

## New kerbside collections of 'small rechargeable electricals' Briefing Note No. 23 - 13

**Service:** Waste management

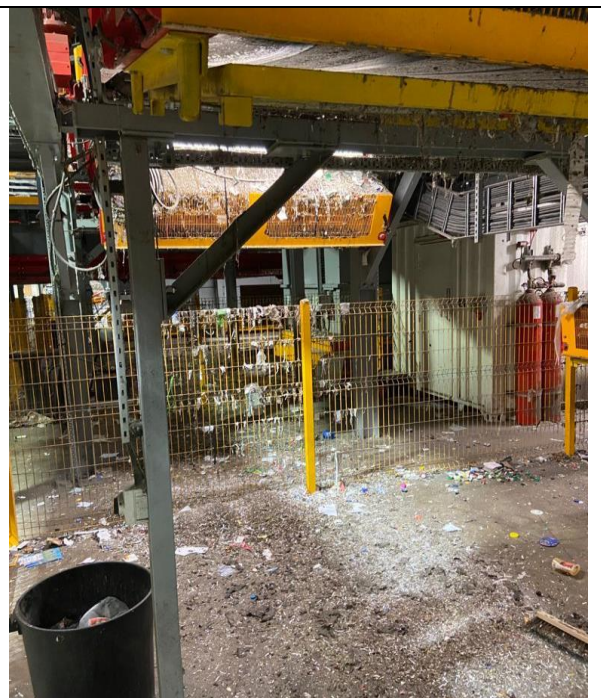
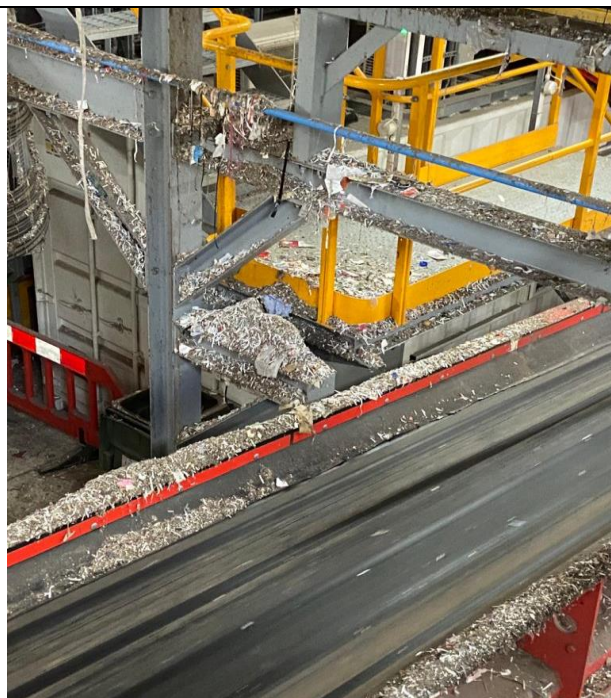
**Date prepared:** 23 May 2023

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### New kerbside collections of 'small rechargeable electricals' for recycling commencing from 5 June 2023.

#### 1. Summary:

- 1.1 This new recycling service has been made possible by making two notable changes to the materials collected via the kerbside collection service from the same date (5 June). Textiles and shredded paper will no longer be collected for recycling via the kerbside scheme.
- 1.2 Recycling textiles collected at the kerbside has become increasingly difficult because they tend to be of a lower quality and are often rain damaged when left out for collection. Good quality reusable clothing and textiles can be taken to a charity shop, household recycling centre, or a clothing bank which people can find at many supermarkets. Textiles and clothing that are not suitable for resale or reuse should be put in the general waste bin where they will be used for energy recovery.
- 1.3 Instead of putting shredded paper in the blue-lidded bin it can be composted at home, taken to a household recycling centre, or it can be put in the general household waste bin for energy recovery. The council has stopped collecting shredded paper at the kerbside for recycling as it is too small for the equipment at the sorting facility to recognise and ends up as a waste and sent to landfill.



**Images on previous page show shredded paper accumulating around equipment at Hills' Sands Farm recycling sorting facility. This is disposed of as waste and sent to landfill.**

- 1.4 In moving to stop accepting low value items such as textiles and shredded paper and replacing these with a new service for the collection of small rechargeable electricals, we hope that the service change will have a positive impact on most Wiltshire households, and help prevent the risk of fires at strategic waste facilities.

