



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 19 September 2023

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Keith Melton – Climate Change  
Councillor Paul Peacock – Strategy, Performance and Finance

Director Lead: Matt Finch – Director of Communities & Environment

Lead Officer: Ryan Oliff, Waste and Recycling Manager, Ext. 5682

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open report, non-key decision
Report Title	Update on Kerbside Glass Recycling Scheme
Purpose of Report	For Members to consider the current status and risks of the glass recycling project
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) note the current status of the project and note the challenges which may impact the project launch date;</li> <li>b) note that there is currently an additional forecast budget requirement of £30k from 2024/25;</li> <li>c) note that the garden recycling subscription fee is increased from £35 to £37 from 2024/25, in line with the rationale set out in paragraphs 2.6.8 and 2.6.10 of the report;</li> <li>d) note that the one-off funding of circa £8k for glass recycling boxes be provided to Recycling Ollerton and Boughton (ROB);</li> <li>e) approve the transition of apprentice Mechanic to permanent FTE NS9; and</li> <li>f) further updates be provided where required.</li> </ul>
Alternative Options Considered	As set out, the report provides an update on an existing Council decision to introduce a kerbside glass collection service in Newark and Sherwood. As such, no alternatives have been put forward at this stage.
Reason for Recommendations	To introduce a kerbside glass collection service in line with resident feedback, the aspirations within the Community Plan and within the budget previously agreed by the Council.

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Residents have repeatedly expressed their frustration at the lack of kerbside glass collection in Newark and Sherwood. This was expressed in both the 2018 and 2022 Resident's Surveys which found that recycling continues to be an issue of high importance for residents. In the 2022 survey it was listed as being important or very important to 83% of residents to live in a sustainable and environmentally aware way. 270 respondents commented to specifically request the introduction of kerbside glass recycling.
- 1.2 Residents also referenced recycling of food and garden recycling however glass was the most requested kerbside service. This is likely because it is collected and recycled in at least half of the district's households, but also because of its potential in reducing the district's carbon footprint. As glass is one of the few materials which is 100% recyclable with no loss in quality during the recycling process, for every tonne of recycled glass that is used to make new glass containers, there are emission savings of 314kg of and CO2 and it prevents 1.17 tonnes of raw materials being used.
- 1.3 A new kerbside glass recycling scheme was approved by cabinet in February 2023 with the first project group taking place in March to meet and discuss progress and milestones on the various work strands.
- 1.4 There are neighbouring authorities that have introduced very similar schemes and there is available data which has helped shape our assumptions on expected tonnages, income generation and certain timescales as well as some experiences of planning and implementing a scheme of this nature.
- 1.5 However, there are also aspects of the project which are unique to NSDC. One of these is the existence of Recycling Ollerton and Boughton (ROB) who offer to collect glass from the kerbside every fortnight from approximately 10,000 properties in the district.
- 1.6 ROB is a charity which provides work-based training placements to adults with learning difficulties. Providing the collection is one of their placement experiences and they mitigate some of the costs associated with their charity with the glass recycling income. We have no desire to damage their business model and seek to offer our service as a complimentary alternative to the ROB scheme.

## **2.0 Project Update**

### **2.1 Infrastructure & Capital Works**

- 2.1.1 Additional infrastructure is required to implement the service. Current vehicle space at the Brunel Drive depot is at its limit and a glass transfer station is required for the storage and bulking up of collected glass for sale, whilst three new collection vehicles are required to run the new service.

## 2.2 Vehicles and Depot Capacity

- 2.2.1 Happily, an agreement is now in place to use land at Farrar Close to deal with the extra space needed for private vehicle parking, fleet parking and bin storage capacity.
- 2.2.2 Vehicles have also been ordered and these have come in below the anticipated price resulting in budget savings.
- 2.2.3 Although the opt in numbers for the ROB area are low, there will still be the requirement for a 2nd collection team and therefore the space needed at Brunel Drive for the additional fleet and staff parking will remain the same as previously modelled.

## 2.3 Waste Transfer Station

- 2.3.1 An agreement has also been reached to use the lorry park for the waste transfer station however there were concerns which needed to be addressed before finalising a specific site due to the potential noise issues.
- 2.3.2 In response to these concerns, an audiometry exercise has been carried out at Mansfield District Council's waste transfer station to measure the noise whilst glass is being ejected from the refuse vehicle when tipping and also when the glass is being loaded into the contractor's haulage lorry. Recordings have also been carried out to record baseline noise levels from the lorry park at nearby properties on Sikorski Close.
- 2.3.3 It has become apparent that planning permission is needed to construct the waste transfer station and a consultant has been assigned to go through that process. Plans for the waste transfer station have been drawn up and are being progressed.
- 2.3.4 Planning permission will be submitted to the relevant bodies and will take up to 12 weeks to approve.
- 2.3.5 Based on initial quotations, we expect the waste transfer station to go over budget. The project was initially costed early in 2022 and since this time the costs of materials and labour has increased significantly; however the savings made on vehicle purchases should cover the cost of any increase.
- 2.3.6 At the time of writing this report, there is an element of uncertainty around a 'go live' date due to the planning and licencing issues alluded to above. A public commitment to a go-live date will only be announced once this certainty has been achieved.

