

Agenda Item 36.

TITLE	Ceasing the supply of single use plastic food caddy liners
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Executive on Thursday, 29 September 2022
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Environment and Leisure - Cllr Ian Shenton

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To confirm the decision for stopping the supply of caddy liners.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive agree ceasing the supply of caddy liners as alternatives are available.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been brought to Council following a 'call-in' motion by seven Members under 5.4.14 of the Council's Constitution as they consider this is a Key Decision. This was originally made as an officer decision in consultation with the Lead Member as it was not considered to qualify as a Key Decision as defined in paragraph 1.4.4 of the Constitution. As it is not clear, this report has been brought to Executive for decision.

In 2019, the food waste service was implemented with a starter pack of 100 caddy liners for one year. Although no budget was set aside, this supply continued in 2020, 2021 and 2022 as income generated by the wider service was able to accommodate this spend, however due financial pressures this is no longer financially viable.

This report sets out the decision to cease the supply of food waste caddy liners and the associated rationale.

BACKGROUND

In January 2018, The Executive approved the report for the delivery of the food waste service which was funded through both revenue and capital expenditure. The supply of caddy liners was funded through a one-off capital receipt in the first year to start the service and was not intended to continue thereafter. The day-to-day operation of the service was funded through revenue.

In 2019, seven million caddy liners were distributed to residents as part of the implementation of the new food waste collection service. Each property received a starter pack of 100 liners to support residents with the transition.

Income to the waste service has subsequently enabled the supply of caddy liners to properties since 2019. However now due to financial and environmental pressures this income from the waste service can no longer be realised.

Financial reasons for the Change:

There is no specific budget for caddy liners as set out in Paper 2 of the January 2018 report. The estimated cost of the caddy liners for 2022/23 has escalated dramatically to around £120k, reflecting crude oil price increases.

The funding as set out in Paper 2 of the 2018 report states that there is only £500,000 one off cost for containers and liners as Table 1 below:

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Not Applicable
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Not Applicable
Following Financial Year (Year 3 2019/20)	£500,000 one-off cost for containers & kitchen caddies, etc.	Yes	Capital

Table 1: Extract taken from January 2018 report

There has not been any specific budget for the supply of kitchen caddy liners beyond 2019 and there is no specific policy in place to supply going forwards. Although there is no specific budget, stopping the supply of caddy liners will save the current cost.

Environmental reasons for the change:

The Council has included reducing single use plastics as an initiative under the Climate Emergency and has tasked the Executive Member for Environment to deliver this (para 5.2.10.26). It is considered that this decision aligns with that initiative as currently the Council uses seven million single-use liners per year. Those that are used to line food waste caddies are removed during the composting process and incinerated with attendant greenhouse gas emissions.

The impact of the change is minor as the kitchen caddy can be lined with other items i.e. bread bags, cereal packets, newspaper etc and ultimately there is no requirement for it to be lined at all (residents can wash the caddy if required).

There is a perception that there could be a drop of collected food waste if the caddy liners are not supplied. However, a strong communications campaign will be undertaken to highlight the issue of food waste in the blue bags (c.20%) and move this to the food caddies. The Council’s waste team will also support residents with advice where required.

The weekly collection of food waste will continue, and it was not envisaged that the caddy liners would be supplied beyond the first year. There are simply financial and environmental issues that have to be addressed

Key Decisions:

The original decision was made by officers on Friday 15 July 2022 after consultation with the Lead Member. The decision was not considered to qualify as a key decision as stipulated in parts 1.4.4 the Council’s Constitution.

However, seven councillors did not consider this was correct and elected to use the constitutional review mechanism within part 5.4.14. This would require Council to consider the point on the 22 September 2022 and if full Council determined it was a Key Decision then it would have required the decision maker to redetermine the decision after following the Key Decision process.

Officers do not consider that this is Key Decision under the Constitution but recognise that it is not clear and so have made the pragmatic decision (in response to the constitution review) to withdraw the original decision and bring this to Executive following the Key Decision process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

Although there is no specific budget allocated for the supply of caddy liners, there would be a cost saving which would amount to around £120k per annum.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial 2022/23 (Year 1)	£0		
Next Financial Year 2023/24 (Year 2)	c.£120k cost saving		
Following Financial Year 2024/25 (Year 3)	c.£120k cost saving		

Other Financial Information
Although there is no specific budget allocated for the supply of caddy liners, there would be a cost avoidance <u>saving</u> which would amount to around £120k per annum.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation
Stakeholder consideration has been assessed as part of this report. The impact of the change is minor as the kitchen caddy can be lined with other bags i.e. bread bags, newspaper etc and ultimately there is no requirement for it to be lined. A robust targeted communications campaign to highlight that over 20% of the blue bags is food waste and encourage moving this to the food waste caddies.

Public Sector Equality Duty
This has been completed with no impact determined.

Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i>
This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible through leading by example as well as by encouragement. This proposal will help reduce carbon and single use plastic and support the goal of the Borough reaching carbon neutral by 2030

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
None

Contact Richard Bisset	Service Place
Telephone	Email richard.bisset@wokingham.gov.uk