
REVISED WEEKLY REFUSE/RECYCLING COLLECTION

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Nick Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Richard Alty, Director of Place**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present options to Members for the introduction of a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service.

Summary

2. Included within the MTFP is a proposal to save £400,000 by introducing a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service, known as an Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) service for recycling and residual waste across the Borough. An AWC service is one where generally residual waste is collected Week 1 and recycling material collected Week 2. Across the country, there are significant differences in AWC systems where different materials are collected from a variety of different containers from bags to boxes to bins. The key for a successful AWC system is that it needs to tie into any existing recycling /treatment/disposal contracts and balances waste volumes across the two weeks.
3. The Council currently collects residual waste weekly from a wheeled bin and paper, card and glass to recycle every two weeks. Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 states "it shall be the duty of each waste collection authority to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area." What the legislation does not stipulate is the frequency of collection; therefore there is no legal reason why the authority cannot move to an AWC system as many other local authorities have already done.
4. Within the report three options are presented that can deliver significant savings, with Option 3; Provision of additional wheeled bin with internal caddy, the preferred option for the majority of properties should Members agree to implement the revised arrangement.
5. The proposal within the MTFP is to introduce the AWC system by October 2014. To enable this to happen, Members would need to make a final decision on

whether or not to implement an AWC system by no later than the end of January 2014, which is outside of the normal MTFP timetable where final consideration would take place during late February/early March. Implementing in October 2014 allows full savings to be brought in from the following year and if left any later than October then we move into the winter months and it would not be advisable to roll-out any major change to refuse/recycling collection due to the potential inclement weather.

6. Should Members agree to go with an October 2014 implementation, the reason why the final decision needs to be taken by end of January 2014, which is outside of the MTFP timetable, is to ensure that new recycling vehicles can be ordered and delivered in adequate time. There is currently a seven to eight month lead-in time from the placing of an order to receiving the new vehicles.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members agree to the consultation on introducing an AWC scheme as detailed at paragraph 41 in this report.
 - (b) Option 3 be the preferred option for the majority of properties across the Borough.
 - (c) A further report be brought back to Cabinet in January 2014 detailing the final scheme and outcome of consultation.
 - (d) Members agree that the procurement of the wheeled bins and boxes, and also the procurement of the new recycling vehicles be designated as non-strategic.

Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported to:-
 - (a) Enable the introduction of a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service, subject to Members' approval in January 2014.
 - (b) Achieve savings to the Medium Term Financial Plan as soon as possible.
 - (c) The designation of contracts as strategic or non-strategic is a Cabinet function, early consideration of the procurement route will enable preparatory work to be undertaken to enable the scheme to move forward, should Cabinet subsequently give approval.

Richard Alty
Director of Place

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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|----------------------------------|---|
| S17 Crime and Disorder | It is not considered that there will be a significant impact on crime and disorder as a result of this report, however on occasions wheeled bins have been used in other areas to assist in criminal activity. In addition, a number of secondary fires are a result of refuse/recycling being left out for collection either loose or within wheeled bins. |
| Health and Well Being | There is no impact on health and well being as a result of this report. |
| Carbon Impact | There will be the opportunity to increase recycling and therefore have a positive impact on carbon. |
| Diversity | The collection system will be universal across the Borough and the Council's existing Assisted Collection policy will continue where individuals because of their personal circumstances are unable to place a wheeled bin/containers out for collection. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out during the consultation period. |
| Wards Affected | All wards will be affected. |
| Groups Affected | The AWC will operate across the Borough providing the same service to all residents therefore there is no particularly affected group. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out during the consultation period. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | Within the MTFP is a proposal to implement an AWC system saving £400,000. |
| Key Decision | This is considered to be a key decision as it will have an impact on all residents as they will need to utilise the AWC service. |
| Urgent Decision | This is not classed as an urgent decision. |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | The implementation of an AWC service does not particularly impact on the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy. |
| Efficiency | The introduction of an AWC will deliver significant financial savings to the Council. |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

