

**Report Title: Local Plan policy – Provision of community recycling facilities in develop proposals.**

Date of meeting:	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills)		
Report of:	Chief Planning Officer		
Portfolio:	Housing and Highways		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

**Summary:**

On March 5<sup>th</sup> 2024 Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills) agreed the following recommendation:

“the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals.”

This report looks into the feasibility of adding a Local Plan policy on this issue.

This report sets out the current situation and the options that are open to the Council.

**Recommendation(s):**

(1) that a new policy for communal recycling facilities within major new commercial and housing developments in the next Local Plan and/or Waste Local Plan, is not currently considered appropriate.

**1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations**

- 1.1 On March 5<sup>th</sup> 2024, Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills) agreed the following recommendation:
- “the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals.”*
- 1.2 Whilst it was not specified what types of development proposals the committee referred to, this report will assume that O&S would like to see all major commercial and residential schemes to be considered for whether they could include community recycling facilities.

### **The current policy framework**

- 1.3 National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) does not provide guidance on the need for community recycling facilities. The NPPF, however, does allow Local Authorities to address non-strategic issues that arise in their area through the Development Plan process.
- 1.4 The Development Plan for Sefton includes the Sefton Local Plan (2017) and the Merseyside and Halton joint Waste Local Plan (2013).
- 1.5 The Local Plan does not include any requirement for community recycling facilities in new development. The Waste Local Plan, however, does include a policy, WM9 “Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New development”. This policy sets out that the design and layout of new development must, provide for the “facilitation of collection and storage of waste, including separated recyclable materials”.
- 1.6 This policy allows for the provision for recycling and for recycling collection. This is intended to ensure that appropriate space within the planning unit (i.e. an individual home or commercial building) is provided and the wider site is laid out so that waste can be collected safely and effectively. It is not aimed at securing communal waste collection facilities on a development. However, the policy does not preclude the provision of communal recycling facilities if these were proposed. Therefore, if considered appropriate, they could be provided as part of a proposal. However, in practice this would be hard to achieve as the Council would need to justify why developers would have to provide communal facilities when there are already household recycling collections.
- 1.7 The former Sefton Unitary Development Plan (2006), an early iteration of the Local Plan, had a policy that related to this issue. Policy EMW9 of that plan, “Recycling Facilities”, stated that communal recycling facilities should be included within all large supermarkets and other large developments that include a large car park. The rationale behind this policy was that large developments that have multiple and regular visits from residents would have the appropriate space and size to include a recycling area and would allow residents to combine their trip to the supermarket with dropping off recycling. The policy was produced to support recycling in the early days of it becoming more widespread and normalised.
- 1.8 The policy was not included in the 2017 Local Plan because it was not seen as a priority as, by then, widespread kerbside recycling collection regimes were in place and evidence was that these communal recycling drop off points were under-used. For example, the recycling point provided at Tesco Litherland was removed due to being underutilised. Additionally, ‘bring sites’ as they are known in the industry often attract fly tipped waste as the public will deposit non-recyclable items as a means of disposal. This impacts the local environmental quality of the location and places greater operational pressure onto the Street Cleansing Service who are often requested to cleanse the area.

### **Potential for a new Local Plan policy**

- 1.9 In order for a new policy to be put into place, it would need to be either through a review of the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan or a new Sefton Local Plan.
- 1.10 There is currently a review of the Waste Local Plan by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) to assess whether a new Waste Plan is required.
- 1.11 It is expected that, with the emerging changes to the planning system, that Sefton will have to start a new Local Plan within the next couple of years. However, the timing of these and the scope of the new Local Plan, remains to be seen. A new National Planning Policy Framework and updated plan making regulations are expected early 2025. In the best-case scenario, a new Local Plan would be unlikely to be adopted for at least three to four years.

### **Issues to consider for including separate recycling schemes with development**

- 1.12 Previously recycling facilities have been secured on commercial development sites. For example, on car parks of large supermarkets and retail parks.
- 1.13 Large supermarkets and retail parks have generally been good places for recycling facilities for the following reasons:
  1. The size and nature of supermarkets and retail parks mean that a significant amount of people use the site, and it allows people to take waste for recycling with them on a planned shopping trip, saving time and effort for people.
  2. Large supermarkets and retail parks usually have large car parks and so allow people to bring recycling with them in the car. Bringing recycling materials by foot, bike or public transport is not practical for many people. The large car parks also mean there is space for a sizeable facility that can cater for a wide range of recyclable materials.
  3. Using retail car parks, away from homes, mean that there is less likely to be complaints with smell, noise and odour and the perception of vermin problems.
- 1.14 Placing communal recycling facilities within both existing and new residential developments can be problematic. Firstly, there are already doorstep collections, provided by Sefton, which each household can use.
- 1.15 Also, the issue of where the recycling facilities would be sited can be challenging. The facility both needs to be readily accessible for anyone to use but not situated immediately next to someone's home. This could cause issues with noise, smells, vermin and increased traffic (as people may drive there). Furthermore, it would be difficult for the facility to be managed and could cause conflict between neighbours. When Operational In-House Services trialled communal bins in 2021 there was significant objection to them being sited near to people's homes for the reasons stated above.
- 1.16 If misused, these sites can also result in inappropriate waste being left (e.g. bulky waste) and if food waste is left, or food packaging that hasn't been washed properly, this can create odours and attract vermin. It is unlikely that many (if any) residents would wish to have such a facility close to their house.
- 1.17 Having a Local Plan policy requiring developers to provide recycling communal recycling facilities would need to be justified in a Local Plan examination. This would be challenging when there are existing household collections.
- 1.18 For the reasons set out above, it is not considered that having a Local Plan policy requiring communal recycling facilities to be provided within new developments is likely to be justifiable. However, it is something that can be reviewed when the next Local Plan /Waste Local Plan is commenced, and the LPA will then engage with the relevant departments and external organisations to explore if there are any possibilities at that point.
- 1.19 Notwithstanding this, the Council will continue to apply existing policies that require the space is included within new premises and homes for the safe and easy storage of

recycling material ready for collection and layouts of new development allow for the collection of waste and recycling.

**2. Financial Implications**

None.

**3. Legal Implications**

None.

**4. Risk Implications**

None.

**5 Staffing HR Implications**

None.

**6 Conclusion**

It is not considered that having a Local Plan policy requiring communal recycling facilities to be provided within new developments is likely to be justifiable. However, it is something that can be reviewed when the next Local Plan /Waste Local Plan is commenced, and the LPA will then engage with the relevant departments and external organisations to explore if there are any possibilities at that point.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

**Equality Implications:**

There are no equality implications. All households have kerbside recycling collections as existing and there is no proposal to change this. This benefits all characteristics.

**Impact on Children and Young People:**

This report will have a neutral impact upon children and young people.

**Climate Emergency Implications:**

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral.

There are no climate change impacts (positive or negative) likely to result from this report as the proposal will not propose a change from the existing patterns of waste

collections. Waste going to landfill can result in methane being produced, which is a greenhouse gas. There are existing kerbside collections as well as some existing bring sites across the borough to allow for recycling. This helps reduce waste going to landfill.

## **What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

### **(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7827/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5927/24.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Michelle Williams, Assistant Director for Operational Inhouse services has been consulted.

### **(B) External Consultations**

None.

### **Implementation Date for the Decision :**

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet decision.

Contact Officer:	David Robinson
Telephone Number:	(0151) 9343898
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:David.robinson@sefton.gov.uk">David.robinson@sefton.gov.uk</a>

### **Appendices:**

There are no appendices to this report.

### **Background Papers:**

None.