thinking about the environment. There are schemes and advice available including Recycle Devon, which explores the use of real nappies over disposable nappies and signposts residents to the different types, how to wash them and also a free trial.
- 2.2.2 After reuse, the next priority is recycle and NappiCycle have pioneered a process allowing them to recover the material from used nappies. It uses friction washing to break down used nappies and absorbent hygiene products into clean reusable products. In Wales, the recycled nappies are then being used in asphalt for road surfacing, composite deck boards, and other secondary products.
- 2.2.3 This service can currently be provided to all Welsh Local Authorities but none at present in England. East Devon District Council are investigating the viability of a trial in November 2024, which Mid Devon will observe with interest, monitor and can review their findings for further consideration.

2.3 Recycling and collection of coffee pods

- 2.3.1 There is currently a scheme in place throughout the District for residents to recycle coffee pods through the Podback scheme. This is a collaboration of coffee pod producers who have developed a system to recycle coffee pods through various collection systems including drop-off in supermarkets (a large supermarket chain has just rolled the scheme out across their stores) and a number of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) or alternatively they can be posted using a Podback bag and a returns label.
- 2.3.2 Once received by Podback the pods are shredded to remove the coffee, then the empty pods are reprocessed to be used in the manufacture of new products. Coffee grounds are sent for anaerobic digestion.
- 2.3.3 Sixteen UK local authorities including Exeter City Council are now able to recycle their used aluminium and plastic coffee pods alongside other household waste and recycling.
- 2.3.4 Recent trials at HWRCs have proved popular with residents. One trial in Berkshire saw 10 tonnes of pods collected within the first six months. Podback provides HWRCs with collection containers to enable aluminium and plastic pods to be collected separately. Due to the popularity of this method of

collection, Podback are moving the focus and support away from Local Authority kerbside collections to setting up disposal points at County Council HWRCs.

- 2.3.5 Consideration will need to be given to how Mid Devon may collect these if not supported by the Podback scheme. Other authorities that collect the pods use various means including designated vehicles for collection of pods or refuse vehicles that have been adapted to take a small cage to collect the pods. Mid Devon may need to collect these on the recycling vehicles utilising the same stillage as the one currently used for collecting textiles, batteries and small WEEE.

2.4 Recycling and collection of metal pots and pans

- 2.4.1 Currently pots and pans are not collected by Mid Devon's waste and recycling service. If pots and pans are in good condition then residents are encouraged to donate them to charity to be reused, which follows Waste Hierarchy good practice. Alternatively, they can be taken to the nearest Recycling Centre either at Punchbowl (Crediton) or Ashley (Tiverton) where they can be placed in the metal labelled skip to be recycled.
- 2.4.2 Currently there are no Local Authorities that collect pots and pans kerbside. In order for Mid Devon to collect them the collected pots and pans would need to be placed in one of the existing stillages of the recycling vehicles. This would need to use the same stillage as textiles, batteries and small WEEE. Due to the volume these would take up, this would need to be further considered if this option was to be pursued.
- 2.4.3 There would be no extra cost in collecting pots and pans. Skip providers would provide and collect the skip free of charge, therefore no income would be received for the material collected.
- 2.4.4 The material tonnages can be included in the recycling statistics for Mid Devon, although they are included in the Devon wide statistics when taken to the HWRCs.

2.5 Collecting extra chargeable waste

- 2.5.1 Although all authorities are committed to reducing the waste sent for disposal and increasing the amount we recycle, there are occasions when residents have planned or unexpected occasions when extra waste is produced, such as a house clearance. In these situations the additional waste can be taken to a local recycling centre when booked in advance, while bulky and recyclable items can be taken there anyway. Alternatively Mid Devon can also provide a chargeable bulky waste collection service for larger items.
- 2.5.2 East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils operate a chargeable additional waste sack collection. They can supply 10 labelled waste sacks delivered to the property in advance of the need to use them.

2.5.3 Another Local Authority is offering to provide a large bin delivery and collection service for house or garage clear outs for £50-£60 depending on the size of the bin required.

