

Title:	Waste and Recycling Review – First Interim Report
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Linda Conley
Reporting officer:	Tim Darsley, Corporate Director
Key decision:	Yes

Purpose

To keep Cabinet informed about progress with the review of waste and recycling and to consider options for suspending green waste collections during the months of July and August.

Background

The existing twin bin and black box system was introduced across the District in stages between 2004 and 2006. In general it has been very successful, raising our annual recycling rate to 40%.

A change to remove cardboard from the green waste collection was made in April this year. This was necessary to address the contamination of the green waste and the failure of the resulting compost to meet the relevant British Standard.

At the same time, about 30 out of the 60 mini recycling sites were converted to provide for recycling cardboard and plastic bottles. These have proved very popular and additional bins have been installed to cope with demand.

A review of these changes over the summer months had always been planned. Additionally, a motion to Council on 11 April 2007, called for a full review of all options for waste collection and recycling. The motion was referred to Cabinet for consideration but this had not delayed the commencement of the review.

Alongside the review, the new Cabinet has requested that options be brought forward for suspending green waste collections and reverting to weekly grey bin collections during the months of July and August.

Scope and Timescale of the Review

The proposed scope and timescale of the review is outlined in Appendix 1. The review will be based on objective data, will include studying best practice elsewhere, and will be informed by consultation with Members, stakeholders and the public.

The review will be carried out in close liaison with the Wiltshire Waste Partnership. Black box recycling, the bring sites and the household recycling centres are provided by Hills Waste under contract to the County Council. In these areas in particular, the Council is not in a position to make changes without the agreement of its partners.

Suspension of green waste collections during July and August

Last summer was a challenging time for the alternate weekly collection system, when hot weather was combined with protracted industrial action taken by Cleanaway staff.

The replacement of alternate weekly collections with weekly grey bin collections in July and August is a possible response to this but will bring with it a number of other implications. Various options, together with their advantages and disadvantages are outlined below.

Option 1

To suspend green bin collections over the months of July and August and move to weekly residual waste collections for the two months.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Will satisfy residents who have little use of green bins.	Will reduce the Council's annual recycling rate by about 3%. (If collections were also suspended in December and January, the annual reduction would be about 5%).
Will prevent build-up of waste and hence associated problems with smell, maggots and litter.	Will upset those residents who now rely on the green bin to dispose of their garden waste.
Will have negligible impact on collection costs.	May be perceived as reducing the service further following the April green bin changes.
	Will confuse a lot of residents who will forget what collection week they are on.
	Will require significant publicity to inform residents of changes.

Option 2

To relax current restrictions on leaving bins lids up and leaving side waste over the months of July and August

Advantages	Disadvantages
Will not affect green waste collections and therefore will not significantly affect recycling rate.	May still result in smells and other problems in certain areas.
Will be easier for residents to understand as calendars will not change.	May be perceived as not tackling the issue adequately.
Will have negligible impact on collection costs.	
Will require very little publicity.	

Option 3

To suspend green bin collections over the months of July and August and move to weekly residual waste collection for the two months on a trial basis in Trowbridge only.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Will only marginally affect green waste collections and therefore will not significantly affect recycling rate.	May still result in smells and other problems in remaining areas.
Will address specific local hotspots where concerns have been raised.	May be perceived as favouring one town over the others.
Will have negligible impact on collection costs.	Will be logistically harder to implement for the contractor.
Will require moderate publicity in one town only.	
Will allow results of the trial to feed into the full review and therefore influence final proposals and options.	

Option 4

To keep a green waste collection every 3 weeks over the months of July and August and a residual waste collection on the other weeks (i.e. grey / grey / green).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Will satisfy residents who have little use of green bins.	Will be more complex to implement & communicate.
Will have less impact on those residents who regularly use the green bin.	Will confuse a lot of residents who will forget what collection week they are on.
Will prevent major build-up of waste and hence associated problems with smell, maggots and litter.	Will require significant publicity to inform residents of changes.
Will have less of an impact on recycling rate than ceasing green collections completely.	