## 2.4 Project Policy & Details

- 2.4.1 Decisions were made early in the project regarding how the consultation with residents will take place and whether they will need to opt in or out and the time scales and method of consultation was agreed. This has been completed and is discussed in 2.7.

### 2.4.2 *Bin Colour*

It has been decided that the colour of the bin will be a silver body and teal lid as this will take advantage of the established and nationally recognised WRAP iconography for mixed glass.

#### 2.4.3 *Collection Times*

It is intended that glass collections to start at 6am in line with other waste services. This will allow staffing of the service to be managed alongside existing services. The feedback from Mansfield District Council's glass collections was that complaint numbers were very low and the frequency of collection (every 8 weeks) meant that noise was less of an issue.

#### 2.4.4 *Bring Sites*

The existing network of glass bottle banks will remain in situ until at least the delivery of glass bins commences however it is anticipated that the drop in glass being deposited in the bottle banks will result in the contractor withdrawing its collection service shortly after.

2.4.5 Tonnage data from 2022/23 show that we collected over 65% of our glass from 8 sites so in order to divert more glass to the kerbside collections, all other sites will be removed. The 8 sites that will remain will be refurbished and replaced with new bins and emptied by the new glass recycling teams.

#### 2.5 Recycling Ollerton and Boughton

Recycling Ollerton and Boughton have seen an increase in customers requesting their glass collection services since we issued our consultation letters. As a result, they have purchased just under 1000 new glass collection boxes for their customers. Following additional operational work carried with ROB, NSDC is being asked to commit one-off funding (circa £8,000) as a contribution to assist with the collection infrastructure in the form of kerbside collection boxes.

#### 2.6 Procurement

##### 2.6.1 *Wheeled Bins*

We will need 43,996 bins to complete the roll out but an additional 1,000 bins will be ordered to cover new build properties and any potential influx of requests from the ROB area. We will also need around 30 660L containers for communal bin areas and around 50-60 for the replacement bottle banks.

2.6.2 Now that the formal consultation has finished and responses have been compiled and we have had confirmation that the ROB area will still be offered the service, we will be able to source the bins from a procurement framework.

##### 2.6.3 *Glass Sales*

The contract for the sale of glass was also delayed due to the uncertainty of where the transfer station will be located but now this has been confirmed, we can proceed. Given that there is some uncertainty with the tonnage collected, quality and contamination, we will be tendering the contract for 1 year only through a procurement framework. This process will be quicker than an open tender and all the large waste management companies are signed up to the procurement framework that we will using. After year 1, we will be well placed to enter into a longer-term contract from year 2 onwards.

#### 2.6.4 *Licensing & Training*

It has been confirmed that the proposed waste transfer station will require an environmental permit from the Environment Agency. This will be a 'bespoke' permit as the conditions (the site is within 200m of a domestic residence) do not fit those of a 'standard rules' permit.

2.6.5 As was the case for the tendering process, we had not been able to proceed with the application process until the exact location had been finalised.

2.6.6 A certificate of technical competence is required to manage the site and whilst the outcome of environmental permit would confirm the level of COTC required (low risk, medium risk or high risk), it is possible to start the compulsory modules while we await confirmation by the Environment Agency and the registration process is already underway.

2.6.7 It is a necessary for the application process to have a named COTC holder however the COTC holder at Mansfield District Council who had offered to assist with the application process has recently made a decision to take early retirement and therefore this is no longer an option. We are currently seeking an alternative.

#### 2.6.8 *Staffing*

Additional drivers and loaders will be required to operate the new glass recycling rounds and although both crews will not be required every day for glass collections, they will be able to be deployed onto an increasingly subscribed garden recycling service, as well as collecting from the residual bring sites.

2.6.9 The recruitment process has not started yet but following the interest for recent recruitment exercises for waste operatives, we do not anticipate any issues filling the required number of posts.

2.6.10 As the new crews will enable growth in the garden recycling service, it is also timely to consider plans for the development of this service in 24/25. Since the service was brought back in-house in April 2020, the price has remained at £35 per annum. Given inflationary pressures the service has faced since that time, it is recommended that the charge in 24/25 is increased to £37 per annum – the first increase in four years, with fees in neighbouring authorities across Nottinghamshire as high as £40

#### 2.6.11 *Round Formulation*

Officers have received demonstrations from companies that specialise in creating efficient waste round collections via computer software and our IT team is discussing compatibility issues with the supplier. We can then use this to create collection rounds and round maps for the crews and these will also be used to assist the bin deliveries.

2.6.12 The added complexity of the lower participation in the ROB area has increased the need for round modelling.

2.6.13 We have also finished a communal bin audit for all flats and houses of multiple occupation which will not be able accommodate individual bins. This exercise has created a list of properties which will be suitable for either; a shared larger bin (660 litre capacity), shared standard bin or no space at all.