9. Included with the Medium Term Financial Plan is a proposal to introduce a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service known as an Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) service for recycling and residual refuse collection. An AWC service is one where generally residual waste is collected Week 1 and recycling material collected Week 2. There are a significant number of AWC systems operating across the country and for our local neighbours in Tees Valley, North Yorkshire and Durham; the majority operate this system, 10 out of the 13 authorities, with only two of our closest neighbours retaining a weekly residual waste collection service, these being Stockton and Middlesbrough. A detailed table is attached as **Appendix 1**.
10. The proposal to introduce an AWC will save an estimated £400,000 per annum.
11. Across the country there are significant differences for AWC systems where different materials are collected from a variety of different containers, from bags to boxes to bins. However, in the majority of cases, residual waste is collected in a wheeled bin. All of our local neighbours in Tees Valley, North Yorkshire and Durham use a wheeled bin for residual waste collection.
12. As Members will be aware, the Council recently introduced wheeled bins across the Borough for health and safety reasons to minimise manual handling and needle stick injuries to employees. This implementation was successful and the new service is working well across the Borough. Therefore it would be possible for Darlington to move to an Alternative Weekly collection system with some changes to the recycling.
13. Darlington currently has a waste treatment, recycling and disposal contract with Stonegrave Aggregates, which is in place until 2020. Any change to the existing refuse/recycling collection system needs to tie into that existing contract as the contractor has exclusive rights to DBC's waste.
14. The existing recycling service was introduced in September 2009 whereby paper and card are co-mingled and glass collected separately. These materials are collected on a fortnightly basis on the same day as the residual collection service. Currently, annually approximately 4,000 tonnes of paper, card and glass are collected and recycled.
15. Other materials that are placed in the wheeled bin are also recycled following the treatment process. Plastics (all types), Tetrapaks, cans and metals are extracted from the remaining waste, which are also recycled.
16. Last year 37.8% of household waste was either reused, recycled, or composted. Of this, 31.24% was recycled and 6.51% composted. Generally the waste that is recycled comes from:
 - (a) Kerbside recycling service
 - (b) Household Waste Recycling Centre

- (c) Bring sites across the Borough
 - (d) Mechanical Biological Treatment Plant – following biological treatment (drying of waste) plastics, metals, tetrapaks are removed from the remaining waste for recycling.
17. Other authorities who have introduced an AWC system have seen significant rises in their recycling rates, however, although DBC's recycling rates will increase, it is not anticipated that they will be significant because the majority of waste in the wheeled bin is recycled through the Mechanical Biological Treatment Plan. There will however be an increase, particularly from paper and card that is not currently separated, which generally following treatment is not suitable for recycling.
18. The key to any successful AWC system requires the balancing of waste volumes across the two weeks. The existing system, whereby only paper, card and glass are recycled, does not take sufficient volume out of the residual waste to create capacity within the wheeled bin to last for two weeks, therefore it would be necessary to review the materials collected at kerbside for recycling.
19. In order to reduce the volume within the residual waste, it will be necessary to increase the materials collected at kerbside.
20. In discussion with the contractor, the most appropriate materials to separate for recycling that will also not impact on the treatment process are:
- (a) Glass
 - (b) Paper
 - (c) Card
 - (d) Plastics (all types)
 - (e) Tetrapaks
 - (f) Cans/metals
21. The Council currently receive £27.50 for every tonne of recycled material delivered to Stonegrave Aggregates from the kerbside recycling collection service. The income is only received because glass is kept separate from paper and card, which enables these products to be recycled without contamination. If the Council were to mix everything other than glass then paper and card would be contaminated and the value of the materials significantly reduced. In early discussions with the contractor, if the materials in paragraph 20 were collected together they would need to do a significant amount of work to separate the material and the value specifically of paper and card would be reduced due to contamination, therefore the Council would receive no income from the material delivered to Stonegrave Aggregates. It is also likely at times that there would be other contamination, e.g. (residual waste) mixed with the recycling therefore this would then have to be treated or land filled losing valuable material.
22. Therefore how the material is separated by residents and collected by the Council is important, not only for the value of the material but also the quality. The Council would continue to receive £27.50 per tonne for recycling material if collected in three separate streams as follows:

- (a) Glass
 - (b) Paper and card
 - (c) Plastics (all types), Tetrapaks, cans and metals
23. It is therefore proposed to collect recycling in three streams from the majority of properties to preserve the quality of the material and to ensure the savings within the MTFP are achievable. It is estimated an additional 2000 tonne of material will be collected at kerbside.
24. The existing green recycling vehicles would be unable to collect the material in this format, however they come to the end of their lease in October 2014 and could be replaced with a suitably designed vehicle enabling the three streams to be collected separately on one vehicle or a variation of the existing fleet, which is still to be determined.
25. The key decision then is how the waste is contained within individual residents' properties. There is a variety of systems across the country using combinations of bins, bags and boxes, which have been designed to meet individual authorities' circumstances. There are a number of key criteria that need to be taken into account when considering the container to be issued to residents:
- (a) Overall capacity of containers for residual/recycling material
 - (b) Health and safety
 - (c) Ease of operation for both resident and collection crews
 - (d) Storage capacity for additional containers within residents' properties
26. As discussed earlier in this report there are a number of systems used across the country for AWC using boxes, bins and bags. In the case of Darlington, the following three options are believed to be most suitable:
- (a) **Option 1**
 - (i) Residual waste - wheeled bin 240 litre (as existing)
 - (ii) Glass – existing box
 - (iii) Paper/card – existing blue sack
 - (iv) Plastics, Tetrapaks cans/metals – additional box (same as glass)
 - (b) **Option 2**
 - (i) Residual waste – wheeled bin 240 litre (as existing)
 - (ii) Glass – existing box
 - (iii) Paper/card – existing blue sack
 - (iv) Plastics, Tetrapaks cans/metals – smaller 140 litre wheeled bin
 - (c) **Option 3**
 - (i) Residual waste – wheeled bin 240 litre (as existing)
 - (ii) Glass – existing box

