

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

18 October 2011

Public Participation Question from Mr Phil Matthews

Question

Bearing mind that the area covered by the former Salisbury District Council still has a weekly refuse collection will the Council consider keeping this weekly collection now that Eric Pickles has said there is £250 million available for weekly collections. If at the end of the day the Council decides to go ahead with a fortnightly refuse collection in the Salisbury Area will they consider providing householders with the larger type refuse bin?

Response

Reverting to weekly collection would not enable the council to achieve its objectives of increasing recycling and reducing waste to landfill. On 30 September 2011 Eric Pickles announced a new fund of up to £250m to support councils in delivering a weekly collection of household waste. Further information has not yet been made available about how to apply for the additional funding. There are 348 local authorities with waste collection responsibilities in England and Wales and of these 195 operate alternate weekly collections of non-recycled waste.

The Local Government Group issued a briefing paper which states that funding will be given to local authorities that guarantee to retain or reinstate weekly collections of residual waste for at least five years. If Wiltshire Council continues with the current roll out of new services and adds weekly residual waste collection, the cost of the additional collection services alone would be £3.2m each year, assuming that 50% recycling is achieved. This gives a cost of £16m over the 5 year period required.

At present in Wiltshire the recycling rates achieved where there are fortnightly collections on residual waste are 46% in the east and 44% in the west. Recycling rates where there are weekly collections of residual waste are 37% in the south and 26% in the north. There is a risk that if Wiltshire Council reverts to weekly collection, recycling rates will fall and more waste would be sent to landfill as a consequence. If recycling levels fall to 35%, total costs of the additional residual waste collection could be in excess of £5.5m each year by 2014 due to the increase in Landfill Tax to £80 per tonne.

The council's standard size refuse bin is 180 litres which residents in the south, north and east of the county already have. Households in west Wiltshire have 240 litre bins but these will be replaced with 180 litre bins over time as they need replacing due to wear and tear. Residents in east Wiltshire have managed with 180 litre bins and alternate weekly collection of residual waste for some years, so the council is

not proposing to provide householders with larger refuse bins. If any residents have difficulty managing with alternate weekly collection they should contact the council for advice. In certain circumstances additional capacity for residual waste would be provided.