#### 2.6.14 *Communication*

##### *Opting In and Out*

2.6.15 Residents have been given the opportunity to opt in or out of the scheme, with residents of the area covered by Recycling Ollerton and Boughton opted out by default and all other residents opted in.

2.6.16 The consultation exercise has finished with 2628 residents from the NSDC area opting out of the service (6%). We have also received 1494 requests to opt in to the scheme from the ROB area (13%). This gives a total of 43996 properties schedule to receive a bin for glass.

2.6.17 The deadline has passed for residents to complete the online form themselves but if anyone phones the contact centre then we will still accept any requests to opt in/out.

#### 2.6.18 *Funding*

Now we have revised numbers for the anticipated take up, we have re-run the financial implications based on the new figures. We have worked closely with ROB to improve the take up of their service, as well as providing financial assistance new containers. As a result of these actions, NSDC's income is reflecting a lower than anticipated level.

2.6.19 Awareness also needs to be maintained that the price from the sale of glass will fluctuate over the life of the service which will result in the revenue element of the budget fluctuating.

2.6.20 As stated above, there is already a consideration to increase garden recycling subscriptions to cover the increasing cost of running the garden recycling service (fuel, vehicle maintenance, staffing costs etc).

#### 2.6.21 *Timescales*

The aspiration is to commence the service this financial year, with an announcement made once planning permission and permits are obtained.

### **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding, Sustainability, and Crime and Disorder and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

#### **Financial Implications FIN23-24/4464**

##### **3.1 Glass Collection – Following Consultation**

3.1.1 The latest figures for 2023-24 shows a reduction in the anticipated uptake in and out of the ROB area following the consultation period; this has resulted in an anticipated reduction of income generated from glass recycling totalling around £9.3k over a 12-month period. The recycling credits income anticipated has also subsequently reduced by £19.3k over the same period, giving an overall loss in projected income over a full 12 month of £28.5k.

- 3.1.2 If the service were to start during the current financial year, there would be no adverse budgetary impact.
- 3.1.3 For the financial year 2024-25, and subsequent future years, the budget would require an increase of circa £30k due to the reasons described in paragraph 3.1.1
- 3.1.4 In order to support the funding of this adverse requirement, there has been some consideration regarding the increase in Garden Recycling Collection Fee & Charge and the rationale for this is included above.
- 3.1.5 The 2024-25 budget set in the 2023-24 MTFP for garden recycling was £680k. This was based on 19,410 customers paying £35. During the current year, the garden recycling service has exceeded 20,000 customers and has generated more than £720k.
- 3.1.6 Should we choose to increase this Fee & Charge to £36 for 2024-25 and set a customer base of 20,000, this would be an income of £720,000 or an increase to £37 would be an income of £740,000. This is an additional £40-60k as an efficiency item to the new 2024-25 income budgets.
- 3.1.7 Therefore, should both of the proposals be accepted, the increase in garden recycling income more than offsets the increase in budget requirement as a result of the reduction in glass recycling income.

### 3.2 Additional Associated Requirements

- 3.2.1 Currently, the service has an Apprentice Mechanic who is nearing the end of their apprenticeship. This apprentice started in Aug 2020 and has shown a great amount of potential and commitment to the role and has added a vast amount of value to the service and team.
- 3.2.2 To enable this apprentice to convert to a full-time permanent post, as opposed to starting a new apprenticeship with a new candidate which is in the MTFP, an adjustment from Apprentice to Established NS9 post would be an impact of circa £13k for a full 12 months on going year on year from 2024-25. Any additional costs during this financial year can be accommodated from the service budget.
- 3.2.3 The increase in Garden Recycling would comfortably support the permanent full-time mechanic and supports the need for the additional work resulting from the 3 vehicles for Glass Collection.

### 3.3 Capital

- 3.3.1 The bin purchases budget in the Capital Programme, allowed for an 80% take up on both non-ROB and ROB areas. The result of the consultation led many in the ROB area to take up the service with ROB, rather than the Council, which has resulted in an unexpected financial burden for ROB purchasing additional bins.
- 3.3.2 Due to the Capital Budget including an element for ROB bin purchases, it has been proposed that the cost of those purchases is funded by the Council for which there is forecast to be sufficient budget for.

## **Summary**

- For 2024-25, the example of £37 for Garden Recycling would give a new income level of £740k, which is £60k more than the MTFP currently states and would support the additional requirement of the £30k mentioned above in paragraph 4 and the staff transition from Apprentice to a fully established Mechanic of around £13k and still leaving circa £17k additional income generated by this service area.
- The glass recycling project continues to progress across the various areas and is still on schedule to be able to go live in 2023/24 however there is a risk with the transfer station status.
- There is an anticipated shortfall in the budgets from 2024 onwards, however, if a planned increase in the garden recycling fee takes place, this will be covered.
- The planning permission will be reviewed by the relevant bodies and the timescales are beyond our control.
- The Environment Agency will be considering the environmental permit but planning permission will need to be in place by the time it is reviewed, and we have been advised this could take up to 13 weeks (or longer if the regional office is experiencing a backlog).
- The requirement for a COTC holder means there will be a need to fast track the training of an officer to obtain the qualification.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None