

Report to: **Executive**

Date: **3 December 2020**

Title: **Schools' Recycling Service**

Portfolio Area: **Environment - Cllr K Baldry**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y / N**

Date next steps can be taken: Immediately following

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Executive approve:**

- 1. the proposal for a continuation to the free recycling service for schools (option 1) as set out in 4.2 of this report; and**
- 2. the related policy to this proposal, attached as Appendix A.**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Council currently provides a free recycling service to schools using the domestic collection rounds. As the domestic service is set to change in March 2021 it will no longer be possible to collect from schools in the current manner.
- 1.2 The free recycling service is a discretionary service which has been offered at the cost to the Council and in recent years has begun to compromise the domestic collection rounds.
- 1.3 The report recommends continuing the provision of a free service to schools using the domestic rounds. In order to reduce the burden this service has on the domestic collection rounds the containers used will be aligned with the new domestic recycling service and limit on number of containers will be introduced.
- 1.4 Where schools generate recycling above the limits they will be required to arrange a trade recycling collection.
- 1.5 Schools currently using the free recycling service have been consulted in advanced of this report.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Currently, the Council offers a free recycling service to 35 schools across the district which mirrors the service offered to households and is collected by the same vehicles. All schools use the clear and blue recycling sack service while 11 schools have brown bins for mixed garden and food waste. No schools receive a refuse collection as part of the domestic service, though some use the Council trade waste service for their refuse collection.
- 2.2 The current service has no formal policy or limits on the amount of recycling schools can put out for collection and this has resulted in more and more recycling being presented by schools. Each fortnight, the amount of recycling produced by the 35 schools is equal to that produced by at around 200-250 households. The majority of schools produce between 20-50 sacks a fortnight, however some larger schools produce over 100 recycling sacks a fortnight. This has put considerable strain on the domestic service which is now being compromised by the free collections.
- 2.3 Most other waste collection authorities in Devon offer a limited free service and require schools to arrange a trade waste collection for anything above the limit.
- 2.4 Schools can also choose to use a private contractor for the removal of recycling, as they all do for their refuse collection. A few smaller rural schools can find it difficult to arrange a financially viable collection with a private contractor due to their location and low levels of recycling created.
- 2.5 In March 2021, the Council will be introducing a new recycling service to all households. The new household service will offer a weekly collection of dry recycling and food waste and be facilitated by new containers for households and new kerb-side sort vehicles. Brown bins will be for garden waste only.
- 2.6 When the domestic service changes, it will no longer be possible to collect from schools in the current manner.
- 2.7 A consultation with the schools using the service was undertaken during October and November 2020. Details of this consultation are detailed below in 4.1.

## **3. Outcomes/outputs**

- 3.1 A recycling service for schools needs to support the desire to encourage recycling in schools without compromising the domestic collection service which the Council is legally obliged to provide.
- 3.2 The policy needs to be agreed and schools notified of the changes in advance of the domestic recycling service change in March 2021.

## **4. Options available and consideration of risk**

- 4.1 The proposed service outlined in 4.2 and further detailed in Appendix A has been presented to those schools using the existing service for consultation. 21 of the 35 schools responded, of which 9 said they would be able to cope with the proposed

number of containers, 2 were unsure and 11 said they would need additional collections. Most admitted that they currently used the service primarily to recycle packaging from their catering operations rather than waste generated from classrooms.

4.2 **Option 1 (recommended) – Free recycling service**

- a. The Council collects a limited amount of recycling from schools (6 boxes and 2 reusable sacks) free of charge. Schools receive a weekly collection on the domestic rounds and would be required to sort their recycling in a similar way to households to align with the new recycling service.
- b. The service would only be offered to schools using the existing service and would include dry recycling only. Brown bin collections will cease the start of the new domestic service in March 2021.
- c. Where schools produce recycling above the limit they can either become a Council trade customer, as described in 4.3, or engage a private provider to collect.
- d. Appendix A details the proposed policy for this service.
- e. This recommendation should help encourage larger schools to opt for a trade recycling service which better fits their needs while not putting smaller schools, who may struggle to find a private provider, at a disadvantage.
- f. This recommendation could be seen as a reduction in service however a free recycling service for schools is a discretionary service which has been provided at the continued cost to the Council. As the Council continues to face financial challenges, discretionary services must be reviewed.
- g. Providing an unlimited free recycling service to schools would not only be detrimental to the domestic collection service but would be unappealing to schools who would likely struggle to sort the recycling in the way required.

4.3 **Option 2 – Charged recycling service**

- a. The Council would cease its free recycling service for schools at the start of the new domestic service in March 2021. Schools could either sign up to the Council's trade service or seek a private provider.
- b. Most schools may find that a trade service would better meet their needs in terms of reduced sorting of recycling and better storage.
- c. Withdrawal of the free service could cause reputational damage however a free recycling service for schools is a discretionary service which has been provided at the continued cost to the council. As the Council continues to face financial challenges, discretionary services must be reviewed.

- 4.4 Both options have the potential to generate income through the Council's trade waste service though this is not guaranteed and is difficult to predict as schools could choose to arrange collections with a private contractor.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Executive approve the recommendations as detailed in this report.
- 5.2 If approved, all participating schools will be notified of the new service in advanced of the new recycling service. Any schools with brown bins will have these removed ahead of the start of the new domestic recycling service in March 2021.

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>The Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 deem waste from premises forming part of a university, school or other educational premises to be household waste for the purposes of charges that can be made for its collection and disposal. The Regulations provide that a charge for the collection and disposal can be applied to waste from premises forming part of a university school, or other educational establishment, except where collection of waste from those premises was being undertaken prior to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012, in such cases a charge can be applied for the collection but not disposal.</p> <p>Under the Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay, Waste Collection Authorities in Devon will offer a recycling collections service to schools.</p> <p>Schools are classed as waste producers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and therefore have a Duty of Care as set out in Section 34(1) of that Act.</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		<p>The provision of the existing service costs the Council, £18,310 annually, £523.14 per school (the service is provided to 35 schools). If the recommendations of this report are approved, the cost per school will remain the same, subject to inflation. The number of schools using the free service may decrease as larger schools will find it beneficial to switch to a SHDC or private trade collection. If they choose to switch to the Council trade recycling service this will also generate income to the Council as this is a charged service.</p> <p>The Executive is being recommended to approve a continuation to the free recycling service for schools (Option 1). The free recycling service is a discretionary service.</p>

Risk		Risk related to the recommendations and alternate options explored are outlined in section 4 of this report. This risk has been reduced through consulting schools in advanced of this report.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The provision of these services aligns with the Council themes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Communities</li> <li>• Environment</li> </ul>
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		<p>Schools have a legal obligation, under their Duty of Care, to apply the waste hierarchy to all waste they create. This means they should put measures in place to reduce, reuse and recycle waste where feasible.</p> <p>While setting limits on the free service may cause some schools to adjust their recycling services, they will still be obliged to apply the waste hierarchy. Therefore the recommendations should not result in less recycling.</p> <p>The recommendations may result in increased vehicle movements related to each schools waste collections.</p>
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity		None
Safeguarding		None
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None
Other implications		None

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – SHDC School Recycling Collection Policy

**Background Papers:**

None