

Potential Establishment of Scrutiny Panels, OSC/316

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Following the Full Council meeting in October 2023, a [Notice of Motion](#) was passed which requested the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission “*to look into setting up a cross-party Scrutiny Panel, to look at how household waste recycling rates in Crawley can be improved*”.
- 1.2 It is the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider and establish Scrutiny Panels as required.
- 1.3 There are several factors that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission need to consider in advance of determining the recommendation:
 - a) The careful selection and prioritisation of review work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be productive, achieve added value and retain credibility. The work programme should also be realistic, flexible and retain spare capacity so that additional matters raised during the year can be addressed.
 - b) The Overview and Scrutiny Commission considered the Waste and Recycling Contract Extension Report (HPS/34) at its meeting on 6 March 2023. There was support for a further report to OSC once the National Waste Strategy was known, indicating proposals for the Council’s collection regime.
 - c) On 21 October 2023, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published the Government response to the “*Simpler Recycling*” [consultation](#) (formerly Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England). Appendix A features an [extract](#) from the Government’s response on key proposals along with proposed implementation dates and timelines. This was noted in the Council’s Budget Strategy 2024/25-2026/27 report ([FIN/636](#)). The final consultation for all local authorities closed on 20 November 2023 on additional policies related to “*Simpler Recycling*” in England and the Council is awaiting the results.

In summary, changes will see:

- More standardised recycling and waste collections across the country, including mandated waste collections as all authorities in England must collect the same waste streams for waste, recycling or composting from households.
- Residual (general, non-recyclable) waste collections to be collected (at least) fortnightly.
- Garden waste will remain a subscription based fee-paying service.
- Co-mingled recycling will continue to be collected on a fortnightly basis.
- A separate weekly food waste and absorbent hygiene products collection will be mandated. Waste collection authorities are required to introduce these arrangements with effect from beginning of April 2026.
- A separate soft plastics collection (crisp packets, cling film) will be required by March 2027.

To implement the above changes to any collection regime, the Council will need to agree a new specification for the new collection arrangements by September 2024 to meet a contract start date 1 April 2026.

2. Recommendations:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

- a) Consider in more detail the merits of setting up a cross-party Waste Recycling Scrutiny Panel (following the guidance set out in Appendix B), and then agree or not, the establishment of a Panel.
- b) Should the Overview and Scrutiny Commission agree the establishment of a Scrutiny Panel, request Democratic Services to seek nominations (including Chair) from Group Leaders for a Panel in accordance with political proportionality, for approval by the Commission, to ensure a swift commencement, taking into account the timescales noted above.
- c) Should a Scrutiny Panel not be agreed, propose of a one-off report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission indicating proposals for the Council's collection regime on waste and recycling options.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To consider the Full Council proposal in a timely manner.