

COMMUNITY EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

7 SEPTEMBER 2023

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7 September 2023

* Councillor Katie Steel (Chairperson)

* Councillor Sallie Barker MBE

* Councillor Dawn Bennett

Councillor David Bilbé

Councillor Honor Brooker

* Councillor Amanda Creese

* Councillor Gillian Harwood

* Councillor Steven Lee

* Councillor Sandy Lowry

* Councillor David Shaw

Councillor Joanne Shaw

Councillor Cait Taylor

* Present

Councillors Carla Morson and George Potter were also in attendance.

C1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joanne Shaw and Cait Taylor. Councillor Dominique Williams was present as a substitute for Councillor Joanne Shaw and Councillor Jane Tyson was present as a substitute for Councillor Cait Taylor.

C2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

No nominations for the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Advisory Board were received.

C3 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

C4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery Executive Advisory Board held on 9 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record, and would be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

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C5 RECYCLING POLICY CHANGES

The Executive Advisory Board (EAB) received a presentation regarding the Recycling and Waste Policy Review which included discussion options.

The Lead Councillor for Planning, Environment and Climate Change introduced the presentation and highlighted the financial challenges currently being faced by the Council. In response to these, the Environmental Services Team had been seeking to identify operational changes through a service challenge process which would realise cost savings. The majority of potential changes identified were minor and it was likely that the related decisions could be delegated to the Lead Councillor in conjunction with the Joint Executive Head of Environmental Services without the need for the formal decision-making process via the Executive or full Council. However, the Lead Councillor wished to share the possible options and intended future direction of travel for the Recycling and Waste service with the EAB and invite its views and advice thereon prior to reaching any decisions in respect of operational changes.

The Waste Strategy and Technical Support Lead gave the presentation which sought feedback in respect of the following opportunities to reduce costs and generate income:

- Removing bring bank sites across the Borough.
- Refuse and recycling sack provision.
- Kitchen caddy provision.
- Charging for kerbside food waste caddies.
- Charging for recycling bin replacement and additional containers.

The Council currently had 22 bring sites which were last refurbished / reviewed in 2013. All recyclables catered for at bring sites could now be presented for kerbside collections. The challenges associated with bring sites were increased anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping and graffiti, commercial abuse, servicing costs, maintenance costs and rogue banks. The options, which considered the related costs and impact, were to (1) do nothing, (2) reduce the number of bring sites or (3) close the sites and convert Station Parade (East Horsley) and Portsmouth Road (Guildford) sites to recycling points for nearby flats. The officers recommended option 3 which would generate an ongoing £26,202 annual operational saving, avoid a one off £3,778 maintenance cost plus unquantifiable support costs together with averting the need to replace a caged vehicle. The impact of this would be the higher use of kerbside services,

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reduced opportunity for abuse by commercial premises resulting in potential uplift in Business Waste customers whilst providing additional capacity on flats and commercial rounds to accommodate new demand.

With regard to sack provision, the Borough currently supplied sacks twice a year to properties that did not have space for bins totalling provision of free refuse sacks to 1,917 properties and recycling sacks to 2,053 properties. The Council supplied sacks in fairness as it had supplied the initial bins to other properties free of charge, although bin costs were now charged. Although residents were able to purchase their own sacks, they were provided to limit the amount of waste produced, to ensure sacks were sufficiently thick to safely lift glass in the recycling, and to ensure sacks were clear enough for waste crews to check their contents. The options were to (1) do nothing, (2) supply recycling sacks only or (3) do not supply any sacks to residents. Option 2 was the officers' recommendation which would realise cost savings of £19,136 annually (sacks and delivery) and delivery cost reductions by moving to one delivery per year. The related impact would be that residents would need to supply their own refuse sacks (as bin customers already had to do) after one last delivery.

In terms of small kitchen caddy provision, two sizes of food waste caddies, 7 litre for indoor kitchen use and 23 litre for kerbside collections, were currently supplied. The indoor caddy was the only container the Council supplied but did not handle during waste collections. The outdoor caddy had to be a specific size and quality for use by the Council's waste crews. When kitchen caddies were first introduced in 2009, they were challenging and costly to obtain and therefore the Council supplied them to ease food waste recycling for residents. The options were to (1) do nothing, (2) stop supplying 7 litre food waste caddies or (3) charge for 7 litre food waste caddies. The officers recommended option 2 which would create cost savings of approximately £7,160 annually without delivery savings as kitchen caddies were for collection only. The impact of this was that residents would need to purchase their kitchen caddies from relevant retail outlets and the creation of increased storage availability at the Council's depot for other containers.

