

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

## Agenda Item 20

**Subject:** Waste Reduction and Recycling

**Date of meeting:** 19 September 2023

**Report of:** Executive Director: Economy, Environment & Culture

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**For general release**

### **1. Purpose of the report and policy context**

1.1 One of the priorities in the recently published Council Plan 2023 to 2027 is to minimise waste. This report sets out the council's plan for achieving this through a newly appointed Waste Minimisation Officer and the start of campaign to improve messaging and education relating to waste and recycling in Brighton & Hove. The report also provides an update on introduction of the government's Environment Act and Waste Prevention Programme.

1.2 The report also highlights recent changes to recycling services in the city, including the ability to recycle metal lids and an increase in the number of carton recycling bins. Further information is also provided on common contaminants in recycling bins.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That Committee notes the report and Appendix 1.

2.2 That Committee approves the introduction of metal lids from glass bottles and jars into glass recycling collections and further notes that this will be communicated to residents at set out at paragraph 3.15 of the report.

2.3 That Committee approves the start of a concerted Council information and behaviour change campaign to reduce the volume of waste produced across Brighton & Hove, to increase the levels of reuse, to increase the levels of recycling and reduce contamination of recycling bins as described in paragraphs 3.20 and 3.21 of the report.

### **3. Context and background information**

**Environment Act update**

- 3.1 On 28 July 2023, the council received a letter from the Resources & Waste Director at Defra which set out the government's next steps in relation to its resources and waste reforms. The letter stated:
- The packaging payments relating to Extended Producer Responsibility have been deferred from October 2024 to October 2025. This deferral relates to the point at which producers will begin to pay for the cost of recycling their products.
  - The delivery of the Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers will proceed to current timelines and be introduced from 1 October 2025.
  - The Consistency in Household and Business Recycling will come in after the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme, with more details to be set out in due course.
- 3.2 The implications for the council are:
- An inability to plan for and introduce new recycling materials.
  - Uncertainty over new burdens funding for the introduction of food waste and the March 2025 implementation timeline.
  - Uncertainty of budget implications for other proposed policy changes such as free garden waste collections.
  - Having to manage significant change across the service due to the 2025 timeline.
- 3.3 A Project Manager has recently been appointed to lead on preparing for the Environment Act reforms in line with the latest information available. This appointment provides additional resource to prepare for the Environment Act to enable the council to be in a good position when implementation and burdens funding announcements are made. This will include developing costed options for a new food waste collection service.
- 3.4 The letter from Defra also referred to the new Waste Prevention Programme, which was published at the end of July 2023. Following a quick review of the Programme to inform this report, the proposed changes in summary are to:
- Ensure the waste hierarchy is more stringently applied in how companies and other bodies manage their waste. The waste hierarchy guidance will be updated by 2024, setting clear expectations for how decisions on waste treatment routes should be made. Considerations will be given to changes to waste legislation to support a more circular economy.
  - Develop best practice guidance on reuse for local authorities, including consideration of how reuse is reported, to help ensure that more Household Waste Recycling Centres and bulky waste collections are performing an effective role in waste prevention as well as enhancing local communities', businesses and the voluntary sector's roles in achieving more reuse, including case studies of successful reuse hubs.
  - Reduce the burden on local authorities and ensure it is as easy as possible for households to return unwanted old items for reuse or recycling. This will be informed by a consultation on proposals to remove fees for consumers to have bulky domestic furniture collected from their homes by 2025.
- 3.5 There will be seven key sectors for action:

- Construction
- Textiles
- Furniture
- Electronics
- Vehicles
- Plastic and packaging
- Food and drink

- 3.6 There are likely to be implications for the council in relation to:
- A consultation in 2024 on reusable and recyclable textiles being presented for separate collection and for the collecting organisation to separately collect and store until treating in accordance with the waste hierarchy, by sorting for reuse and recycling.
  - A consultation in 2024 on businesses over a certain size to provide customer take back systems for used textiles.
  - A consultation in 2025 on proposals to remove fees for bulky waste collections.
  - A consultation in 2023 on reforms to Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations to explore ways to increase collections of waste electricals in 2023.
- 3.7 City Environment will review the Waste Prevention Programme in more detail and await the consultations.

### Minimising waste

- 3.8 The waste hierarchy, as pictured below, ranks the options for treatment of waste from the least harmful to the environment, which is to reduce consumption or prevent the generation of waste, to the most harmful, which is landfill. To reduce carbon emissions and the other harmful environmental impacts of waste, such as methane production, individuals, organisations and local authorities should be seeking to push activity and treatment of waste up the waste hierarchy.



- 3.9 City Environment already has one of the lowest landfill rates, with 0.96% of waste sent to landfill in 2022/23. The 2022/23 recycling rate was 28.3%, with the remainder of waste sent for recovery at the Energy Recovery Facility and generating electricity for 20,000 homes. The recycling rate can be improved by reducing the overall volume of waste produced, as well as focusing efforts on reduce and reuse.
- 3.10 The average volume of waste produced by each household each year in Brighton and Hove is detailed in the table below.

Table 1: Average Waste per Household in Brighton and Hove

Financial year	Residual waste per household (kg)
2022/23	552.05
2021/22	544.45
2020/21	569.51
2019/20	552.32
2018/19	561.28
2017/18	575.14
2016/17	601.87
2015/16	620.95

- 3.11 Whilst there has been an increase from 2021/22 to 2022/23, there has been a significant decrease over the last eight years. It is considered that with dedicated officer resource, the council can further reduce the volume of waste produced across the city.

