

Cessation of provision of food waste liners**Ricky Moffat, Head of Commercial Operations****1 Purpose of Report**

This paper details proposals to cease the free provision of food waste caddy liners.

2 Background

It is a statutory requirement for Midlothian Council to offer kerbside collection of food waste to all areas classified as urban.

At its meeting of 8 January 2013 Council agreed to the introduction of a food waste collection service from December 2015, coinciding with the completion of the Edinburgh/Midlothian food waste treatment plant at Millerhill.

Residents were provided with an internal caddy, an external caddy and a 12-month supply of caddy liners.

Since that time residents have been able to make unlimited requests for additional caddy liners. These are provided free-of-charge and are delivered by food waste collection crews.

As a condition of receiving funding to introduce kerbside collections of food waste, Midlothian Council committed to the Scottish Government to supply householders with replacement liners for a period of three years. Additional caddy liners are therefore not required to be funded by the Council beyond December 2018.

It is proposed that from this date, they are no longer provided to residents.

Ceasing the provision of food waste caddy liners will save Council approximately £16,000 per year (based on a potential 10% diversion of food waste into the residual waste stream).

2.2 Provision of liners

Making caddy liners available to purchase from Council premises such as libraries and community hubs was considered however caddy liners are widely available from a range of local shops as well as via online retailers.

It should be noted that it is not necessary for residents to purchase caddy liners to secure their food waste. It is acceptable to use any type of plastic bag to secure food waste or to present it wrapped in paper.

One roll of liners will continue to be provided to new build housing offered kerbside collections of food waste. There are no direct costs associated with this as from April 2018 a charge to developers for all waste containers (which includes the food caddy bags) was introduced.

2.3 Potential effect on participation

There is limited data detailing the effect that stopping the provision of free caddy liners has on levels of participation and therefore tonnages of food waste collected. Data previously collected by Zero Waste Scotland and Waste Resource Action Programme featured trials where free liner provision ceased after a year, rather than the three years of provision offered by the Council.

It should be noted that during May 2018 when stocks of liners ran out and there was a two week waiting period for new supplies, no associated drop in tonnages were seen.

There is currently an allowance of £27,665 in the revenue budget for 2019/20 for food waste caddy liners.

The potential financial implication of stopping provision of caddy liners is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Potential savings in ceasing provision of free food waste caddy liners

% drop in participation	Savings in liner provision	Decrease in food waste tonnage (tonnes)	Increased waste disposal costs	Cost:Saving
5%	£27,665	115	£5,750	£21,915
10%	£27,665	230	£11,500	£16,165
15%	£27,665	345	£17,250	£10,415
20%	£27,665	460	£23,000	£4,665
25%	£27,665	575	£28,750	-£1,085

The costs in the table above are for the capital cost of the liners only. It does not include costs associated with the storage and delivery of the liners, or associated administrative costs including staff time in the Corporate Contact Centre in dealing with requests for replacement liners.

2.4 Promotion

If approved, a range of communication channels will be used to advise residents.

- Information will be included in the mailing being sent to residents in January 2019 advising on the changes to the garden waste collection service
- Messages via the Council website and social media
- Informational postcards will be left in the caddies of residents requesting liners

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

An annual saving of £16,000 based on a projected 10% drop in participation and the associated diversion of food waste to the residual waste stream.

Year one one-off cost of £300 for 10,000 informational postcards.

3.2 Risk

Risk Causes: Midlothian Council are proposing to cease the free provision of food waste liners.

Risk Event: There is a risk that residents who choose not to use alternative liners will place their food waste in their residual waste bin instead.

Risk Impact: There is risk that the Council's recycling performance will fall.

Actions to mitigate risk:

A wide communications and marketing campaign to raise awareness of alternative suppliers of liners and alternative ways to present food waste for collection will take place.

Moving to smaller (140L) residual waste bins or reducing the frequency of residual waste collections would reduce the opportunity for residents to dispose of food waste alongside their general refuse. These options are being considered as part of the wider Waste Strategy which is currently being prepared for consideration.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☒ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The budget projections indicate that in 2019/20, this proposal means Council will have in the region of £16,000 (assuming a 10% diversion of food waste to the residual waste stream) for the provision of services and the pursuit of key outcomes as set out in the Single Midlothian Plan.

3.4.1 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Loss of tonnage due to diversion to residual waste would affect Midlothian Council's recycling performance.

This proposal also impacts the performance and outcomes of other services eg; Contact Centre, Library Services and Corporate Communications due to queries and the necessary promotional activities.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Promoting alternative liner suppliers and other means to present food waste for collection are intended to ensure that so far as reasonably practicable participation in the kerbside collection of food waste is maintained.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

No consultation has been undertaken in connection with this proposal.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

There are no Sustainable Development issues as a consequence of this report.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues associated with this report. Information on caddy liner provision on the Council website will be updated.

4 Recommendations

Council is recommended to: -

- a) Approve proposals to cease provision of food waste caddy liners with effect from 1st January 2019.

Date 18th December 2018

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Background Papers:

None