

Subject: Transformation of Waste and Recycling Collections

Cabinet Member: Councillor Toby Sturgis – Waste, Property and Environment

Key Decision: Yes

Executive summary

The report sets out the results of the recent public consultation on proposed changes to waste and recycling collections and recommends that the proposal be implemented.

The consultation response numbered over 10,000, and over 70% of replies supported the Council's proposal.

The proposal reflects the objectives of the waste management strategy adopted by the five Wiltshire councils in 2006 and inherited by the Council, plus the corporate objective of reducing waste sent to landfill to 25% of the total collected by 2014. The proposal reflects action taken by over half the waste collection authorities in England and has strong support from residents.

Significant risks will need to be managed during implementation, including the need to gain planning permission for, and develop new sites for, the management of the changing tonnages of waste and recyclates. This factor is one of the most significant in setting the timescale for implementation and it will now be necessary to propose interim solutions to enable the services to commence.

The report also recommends key service delivery policies to support implementation of the new services, addressing such matters as type of receptacle, bin size and policies on excess waste.

A communications strategy is proposed to support the service changes. Key aspects are the proposal for a phased programme commencing at least six months before service roll-out, the need to target residents who do not regularly engage with the Council and the need to target areas of the county where there was less support for the proposal set out in the recent consultation.

The environmental impact of the proposal is considered. Recycling will increase, assisting the reduction in resources required to make new products. Within Wiltshire the increase in council collection mileage of about 20% is likely to be offset by a reduction in car journeys to recycling sites by residents.

The equalities impact of the proposal is likely to be positive, giving more residents the opportunity to recycle. However, this will depend upon the success of the communications strategy, and its ability to inform all residents. Financial and legal issues are also considered and a recommendation made to increase the Council's waste budget accordingly.

Proposals

That Cabinet:

- (i) Notes the results of the public consultation "Waste Collection and Recycling – Proposing a first class service for all households in Wiltshire" carried out during June, July and August 2010, and agrees to the implementation of that proposal;
- (ii) Notes that implementation of the proposal requires management of a number of significant risks, in particular the procurement and development of waste management sites, the availability of depot space for additional vehicles and temporary storage facilities for additional bins and the procurement of vehicles, bins and bags which will determine the timescale for implementation;
- (iii) Gives delegated authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Waste, Property and Environment to implement the proposed policy;

Agrees to:

The proposed area by area phasing of new services, to minimise disruption and to control the very substantial logistical issues, such as bin delivery and staff availability to assist residents during the change;

A phased communication and education programme prior to, during and subsequent to the roll out of service changes, commencing at least six months prior to roll-out;

The proposed key decisions on service delivery and policy, as set out at paragraphs 25 to 44 and in **Appendix 7**;

Policies for non-collection of overfull bins or side waste being implemented after a "settling down" period of six months for the new services;

Enforcement action by the Council being limited to repeated failure to use receptacles provided for recycling or creation of side waste and warnings being issued before any formal enforcement action is taken;

Residents being invited to apply for the garden waste collection, but that this will be provided on request only except in west Wiltshire, where the service already exists;

Charging for provision of additional garden waste bins and their collection (ie more than one bin per household) at £30 per additional bin per year (2011-12) with prices subject to annual review;

Budget provision being made for the capital and revenue costs of the service changes, as set out in paragraphs 71-73 and **Appendix 2**, commencing in 2011-12, with timing subject to the emerging dates for implementation.

Reason for proposals

To seek agreement to commence implementation of the Cabinet's proposal for harmonisation of waste collection and recycling services across Wiltshire, following a positive response to public consultation.

MARK BODEN

Corporate Director
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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet
19 October 2010

Subject: Transformation of Waste and Recycling Collections

Cabinet member: Councillor Toby Sturgis – Waste, Property and Environment

Key Decision: Yes

Purpose of report

1. To:
 - (i) Report the results of the public consultation on transformation of waste collection and recycling services carried out during June, July and August 2010;
 - (iii) Seek agreement to implementation of the proposal;
 - (ii) Update Cabinet on the details of the proposal, and seek agreement to key policies for the new services.

Background

The Council's Waste Strategy and Corporate Plan

2. The harmonisation of waste collection and recycling services will affect progress towards the objectives set out in Wiltshire's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This was adopted in 2006 by the previous local authorities following a consultation exercise, and inherited by Wiltshire Council. The Strategy's key objectives are to divert municipal waste from landfill, to reduce local and global environmental impact and, in the medium to long term, secure significant cost savings for residents through the reduction in payment of Landfill Tax and avoidance of penalties under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme.
3. Like many other waste authorities in England, Wiltshire has been heavily reliant on landfill for disposal of its waste. As little as eight years ago, Wiltshire was sending about 80% of its municipal solid waste to landfill. However, significant progress has been made, with the proportion sent to landfill reduced to less than 50% for the first time during 2009-10. The Council's Corporate Plan now seeks further improvement, with a target to reduce landfilled waste to less than 25% of the total by 2014.

