



To: Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services: Jean Swanson
Report by: Jas Lally, Head of Refuse and Environment
Relevant scrutiny Environment 8th October 2013
committee: Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected: All Wards

Proposal for the Collection of Commercial Food Waste for Composting Non- Key

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In the Government's Review of Waste Policy 2011 it identified preventing and reducing food waste sent to landfill from commercial businesses as a priority.
- 1.2 Unlike household premises educational establishments and businesses are currently unable to have a segregated food waste collection service provided by the City Council.
- 1.3 We are currently undertaking a survey of our existing commercial customers and it is anticipated that a high proportion of those responding will be interested in food waste collections. We are aware that a number of customers from the education sector have expressed an interest and it is therefore anticipated that food waste collections would be welcomed by many of Cambridge's business and the Education sector. It is proposed to start a food waste service for businesses utilising existing resources with vehicles becoming multi use. Initially the scheme is expected to be self-financing and in the future some income forthcoming to secure the future sustainability of the service.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To approve a food waste collection service for businesses and educational establishments to begin in April 2014. At this stage this service would not require any capital investment as it is proposed to use existing vehicles which will become multi use. The scheme would initially

be

self-financing.

2.2 To approve any net profit generated from the service be retained to support vehicle and bin R & R contributions for the first 3 years, at which point a review will be undertaken and a decision made as to the capital required for the service as a more specialised vehicle may be required. If capital investment is not required the money will be returned to the general fund as a saving.

3. Background

3.1 The government previously identified food waste as a priority waste-stream for action as it goes to landfill in considerable quantities, and accounts for almost half of all waste CO₂eq emissions. The total annual food waste arisings in Britain are estimated at around 16 million tonnes with at least 40% of this disposed to landfill.

3.2 Tackling food waste is an example of where prevention and recycling/recovery go hand in hand. According to the Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011 we need to cut down the estimated 16 million tonnes of food waste produced every year in Britain, while ensuring that much more of the food waste which is produced is not simply disposed of in landfill

3.3 In particular the government is keen to target those waste streams with high carbon impacts. Food waste has both high embedded carbon impacts and direct emissions impacts when landfilled. Improvements in the management of business waste will be a critical part of the move towards a zero waste economy. The governments' 'Call for Evidence' identified a range of problems and barriers, particularly in relation to waste and recycling services provided to SMEs.

These included:

- A lack of recycling services in some areas and in relation to some materials (particularly food waste);
- High cost of service to the business user and lack of convenience;
- A lack of awareness amongst SMEs of their legal obligations (e.g. Duty of Care, Pre-treatment Regulations.) It is likely that many micro businesses are using household services without prior agreement or payment; and
- A lack of awareness amongst SMEs of services available in their area.

- 3.4 Consequently we intend to promote a food waste service to facilitate the opportunity for small businesses such as cafes to benefit from the service by the provision of small receptacles.
- 3.5 Customers will also have the opportunity to have a more comprehensive service which included additional options such as bin washing and additional receptacles for inside the kitchens to enable the hygienic separation of waste for composting. This is because odour and hygiene are considered a barrier to recruiting businesses to take up the scheme.
- 3.6 The survey of customers will provide further information on the business sector who are most likely to take up this service and consequently where we will focus our marketing.
- 3.7 We aim to be collecting 4 tonnes per day by the end of the first year which could equate to a reduction in landfill of approximately 800 - 1000 tonnes per year.
- 3.8 A core service of around 50-100 bins per day should provide this yield. However the continued expansion of the service will be limited by the resources available to undertake collections.
- 3.9 The food and green waste collected will be transported to our normal tipping point in Waterbeach and it is likely the disposal of which will fall under the existing County Council contract. This has been discussed with the County Council.
- 3.10 The food and green waste will most likely be processed via In-Vessel Composting (IVC) which is the same process our household food and green waste undergoes.
- 3.11 The costs for disposal of food waste by IVC are cheaper than the costs of landfill or processing by Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT).
- 3.12 Existing staff and vehicles will be used to provide the service and a review will be undertaken to consider whether some collections of waste defined as household eg. Schools and colleges could be collected alongside the existing fortnightly collection services. It is however anticipated that more frequent collection will be required and these will be facilitated by optimising the collections for the four existing commercial landfill collection vehicles.
- 3.13 A recent report by WRAP, "Collecting food waste from small businesses and schools" has suggested that to encourage SME's to take up the service it is necessary to not just provide cheaper collections than

landfill collections but to also provide cheaper collections overall and reducing the total cost of waste disposal.

3.14 It would therefore be beneficial if additional training was provided to staff to enable them to undertake effective waste audits and effectively review the collections of existing customers to provide the most cost effective solution available to them and help customers identify their own waste collection cost savings.

3.15 WRAP provide resources for businesses in their “Business Resource Efficiency Hub” it will be necessary for staff to understand and promote these available resources in order to encourage businesses to take up the service.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

It is anticipated that route optimisation within the commercial waste services will enable vehicle and staff resource to be freed up to facilitate a small number of customers on a daily basis.

Income from the initial customer base will be set to cover the initial operational costs, and some bin purchases. It is hoped that income in the first three years may be between £30,000 and £60,000 offsetting the operational costs, disposal costs and bin purchase with a small surplus at the end of year three.

Expansion of the service should it remain successful is likely to be reliant on additional capital to procure a bespoke vehicle adapted to facilitate these collections. However it is proposed that any additional income raised from the new food waste service be retained through R & R to support the service expansion for initially 3 years. Should funds not be required the additional funds will be returned to the general fund.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

Additional operational staff resource is not required to initially facilitate the service start up. As the service develops resource needs will be determined and reviewed. Any additional resource requirements will be funded from the service income generated.

The additional office staff resource is limited with no dedicated administrative resource therefore the development of the service will be limited by the ability of the existing commercial team to facilitate the

progression of the service. New service start-up will require considerable management oversight.

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications

This new service is an extension of the existing services and there are no equal opportunities implications. As an extension of the existing services an equalities impact assessment has not been completed.

(d) Environmental Implications

The removal of food waste from land fill has significant carbon benefits. The extent of these benefits is dependent on how much food waste can be diverted which would have ordinarily gone to landfill.

As this is currently unknown the service is likely to have a low to medium positive impact.

(e) Procurement

The procurement for the procurement of new bins for this project will be on a small scale and under EU procurement thresholds. In addition there is an ESPO framework contract for the purchase of bins.

(f) Consultation and communication

A survey of customers is continuing over the next few months and will provide further information on the business sector who are most likely to take up this service and consequently where we will focus our marketing.

The service like all commercial waste services is an opt-in service and extensive marketing will be required with Cambridge businesses to encourage participation in the service some resource may be required to facilitate this.

Advertising will also be done on Facebook and Twitter.

(g) Community Safety

There are no community safety implications.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- WRAP, “Collecting food waste from small businesses and schools”
- Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011

6. Appendices

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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