- (iii) Plastics, Tetrapaks, cans/metals - 240 litre wheeled bin with an internal caddy to keep paper and card separate

27. The current capacity (based on the default 240 litre wheeled bin) in the existing containers across two weeks for recycling and refuse is as follows:

- (a) Box for glass 40 litres (collected once per fortnight)
- (b) Blue sack paper and card 80 litres (collected once per fortnight)
- (c) Wheeled bin for residual waste 240 litres (collected twice per fortnight)

Residents therefore have a total capacity of 600 litres to contain their waste over a two week period.

When taking this into account alongside the other criteria in paragraph 25, each option is considered in the table below.

| Criteria | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 |
|---|---|--|---|
| a) Overall capacity of containers for residual/recycling material | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each container will be collected once across the fortnight • 240 litre wheeled bin for residual refuse • 80 litre blue sack for paper/card • 40 litre box for glass • 40 litre box for plastics, tetrapaks, cans etc • Total capacity 400 litres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each container will be collected once across the fortnight • 240 litre wheeled bin for residual refuse • 80 litre blue sack for paper/card • 40 litre box for glass • 140 litre wheeled bin for plastics, tetrapaks, cans/ metals • Total capacity 500 litres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each container will be collected once across the fortnight • 240 litre wheeled bin for residual refuse • 40 litre box for glass • 240 litre wheeled bin including caddy for paper/card, plastics, tetrapaks, cans/ metals • Total capacity 520 litres |
| b) Health & Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce additional manual handling for a further box containing plastics, tetrapaks, cans and metals. However anticipated not to be too heavy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual handling similar to existing system with the only introduction being a 140 litre wheeled bin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for slight reduction in manual handling as two wheeled bins used however caddy in second wheeled bin will need to be lifted and decanted into refuse vehicle |
| c) Ease of operation for both resident and collection crews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System requires residents to separate material into appropriate containers however fairly easy to use • For the crews there | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System requires residents to separate material into appropriate containers however fairly easy to use • For the crews there | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System requires residents to separate material into appropriate containers however fairly easy to use • For the crews there |

| Criteria | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 |
|--|--|---|--|
| | <p>will be three individual containers to carry to the vehicle and empty therefore slowing the operation down and requiring three staff as opposed to the existing two staff per round</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents would present material for collection at the kerbside as they currently do for the existing recycling service | <p>will again be three individual containers to carry/wheel to the vehicle and empty therefore slowing the operation down and requiring three staff as opposed to the existing two staff per round</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents would present recycling for collection where they currently place their wheeled bin out, e.g. either at kerbside or within the back lane | <p>will be two containers to carry/wheel to the vehicle although one container when at the vehicle will need separating and emptying. It is likely that this operation will be slightly quicker than the other two and only requiring two staff to complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents would present recycling for collection where they currently place their wheeled bin out, e.g. either at kerbside or within the back lane |
| d) Storage capacity for additional containers within residents' properties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This system would introduce an additional box with a footprint of 38 cm x 25 cm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This system would introduce an additional wheeled bin with a footprint of 62 cm x 48 cm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This system would introduce an additional wheeled bin with a footprint of 74 cm x 58 cm |

28. When considering the main criteria above, there is a reduction in capacity across the fortnight on all the options which will encourage residents to think about how they deal with and separate their waste. Option 1 provides the least capacity at 33% less than currently exists which would for the majority of residents be extremely difficult to cope with. For Option 2 there is a reduction of 16% capacity and for Option 3, 12%. The actual footprint of the three containers isn't significantly different and therefore for the majority of residents if stored next to an existing wheeled bin should not create difficulties. However, there will be issues for some residents and the box if residents' choose could be kept in the house. Each of the three systems is fairly easy to use but does require the resident to think about their waste and requires them to separate it. Operationally Option 3 would be slightly quicker and from a health and safety point of view for the workforce would be preferred.

29. For the majority of properties across the Borough (approximately 37,000 – 38,000) the option that provides residents with the greatest capacity and is easy to use for both the resident and the workforce is Option 3. Therefore it is proposed to implement this option for the majority of properties subject to Members' approval. As officers work through the practicalities of implementing Option 3 there will be

between 10,000 – 11,000 properties where Option 3 will be impractical because of access for the recycling vehicle or some other logistical reason and in these cases Option 1 or a variation of the service may be the most practical, however the final detail will be presented to Members in a future report.