4. The Council is already diverting waste from landfill by recycling and securing energy from waste capacity¹; however, the Strategy also seeks further major improvements in recycling. For example, there are targets in the Strategy to increase recycling to 40% by 2010-11² and 50% by 2020, supported by targets to:
 - (a) Provide kerbside recycling to the great majority of residents by 2011 – this has largely been achieved by expansion of the black box kerbside recycling service; a project is underway to extend this service to those residents who live in flats in north and west Wiltshire who do not currently benefit from the service;
 - (b) Convert residual waste collections to alternate weekly collection (AWC) by 2011 - this has been achieved in east and west Wiltshire, and will now be subject to Cabinet's decision on waste collection and recycling services.
5. The average recycling rate in Wiltshire has now reached 40%, meeting the 2010-11 Strategy target. However, major investment and encouragement will be needed to secure the 2020 target of 50%. Also, current services deliver significant differences in recycling performance across Wiltshire. Areas with alternate weekly collection (AWC) of recyclable and non-recyclable materials have significantly higher recycling rates than those areas with weekly collections of residual (non-recyclable) waste (**Appendix 1**).

Local Government Reorganisation and Options for Harmonisation of Waste Collections

6. The One Council bid document 'next steps' contained commitments to harmonise waste collection and recycling arrangements across Wiltshire. Potential cost savings from the integration of the former district council operated services were identified, with the commitment that these would be reinvested in the form of service enhancements to provide a consistent service across the whole council area.
7. Wiltshire Council authorised a review of Waste Collection at its meeting on 16 June 2009. This was progressed by Environment Select Committee and an appointed Waste Scrutiny Task Group throughout late 2009 and early 2010. A number of options were identified, evaluated, and reported to Environment Select Committee on 12 January 2010. However, this work was not concluded, due to the introduction of a Minority Report, produced and supported by Committee Members, and further option development work was commissioned from Officers. These options were presented for a consultation exercise originally due to commence in January 2010, but postponed due to a lack of national policy direction ahead of the general election. In June, Cabinet considered a briefing note on Options (**Appendix 2**) and proposed consultation on a modified option – this is the proposal, as set out in the consultation leaflet (**Appendix 3**) and the briefing note.

¹ One contract (the Lakeside / Hills contract) commenced in 2009. A second contract, for a mechanical and biological treatment (MBT) plant at Westbury is in the late stages of negotiation. Any decision on waste collection and recycling services needs to take account of the adopted strategy and the progress made in its implementation.

² The average recycling rate recorded for Wiltshire during 2008/09 and 2009/10 was 40.5%.

8. Consultation on the proposal was carried out from 18 June to 20 August 2010. This formed Phase 1 of the Communications Strategy (**Appendix 4**) for the proposed service changes. The proposal was presented at all Community Area Boards and roadshows were held in various locations. The consultation was promoted through the Council’s website and ‘Your Wiltshire’ residents’ magazine, which is delivered to all households. Advertisements were also placed in local newspapers. Leaflets inviting residents to have their say were distributed through the Council’s libraries and leisure centres and were carried by refuse collection staff. Town and Parish Councils were notified via the Council’s Parish Newsletter and invited to include a link to the consultation on Wiltshire Council’s website from their Town and Parish Council websites. Whilst there has been some criticism of the Council for not contacting each household directly, such an exercise would have been expensive.

Main considerations for the Council

Results of Consultation

9. The following summary of results is based on responses received by 3 September. If required, a verbal update of responses will be given at the Cabinet meeting.
10. Residents were asked whether they supported the Council’s proposal in an electronic (on-line) SNAP survey, in the leaflet referred to above and in People’s Voice postal and electronic surveys. A total of 10,326 responses were received, of which 10,009 were found to be valid (96.9%). This level of response is considered to be ample to provide a good indication of residents’ views. Of the valid responses, the proportion who voted “yes” was 72%, with 28% voting against. Some 45% of responses were received in posted reply forms and 28% in the electronic SNAP survey. The remainder came from the People’s Voice Survey.
11. Respondents were invited to give their postcode, although this was optional. Some 88% of the response was successfully analysed by location. The response by service area is set out in the table below and the response by Community Area is set out in **Appendix 5**.

Service Area	Number of Votes	Per cent voting in favour of Proposal
East	2200	96.4
North	2136	71.3
South	2523	46.5
West	1932	91.8

12. The responses by community area can be compared with estimates of dwelling stock, as a proxy for households and population. This indicates that the rate of response varied from 9% in Tidworth in east Wiltshire to 3% in parts of north and west Wiltshire.

