

Report for: Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement PDG

Date of Meeting:	2 December 2024
Subject:	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 builds upon the previous report presented in June 2024 where members were presented various options to consider regarding extra service provision.
- It sets out future options regarding the provision of the Waste and Recycling service to the residents of the District together with proposed pilots of new services.

Recommendation(s):

1. **To review the contents of this report.**
2. **Make recommendations regarding trialling and introducing the following practices in the District:**
 - a. **Nappy waste collections**
 - b. **Collecting unwanted metal pots and pans**

c. 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, followed by a further update in November 2023 on the performance of Bin-It 123. A report was presented earlier this year with recommendations to both the SD&CI PDG and Cabinet on the feasibility of various potential initiatives.
- 1.2 This report outlines the possibilities for the service to further reduce residual waste along with an increase in the recyclate collected from 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



- 1.3 The Government released its intentions with regards the Collection and Packaging Reforms (CPR), around Simpler Recycling. These reforms also include Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). Defra also confirmed their intentions when the new government took office and we are currently awaiting further clarification, which is expected later this month (November 2024). This payment is expected to cover the total cost of collecting all packaged recycling both in the residual and recycled waste streams.
- 1.4 There is now a need to further review recycling and refuse collections in order to meet our Devon target of a 60% recycling rate by 2025 and the National target of 65% by 2035 but available budgets will need to be considered when thinking through future proposals and how they are delivered.

2.0 Trials and introductions of new schemes

2.1 Recycling and collection of nappies

- 2.1.1 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.
- 2.1.2 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 (AHPs) 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.
- 2.1.3 This service can currently be provided to all Welsh Local Authorities but none at present in England. Bristol Waste began a twelve month trial in July 2024 and East Devon District Council have just begun a limited three month trial of two hundred eligible properties in September 2024.
- 2.1.4 Mid Devon are in discussions with NappiCycle to pilot a trial beginning in April 2025 similar to that undertaken by East Devon District Council, running for a three month period. Meetings are currently taking place to consider the proposals put forward by NappiCycle. This would include a limited trial of collecting nappies and AHPs from around 200 eligible properties by our own team. They will then be collected from the depot by a contractor from NappiCycle and taken to the Welsh plant for recycling. The cost of the trial will be approximately £4.5K, which includes gate fees, transport to Wales, vehicles, staffing, fuel and materials.
- 2.1.5 Once complete, a full analysis will be presented to Members for discussion, which will include a cost and benefits exercise. Initial information suggests it will cost around £280k per annum to roll this scheme out fully into the District (should it be so desired following the pilot). This would offset approximately 1000 tonnes of nappies and AHPs from the residual waste stream from around 3500 properties. This equates to around 4 million nappies collected per year. The service is unsure of the short/medium term performance benefits but may reduce the potential costs (the tax for the carbon emitted) to the authority for sending waste to energy from waste facilities to be incinerated under the proposed expansion of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme in 2028.

2.2 Recycling and collection of metal pots and pans

- 2.2.1 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. Currently there are no Local Authorities that collect pots and pans kerbside.
- 2.2.2 In order for the Council to collect the recyclable pots and pans, they would need to be placed in one of the existing stillage's of the recycling vehicles. This would need to utilise the same stillage as textiles, batteries and small WEEE. The service proposes to facilitate a trial in a rural and urban area of the District beginning in February for three months. Information will be collected on the weights/volumes, impact on rounds and an analysis will take place including a customer survey before the results are presented back to Members for further consideration.
- 2.2.3 There would be no extra cost in collecting pots and pans. Skip providers would provide and collect the skip free of charge. There will be a small cost in administering the trial for letters and postage.
- 2.2.4 The material tonnages may be included in the recycling statistics for Mid Devon, although they are included in the Devon wide statistics when taken to the HWRCs.
- 2.2.5 Work has been undertaken with a National collector of reusable materials with a view of utilising them for kerbside collections of reusable pots and pans, where residents are unable to take these to a charity shop themselves. The details can be posted on the MDDC website for residents to request this service free of charge.

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

- 2.3.1 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 owner of the property.
- 2.3.2 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.
- 2.3.3 The project continues to progress with further research and legal advice required on how the scheme would be utilised and applied by MDDC. Once obtained this will inform the level of extra income that could be gained.

3.0 Update on other options

3.1 Recycling and collection of flexible plastics

3.1.1 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. This will be followed with a review and presented when further detail is available

3.1.2 Currently soft plastics can be taken to supermarkets in the District, which is supported by the FlexCollect scheme.

3.1.3 Points for future consideration would include how the product will be collected along with the potential volume of the material. The configuration of the current fleet of recycling vehicles would only allow it to be collected in one of the existing stillage's, such as the ones used for paper or it would need to be collected with plastic and cans, then manually separated by additional staff at the depot.

3.2 Recycling and collection of coffee pods

3.2.1 As was written in the report presented to Members of this PDG in June, focus for the Podback scheme is via posted returns of coffee pods, supermarkets and high street coffee shops (pick up and drop off) and the use of Household Waste Recycling Centres as disposal points, which is currently being supported by Podback. One supermarket chain has begun rolling the scheme out across all its 350 stores beginning in July this year and a different supermarket chain is also trialling out the scheme across some stores that have an in house coffee shop. Another high street coffee shop chain is offering customers to pick up the free drop off recycling bags, which can be taken to around 6500 drop off points in the UK. The service will continue to monitor and provide feedback.

3.3 Collecting extra chargeable waste

3.3.1 This was not seen by Members as a priority at this time. It will therefore be put on hold and revisited in the future.

3.4 Composting groups in Mid Devon

3.4.1 The report in June highlighted the significant work community composting groups are doing along with the importance of residents to compost at home where possible.

3.5 Recycling blister packs

3.5.1 Following some background work completed by one of the Members the Street Scene service will update the MDCC website to include details where

residents can take their used medicinal blister packs to be recycled, both empty and with tablets.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The report contains findings from analysis within the service and that on a local and national level. It provides ideas sanctioned by Members that the service will now trial or introduce, which will increase recycling and reuse, as well as supporting the budget to minimise costs to the taxpayer. 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.
- 4.2 Reports will be submitted with a full analysis following any trials detailed above.

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 this current time. 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.

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 clarified by Government.

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. Consideration will need to be sought regarding a potential bin levy and the impact for those in receipt of Council Tax Reductions

Relationship to Corporate Plan

This report identifies with the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement section of the Corporate Plan for 2024-2028, and in particular 5.2 – *We will increase our recycling services, enabling our communities to achieve even higher levels of recycling.* Supporting and enabling customers to recycle and reduce residual waste contributes to Mid Devon District Councils' commitment to the Devon Climate Emergency.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 19 November 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 19 November 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 19 November 2024

Performance and risk: Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 20 November 2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

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 [Nappies - Recycle Devon](#)
- 2.1 [NappiCycle – Nappy Recycling & Sustainability Solutions](#)
- 2.1 [7 March 2024 - New kerbside nappy and hygiene product recycling scheme being investigated for East Devon - East Devon](#)
- 3.1 [Household collections — Flexible Plastic Fund](#)