

CABINET
29 NOVEMBER 2022

RECYCLING OPTIONS REPORT

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Colin Slade, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change

Responsible Officer: Darren Beer, Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Services

Reason for Report: Cabinet requested a report regarding recycling options following the delivery of three weekly residual waste collections, which commenced in the District on the 10 October 2022. This report reviews the need to increase recycling in the District in line with government guidelines to recycle 65% of household waste by 2035 and Devon's proposed 60% target rate by 2025. This report describes possible future weekly recycling collection arrangements and their implications.

Recommendations: That Cabinet reviews the information in this report along with any potential future implementation of weekly recycling and the subsequent implications that would arise from such a change.

Financial Implications: If a trial was to be conducted at some point in the future, the costs of a three-month trial are likely to be around £30K. If the service were asked to proceed with the roll out of weekly recycling on a permanent basis there would be substantial costs. These costs are based on modelling but would not be fully quantifiable until a trial was complete. However, initial modelling performed by WYG (in 2019) with current costings indicate potential costs of £1.4m in collection costs from a move to weekly recycling. There may be a potential increase in recycling credits and material income from the increased recycling tonnages but the volatility of the market needs to be considered. A decision to move to the delivery of weekly recycling collections would require Waste and Recycling moving to a larger site with additional capacity to accommodate the extra vehicles and the potential extra recycling.

Budget and Policy Framework: None directly in terms of the Council's Policy framework. There will be budget implications with regards any potential change in service, which can more accurately be ascertained following a trial. These will have both revenue and/or capital implications if the service were asked to proceed with these changes.

Legal Implications: Under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act Waste Collection Authorities may by means of notice specify how householders present their waste for collection.

Risk Assessment: A register of risks would be compiled as part of a trial if authorised. There are risks, including impacts on; carbon emissions, the carbon footprint, operational costs and other resources required.

Equality Impact Assessment: The service will continue to provide assisted collections according to the current policy; considerations for residents residing in HMOs, flats and properties with no outside space will be included in any proposed

project plan. The service would review the lessons learnt and best practice from recent changes along with a review of other councils who have successfully implemented strategic changes to their waste collections operations.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: This report identifies with the 'Environment' priority area of the Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 '*increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of residual waste generated*'. Supporting and enabling customers to recycle and reduce residual waste contributes to Mid Devon District Councils' commitment to the Devon Climate Emergency.

Impact on Climate Change: Following on from the move to three weekly bin collections, a further increase in recycling would further enable the Council to reduce its carbon footprint and hit its carbon net zero commitment. There would however be an increase in the carbon footprint due to the increase in fuel usage. There are opportunities to reduce fuel usage with the types of vehicles Mid Devon would be looking to procure.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The most recent review of waste and recycling collections took place in October 2020, which resulted in the authorisation from Cabinet in February 2022 to introduce three weekly waste collections in the District. The arrangements commenced on 10 October 2022.
- 1.2 The current household refuse service consists of the recently introduced three weekly residual waste collections (wheelie bins/seagull sacks), fortnightly dry recycling (green and black boxes); opt in chargeable fortnightly garden waste collections (brown wheeled bins and sacks) and weekly food waste collections (blue caddy). The current regime has not been in place long enough to ascertain the true and real impact the new scheme is having on District recycling rates. It is likely to take a minimum of six to nine months before accurate trends and results are obtained. There has been no proposed change in frequency for garden or food waste in this report.
- 1.3 Weekly food collection is gathered by the same vehicle as dry recycling for one week and on the opposite week, food is collected in a split-bodied vehicle alongside garden waste. Over a fortnightly cycle, there are 36 garden and food routes and 95 dry recycling and food routes. On the three weekly residual cycle, there are 46 routes. Household waste is required to be contained within the wheelie bins/seagull sacks for collection.
- 1.4 The number of garden waste customers is increasing year on year. New customers are most likely to be occupants of new builds but cannot be relied upon to have a hugely noticeable effect on the recycling rate in the future.
- 1.5 Waste arisings encompass all waste types put out for collection by residents; reducing waste arisings involves encouraging residents to think about prevention and reuse primarily as illustrated in the waste hierarchy in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Waste Hierarchy