13. The responses by area show that residents in east and west Wiltshire, who already have AWC, have a significantly higher level of support for the proposal than those in other areas. This is to be expected, as these residents have already experienced a fortnightly collection of non-recycled waste, and will benefit from proposed new recycling services. This is particularly the case in east Wiltshire, where residents would benefit from both the proposed plastic bottles and card collection and the change from a charged collection of garden waste to one which is provided at no extra charge.
14. In the areas where residents currently receive a weekly collection of non-recycled waste there is also a marked difference in response to the consultation between north Wiltshire and south Wiltshire. In north Wiltshire the response in favour of the proposal is close to average for Wiltshire as a whole. In south Wiltshire the response in favour is much lower, but still over 46% in favour. Comments made at public events indicate that the fact that residents in the south already have a plastic bottles and card collection has led to a general view that there is more to lose. Members will be aware that the current service in this area is much more costly than elsewhere. This was explained and discussed at the Area Board meetings.
15. The response at community area level is numerically smaller and must necessarily be treated cautiously. However, the results presented in **Appendix 5** indicate that there is generally a close relationship between the response at community area and service area (former district) level.
16. The community areas with relatively low responses in favour of the proposal are in the south of the county, excluding the Mere and Tisbury areas where a 65% positive response was recorded. The pattern of response indicates that, should the proposal be approved, there should be a focus upon providing information and encouragement to residents in the community areas with low support, in the communications strategy.
17. 95% of those who replied responded to the question on which age band they fell within. The analysis by age demonstrates that younger residents were somewhat under represented in the responses with the vast majority (77%) being over 45. This would seem to reflect national trends which have tended to show less engagement of younger people for many years. Further analysis of voting behaviour by age reveals only minor differences with the exception of a lower level of support for the proposal (64.6%) amongst 18 to 24 year olds.
18. The People's Voice Survey also asked about general attitudes to recycling. Analysis of the 2823 responses revealed that 94.8% described themselves as either "a very enthusiastic recycler and recycle everything I can" or "a good recycler and recycle things that are easy to do". This confirms that there is likely to be a very high level of support for recycling services offered at kerbside. The survey also found that 43.8% were not aware they could have a second black box, despite repeated publicity about this. Increased use of the kerbside black boxes will therefore be promoted as part of the communications campaign.

19. A brief summary of the key issues raised is set out in **Appendix 6**. The most frequently raised positive comments are:

- Residents welcoming the addition of a plastic bottle and cardboard recycling collection;
- Residents emphasising their agreement with all elements of the proposal put forward in the consultation;
- Residents welcoming the addition of a non-chargeable garden waste collection.

The most frequently raised negative comments are:

- Concerns about the fortnightly collection of waste due to public health and hygiene, storage of waste and reduced capacity;
- Concerns about the increase in wheeled bins or containers for the new services and about the suitability of properties to accommodate additional containers, for example, terraced houses and those properties which do not have gardens;
- The non-chargeable garden waste collection service is unnecessary as a successful chargeable service is already in place and not all residents would use this service;
- Concerns about the lack of options available to comment on and a perceived lack of communication about the consultation;
- The increased cost of the service compared to that of the existing service in the current financial climate.

20. If Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal, this information will be used to provide guidance on the key issues that need to be addressed in the detailed design of the services and the information to be provided through the communications campaign. The proposals in this report relating to service standards and policies will also address some of the issues raised by residents.

National policy

21. At the end of July, central government announced that a review of national waste policy would be held during 2011. The 18 published terms of reference include many statements that imply support for the Council's various efforts to reduce landfilling of waste. However, item 15 refers to waste collection as follows.

“How government can work with local councils to increase the frequency and quality of rubbish collections and make it easier to recycle, to tackle measures which encourage councils specifically to cut the scope of collections; and to address public concerns over the civil liberty aspects of inappropriate enforcement practices associated with household collections.”

22. The reference to enforcement practices does not apply in Wiltshire and further reassurance can be given by the recommendation to Cabinet on policy. However, the references to “frequency and quality” of collections could be interpreted as a move to discourage AWCs. If so, the government is ignoring both the substantial information that AWC delivers higher recycling and the cost implications of bringing back weekly residual waste collections, both in terms of the cost of rebuilding and operating the collection fleet and the cost of additional Landfill Tax. These costs would be an issue for Wiltshire, plus about half the waste collection authorities in England.
23. Evidence that AWC supports improved recycling is shown at **Appendix 1**. This also summarises the lower service costs in areas of Wiltshire where AWC has been implemented. Further evidence on cost differences is given in **Appendix 2**, in the Summary of Options Table at paragraph 9 and in more detail in Table 3. The response to consultation indicates a high level of support for the Council’s proposal, particularly from areas where AWC has been implemented and residents have experience of its operation.
24. There is no specific statement in the terms of reference for the Government review about the separate collection of food waste. Whilst food waste collection is not proposed by the Council at this stage (see the discussion of options considered below) this position remains under review.

Service Delivery – Policies and Exceptions

25. New policies and exceptions for service delivery will need to be agreed, to provide a framework for development of the new elements of the proposal and to harmonise the policies inherited from the previous four waste collection authorities. Proposed guidance on policy and exceptions is set out at **Appendix 7**. This includes a number of key proposals, as described below.

The use of wheeled bins

26. It is widely recognised within the waste management industry that the use of wheeled bins has significantly reduced injury rates amongst waste collection staff since being adopted by many councils and private contractors. Recent research also suggests that significant health and safety issues arise when emptying bags into vehicles fitted with bin lifting equipment. The proposals are therefore based on using wheeled bins as widely as possible, while recognising that they may not be suitable for all households.
27. The main advantages of using wheeled bins are:
 - (a) They are already used widely for these collections;
 - (b) They are easier to move when full and much less likely to cause injuries (particularly strain injuries) to both residents and staff;
 - (c) They provide better containment, less risk of litter and are more hygienic;
 - (d) They are less likely to be lost or used for other purposes.

