

## **Waste and Recycling Service**

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

**Reason for Report:** To advise Members of the outcomes from their considerations on 24 July and to outline a potential programme for changes to the service.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the PDG recommends to the Cabinet:

- 1. That the Cabinet note the current pressures on the waste and recycling service and the difficulties in delivering reduced costs without a fundamental review of the services provided.**
- 2. That the outline timetable at appendix 1 is agreed and the Managing the Environment Policy Development Group makes regular update reports to the Cabinet on proposals for changes to the waste and recycling service.**

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The service is one of the most highly visible the Council provides and part of the statutory duty of the local authority to collect household waste.

**Financial Implications:** At £2.5m per annum, the cost of this service is increasing disproportionately compared to other service areas as government funding streams are reducing.

**Risk Assessment:** Without considering options to redesign the service, the Council will face running a service that is either unaffordable in the current financial regime or that requires deeper cuts to other service areas to support the existing arrangements for waste and recycling.

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1** Members attended a workshop-style day on 24 July to look at future requirements for waste and recycling collections. Officers outlined the statutory duties and responsibilities associated with collections, including health and safety, the financial position and the opportunities and threats that will present themselves in the future. It soon became clear that a strategy for the future delivery of waste and recycling services was needed.
- 1.2** This report highlights the main findings from the day and reflects the comments made which identify work streams to assist in the design of future service delivery.

### **2.0 The current service**

- 2.1** The current waste collection service is a high quality, highly valued service. It will pick up virtually anything from householders, it deals with large amounts of refuse presented, deals with fly tips and deals with items left behind and

outside by departing householders. This report does not include any reference to street sweeping.

- 2.2 Currently each property has three 'passes' per fortnight. 80% of the district has a two-weekly kerbside recycling service and an alternate weekly brown (compostable) and black bag (residual waste) collection. The remaining 20% have fortnightly recycling and weekly black bag collections. A reduction of one pass has the potential to result in a saving of approximately £830k. Part of the debate therefore revolved around the potential to have the same service across the district.
- 2.3 In addition to current pressures to reduce the cost of the service, officers highlighted the growth expected at Cullompton (Knowle Lane), Tiverton (Farleigh Meadows/Eastern Urban Extension) and potentially a Cullompton North West Extension. The number of properties will continue to increase and at some point in the immediate future we will not have sufficient vehicles, crews, containers or resources to provide the service within the current budget constraints.
- 2.4 The present methods of operation were discussed and Members had the opportunity to see the vehicles and equipment in use, hear from an experienced operative and received a presentation on the health and safety record of the service. This brought into stark relief the need to change current practices to deliver safer working practices for the staff involved.
- 2.5 The financial background and future projections were explained which provides a further imperative for change. The waste service is provided universally for all domestic properties and opportunities for income earning are limited. Recycling, trade waste and bulky collections are the main sources of income that are monitored and maximised to reduce the overall net cost of the service. Although new homes bring with them additional council tax income streams, that does not compensate for the additional costs falling to the Council and the reduced government funding also being applied nationally.
- 2.6 Members debated the above issues in work groups and some common themes emerged. The groups considered recycling, residual waste and green waste. The comments listed below are the common themes that emerged and this report highlights the areas where it was agreed options for change should be developed.

### **3.0 Recycling**

- 3.1 This was clearly an area that Members and the public would like to see changes implemented. Comments arising included:
  - Encourage more recycling at kerbside and review the range of materials collected – notably mixed plastic bottles, textiles, cardboard and food waste.
  - Possibly look at providing a skip service.
  - Bulky waste - could furniture be salvaged and re sold.

- Potentially looking at a better recycling centre as a 'bring site' working with DCC to relocate the Ashley site to a more convenient Tiverton location.
- Examine the feasibility of sorting at a depot to save kerbside sorting and simplify collection vehicles – particularly for mixed plastics.
- There was a consensus that more should and could be done to offer a wider and more comprehensive trade recycling service.
- Take a fresh look at recycling and food waste containers to see if some with wheels could be found to assist elderly and infirm or ones with compartments inside may improve sortation.
- Look at providing smaller vehicles to collect both landfill refuse and recycling at the same time in some rural locations.
- Offering a recycling service to village hall/village pub/village community centres, etc.
- Education plays an important part in maximising recycling but we may need to look at enforcement at later date.