With regard to charging for food waste caddies, these were currently supplied free of charge from Millmead and a number of local parish councils. The Council did not deliver caddies unless it was intending to deliver a bin to the same property. Kerbside caddies had to meet the authority's specific criteria

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to remain compliant with Health and Safety Executive requirements. Most replacements were due to caddies becoming brittle over time. Regarding future legislation changes, the Environment Act 2021 would make food waste collections compulsory for all relevant local authorities and a biodegradable waste landfill ban would be introduced from 2028. The options were to (1) do nothing, (2) stop supplying all food waste caddies or (3) charge for all caddies. Option 1 was the officers' recommended option for the time being which would create no changes in terms of cost or impact. This option choice could be revisited in the future.

Although recycling bins were provided to residents free of charge currently, the Council charged for the initial issue of bins to a property at a cost of £60 per set. 1,400 bins were delivered per year. Risks associated with charging for recycling bins were reduction in recycling ahead of legislation change leading to higher refuse costs to the taxpayer; increased refuse tonnages as recycling displaced to refuse resulting in lower performance and higher costs to Surrey County Council (SCC); and loss of performance related income from SCC and the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP). The options were to (1) do nothing, (2) charge for delivery only or (3) charge for all containers and delivery. The officers' recommended way forward was Option 1 as the Council was awaiting confirmation of the Government's legislative changes prior to implementing any procedural alterations as they may become incompatible with forthcoming legislation and require adjustment.

The following points arose from related questions, comments and discussion for forwarding to the Executive:

1. It was hoped that, with the possibility of bring sites being closed, residents were aware that they were able to recycle textiles and shoes at the kerbside as a number of communications to this effect had been circulated. The Annual Recycling Leaflet, designed by the SEP on the Council's behalf, would be delivered to each household in the Borough in October, at a significant cost, which included details in respect of local kerbside recycling services. The SEP had a separate communications team supported by the Surrey local authorities which provided an additional messaging opportunity. There was also an option to undertake some publicity in partnership with other Surrey boroughs and districts experiencing similar issues to share costs by pursuing a county-wide campaign. Although the Council's Communications Team could be

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approached with a view to obtaining a quotation in respect of a communications campaign to raise public awareness of local recycling facilities, the EAB was reminded that the Council was currently experiencing considerable financial challenges.

2. In the event of the closure of the bring sites, information concerning the alternative recycling services would be posted at the sites and a relatively long lead in notice time would be provided, particularly to take account of the peak use following Christmas. Such closure of the bring sites would involve the Waste and Recycling Team working in partnership with the Enforcement Team following the peak period to ensure that support, within current resources, was in place to tackle any resulting fly-tipping. Posting notices at bring sites during busy periods was an effective and economical form of communication. In addition, information concerning kerbside recycling was included on the Council's website and social media platforms.
3. Charity recycling collection banks, which were not situated at the Council's allocated sites, would remain across the Borough to offer a separate service.
4. Whilst the Council encouraged composting of garden and food waste, many properties had limited space to accommodate composters which made the food waste collection service valuable. Related information was available on the Council's website and the SEP offered residents an opportunity to purchase composter bins such as the 'Green Johanna' at a discounted price to compost food and garden waste. However, one of the challenges with food waste was the expectation that the Government would require councils to provide a food waste collection service from every property by 2028. One reason for this approach was that food waste was beneficial for anaerobic digestion and production of methane and other usable gases.
5. A Councillor welcomed the recommended options which were felt to recognise and seek to overcome the potential barriers and financial costs faced by residents in readiness for the legislative changes to be introduced in 2028.

The EAB indicated its agreement with each of the five recommendations put forward by officers in relation to bring sites, sack provision, small kitchen caddy provision, charging for food waste caddies, and charging for recycling bins.

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C6 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan was noted without comment.

C7 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

There were no comments regarding the Executive Advisory Board Work Programme nor suggestions in respect of future possible Work Programme items.

The meeting finished at 8.19 pm

Signed

Date

Chairperson