Receptacles for Residual Waste and Garden Waste

28. The proposal is to provide 180 litre wheeled bins as standard for garden waste and residual waste. These are currently in use in east, north and south Wiltshire. In west Wiltshire 240 litre bins are used. These will not be withdrawn (to avoid unnecessary cost) but 180 litre bins are proposed as the standard replacement, or for new properties and services.
29. The main advantages of using 180 litre bins are:
- (a) They are the most widely used currently in Wiltshire;
 - (b) They are not as bulky and take up less standing space in gardens and yards;
 - (c) They provide more encouragement to recycle, because the residual waste bin size is limited;
 - (d) They provide more encouragement to home compost, because the garden waste bin size is limited.

Receptacles for Plastic Bottles and Cardboard

30. The proposal is to provide 240 litre wheeled bins as standard for plastic bottles and cardboard. In south Wiltshire 180 litre bins are used. Again, these would not be withdrawn but 240 litre bins would be used for replacement and for new properties and services. The main advantages of using 240 litre wheeled bins are:
- Plastic bottles and cardboard take up a large amount of space so more recyclables might be collected;
 - Greater flexibility for possible future service changes.
31. The alternative would be re-usable bags for plastic bottles and cardboard which contain a weighted base to reduce the possibility of them blowing away when empty.
32. The main advantages of using bags are:
- (a) They offer more storage options when not in use or part full;
 - (b) They reduce the overall number of wheeled bins;
 - (c) The initial purchase will cost less.
33. The main disadvantages of using weighted bags are:
- The risk of injuries to the lower backs of waste collection operatives and residents;
 - Lower capacity than 240 litre bins so the Council is likely to have to issue multiple bags to each household (2 to 3 bags);
 - Greater pavement space is occupied;
 - There is a higher replacement rate than with bins;
 - Different specification vehicles would be required, reducing flexibility for changes within the service and creating the need for additional spare vehicles to deal with planned maintenance of the fleet and mechanical breakdowns;

- Greater risk of litter due to lack of containment;
- Smaller capacity of bags could reduce the amount of material sorted by residents for recycling.

Alternative Containment

34. Alternative containment will be required for properties which do not have space or a suitable collection point for wheeled bins, or where the householder has particular needs which mean that the standard proposal would not be appropriate.
35. Blue re-usable bags would be issued for plastic bottles and cardboard and green re-usable bags for garden waste. The proposal for residual waste is to provide households with labels to attach to disposable refuse sacks supplied by householders. The alternative would be to provide households with an allocation of disposable plastic sacks for residual waste. Both approaches are in use currently within the county.
36. The main advantages of supplying disposable refuse sacks and re-usable bags are:
- (a) The householder is provided with a container, in the same way as if they are able to use a wheeled bin;
 - (b) Sack and bag colours can be used to assist collection;
 - (c) Containment is standardised;
 - (d) The quality of the bags and sacks is controlled, reducing the risk of splitting at kerbside.
37. The main disadvantages of supplying disposable sacks and re-usable bags are:
- (a) Expense, as in order to provide similar containment capacity each identified household would be issued with 3 disposable sacks and additional re-usable bags for each collection. For the disposable sacks, an annual issue would be in the region of 78 sacks per property;
 - (b) Additional storage space would be required to store disposable sacks and re-usable bags prior to distribution;
 - (c) Additional resources are likely to be needed to distribute to identified households, with previous experience suggesting that return trips are often needed as rolls of disposable sacks and re-usable bags should not be left on the doorstep (they can be easily taken by others, or can signify that a resident is not at home, increasing risk of burglary);
 - (d) Disposable refuse sacks in this quantity cannot be easily posted. Re-usable bags would be bulky and expensive to post.
38. The main advantages of supplying labels would be:
- (a) They are cheaper for the Council to produce or purchase and require less storage space;
 - (b) They are easier to deliver because an annual issue can be easily posted by the supplier with a mail-merged letter;
 - (c) Residents may prefer to use a wheeled bin rather than purchase disposable refuse sacks.

39. The main disadvantage of supplying labels would be that residents would need to supply their own disposable refuse sacks, although this is the current situation in the majority of the authority area.

The supply of additional bins on request

40. The proposal is as follows:
- (i) Residual waste bin – only in exceptional cases (see **Appendix 7**);
 - (ii) Garden waste bin – upon request and payment of an annual fee of £30 (subject to annual review);
 - (iii) Plastic bottles and cardboard bin – upon request, one additional bin per household;
 - (iv) Black box – upon request, one additional box per household, with further requests for additional boxes being at the discretion of the Council.
41. The alternative of providing more residual waste bins would undermine recycling. The alternative of providing additional garden waste bins free of charge may increase recycling, but runs the risk of undermining the commitment by many residents to home compost.

Ownership of bins and boxes

42. The proposal is that all bins and boxes remain in the ownership of the Council. The alternative of granting ownership to the householder runs the risks that they may be removed during house moves and may give householders the perception that they are able to purchase and use extra bins.

Presentation of Bins

43. The proposed guidance recommends that bins with open lids may not be collected and that waste placed alongside bins (“side waste”) will not be collected. This proposal is key to encouraging householders to make good use of all the collection services provided and to recycle as much as possible.
44. However, it is proposed that this policy is implemented gradually, with:
- (a) A commitment not to take action until an agreed timescale has elapsed after the start of fortnightly services, with the proposed delay being six months, as inevitably some people will take some time to adapt to new services;
 - (b) A commitment to issue warnings before taking formal enforcement action;
 - (c) A commitment that this policy will be applied uniformly, regardless of the type and location of the households concerned.