## **2. Background:**

- 2.1 An officer's decision was made on 5 Dec 2022 to stop the kerbside collection of textiles and shredded paper as part of the mixed dry recyclables (MDR) service. A copy of the decision was published here <https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1877> on 13 Jan 2023.
- 2.2 As part of the launch of the "Recycling - Let's Sort It!" campaign, officers briefed Cabinet Liaison in February on the issues caused by textiles and shredded paper at the Sands Farm recycling sorting facility, and how these contribute to the high levels of materials being rejected by this facility, and which suppress our recycling rate.
- 2.3 In considering the continuing lack of sustainable markets for kerbside-collected textiles and the problems they cause for the Sands Farm recycling sorting facility, the decision to stop the collection of textiles was made to free up capacity on the kerbside collection vehicles to enable kerbside collections of small rechargeable electrical items be implemented.
- 2.4 Containers attached to the collection vehicles originally used to keep textiles separate from the other recyclable materials, will instead be used for the new collections of small rechargeable electrical items.
- 2.5 Small waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) typically includes household electrical items such as toasters, kettles, as well as an increasingly large number of rechargeable electricals such as laptops, toothbrushes, shavers and their associated charging equipment.
- 2.6 A national TV and media campaign is currently underway designed to encourage households to recycle their electrical items - ([Recycle Your Electricals - WEEE Recycling - Material Focus](#)). [Though the national campaign refers to all electrical items, in Wiltshire we need to take a more staged approach, primarily due](#) to space constraints on the collection vehicles. Therefore, stage 1 will see an initial focus on removing small rechargeable electrical items that contain Lithium-ion batteries from the residual household waste stream, thereby reducing the risk of fires and injuries which can be caused when these items are disposed of inappropriately. It is anticipated that Stage 2 will see the scheme extended to include all small WEEE at a later point, and after the experience and impacts of the stage 1 implementation have been fully assessed.
- 2.7 The implementation of stage 1 of these changes will be supported by a wide-ranging communications campaign to inform residents and promote which materials should be included in their recycling collections. Information on other aspects of the council's waste services will also be included in these communications.
- 2.8 Website and social media messaging will encourage residents wishing to recycle small mains-powered electricals to use established retailer take back points or access their local household recycling centres which have facilities for this wider range of small WEEE items.

## **3. The service:**

- 3.1 As referenced at paragraph 1.5, the definition of small WEEE extends beyond those items containing Lithium-ion batteries, but experience of similar services provided by other councils shows that over the first few collection cycles residents will put out excessive quantities of small

WEEE for collection. This can lead to the collection service being over-whelmed and items not being collected, resulting in increased customer contact and a need to implement contingency plans to recover the recycling services.

- 3.2 To mitigate the need to provide exceptional or continued additional 'surge capacity' to cope with demand, the service will initially be limited to small rechargeable electricals that are known to contain lithium-ion batteries. To further support the roll out, additional resources will also be deployed for the first three collection cycles.
- 3.3 Collections are planned to commence from 5 June 2023, with residents being encouraged to place their 'Small Rechargeable Electricals' in carrier bags alongside their blue-lidded recycling bins (or reusable blue bags). Residents will also be asked to only place out items that are no bigger than a "shoe box' in size.
- 3.4 The volume of collected rechargeables will be closely monitored through the initial implementation phase. The service will be reviewed after the first 3 collection cycles (6 weeks), and an assessment made as to the feasibility of extending the scope to include all Small WEEE items at a later date. Future service updates will be communicated to residents through established channels such as the website, social media and direct email.
- 3.5 Officers estimate that up to 125 tonnes of small rechargeable electricals could be recovered for recycling through this new scheme which, along with other targeted activity in respect of recycling would be expected to positively influence the councils overall recycling rate, as well as have carbon emission benefits as precious metals contained in the targeted items are returned to manufacturing through recycling.

#### **4. Communications:**

- 4.1 As an alternative to relying solely upon printed media, the waste service has achieved some success in delivering service messaging via the council's website, as well as through social media (Facebook and Twitter) and information directing residents to key messages via automated acknowledgement emails sent in reply to emails received by the waste service.
- 4.2 The waste service currently holds approximately 135,000 email addresses for Wiltshire residents, where they have agreed for these to be used to receive information or service updates. These will be used to inform residents of the service changes, significantly reducing the printing and postage costs associated with promoting new services or service changes.
- 4.3 There remains a sizeable number of Wiltshire households for which we do not hold a valid email address. An information leaflet has been produced with input from the Communications team which will be posted to these households from w/c 22 May.
- 4.4 Consideration was given to including this leaflet with the annual Council Tax demands but was discounted on the basis that:
  - We were unable to align the timing of this service rollout with the issuing of annual council tax demands.
  - Sending service information out with the council tax demand poses a potential distraction from the key intended messages.
- 4.5 Waste service budget has been allocated to cover the costs of communicating these planned service changes, and directly supports the recently launched "Let Sort It!" campaign which aims to help increase the efficiency of the sorting facility which receives Wiltshire's collected recyclables.
- 4.6 In addition, a bid for £100k of external funding has been made to support the new service through the Electrical Recycling Fund Project ([www.materialfocus.org.uk](http://www.materialfocus.org.uk)).
- 4.7 The planned activity is not contingent on this bid but, if successful, any funding received will allow allocated budget to be redirected to support other planned waste initiatives throughout the year.

4.8 To maximise the opportunity a leaflet provides for sharing service updates with residents, the flyer will also include information relating to other important aspects of the council's waste services, as can be seen in Appendix A:

## Appendix A



SmallElectricalsFlyer-  
DigitalVersion.pdf



SmallElectricalsFlyer-  
PrintVersion.pdf