#### **4.0 Residual Waste**

- Waste to Energy should be a long term vision and the on-going need to 'reduce waste' remains a key corporate priority.
- Look at legislative changes to drive zero to landfill.
- Potential exists for working with others in partnership to provide waste disposal facilities.
- For several reasons – health and safety, collection efficiency, avoiding spillage/damage - wheeled bins should be used instead of bags. Cost of provision could be prohibitive but re-use of the brown bins should be considered.
- Increase recycling collections and reduce waste collections but do not restrict the amount put out. A rationalisation of the containers and a freely available recycling scheme may have the desired effect of limiting waste which would be helpful in establishing rounds that were capable of being completed as the weight/volume factor would be known.
- Increase commercial waste customers and use funds to provide better service/wheeled bins, etc.
- Look at advertising on bins as an income stream.
- Review the use of collective bins rather than individual receptacles and using bigger lorries to accommodate larger loads.
- Planning conditions for private roads should ensure they are suitable for LGVs.
- Consider the potential financial benefits of contracting out the service.

#### **5.0 Garden Waste**

- Consider separation of cardboard and food waste from the existing organic collection and look at recycling markets.
- Provide a chargeable and/or a seasonal service with fewer collections for the garden waste. Encourage 'take to recycling centres' or community composting schemes in villages.

- Promote the sale of green cones and wormeries to increase home composting.
- Would there be a resale value of compost if we could make it ourselves.
- Examine the use of paper or other sacks for collections to free up brown wheelie bins for residual waste collections.

## **6.0 Fleet investment**

- 6.1 The position with the current fleet was outlined. There is a need to update and replace existing vehicles that are past their economic working life. Decisions on replacements require more certainty as to the service and recycles that will be required in the future.
- 6.2 Refuse collection vehicle costs of are circa £160K (with an additional annual operating and depreciation cost) and a three man crew £90k (per annum). A recycling vehicle is likely to be circa £90K (again with an additional annual operating and depreciation) plus £90k crew (per annum). Any increase in fleet numbers will therefore add costs to the £2.5m budget.
- 6.3 Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) complete between 2-6 miles per gallon, can carry 11-12 tonnes, need 20 minutes to be emptied on the tip plus travelling time to and from the tip. It is important therefore that the least number of vehicles are used in the most efficient way to reduce the costs of fuel, manpower and downtime.
- 6.4 Recycling vehicles are not so much constrained by weight as by the volume of the recyclable materials collected. Once a compartment on the vehicle is filled the vehicle needs to return to base to off-load. The present fleet is aged and in need of replacement – for some individual vehicles this requires some urgency however the choice of replacement vehicles needs to be guided by the future service needs if we are to avoid unnecessary expense.

## **7.0 Summary**

- 7.1 Officers agreed to report back on the comments and findings of the day so that all Members could share the deliberations.
- 7.2 Officers also agreed to look at the design of a new system – potentially from October 2015 onwards, recognising the time required to plan and communicate a successful change to these services. This may also coincide with new calendars and the provision of additional containers and funding opportunities.
- 7.3 A further report will be brought to the November meeting to align any service changes to the budget that Members will be asked to endorse, not only for 2014/15 but for future years.
- 7.4 Objectives agreed from the day can be summarised as follows:

In the short term:

1. To optimise the service that we are currently providing to allow manipulation of vehicles and rounds to better accommodate waste collection and recycling.

Longer term aims:

2. To provide a service across the whole district based on one residual collection and one recycling collection per fortnight - but consider more frequent food collection regimes.
3. To expand the current limited trade recycling service and seek to increase trade waste customer base.
4. To commence collecting mixed plastic bottles (ie containers with a neck and lid) with milk bottles.
5. To remove cardboard from the organic collection and collect as dry recycling.
6. To consider a seasonal, March – September possibly, chargeable green waste collection by bio or other bags.
7. To re-designate brown bins as residual waste bins and to find funds to supply the remaining 20% of residents with a wheeled bin.
8. In order to remove food waste from compostable and collect on dry recycling, supply a dedicated outdoor food waste container subject to business case/funds (25 or 50 litre depending on collection frequency and manual handling restrictions).

**Contact for more Information:** Paul N Williams, 01884 244606, [pnwilliams@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:pnwilliams@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr Clive Eginton and Management Team

## Possible timeline for implementing changes to waste and recycling services

November 2013	May 2014	September 2014	October 2014	December 2014	April 2015	October 2015
Consider and decide: 1. Overall budget constraints and financial targets 2. Recycling aims and targets 3. Recycling and food waste scheme design 4. Scheme for garden waster 5. Residual waste arrangements  Nov to May →	Commence trial and consultation process  May to Sept →	Agree final scheme design	Start communication campaign  Oct to Dec →	Order new vehicles	Order bins and send calendars	Implement changes