Timescale of Service Roll-out

45. The exact timescale for roll-out will need to be determined when the time required to determine major issues relating to provision of sites, vehicles, bins and bags is more certain. (See also the section of the report on Sites and Risk Assessment). This will also affect the timing of the implementation of the communications strategy.
46. The introduction of recycling services ahead of the change to fortnightly collection of residual waste has been proposed and costings for this are given in **Appendix 2**. Costings for this sequential approach and a one-off change are estimated to be similar, with the main difference being the additional staff required to carry out home visits in the event that the service changes are implemented county-wide at the same time.
47. The scale of change across the Council area would be considerable. For example, it is estimated that some 280,000 bins might need to be delivered to householders, to enable expansion of the plastic bottles and card and garden waste collections. Considerable storage would be needed, plus a very large distribution campaign. Also, a single start date would exceed the capacity of existing staff resources and additional temporary staff would have to be employed to enable the Council to deal with residents' concerns.
48. For these reasons an alternative approach to implementation, based on an area by area and service phasing format, is recommended, as follows:
 - First, implementation of the garden waste and plastic bottle and card collections in north Wiltshire in June 2011;
 - Next, this would be closely followed by implementation of both the garden waste and plastic bottle and card collections in east Wiltshire and the garden waste service in south Wiltshire (which already has the plastic bottles and card collection), during July 2011;
 - Then, implementation of the plastic bottles and card service in west Wiltshire during August 2011 (this area already has the garden waste collection);
 - Alternate weekly collections of residual waste would commence in north and south Wiltshire by about October 2011 (other areas already have this service).

Communications Plan

49. The proposed communications plan is attached at **Appendix 4**. The key components of the plan are:
 - The strong emphasis upon information and education, to encourage those residents who are not recycling to make use of the new services;
 - The need to communicate with residents over an extended time period, starting at least six months, before new services are implemented;

- The need to provide information that can be used by as many residents as possible.

Experience from district councils in Wiltshire and elsewhere demonstrates that any change to the waste collection system causes disruption and some adverse reaction from the public and the media. An extensive communications programme is therefore essential to minimise this.

Sites for Waste Treatment and Disposal

50. The proposal will have a number of impacts upon the nature of waste presented to the Council's recycling and disposal contractor. These are summarised below.
- A reduction in total tonnage – conversion to AWC services in east and west Wiltshire resulted in a reduction in overall tonnage collected. This is likely to happen in north and south Wiltshire, although the impact will probably be lessened by the greater proportion of people who are already active in waste minimisation and recycling and by any increase in garden waste generated by provision of a service for which there is no charge.
 - A reduction in tonnage of residual waste delivered to waste transfer stations in north and south Wiltshire. This will mean that more non-recycled waste from elsewhere will need to be sent to the Lakeside energy from waste incinerator to maintain the contract supply tonnage.
 - An increase in black box dry recycling tonnage in north and south Wiltshire, as residents make more use of this service.
 - A large increase in mixed plastic bottles and card tonnage from east, north and west Wiltshire, where this service will be new.
 - A large increase in garden waste tonnage from north, east and south Wiltshire, where this service will be at no extra charge for the first time.
 - Changes to waste streams will affect the use of disposal points. This will also have an impact on the waste collection services and their vehicle and staff requirements. Lengthy trips to disposal points would reduce productivity as travelling times increased.
51. The Council's contractor has capacity to deal with existing waste streams. However, spare capacity is limited. Under the Lakeside contract, the contractor is expected to provide a new waste transfer station in south Wiltshire. However, purchase of a site at Amesbury has fallen through at a late stage. Under the waste and recycling contract, the contractor is required to provide a waste transfer station in west Wiltshire. This requirement would be met by the proposed MBT contract.

52. The following new or expanded sites would be required to deal with the changing waste streams generated by the proposal:
- New waste transfer station (WTS)/materials recycling facility (MRF) in southern or south eastern Wiltshire;
 - A waste transfer station at Lower Compton (this use is not permitted at present, for residual waste but is permitted for recyclates and compost);
 - Additional composting capacity in north and south Wiltshire;
 - Premises for sorting and baling plastic bottles and card in north and south Wiltshire.
53. Councillors will be aware that the purchase and development of waste transfer and treatment sites can be a difficult and time consuming process. The contractor's recent loss of a potential site at Amesbury at a late stage is both a blow to progress and a reminder of the issues associated with the acquisition of sites for such facilities. For this reason the provision of adequate capacity is identified as a major risk to the proposal (see section on Risk Assessment below).
54. The Contractor is currently assessing potential sites, with particular reference to sites identified as having potential for waste uses in work on the Waste Sites Local Development Document. Two major planning applications are likely to be made in the near future and more may be required. Planning applications will be determined by the Council's Strategic Planning Committee. A meeting has been held between the Contractor, planning consultants, the Council's planning staff and the waste service, to explain the strategy and development requirements arising from the Council's proposal and discuss the planning process. Environmental permits from the Environment Agency will also be required.
55. The Contractor is also endeavouring to secure alternative, interim arrangements to ensure that services can commence in advance of provision of the necessary sites for waste management capacity within the county.

