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1. Background and Purpose

The Joint Waste Collection Contract delivers a single specification across the four authority areas. Under the contract, each of the partner authorities pay the same charge for services, including garden waste collections, bulky waste collections and the provision of wheeled bins. Whilst the IAA specifies that the setting of annual fees and charges is a Tier 1 decision i.e. remains with the individual authorities

it was envisaged that charges and policies across the contract area would align over time. Over the past two years, substantial progress has been made in transitioning towards a set of aligned policies and charges. However, some differences remain in each area, principally as a legacy of each Authority's previous service arrangements. Those that remain disparate are challenging to align due to the variances in policies and fees currently being applied

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress made to date and recommend further areas for policy alignment. Where this represents a change to existing policy or fees, the Committee is asked to recommend these for adoption at their Authority, where applicable.

2. Benefits of Alignment

By achieving further alignment residents within the contract area will experience a more consistent, simplified service which would enable more precise, more targeted communication with residents – assisting them in recycling more and increasing the use of revenue-generating services. Also, alignment of fees and services would simplify contract oversight, enabling a greater focus on improving the quality and efficiency of activities.

The need for consistency has also been highlighted in the recent government consultancy outcome report, on improving recycling rates – which highlighted the overwhelming support from residents for greater consistency across all of waste management services, not just recycling.

Furthermore, there is currently a reputational risk associated with having different policies, and charges for a joint contract.

3. Policy alignment to date

Over the past few years, significant progress has been made in aligning charges and policies across the contract area. The following is a summary of the key policies that are already aligned, or have been aligned since the formation of JWS.

1. Food and recycling bins are provided for free to houses.
2. Excess recycling will be collected.
3. Bins will not be emptied when:
 - a. more than two rubbish bins are presented,
 - b. there is excess rubbish,

- c. the lid won't close because of excess waste,
 - d. they are overweight so can't be safely lifted,
 - e. they are damaged so can't be safely lifted,
 - f. the incorrect bin is presented e.g. rubbish instead of recycling,
 - g. unaccepted contaminating items are visible on lifting the lid.
4. Missed collections can be reported up to two days after scheduled collection. Crew to return on same day if reported before midday or following day if reported after.
 5. Additional temporary rubbish bins, of 180 litre as standard, will only be provided if the household meets one of the following criteria:
 - a. there are six or more adults,
 - b. there are more than three adults and one child in nappies,
 - c. there are two or more adults and two children in nappies,
 - d. a medical condition of one or more residents results in more waste being produced than would fit in one standard rubbish bin.
 6. For communal properties the required bin capacity is calculated based on allowing the following per fortnight:
 - a. 60 litres per person for rubbish and recycling,
 - b. 46 litres per household for food.

4. Proposals for further policy alignment

Two areas have been identified as further opportunities to harmonise policies and adopt best practice:

- Provision of temporary additional rubbish bins; and
- Charges for residents downsizing rubbish bins

4.1 Provision of Temporary Additional Rubbish Bins

Current policy: Additional rubbish capacity is currently provided to households with large families, children in nappies, or where additional rubbish is generated due to medical reasons. The criteria against which temporary bins are provided is currently aligned; however, as Table 1 shows, there are currently differences in the charges made.

Table 1 - Current charges for the provision of temporary additional bins

	Elmbridge	Mole Valley	Surrey Heath	Woking
Current situation	Residents only charged for delivery. Provided free for a medical reason. Eligibility reviewed every 2 years.	Residents charged for the bin. It is provided free for a medical reason.	It is currently provided for free.	Residents only charged for delivery. Provided free for a medical reason. Eligibility reviewed every 2 years.
Alignment	No change	Removal of	Charge of £15	No change

action required		charge for bin and alignment of £15 delivery fee.	delivery fee, unless additional bin is for a medical reason.	
Current demand	20 requests p.a. 50% due to medical reasons	20 requests p.a. 50% due to medical reasons	20 requests p.a. 50% due to medical reasons	20 requests p.a. 50% due to medical reasons
Revenue Impact of alignment		-£300 p.a.	+£150 p.a.	

Proposed Policy: It is proposed that additional rubbish bins shall be provided to eligible households on temporary loan, instead of on a permanent basis, and reviewed on bi-annually so they can be recalled when the household no longer meets the criteria. This will ensure that waste capacity is contained, and excess residual waste disposal is not encouraged.

It is proposed that a charge of £15 is made for provision of the bin which covers the cost of delivery, as well as future removal and cleaning. Households requiring an additional rubbish bin for medical reasons will be loaned the container free of charge.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is asked to recommend to their Authorities that, on approval of written request, householders are provided a temporary additional rubbish wheeled bin for £15. The charge will be waived for applications made on medical grounds. Eligibility will be reviewed every 2 years.

4.2 Households that choose to downsize their residual bin

Current policy: There is a range of policies for residents wishing to downsize their bin. With Mole Valley and Surrey Heath aligned in providing a 140-litre bin free of charge, Elmbridge is charging for the bin and Woking charging a delivery fee.

Table 2 - Policies for households choosing to downsize their residual bin

	Elmbridge	Mole Valley	Surrey Heath	Woking
Current policy for downsizing	180-litre bins can be bought for £25	140-litre bins provided for no charge	140-litre bins provided for no charge	140-litre bins provided with a £15 delivery charge
Current demand per annum	40	40	40	40
Alignment action required	Change of bin from 180-litre to 140-litre and removal of £25 fee.	No change	No change	Removal of £15 delivery charge.
Annual cost of alignment	-£1000			-£600

Proposed Policy: There is strong evidence that households who have a smaller residual waste capacity, recycle a higher proportion of their waste. Therefore, to encourage higher

recycling rates, residents should be encouraged to downsize, as such a 140-litre bin should be provided free of charge, with no delivery fee charged.

The number of households requesting to downsize their bin per year is small, estimated to be 40 per year.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to recommend to their Authorities that households downsizing from a standard 240-litre to a 140-litre bin rubbish bin are provided this free of charge.

5. Further Alignment of fees and charges

Annex 1 shows the current charges for services to households charged by each Authority for 2019/20. Various options to align these charges over a 3-year period have been modelled however, the extent of changes required to achieve alignment is significant. Such changes would result in either a loss of income to some Authorities or require some residents to pay significantly more for services which is not feasible.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked that to recommend to their Authorities that, where broad alignment in fees and charges has already been achieved, the annual review of fees and charges continues to support alignment.

Annex 1: Fees and charges to households 2019/20

	Elmbridge	Woking	Surrey Heath	Mole Valley
Bulky waste collections				
1 item	£30	£30	£30	£40
each additional item (max 9 additional)	£10	£10	£10	£10
Rubbish Bin				
140 litre	-	£45	no charge	£30
180 litre	£25	-	no charge	n/a
240 litre	£30	£45	n/a	£50
Used bin	-	£30	n/a	
Exchange to smaller bin	£25	no charge	no charge	£15
Temporary additional rubbish container	£15	£15	no charge	£50
Recycling bins	no charge	no charge	no charge	no charge
Food bins	no charge	no charge	no charge	no charge
Garden waste service				
1st bin	£45	£45	£45	£56.50
each addition bin	£40	£30	£30	£56.50
Sacks	by assessment only	by assessment only	by assessment only	by assessment only
Charge for bin	n/a	no	no	yes