2.5.4 A large bin delivery and collection service would be difficult to offer in Mid Devon due to the current collection rounds. Mid Devon could supply bin bags (10) at a suggested cost of £40-£55.

2.6 Charging new builds the cost of containers for waste and recycling

2.6.1 Local Authorities are able to charge for the cost of receptacles to protect their services. One such Local Authority (Teignbridge District Council) charges a one off fee for a full set of containers to be delivered to newly built properties, which have not previously been occupied, at a current cost of £96.00. The charge can be levied on the developer of the property.

2.6.2 These charges offset the cost of the service. The bin charging policies have been introduced to encourage residents to take responsibility for the bins provided and to reduce demand for replacement bins. The charges cover the actual cost of the bins and delivery.

2.7 Composting groups in Mid Devon

2.7.1 Mid Devon supports home composting as it diverts garden waste from incineration, or being collected by the Waste and Recycling Team, which involves transportation to the disposal site.

2.7.2 Mid Devon also supports community composting, and through Recycle Devon is able to offer advice and support in composting and setting up community projects. One such project is the Uffculme Compost Magic not for profit group run by a voluntary management committee and monitored by DCC and the EA, which has been running for a number of years.

2.7.3 Like the garden waste collected by Mid Devon the garden waste collected by composting groups are recorded as tonnages for data recorded by Waste Data Flow and then used as a recycling measure.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The report contains findings from analysis within the service and that on a local and national level. It provides suggestions to increase recycling and looks at ways to reuse. Ultimately, as an authority Mid Devon looks to promote the Waste Hierarchy and strongly encourage residents to review what they then do themselves with regards to waste at home around reduce and then reuse before recycling.

- 3.2 There may be other measures and initiatives that Members wish to discuss that can be included and reported on.
- 3.3 Any measures that do proceed will require a full cost analysis and benefits report before bringing these back to approve potential future trials or implementation.

Financial Implications

It should be noted that an increase in recycling tonnages for each material will increase our recycling credits for that material. This increase also has an effect on the income received from each product. At present this is difficult to determine due to the constant variations in market values. Shared savings through the DCC Shared Savings Scheme would potentially increase as we decrease waste and increase recycling.

There are none as a result of this report but would need to be included if trials or further analysis is required.

Legal Implications

Under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act Waste Collection Authorities may by means of notice specify how householders present their waste for collection. There will legal requirements to adhere to legislation around Simpler Recycling once it has been given parliamentary approval.

Risk Assessment

In the event that any future changes are trialled (or mandated by government) a register of risks would need to be compiled in advance of those proposed service changes. There are potential risks, including impacts on; carbon emissions, the carbon footprint, operational costs and other resources required (from containers to personnel).

Impact on Climate Change

An increase in recycling would further enable the Council to reduce its carbon footprint and hit its carbon net zero commitment. Recycling is one of the most 'mainstream' concepts of addressing overarching sustainability goals, therefore it is vital to make sure that the council is maximising the effectiveness of both its scheme design, but also its operational implementation.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The service will continue to provide assisted collections according to the current policy; considerations for residents residing in HMOs, flats and properties with no outside space will be included in any proposed project plan. The service would review the lessons learnt and best practice from recent changes along with a review of other councils who have successfully implemented strategic changes to their waste collections operations.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

This report identifies with the 'Environment' priority area of the Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 '*increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of residual waste generated*'. Supporting and enabling customers to recycle and reduce residual waste contributes to Mid Devon District Councils' commitment to the Devon Climate Emergency. The Corporate Plan is currently under review.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 14 August 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 14 August 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 14 August 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 03 June 2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes/no)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Darren Beer, Operations Manager – Street Scene and Open Spaces

Email: dbeer@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 255255

Background papers:

2.1.1 [Podback](#)

2.1.3 [Podback FAQs - Exeter City Council](#)

2.3.1 [Nappies - Recycle Devon](#)

2.3.2 [NappiCycle – Nappy Recycling & Sustainability Solutions](#)

2.3.3 [7 March 2024 - New kerbside nappy and hygiene product recycling scheme being investigated for East Devon - East Devon](#)

2.4.3 [Household collections — Flexible Plastic Fund](#)