Environmental impact of the proposal

56. At this stage, the environmental impact of the proposal can be considered under two headings. More detailed considerations will arise during the planning and development process for the sites described above.

Relative environmental impact of recycling

57. The national waste strategy³ advises that recycling will generally have a lesser environmental impact than use of waste for energy production. This, in turn, will have less impact than disposal to landfill. The national "waste hierarchy" is based on these general guidelines, and is supported by evidence about the savings in fuel and raw materials when new consumer items are provided from recycled resources rather than raw materials.

³ Waste Strategy for England, published 2007

58. The proposal is forecast to increase the Council's average recycling rate to about 50%, compared to 40% currently⁴. The proposal therefore supports government policy to increase recycling.

Collection of recyclates

59. However, there is no clear guidance about the extent to which this general presumption in favour of recycling might be undermined when additional vehicle miles will be travelled and additional fuel will be needed to collect the recyclates. For this reason, the proposal has been assessed for the likely vehicle mileage impact and mitigating factors at the collection stage (**Appendix 8**).
60. The assessment concludes that the proposal will result in an increase in collection vehicle mileage of about 20%, which will result in the authority's carbon footprint increasing. Based on the figures contained within **Appendix 8**, it is estimated that an additional 634 tonnes of CO₂ will be emitted which, based on the Council's 2009/10 carbon footprint, would account for 3.7% of transport emissions and 0.95% of the total. In mitigation, the proposal should see a decrease in the overall County carbon emissions as residents would make fewer journeys to household recycling centres and local recycling sites, instead taking advantage of the enhanced kerbside recycling services. The assessment concludes that if 4% of residents cancel a trip (by car) to their local recycling site each week and 2% cancel a weekly trip by car to their nearest household recycling centre, the equivalent of extra collection fuel use incurred by the Council would be saved by residents. Whilst this scenario cannot be proven at this stage, if realised approximately 681 tonnes of CO₂ could be saved on the County's carbon footprint, cancelling out the increase due to kerbside collections. There would also be a slight reduction in heavy goods vehicle miles for servicing these sites.
61. Whilst these estimates cannot be confirmed, they indicate that the net mileage impact of collections on Wiltshire's carbon footprint is likely to be relatively slight, with the collected recyclates then yielding net gains by replacing raw materials in industrial processes. The proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with government policies to increase recycling and save resources from landfill, and likely to be broadly neutral in its effect on the collective Wiltshire Council and County carbon footprint. Current work by the waste and climate change services and contractors to reduce collection vehicle fuel use, by driver training and "engine remapping" would also reduce the impact of the proposed collection changes.
62. The decision to provide a garden waste collection service at no extra charge in north, east and south Wiltshire should divert an increased quantity of waste which is 100% biodegradable from landfill. Similarly, the decision to provide a cardboard collection service (co-mingled with plastic bottles) should divert a considerable quantity of card, which is also 100% biodegradable, from landfill. In the future, the Council hopes to integrate the CO₂ equivalent of greenhouse gases from waste disposal into the authority's carbon management plan, and with less biodegradable municipal waste entering landfill, this would demonstrate that lower methane production from landfilled waste would

⁴ Both percentages are based on the government methodology for calculating National Indicator 192: Household Waste Recycling.

mitigate any increase in carbon emissions from additional miles travelled to collect these materials.

Equalities impact of the proposal

63. The proposed waste and recycling collections at kerbside would be offered to all residents. The proposal is therefore expected to provide improved opportunities for recycling to the many residents who may currently find it difficult to walk to a local recycling site or do not have a car for access to household recycling centres. Residents in flats may be especially affected, largely where no on-site recycling facilities currently exist. However, work will need to be done to ascertain whether all flats can receive the new waste service, or whether there are constraints to accessing the service, for example, because of bin store size. A project group has already been set up to investigate these issues.
64. Also, some residents find use of kerbside collections challenging, due to age or infirmity. For these residents, assisted collections are offered. Collection crews are provided with lists of addresses where this service has been agreed with the residents concerned. This will need to be a continuing feature of all the proposed collections. Variations in bins or other receptacle size will also need to be offered where feasible, to enable those who wish to join the service on an independent basis to be able to do so. The Council will provide reasonable sized containment for single occupancy homes as well as for those with large households, thus avoiding discrimination in the way the Council provides the service to the public.
65. Also, the proposed services will encourage many residents to sort their waste more than they do currently. For some, this will be more challenging than using a single waste bin. Experience with previous service changes in Wiltshire and elsewhere has led to guidance that a very considerable education and promotion process will be required. This should operate for at least six months before services are changed, during the changeover and for some time subsequently. The proposed Communications Strategy is set out at **Appendix 4**. This will need to take account of the consultation process, focussing on areas where the response has been lower than average or more negative responses have been recorded.
66. Monitoring and evaluation work will also be needed, to highlight areas of poor scheme take-up enabling targeted follow-up work to increase participation. Methods are likely to include visits to individual houses and attendance at disability forums and various community groups, which should further promote equality and good relations between the Council and members of these groups. This work will need to include communication with those who do not speak English as their first language and will need to be available to those with disabilities, such as the visually impaired. A project group has already been set up to address these issues.
67. The proposal will affect employment opportunities with the Council, although calculation of the total number of collections that will be required confirms that there will be a net increase in activity.