30. When wheeled bins were introduced, a small number of properties that were unsuitable for the standard default 240 litre wheeled bin were issued with a 140 litre wheeled bin. For these properties, it is proposed that Option 1 would be more appropriate than Option 3.

Financial Implications

31. Each of the three options has different financial implications, however all three do deliver significant savings:

(a) **Option 1:**

| | £ |
|---|----------------|
| Savings from round reduction | 375,000 |
| Reductions on the waste contract | 200,000 |
| Increase in recycling crews one man per vehicle | -100,000 |
| Annual bag/box replacement | -15,000 |
| Total saving | 460,000 |
| | |
| One off cost for purchase of 50,000 boxes | 185,000 |

(b) **Option 2:**

| | £ |
|--|----------------|
| Savings from round reduction | 375,000 |
| Reductions on the waste contract | 200,000 |
| Annual loan charges for 140 litre wheeled bin | -100,000 |
| Increase in recycling crews, one man per vehicle | -100,000 |
| Annual bag/bin replacement | -25,000 |
| Total saving | 350,000 |

(c) **Option 3:**

| | £ |
|--|----------------|
| Savings from round reduction | 375,000 |
| Reductions on the waste contract | 200,000 |
| Annual borrowing 240 litre wheeled bin and caddy | -125,000 |
| Annual bag/bin replacement | -25,000 |
| Total saving | 425,000 |

32. The above estimates will be refined as work on route modelling and vehicle configuration continues and the outcome of any procurement exercise for the purchase of appropriate containers and new vehicles is completed.

Procurement

33. If Members agree to the implementation of an alternate weekly collection system then there would be two key procurements to carry out. Firstly, there would be a need to either purchase boxes and wheeled bins, and secondly the purchase of new recycling vehicles.
34. Should Members decide to implement AWC, under the Contract Procedure Rules as the value of two procurements will be above £75,000 the contracts will need to be added to the Annual Procurement Plan and decisions made about whether the procurement is strategic or not.
35. For those contracts designated strategic, a procurement strategy must be produced and presented to Cabinet. The final contract award decision will be a Cabinet decision. As set out in the Contract Procedure Rules the contract award decision for those contracts not considered strategic will be through delegation to officers.
36. The evaluation of the purchase of the new recycling vehicles and also the purchase of either boxes and wheeled bins has been undertaken as detailed in **Appendix 2**. The assessment was undertaken against the criteria agreed by Cabinet. The criteria are provided at **Appendix 3** for information.
37. Based on the evaluation, both of the procurements are designated as non-strategic.
38. The procurement will be to use Existing Public Service Frameworks for these two procurements.
39. Consideration of the procurement aspects at this stage will not bind Cabinet when it comes to giving approval or not to AWC but will clarify the procurement route that will be followed should approval be given and enable preparatory work to begin now (see details below on timeline).

Timeline

40. In order to implement the AWC system by October 2014 to deliver the savings identified in the MTFP, it would be necessary to place an order for the new recycling vehicles by no later than February 2014 as there is a 7/8 month lead in period. Alongside this, depending on which container was agreed, there could also be up to a six month procurement for a wheeled bin. To achieve this deadline Cabinet and Council will need to take final decision in January 2014 as to whether to implement AWC.

Consultation

41. In order to understand the impact that the introduction of the AWC system will have on residents, a four week consultation period will commence following Cabinet on 13 November 2013. A survey (attached as **Appendix 4**) will be published on the Council's website with paper copies available at the Town Hall Reception and in the

Dolphin Centre. The survey will seek to establish the impact on residents, firstly of the introduction of the scheme and then secondly, on each of the options. The survey will be supplemented with a full visual display of the options in the Dolphin Centre Reception and a visual guide to the options on the Council's website. In addition, there will be a full page article in December's edition of Darlington Together detailing the options and signposting residents to the consultation survey. The consultation will close on 16 December 2013 and a full analysis of the results will be presented to Cabinet in January 2014.

HR Implications

42. As there will be a reduction in the workforce as a result of implementing AWC, full consultation will need to take place with Unions and employees. This process will commence as part of the MTFP.

Equalities Considerations

43. Prior to Members making a decision in January 2014, an equalities impact assessment will be carried out and the outcome of which will be included in any future report to Members. A plan for the assessments in relation to Alternate Weekly Collection is set out as part of the wider MTFP report at Appendix 13 to that item.

Outcome of Consultation

44. The outcome of the consultation carried out will be included in any future report to Members on AWC.