

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: TUESDAY, 23rd AUGUST 2022
title: DRS, EPR AND COLLECTION CONSISTENCY CONSULTATIONS
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide Members with an update on the above

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities – To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The consultations were launched for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) by DEFRA on the 24 March 2021 with a closing date of the 24 June.

2.1.1 **EPR**:- The proposals covered in this consultation were concerned with reforms to the packaging waste regulations. The current system of producer responsibility for packaging has been in place since 1997 but needs reform. Initial reforms were outlined in the first consultation, where governments signalled their intent to introduce EPR for packaging so that producers pay for the cost of packaging from cradle to grave.

2.1.3 **DRS**: - The consultation seeks views on proposals to introduce a DRS for drinks containers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It referred solely to deposit return schemes (for drinks containers explicitly) and not reward and return schemes. So, a system where you pay an upfront deposit, which you must return the container to redeem.

2.2 A second consultation was launched for Consistency of Collections by DEFRA on 7 May with a closing date of the 4 July 2021.

2.2.1 The consultation was concerned with having consistent recycling collections to improve the quantity and quality of municipal waste recycled in England and achieve a national recycling rate of 65% by 2035. It directly impacted on local authority waste services and was looking for proposals for all waste collection authorities to:

- Collect the same core set of dry recyclable materials from households.
- Have separate weekly food waste collections from households.
- Have separate minimum fortnightly collection of green waste (possibly free)

3 ISSUES

3.1 EPR

After months of deliberation, the government published its response to its consultation on extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging in late March.

EPR places the cost of managing products once they reach end-of-life on to producers. The response sets out the way in which the government and devolved nations will implement EPR across the UK

In a controversial move, the estimated costs to producers fell from £2.7 billion to £1.7 billion. This is down to two main factors. Firstly, the government dropped plans to make producers responsible for the cost of business waste until at least 2026/27, when there will be a review. Secondly, England and Northern Ireland will not make producers responsible for litter “on the ground”,

Other headline moves include delaying implementation of EPR from 2023 to 2024 and excluding glass from the scope of the deposit return scheme (DRS) in England and Northern Ireland, despite its inclusion in Wales.

3.2 LITTER

It is likely the government made the decision as a response to quite hard lobbying by producers who did not feel they should pay for “inappropriate behaviour by individuals”. Unfortunately, that will mean that the cost for the litter removal will fall again on local authorities.

3.3 CONSISTENCY

EPR is just one aspect of the government’s reforms. It has yet to publish its responses to the consultations on the DRS in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and on consistent collections in England.

Update:

3.3.1 One of the biggest issues around consistent collections for this Council is the call for weekly separate collections of food.

3.3.2 The latest news from the government is that they will consider the mixing of 2 waste materials if a good case under TEP (Technically, environmentally, practicable) can be made. The last time the council collected food waste it was mixed with green waste. However, the council have recently been informed that Lancashire County Council, the disposal authority, that the weekly food waste will have to be collected separately.

3.3.3 When the council previously collected food waste the waste was limited to kitchen preparation and non-cooked items of food. The weekly food waste now proposed to be collected will include the above but also any other waste food including waste off the dining plates.

3.3.4 In order to do this this council will need to provide some form of kitchen caddies and decide whether or not to provide free biodegradable caddy liners and provide another external bin food waste. It is thought, at this time, that the vehicles presently used to

collect residual and recycling will not be suitable for food collection. Therefore, different vehicles, and potentially drivers, will need to be sourced.

- 3.3.5 Pilot schemes around the country have been carried out with varying success. The vehicles that have been used on the food collection have been smaller than the existing refuse vehicles but included some form of pod to contain the food-waste. (See Lancaster food waste trial below)
- 3.3.6 Presently, all the waste collected from the borough is taken to the Waste Transfer Station at Lincoln Way. From there LCC bulk transport it to their treatment premises. The paper from the borough is taken straight to the paper mill, currently in Rishton, because there is insufficient space at the Depot to store it and bulk transport it away.
- 3.3.7 The food waste is expected to be in a more mobile/liquid form than our existing residual stream and the storage requirements will be different to those of the current waste.
- 3.3.8 Lancashire Council have been made aware of this for the paper and now for the food. They have suggested that they attend the depot and give advice. If there is insufficient space for the proposed storage, then the collecting vehicles will need to deliver it to a facility provided by Lancashire County Council. (See appended email)
- 3.3.9 Originally it was thought that with local elections looming on the horizon the government will not publish its response until the end of May. However, the response is still not available.

The Lancaster food waste trial commenced in April 2021 and lasted for 6 months.

Weekly separate food waste collections took place on Mondays to 879 properties – the trial area had been chosen due to the diverse demographic of young families, retirees and executive homes. Residents had been provided with a 23-litre street caddy, 5 litre kitchen caddy and 2 rolls of compostable bags. The provision of bags had been very important to residents who had not wanted to provide their own and, although they could request as many bags as they required, the expense of this would need to be taken into account once the scheme was rolled out to all properties.

The collection round had taken in between 3.5 to 4 hours; the crew had no issues emptying the bins but sometimes had to go and look for them. The overall participation rate dropped to 36%, mainly due to an invasion of sand flies, and some residents stated they did not wish to take part in the trial for hygiene reasons, even though their residual bin would contain food waste. In addition, some residents did not understand it was a weekly collection or did not put the bins out in the same place each week. Environmental Health had been called in by residents, but no evidence could be found that the trial was the cause of the sand fly infestation. Regular trial participants had expressed a wish to continue with separate food waste collections permanently.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The report may have the following implications:

- Resources – The government has stated that local authorities would be reimbursed any capital costs that have been incurred to carry out the weekly food waste collection. However, no details have been provided to date. Revenue costs will need to be covered by the Council.

The legislation is leaning towards all collection authorities providing a free green waste collection. Presently RVBC is the only one in the county providing this service for free. Councils that are presently charging for the green waste collection are assuming that the government will reimburse them for the loss of revenue.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Investigation will be required into the types of vehicles and the associated storage required in order to collect and store the food waste
- Political – With the implementation of the weekly food waste collection there may need to be a change in the frequency of the residual collection.
- Reputation – None arising as a result of this report.
- Equality & Diversity – None arising as a result of this report.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Note the report

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REF: AH/COMMUNITY 230822