Risk assessment

68. The transformation of waste and recycling collections has already been identified on the Council's corporate risk register. (CR0027, see **Appendix 9**). The related risks associated with the Council's overall waste strategy and diversion of waste from landfill are also registered in this way (CR0001, see **Appendix 9**). The Briefing Note to Members in June 2010 identified high level risks associated with the proposal and other options, then under consideration (**Appendix 2**, Table 5).
69. These appendices to the report provide key information on risk for the forthcoming projects that will be completed to enable implementation of the proposed services. Each risk will need to be considered in detail and addressed. Other sections of this report refer to the particular risks of financing the service changes, acquisition and development of required sites and acceptance of new collections by all residents. These will have a particular influence on the timescale of implementation. The teams tasked with completing the proposed implementation projects will manage the identified risks.
70. The appendices also provide information on risk that would result if action was not taken to harmonise waste and recycling collections, or if alternative options were to be chosen (**Appendix 2**, Table 5 options 1 and 2). The proposal to Cabinet includes a number of recommendations that represent the first stage in managing the key project risks.

Financial implications

71. The cost calculations for the proposal, existing services and other options considered by Cabinet in June 2010 are set out in **Appendix 2**, Table 3. The costs shown are for specific waste collection and waste management activities, not for the whole of the relevant council budgets. The costs are also calculated without an allowance for the effects of inflation, although they do include the costs of the Landfill Tax escalator adopted by the previous government. The current calculation of cost changes (net of inflation) required to implement the proposal is set out in the table below. These figures show the difference in costs between the current service and the proposed service for each of the next few years.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Existing Services	£24.181m	£24.851m	£25.522m	£26.192m	£26.862m
Proposal		£35.982m	£28.267m	£27.775m	£27.786m
Cost Increase	£0	£11.131m	£ 2.745m	£ 1.583m	£ 0.924m
Increase in Capital	£0	£ 8.151m	£ 0.138m	£ 0.138m	£ 0.138m
Increase in Revenue	£0	£ 2.980m	£ 2.607m	£ 1.445m	£ 0.786m

Figures taken from Cabinet Briefing Note (see **Appendix 2**, Table 3)

Therefore, subject to cost updates which will be provided throughout the implementation process, the increase required to capital and revenue spending (net of inflation) above the cost of maintaining existing services for each financial year is currently calculated as set out above, commencing with 2011-12 budgets.

The implications for the increase in the revenue budget, compared to the 2010-11 budget, are set out in the table below:

Year	Existing Service: Revenue Costs	Proposal : Revenue Costs	Increase from 2010-11 budget	Annual change
2011-12	£24.851m	£27.651m	£3.470m	£3.470m
2012-13	£25.522m	£28.129	£3.948m	£0.478m
2013-14	£26.192m	£27.781	£3.600m	- £0.348m
2014-15	£26.862m	£27.647	£3.466m	- £0.134m

72. In addition, capital spending proposed will result in an addition to the Council's capital financing budget requirement. The additional revenue budget requirement is as follows:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Revenue costs of capital	£0m	£0.350m	£0.519m	£0.528m	£0.537m

73. At the same time as the proposed service changes would take place, the waste service will be undertaking a comprehensive service review as part of the corporate programme for managing the Council's response to government cuts and need for increasing investment. The costs of carrying out the review and any resulting savings may further affect budgets.

Legal implications

74. The Council has legal obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 45 to provide waste collection services to residents. There is no stipulation about frequency of collection. Under Section 46 of the same Act, the Council, as waste collection authority, may give notice to residents that they are required to place waste in specified receptacles. This provides the basis for asking residents to separate their waste and use different bins for each collection. The Act therefore provides the basis for alternating collections and sorting by residents. Section 46 has already been used locally to support separate collections of dry recyclates, garden waste and (in south Wiltshire) plastic bottles and card.
75. The right to carry out fortnightly collections of residual waste as part of an AWC service has been questioned by some residents, organisations and parts of the media, both in Wiltshire and elsewhere. However, no legal basis for this has been established. The Council's legal service advises that they have reviewed the UK legislative position, as well as the recent EU Waste Framework Directive, and there is nothing to indicate that a collection authority must collect residual household waste on either a weekly or a fortnightly basis.
76. In this context, it should be noted that, by March 2009, 216 out of 434 UK waste collection authorities had already implemented fortnightly collections for residual waste. Therefore, some 50% of collection services are now delivered in this way across the country.

77. The results of the consultation indicate that a significant majority of residents (over 70%) support the changes proposed by the Council. Whilst any change brings concerns and opposition, the experience in east and west Wiltshire and elsewhere is that a move to alternating collections does not cause a long-term problem for the great majority of residents, many of whom welcome the opportunity to recycle more. The key requirements for success are ensuring that the detailed design of services addresses as many concerns raised by residents as possible and that the information and education process outlined in the Communications Strategy is delivered.
78. It will be necessary to negotiate a variation to the Council's existing contractual arrangements with Hills and Focsa in order to implement the proposals. Further advice will be sought from the Council's legal service to deal with these variations in due course.

