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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Cabinet


7th November 2023

Councillors Rhys Baker and Patsy Ellis, Cabinet Members for Waste and

Provision of Domestic Battery Recycling Service

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

This report provides information regarding options for the introduction of a domestic battery recycling service along with the recommendation by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (3rd October 2023).

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. **Notes the report and the outcome and agreed recommendation from the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee (3rd October 2023) of:**
 - a) *Noting the contents of the report.*
 - b) *Recommended that option D - Kerbside Collection -The implementation of a kerbside scheme with residents providing their own bags as the most cost efficient and sustainable method’.*
2. **Agrees and approves the recommendation by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee or wishes to consider an alternative option.**

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Clean and sustainable environment High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 This report contains a number of options and the financial implications of each are detailed accordingly. The financial implications of whichever option is proposed, if supported by Cabinet, will be incorporated into the budget setting proposals for 2024/25.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Local Authorities are not required to collect used batteries from households. Any legal requirements fall upon the retailers and distributors which is enforced by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).

Completed by: Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer)

Health and Safety

- 1.3 A full assessment of the risk and required mitigation, including a safe system of work and appropriate training for operatives would be required. Appropriate containers would need to be procured to ensure the safe collection, storage and transportation of batteries from general household waste.

Completed by: Phil Swinton

Climate Change

- 1.4 Recycling can help to extract the raw materials from used batteries and support the move towards a circular economy. The options for battery collection set out within the report are not expected to generate additional trips for the Council's waste collection vehicles, therefore not adding to the carbon emissions of operating the vehicle fleet. The outlined Option b) ensures the principle that the 'producer pays', as they are responsible for the collection and onward recycling of the product.

Consult with Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Currently Local Authorities are not required to collect used batteries from households and the Department for Environment & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) consultation (Environment Act 2021) on the separate collection of recyclables does not propose to introduce this.
- 2.2 South Kesteven Council's waste operations as with many local authorities does not directly collect batteries as part of their recycling initiatives. Although, they are accepted at the local household waste recycling centres within the district.
- 2.3 Members raised concerns in respect of the safe recycling of batteries as a result of an incident in March 2023, when a refuse vehicle was forced to empty its smoking and smouldering contents onto the ground in Ingoldsby, Lincolnshire. The source cannot be confirmed but may have been due to a suspected spark caused by a domestic battery or a single use vape.
- 2.4 South Kesteven District Council take the safety of our waste/recycling operatives very seriously and want to do everything possible to mitigate any risk to them. As identified at 1.3 a full assessment of the risk and required mitigation will be carried out should approval be given and before any collections take place.
- 2.5 Retailers and distributor do have responsibilities which means they must offer free collection points ('takeback') of waste or used batteries if they sell or supply 32kg or more of portable batteries per year, (this equates to one pack of 4 AA batteries per day). This requirement is enforced by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Officers were tasked to look at a number of options in respect of safe battery recycling which also included reviewing the scheme of another local authority who are collecting directly from the householder.

3.2 **South Kesteven District Council**

3.3 **Regulations** – South Kesteven District Council is a waste collection authority and as such does not hold the appropriate Environmental Agency Licence to store batteries at its depot.

3.4 However, Lincolnshire County Council have indicated that they would be willing to set up an arrangement for batteries to be tipped at the Waste Transfer Station or Household Waste Recycling Centre in Grantham, but the types of battery would need to be agreed along with the method and receptacle the batteries are collected in from the householders.

3.5 **Operational Implications** - The refuse fleet is not currently adapted to carry batteries separately. However, it is considered that a suitable container could be sourced and attached without impacting on the vehicle manufacturer's design specification.

3.6 As indicated in 3.4, if a proposed scheme were to be introduced either the Council would need to provide an approved bag / container for householders (this may be an ongoing cost) or the resident would need to present the batteries in a suitable receptacle / bag which was acceptable to the disposal authority. If this is taken forward, then guidance will be given regarding the suitability of any bag used by the resident.

3.7 Adding batteries as a separate collection is unlikely to add any significant time in terms of collections from properties or on a round (any possible increased collection time would be dependent on the take up of the scheme and method used for collection).

3.8 **Other Collection Authorities**

3.9 It is understood that Rushcliffe Borough Council's has been running a battery collection scheme for a number of years which has evolved over time. The scheme currently recycles approximately 1 tonne of household batteries each month and carries out the operation as follows:

- Initially Rushcliffe Borough Council provided a battery bag for each resident, this was to raise the profile of recycling batteries and the take up of the scheme. Although now residents can request replacement bags or use their own bags. This can include AAA, AA, C and D size household batteries as well as button, mobile phone, laptop and rechargeable batteries.
- Residents are told 'Not to Overfill the Bag' and to leave the bag on any colour bin on any collection day.
- The battery bags are collected and stored in a caged box on the vehicle and offloaded at the end of the round for onward transportation and recycling

4. **Other Options Considered**

4.1 Other Options:

- a) **Status Quo** - Continue as currently, with residents using the take back scheme and household waste recycling centres.