### **Increasing recycling**

- 3.12 Following conversations with Veolia, metal lids from glass bottles and jars can now be recycled with the glass container as part of the separate glass collections – either in a glass recycling box or a communal glass bin.
- 3.13 Residents should wash the bottle and reattach the lid and place the item in their glass recycling box or take to a communal glass bin. This includes lids that can be screwed back on, such as sauce bottles and jam jars, as well as bottle caps, such as those attached to beer bottles.
- 3.14 The lid will get recycled at the glass processor, where over-band magnets will pull out the lids. Residents are asked not to put the lids in their “normal” recycling container as the lids are small and sometimes get confused with other small, flat items such as paper and cardboard, and can get missed in amongst other material at the Materials Recovery Facility.
- 3.15 The Council’s website and recycling communications will be updated with this information and further communication on this will take place as part of the concerted and ongoing messaging campaign as detailed in paragraph 3.21 below.
- 3.16 In recognition of the demand for carton and Tetrapak recycling, six additional carton bins have been installed across the city. The containers have been added to recycling points at:

- Western Road, at the corner of St John's Road
- King's Esplanade, at the south end of the King Alfred car park
- Lewes Road, near the corner with St. Martin's Place
- Portland Road, outside number 189
- Queen's Park Terrace, on the corner of Queen's Park Road by the Pepperpot
- White Cross Street, outside the entrance to the Trafalgar Street car park

3.17 Options are being reviewed for rolling out further carton and Tetrapak recycling bins at other recycling points across the city, as well as options for expanding recycling collections to other materials.

### **Reducing contamination**

3.18 Reducing contamination within recycling bins can also help increase the recycling rate. Contamination is when waste materials are put in the wrong recycling bin. For example, if a drinks carton is placed into a recycling bin. The average level of contamination within recycling bins across Brighton & Hove between January and July 2023 was 13.55%. When recycling bins are contaminated, it presents a risk that the material may have to be disposed of as refuse, rather than as recycling.

3.19 Common contaminants are listed in Appendix 1. These cannot be placed in either grey recycling wheelie bins or in communal recycling bins. How they can be disposed of correctly is detailed in Appendix 1.

### **Waste Minimisation Officer**

3.20 To deliver the priority to minimise waste, a Waste Minimisation Officer has been appointed for a two-year period. A work plan is under development and will include:

- Engaging with and promoting the multitude of reuse organisations in the city to encourage greater participation and behaviour change
- Improving the resources on the council website to educate residents on reducing, reusing and recycling to encourage behaviour change and reduce levels of contamination in recycling collections
- Creating and implementing a communications campaign to increase levels of reducing, reusing and recycling
- Closer working with universities and university students to encourage reuse initiatives

3.21 This new appointment provides additional resource in the service to begin a concerted information and behaviour change campaign to reduce the volume of waste produced across Brighton & Hove, to increase the levels of reuse, to increase the levels of recycling and reduce contamination of recycling bins, as well as preparing for the newly published Waste Prevention Programme. Not only will this help improve Brighton & Hove's waste performance, but it will also help encourage further circular economy practices and principles, which contributes to the city becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 The appointment of the Waste Minimisation Officer presents an opportunity to begin a concerted effort to reduce the volume of waste in the city. This dedicated resource has not been available before and means the effectiveness of having a dedicated officer over a long time period can be tested.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 No direct community engagement or consultation has taken place in relation to this report.
- 5.2 The new appointed Waste Minimisation Officer will be working closely with the council's Circular Economy team and with community organisations across the city. They will improve information and education about optimal waste management for carbon reduction and foster behaviour change.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 This report provides City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee with an overview of how the council will minimise the waste produced by the city, as well as an update on the Environment Act and Waste Prevention Programme. The report also sets out two recent changes to recycling services in the city to increase the recycling rate.
- 6.2 A Waste Minimisation Officer has recently been appointed and will take forward the work on waste minimisation, starting a concerted programme of work to reduce the volume of waste produced across Brighton & Hove, to increase the levels of reuse, to increase the levels of recycling and reduce contamination of recycling bins.

#### **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report which is for noting.
- 7.2 The report highlights pending legislative changes to waste collection and disposal and the accompanying uncertainty of financial implications in future years until clarity and guidance is received from the government.
- 7.3 This report, however, is an update report on progress on existing initiatives which are funded from existing resources.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack    Date consulted: 31/08/2023

#### **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert    Date consulted: 31/08/2023

## 9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the report's recommendations.

## 10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Reducing waste contributes to the council's objective to be carbon neutral by 2030. This means focusing efforts on increasing reuse, increasing recycling and reducing contamination can all have a positive impact on the environment.

## Supporting Documentation

### Appendices

1. Appendix 1: common contaminants and how to dispose of them correctly

### Background documents

1. Waste Prevention Programme available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-prevention-programme-for-england-maximising-resources-minimising-waste>
2. [City Environment Improvement Programme Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 14 March 2023 (item 88)
3. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 15 November 2022 (item 46)
4. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 22 June 2022 (item 8)
5. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 21 September 2021 (item 41)
6. [National Resources and Waste Strategy – Responses to Government consultations](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 21 June 2021 (item 8)
7. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 16 March 2021 (item 80)
8. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 29 September 2020 (item 29)
9. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 21 January 2020 (item 66)
10. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 8 October 2019 (item 36)
11. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 25 June 2019 (item 10)
12. [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 22 January 2019 (item 57)
13. [City Environmental Management – Modernisation Programme Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 9 October 2018 (item 29)