Options considered

79. Other options considered by Cabinet are summarised in **Appendix 2** and the accompanying tables. These include options previously considered by the Environment Select Committee and the Waste Scrutiny Task Group.
80. The proposal was selected from the list of options by Cabinet, on the basis of:
- Equity – the proposal delivers a harmonised service with improvements and increased opportunities to recycle for all residents and in all areas recycling services are expanded rather than reduced.
 - Performance – the proposal and other measures already taken are likely to significantly improve Wiltshire Council's performance against national indicators (NIs) 191, 192 and 193 resulting in top quartile performance for all indicators, when compared with other waste disposal and unitary authorities (see **Appendix 2**, tables 2 and 4).
 - Cost – the forecasts set out in **Appendix 2**, table 3 indicate that the proposal will have significant start up costs, but that within three years of start up is likely to be showing relative cost stability compared with a significant increase in the cost of existing services, which will continue to be heavily affected by rising Landfill Tax; and similarly, by 2014-15 the proposed services would be costing significantly less per year than a return to weekly collections.
81. Of the other options, option 7 would deliver comparable performance against national indicators but would cost significantly more, due to inclusion of a weekly collection of food waste and the subsequent need for provision of a facility to manage this waste.
82. The Waste Scrutiny Task Group met on 2 September 2010 to consider the results of public consultation on the proposal. At the conclusion of the discussions the Task Group resolved the following in respect of its findings and recommendations:

- (i) To thank the Cabinet Member, Cabinet Portfolio Holder and Waste Services Manager for attending the meeting and responding to questions.
- (ii) On the balance of the evidence presented and the responses given at the meeting, the Task Group:
 - (a) Noted the results of the consultation exercise;
 - (b) Accepted the proposal to move to a harmonised waste collection service based on two weekly collections of free garden waste, plastic bottles and cardboard, the retention of the black box for glass, paper, cans and textiles and a two weekly collection of residual waste;
 - (c) Requested that the proposal be implemented as soon as possible (although recognising the constraints of doing so) subject to approval by Cabinet on 19 October; and
 - (d) Acknowledged that some of the finer detail relating to the proposal will be the subject of a further report to Councillors in respect of “Service Policies and Standards”.
- (iii) That a letter confirming the Task Group’s findings and recommendations be sent to the Cabinet Member and ask that this be taken into account by Cabinet when it considers the matter on 19 October.

Conclusions

- 83. The proposal for changes in waste and recycling collections will meet the Council’s key objectives of providing a harmonised service to residents in all areas and encouraging a significant improvement in recycling. This will enable achievement of the Council’s adopted waste management strategy and corporate plan targets, and reduce waste to landfill in accordance with the long established driver behind government and EU policy. The proposal also reflects similar decisions by about half of England’s waste collection authorities, (WCAS) including two of Wiltshire’s former WCAS, and does not contravene legislation relating to the waste collection duties of local authorities.
- 84. The proposal has been widely supported by Wiltshire residents, with over 70% of respondents to the consultation voting in favour. The current government’s guidance that councils obtain local support for their proposals has therefore been met.
- 85. Any change to the waste collection service causes disruption and some adverse reaction from the public; this is likely to result in an increase in telephone calls to the Council and interest from the media. Concerns expressed by some residents can, and need to, be addressed in the detailed design of the service and through an extensive and planned communications programme, incorporating education and information over a period of at least six months before implementation.

86. Concerns can also be addressed by policies to support the proposal, the main principles of which are covered by the recommendations to Cabinet.
87. The proposal will result in a significant increase in recycling, with environmental benefits due to the reduced use of raw materials in production industries. Collection fuel use will increase, but there is likely to be an off-setting reduction in car trips to household recycling centres and local bring sites by residents.
88. A number of new waste treatment sites and significant contractor investment will be needed to support the proposal. This represents a significant risk to project timescale and costs. However, this risk would apply to any option that sought to significantly increase recycling.
89. The proposal would provide wider access by residents to recycling, due to more kerbside collection. Provision of assisted collections, some choice of receptacles and the communications campaign will all be needed to maximise opportunities for those who face particular difficulties in accessing services.
90. A risk-based approach to project work is proposed, in recognition of the very considerable risks at corporate and departmental level. The main risks are the financing of service changes, acquisition and development of required sites, acquisition and delivery of vehicles and receptacles, and acceptance of new collections by all residents. These will have a particular influence on the timescale of implementation.
91. Initial cost assessments of the proposal provide a basis for the Council's medium-term financial strategy and increase to the waste capital and revenue budgets. However, these will need to be kept under review, as proposals are developed in detail.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Summary of Evidence in Support of Alternate Weekly Collections
- Appendix 2 - Briefing Note: Options for Collection of Recyclable Materials and Residual Waste
- Appendix 3 - Consultation Leaflet
- Appendix 4 - Communications Strategy and Timetable
- Appendix 5 - Results of Consultation by Community Area
- Appendix 6 - Summary of Comments Received in Response to Consultation
- Appendix 7 - Proposed Guidance on Policy and Exceptions for the Collection of Household Waste
- Appendix 8 - Estimated Mileage Impact of the Waste and Recycling Collection Proposal
- Appendix 9 - Corporate Risks relating to the Proposal