No Additional Cost

- b) **Communications Campaign** - Carry out a managed communications campaign promoting the “take back” scheme through social media, the Council’s website and other communication channels to raise the profile and benefits of recycling batteries safely.

Cost - up to £5,000 depending on the type, timescale and extent of campaign.

- c) **Kerbside Collection** - Implement a kerbside scheme with bags provided for residents use (supply of 4 bags per annum but has an ongoing cost)

Cost £71,800

- d) **Kerbside Collection** - Implement a kerbside scheme with residents providing their own bags and run alongside a communication campaign.

Retrofit Vehicles £8,000, Communication Campaign £5,000

Total Cost £13,000

4.2 Summary of Estimated Costs

Item	Option (a) Status Quo	Option (b) Comms Campaign	Option (c) Year 1 Bags Provided	Option (c) Year 2 etc. Bags Provided	Option (d) Residents providing own bags
Retrofitting of 32 vehicles	£0	£0	£8,000	£0	£8,000
Annual letter delivery and supply of WEEE Bags (4) to all households (70,000 @ £0.84) (Ongoing Costs)	£0	£0	£58,800	£58,800	£0
Comms campaign / ongoing	£0	£5,000	£5,000		£5,000
Total	£0	£5,000	£71,800	£58,800	£13,000

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are invited to consider the following points and recommend a chosen option.

- Local Authorities are not required to collect used batteries from households.
- The collection of batteries shows commitment from the Council for recycling additional items safely.
- The introduction of a battery recycling scheme would not necessarily eliminate incidents of waste collection vehicle conflagration.
- The March 2023 incident is the only recorded one of this type in SKDC.
- There are varying costs for each of the options which the service will need to absorb as detailed in 4.2 should a scheme be implemented.
- Retailers and distributor have responsibilities if they sell or supply 32kg or more of portable batteries per year, in terms of providing free collection points 'takeback scheme'.
- The 'takeback scheme' aligns with producer responsibility as identified in the Environment Act – 'producer pays'.
- There are significant number of retailers within walking, cycling and driving distance within South Kesteven District Council who provide containers for the deposit of batteries - Morrisons, Asda, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Tesco, Lidl, Co-op along with other independent retailers).
- Batteries can also be taken to the local Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- The Introduction of the scheme would show South Kesteven Council's Commitment to:
 - a responsible sustainable recycling management system
 - a commitment to protecting the environment.
- Collection of batteries from households may eliminate any issue for rural communities who may not have any readily available collection point and for those whom travel is difficult.
- Other authorities have introduced similar schemes e.g. Rushcliffe Borough Council, South Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Following a Motion at Full Council in July 2023 in respect of the recycling of batteries, the Council considered that the issue merited further consideration and thus resolved to;
- Ask officers to investigate and prepare a report giving costed options.
 - Request the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider the report and to make recommendations of a chosen option to Cabinet for their consideration and decision.
- 6.2 A report was prepared and presented at Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 3rd October 2023 and their agreed recommendation was as follows:

'It was proposed, seconded and AGREED that the Committee:

- a. Noting the contents of the report.*
- b. Recommended that option D - Kerbside Collection -The implementation of a kerbside scheme with residents providing their own bags as the most cost efficient and sustainable method'.*

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Rushcliffe Borough Council – Battery Recycling Scheme



Rushcliffe Borough Council

Battery Recycling

In the United Kingdom, we throw away over 600 million batteries every year. The main method of disposal for batteries is sending them to landfill sites, which are rapidly running out of space.

We currently recycle about 1 ton of Rushcliffe household batteries each month.

Put your used household batteries in the battery bag and leave it on the top of any colour bin on any collection date. We'll recycle them and leave you a replacement bag.

- Simply place your used or unwanted batteries - including AAA, AA, C and D size household batteries as well as button, mobile phone, laptop and rechargeable batteries in this bag.
- Please DO NOT OVERFILL this bag.
- Place bag on any of your bins on collection day and our collectors will remove it and leave you a new bag.
- For more information about household battery recycling please call our customers services centre on 0115 981 9911.

We can recycle the following types of household batteries:

- AAA
- AA
- C
- D
- Button batteries
- Mobile telephone batteries
- Laptop batteries
- Accumulators (rechargeable batteries).

We can't accept car batteries or any batteries with gel or acid inside them.

How to store your batteries for safe recycling

Batteries are made from many different materials including lithium-ion (used in laptop batteries), zinc (used in AA batteries) and nickel cadmium (used in power tool batteries); all are recycled into their component parts.

The recovered materials can be used to manufacture new batteries and electronics; they can also be used in the steel industry and even in paint production.

1. Store your batteries away from children and pets. Many batteries contain hazardous materials.
2. Keep your batteries in a cool dry place. If your battery becomes corroding or overheated they could leak or rupture.
3. Tape up the terminals and any wires of your batteries. Dead batteries sometimes hold a small charge, fires can result from batteries coming into contact with conductive materials like other batteries.
4. Store used batteries in a plastic container (like our battery bag) or cardboard box. Storing batteries in a non-conductive container will reduce the risk of fire, leakage or rupture.
5. Do not store different types of batteries together. Try to store different batteries separately before placing them out for collection.