Option 5

To add an additional collection of residual waste and maintain green waste collections over the months of July and August.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Will satisfy residents who have little use of green bins.	Will be more expensive (in the region of £300K for 2 months).
Will prevent build-up of waste and hence associated problems with smell, maggots and litter.	Will require significant publicity to inform residents of changes.

Option 6

A final option would be to defer any further changes to waste and recycling arrangements until the review had been completed. This could be combined with highlighting guidance on how to manage grey bins to avoid problems.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Enables the effects of the new green bin arrangements to be properly assessed.	Expectations of change will not immediately be met.
Will not confuse residents with further changes to arrangements.	Possible complaints of smells etc if a particularly hot summer.
Will need no specific publicity.	
Any changes will be informed by public consultation and an examination of best practice.	

Effects on Strategies and Codes

The suspension of green waste collections in July and August would reduce the Council's recycling rate. This would run contrary to the corporate plan aim of recycling more waste and targets for recycling and waste minimisation.

Risk Management

Some options mitigate the risk of losing significant recycling tonnage and hence the impact on the Council's recycling rate.

Financial Implications

Option 5 has a significant financial implication. The funding for this would need to be clearly identified and would be a key decision. Any changes to the current arrangements may incur additional publicity costs.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

There are no direct legal or human rights implications.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Agrees the format and indicative timescales and milestones of the proposed waste and recycling review.
- b) Considers and agrees an option for collections over July and August 2007.

Statement of reason for key decision	Option 5, if selected, would require substantial expenditure for which there is no budgetary provision
Options considered and rejected	Options 1 to 6 above
Date of implementation	18 June 2007

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Appendix 1

West Wiltshire District Council Waste Collection Review

Scope

- Residual waste collection
- Green waste collection
- Black box collection
- Bring Sites (full review)
- Impacts on residual waste collection
- Fortnightly collection of grey waste remains

Starting Point

- Objectives
 - Increased recycling performance (to what though?)
 - Building on existing success
 - Increased public satisfaction with the service
 - Resolution of real issues (card / plastic etc)
 - Use / adoption of best practice
 - Viable & affordable solutions
 - Future proof solutions
- Constraints
 - Financial
 - Government / EU policy
 - Known future obligations
 - WCC / WWP
 - Composting issues
 - Markets
- Opportunities
 - Constant evolution
 - Salisbury DC work
 - Best practice locally and nationally
 - Focsa (new ideas and solutions)
- Background including statutory position (government / EU) (LGA info)
- Explanation of the current arrangements
- What have the current arrangements delivered (performance / cost / perception)?
- Feedback from recent roadshows prior to changes
- Data and statistics post green bin changes (what has changed?)
- Waste composition survey information (before & after)

Key Elements of the Review

- Current perceived issues / problems
 - Redundant green bins (no gardens / winter)
 - Health issues (maggots / smell / rats)
 - Balance of kerbside and bring sites
 - Overflowing bring sites
 - Bring site materials and mix
 - Consequential litter
 - Fly tipping
 - Missed collections
 - Promotion / awareness
 - Operational rules
 - Local issues (For example Newton)

- Factual and objective assessment of the impact of the changes
- Member involvement (full with possible task & finish group and policy project group)
- Portfolio Holder involvement (new PH)
- Options going forward (pros and cons)
- Involvement of contractors (Focsa / Hills)
- Involvement of Wiltshire County Council
- Potential use of Peoples Voice for additional focused feedback
- Review of Best Practice
 - within Wiltshire
 - nationally (Cambridge / York)
 - other audit family councils
 - fact finding visits (including members)
- Quick wins

Timescales

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| • Scope to CMT | Early June 2007 |
| • Detailed work | May / June 2007 |
| • 2 nd Interim report to Cabinet | August 2007 |
| • Implement Quick Wins | July - September 2007 |
| • Full report to Cabinet | October 2007 |