- 1.6 MDDC Refuse Service Carbon Model Report (WYG Consultants) indicates that the move to three weekly residual waste collections will reduce the carbon footprint to 323.50tCO₂eq from 550.14 tCO₂eq (two weekly residual waste collections) that is attributed to collection vehicles. Continuing to provide waste and recycling collections in its current format will increase the carbon footprint as new housing developments are added to routes. Collecting waste from large housing estates may not add considerable mileage to routes however; idling vehicles can release carbon emissions in equal measure to a moving vehicle. Any increase to the baseline will need to be offset in the interest of MDDC's declaration of 'Climate Emergency'. However, it should be mentioned that the vehicle replacement programme would introduce cleaner and more energy efficient vehicles to the fleet over the coming years.

2.0 CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The WYG report indicated weekly recycling would further decrease the residual waste collected by 4% and increase the recycling tonnages collected by 4.5%. As weekly recycling is unlikely to affect the tonnages for food and garden waste then there is likely to be an increase in the kerbside recycling rate of 2%.
- 2.2 The most favourable option in terms of tonnes of CO₂ equivalent is the delivery of four weekly residual waste collections combined with weekly recycling. The capture of additional materials for recycling and diversion of these away from the residual waste stream offsets the impact of the additional fuel use. This option would potentially increase the recycling rate by 6% against the new regime. Currently few authorities operate four weekly residual waste collections alongside weekly recycling collections, although some are considering this regime for the future e.g. South Gloucestershire.
- 2.3 Weekly recycling would require a far larger recycling fleet, almost doubling in size with the need to increase the fleet by nine (6 x 12 tonne recycling vehicles and 3 x 11 tonne recycling vehicles). Rounds may become quicker due the increased frequency of collections and residents putting out less on each cycle. Routes would not change thereby nearly doubling the requirement of fuel for the recycling fleet. To staff these extra rounds/vehicles would require another 24 staff and a member of staff in the depot to assist with unloading the extra vehicles. There is also the extra cost in providing staff to cover this holiday and sickness, thus increasing the expected annual costs by £1.4 million. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Additional costs with a move to weekly recycling

Annual additional costs for weekly recycling		
Budget area	Number	Total costs (£k)
Staff salaries	25	762
Agency and overtime		161
Vehicle and maintenance	9	292
Fuel		192
Insurance		14
		1421

- 2.4 Due to the extra vehicles required and the current capacity of the depot, a move to delivering weekly recycling would require a far larger footprint to accommodate these vehicles. Therefore, a move to a larger depot in the District would be needed.
- 2.5 Any movement of waste from the residual waste stream to recycling would save DCC as the disposal authority money and be passed onto MDDC through the shared saving agreement (which runs until 2026). However, there is no increase in this level of payment under the shared savings agreement for future changes, although there will be in terms of recycling credits for increases in tonnes recycled. The implementation of the proposed government policy, including Extended Producer Responsibility, would significantly affect any future payments from this scheme.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Although the recycling rate has been set at 65% by 2035, we need to be prepared for any changes in government policy including Extended Producer Responsibility, the Deposit Return Scheme and Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England as part of the new Environment Act.
- 3.2 That the Committee review the contents of the report including the effects on the environment, service costs, depot demands and recycling rates.
- 3.3 Analysis will be required of the impact of three weekly collections on the Districts recycling rates. Trends and data would not be accurate until the roll out has become settled and embedded (at least 6 to 9 months after implementation). At this viable future point in time, we could then revisit the operational and financial viability of any potential new scheme. It would therefore be prudent in line with any potential impact of 3.1 to revisit again in a year's time.

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