

**MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
AGENDA ITEM: 8**

**JULY 2014.**

**Waste Services Update**

**Cabinet Member** Cllr Clive Eginton  
**Responsible Officer** Head of Environmental Services

**Reason for Report:**

The Chairman has requested a written update on the waste service.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the report is noted.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:**

Provision of a household waste service is a statutory duty. Collection of 4 recyclable materials at kerbside has been a directive since April 2014. The Council needs to fulfil its duty at a cost that reflects the formula grant provided.

**Financial Implications:**

There are no financial implications arising from this report

**Legal Implications:**

The waste activities need to comply with a variety of statutes and obligations.

**Risk Assessment:**

None specifically arising from the report but adverse press coverage is likely.

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The waste collection scheme was altered as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 to coincide with the issue of new calendars replacing those which were expiring.
- 1.2 The reason the refuse service was altered was as part of the looking for ongoing savings required to deal with the shortfall from the Government grants.
- 1.3 Over the past four years, MDDC have had less grant money each year and have striven to provide the same service across the entire Council at the same time not increasing council tax. There is now a £2million difference between the grant in 2011 and now.

- 1.4 Waste is a high cost service – its budget is approximately £2.4m - and unless it can make savings other services will have to bear the brunt of future cuts.
- 1.5 The route optimisation programme was used to assist using the assets of the waste service in as efficient manner as possible and to stop increasing costs unnecessarily.
- 1.6 There had also been a number of new developments – notably Cullompton requiring refuse collection which had put undue pressures on some rounds and emphasised the difference between those always needing overtime and those finishing within the normal day - some with time to spare.

#### Other considerations

- 2.1 There are two parts to the service; refuse is time limited by the Landfill site opening arrangements and the need to have empty lorries at Station Yard overnight for insurance and fire risk. Recycling is a less problematic operation as the facility is not time limited, the materials are stored on site but it is in an inconvenient location
- 2.2 The new routes were modelled on the software package using information from the vehicle tracking devices, data sheets of the weights carried and driver time sheets. Using this data, new rounds were designed. They incorporated features such as having the same collection day for refuse and recycling in most cases, having the District divided into sections to be cleared on each day and taking out some hard to reach places by using different vehicles.
- 2.3 The new routes were then 'driven' by the drivers – not using refuse trucks as they were all elsewhere collecting refuse - to see that they would work. The supervisors were included in looking at routes on maps to see that the new rounds were achievable before the start date.
- 2.4 Crews were asked to do new routes - ones that they were not familiar with. The previous change to their routes was when garden waste commenced in 2005, so time was needed to adjust. The early weeks were uncomfortable as the crews did long days following the new maps.
- 2.5 Within two weeks of the start there was the first Bank Holiday break and Saturday catch up, followed by Easter and then another Bank Holiday for May Day. The initial volume of material collected by both parts of the business had increased because days had been altered - this increase was apparently not cancelled out by a corresponding decrease from those properties which came forward in the collection calendar.

- 2.6 Bank Holidays traditionally yield more waste as households tend to use the time to clear out more. Having worked within these factors and assumed that a settling in period would resolve many of the problems; it is disappointing not to see reduction in the number of missed collections
- 2.7 Unfortunately it appears some of the refuse rounds in practical terms seem to be unachievable. This has resulted in some of the same properties consistently being missed as the crews try to get the route quicker with familiarity but end in roughly the same place or not returning past those properties to collect as they go to tip.
- 2.8 It is difficult to be precise about where all the issues have arisen; whilst the software can only predict a modelled route, the information put in was that which had been produced by the previous routes reassembled in a different order. The software analyst has returned to assist and some new routes have been created to attempt to alleviate the problems.
- 2.9 The principal of the optimisation was to use the vehicles in the best way and hence sending them to landfill full of refuse was the aim. Previously some rounds were not full and as the cost of transporting the waste is fairly critical, it is an issue to be addressed. The transportation costs are not materially any different for full loads against half full loads.
- 2.10 The crews have tried to manage the rounds but in some case cannot – these are the areas with the high number of repeat missed collections simply 'undoing' those rounds is not an option because of the knock on affect on other rounds.
- 2.11 The number of missed collections from recycling is slightly less and is further complicated by unpredictable and varying amounts of material presented for collection and the vehicle breakdowns of the aging fleet.

#### Missed collections

- 3.1 The logistics of collecting missed collections is complex; it is not as simple as sending a lorry back. Refuse vehicles are fully used and the 'spare' vehicle days are used as trade refuse days.
- 3.2 Picking up missed collections will involve having a lorry available, with capacity, with a crew either with time or overtime, and sufficient time left before 4 PM to collect and get to tip. Doing the missed collections on the next day merely puts more premises at risk of missed collections as the vehicles are full sooner.
- 3.3 There are restrictions on the size of refuse vehicle that can be used in certain areas – the three smaller refuse units able to negotiate the lanes on rural rounds can be used on urban rounds but not vice versa;

it appears it is the rural rounds that have been giving more of the issues possibly as the travelling distances between properties and groups of properties is too onerous.

- 3.4 Recycling is slightly less complex as small amounts can be collected in the small vans and older curtain sided vehicles – having more older curtain sided vehicles does give flexibility on rural/urban use but as said earlier their reliability is poor due to the age of the fleet.
- 3.5 Meetings with management and crews have been a regular feature of the past three months and some rounds altered to include or exclude some properties.
- 3.6 The relocation of recycling to 16 Shop, Tiverton may have benefits in being able to use the staff more flexibly but the tip restrictions, fleet limitations and other logistics need to be taken into account.
- 3.7 Two new rural rounds have been created which is designed to relieve some of the strain on the three rural lorries, and now effort is being directed with some of the drivers towards some of the heavier urban routes.
- 3.8 In the meanwhile we are endeavouring to catalogue where the remaining problems are and how best to deal with them in conjunction with the refuse staff.

**Contact for more Information:** Paul N Williams 01884 234606

**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr C J Eginton Cabinet member, Management Team

**List of Background Papers:** none