



To: Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services: Councillor Jean Swanson  
Report by: Jen Robertson - Waste Strategy Manager  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Environment 13/3/2012 Scrutiny Committee  
Wards affected: All Wards

## **BLUE BIN PLASTICS RECYCLING Key Decision**

### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 At present the plastics accepted for recycling in the blue bin are plastic bottles only.
- 1.2 Cambridge City Council is collecting and recycling 44% of household waste through the blue bin, green bin and bring banks.
- 1.3 In November 2011 a resident's waste collection survey was carried out. For the online element of the survey more than half of respondents said that being able to recycle a greater range of materials would encourage them to recycle more.
- 1.4 Officers have been able to negotiate with the current contractor for the inclusion of additional plastic material, i.e. plastic pots, tubs and trays, in the blue bin collections.
- 1.5 The contract, which runs until November 2014, is between ourselves, two partner authorities (Huntingdonshire DC and Fenland DC) and Viridor Waste Services. Partner authorities are supportive of the inclusion of this material.
- 1.6 The addition of this material has financial implications that are covered in further detail in Section 4.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To agree the inclusion of plastic pots, tubs and trays in the blue recycling bin scheme with our contract partner authorities Huntingdonshire DC and Fenland DC.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In October 2011 Environment Scrutiny Committee agreed that a data gathering exercise should be carried out in order to help make decisions about the best ways of increasing recycling to meet our target of recycling 50-55% of waste by 2015/16.
- 3.2 The RECAP partnership carried out a waste analysis in 2007. Based on this analysis there are approximately 1500 tonnes of non-bottle rigid plastics in Cambridge's household waste each year. It is not known what proportion of this is recyclable pots, tubs and trays.
- 3.3 If we were able to capture at least 30% of this material into blue bins for recycling, this would represent a rise in the recycling rate of 1%.
- 3.4 Being able to recycle a wider range of plastic items is the most often cited improvement that residents would like to see made to recycling services. From the online part of the survey carried out in November 2011, when asked, "What would encourage you to recycle more?" 58% answered "A greater range of materials accepted". Also in answer to the question, "Are there any waste or recycling services that the council does not currently offer that you would like to see?" 32% of online respondents and 14% of telephone respondents answered that they would like to see a wider range of plastic items collected for recycling at the kerbside.
- 3.5 If collected, most of the plastic pots, tubs and trays are likely to be sent to China for recycling. This is due to a lack of infrastructure at present for recycling these materials in the UK. Most of the plastic bottles collected by the council are also sent to China, although some are recycled in the UK. We expect more UK facilities to become available over the next few years as recycling infrastructure improves.
- 3.6 The Council currently has a contract with AmeyCespa (formally Donarbon) to collect plastic pots, tubs and trays in banks at public recycling points. It is anticipated that this contract will continue and will compliment the kerbside collections.
- 3.7 It is proposed to implement this change in July 2012, to coincide with changes associated with the Route Optimisation project.

- 3.8 Discussions are also taking place with the contractor to investigate whether any further materials can be added to the blue bin scheme.

## 4. Implications

### (a) **Financial Implications**

The contract price for bulking, sorting and onward sale of recyclable material varies depending on the value of the mix of recyclables. In January 2012 the value of the mix of recyclables was £87.43 per tonne, however the average for the six month period from June 2011 to November 2011 was £99.10 per tonne.

It has been predicted that if the plastic pots, tubs and trays were added to the mix of recyclables, the value would go down by approximately £5. At January prices this would take the value to £82.43. If the average value goes below £80 the income to the authority will go down. Based on last year's tonnage this would be a difference in income of £32,190. It is important to note that the reduction in value of the mix of recyclables may happen anyway based on economic decline in markets, but that the inclusion of this material may bring the move to the low bracket more quickly than without the material.

This additional material would also generate additional income of £17,392 from recycling credit payments.

A recycling rate increase of 1% or 450 tonnes would save Cambridgeshire County Council £28,800 of avoided landfill tax based on the 2012/13 rate.

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

There are no staffing implications

### (c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out at this stage.

### (d) **Environmental Implications**

The climate change rating for this proposal is medium indicating that the proposal has a medium positive impact.

Recycling one tonne of non-bottle plastic saves 0.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. If we are able to collect the predicted amount of plastic packaging this would create a saving of 225 tonnes.

### (e) **Consultation**

A resident consultation was carried out in November 2011. This is discussed at 1.3 and 3.4.

(f) **Community Safety**

There are no community safety implications.

**5. Background papers**

There were no background papers used for writing this report.

**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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