

Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Ann Hedges
Title	Colchester Waste Collection Strategy		☎ 282202
Wards affected	All		

**This report concerns the implementation of changes to the way we collect waste and recycling**

## 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree a series of changes to the way in which the Borough collects waste and recycling:
  - 1.1.1 End the provision of free black sacks
  - 1.1.2 Residual waste to be collected fortnightly
  - 1.1.3 A limit of three black sacks for residual waste for areas that don't have wheeled bins
  - 1.1.4 Introduction of a second green box so that glass and cans are separated
  - 1.1.5 Provision of free white garden sacks in areas that will not have wheeled bins from the date of the introduction of the changes
  - 1.1.6 Introduction of wheeled bin collections for specific areas of the Borough; one for residual waste and a second optional bin for garden waste
  - 1.1.7 The continued provision of free clear sacks for recycling materials as at present
- 1.2 To agree the exemptions policy that will allow households who are unable to reduce their residual waste for example because of the size of the household, to put out additional residual waste and provision of a weekly collection of medical waste
- 1.3 To agree to include the revenue implications set out in this report in the 2017/18 budget and Medium Term Financial Forecast.
- 1.4 To agree that as part of the final budget report to recommend to Council the inclusion in the capital programme of the capital budget requirements set out in this report.
- 1.5 To agree that subject to appropriate budget provisions being agreed to delegate to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder the procurement of the appropriate number of wheeled bins, green boxes and other capital expenditure as outlined in section 12 to be funded from the capital programme

## 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 A waste vision was adopted by the Council in 2015 which sets out how decisions relating to waste management will be reviewed:
  - Waste is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy, so that waste is prevented and minimised where possible
  - Reuse activity is encouraged in households and businesses

- Recycling activity increases the quantity of recyclable material and produces high quality materials that are required by re-processors
- The environmental impacts of the whole system of waste management are minimised
- The recycling and waste collection service provided by the Council provides value for money for its customers

## 2.2 The key aims of the proposals are

- To improve our performance, in particular reducing residual waste and increasing recycling
- To provide a waste and recycling collection service requested by residents

## 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 To retain the current collection methods and to accept inability to improve recycling or further reduce residual waste.
- 3.2 To introduce wheeled bins across the whole Borough
- 3.3 There are a variety of other options around some of the detail, but the decisions proposed, following careful consideration and analysis, are believed to be those that
- most closely meet the views of the public
  - deliver the most benefit in terms of improving performance
  - provide the best value for money
  - meet the priorities set out in the Waste Vision

## 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Currently the service carries out over 16,000,000 individual collections per year from around 78,000 properties, a mixture of residual waste, food waste, garden waste, paper, glass, cans and textiles from households. It also provides a network of bring sites across the Borough for residents to place recyclable materials into.
- 4.2 The service that is currently provided has evolved over time. The collection of residual waste has been a constant service and the first material collected for recycling, many years ago, was paper. The separate collection of glass and cans followed in 1999 with the introduction of the still used green boxes along with a fleet of new collection vehicles. A garden waste collection service was introduced in 2004, following a successful bid for funding to DEFRA and the collection of plastics followed shortly thereafter.
- 4.3 In July 2011 the service moved from a five day to a four day week operation to improve the service to customers around Bank Holidays and in October 2013 food waste collections, following a successful funding bid to DCLG, were introduced to all households in the Borough. All of these additions bring us to where the service is today.
- 4.4 As a result of the service seeing different materials added over a period of time, there are a range of different containers which customers are asked to separate recycling into over a fortnightly schedule (blue and green weeks).

4.5 In order to assist with the collection of waste and recycling, the Council provides the following equipment to residents:

- 52 black sacks annually (for residual waste)
- Unlimited numbers of clear sacks (for paper and plastic collections)
- Unlimited green boxes (for glass and cans collections)
- Unlimited Food waste internal and external caddies
- 52 Food waste caddy liners - free with first kit then purchased
- White hessian sacks (for garden waste) – at a cost of £3.70 per sack

4.6 The frequency of collections with these containers is shown in the diagram below:

## Current Service



## 5. Proposals

5.1 The proposed changes to the recycling and waste service will create two methods of collection.

5.1.1 Introduction of wheeled bin collections for specific areas of the Borough; one for residual waste (180 litre) collected fortnightly and a second optional bin for garden waste (240 litre) also collected fortnightly. Residents will be able to opt out of having the second bin for garden waste if they have no requirement for garden waste to be collected.

5.1.2 Residual waste in all other areas will be collected in black sacks, 3 sacks fortnightly. We will limit the size of black sacks to 60 litres, so that three equates to 180 litres. Garden waste will be collected in white sacks, on alternate weeks. White sacks for garden waste will be provided free of charge with a limit of 4 sacks throughout the year to match the capacity of a 240 litre wheeled bin

5.2 Recycling collections will be the same as they are now for all households with the addition of a second green box for the separate collection of glass and cans across the whole of the Borough.

5.3 Food waste – the food waste collection will remain unchanged ie a weekly collection for all households

5.4 Flats and communal bin stores – at this point there will be no changes to the collection methods for properties with communal bin stores. There are a set of opportunities to look at how to improve participation in recycling and reduce residual waste collected from flats and communal bin stores. This work will be looked at following the implementation of the changes and a settling down period. We envisage that this work could be undertaken in early 2018.

5.5 The two methods of collection are shown in the diagrams below.

## New Service - sacks



## New Service - Wheeled bins



## **6. Exemptions Policy**

6.1 An Exemptions Policy has been developed to try and deal individually with those who will be unable to meet the requirements of the new system, for example because of:

- 6.1.1 The size of the household
- 6.1.2 Medical waste
- 6.1.3 Assisted collections

6.2 The other issue is the storage of medical waste, nappies and sanitary products (defined as “offensive waste” in the exemption policy) for alternate weekly collections. An additional collection will be available to houses where this is identified as an issue. Applications for the additional service would be made in the same way as for other exemptions

6.3 Assisted collections will remain and we recognise that there will be different households that will require assistance.

6.4 We are undertaking a profiling exercise to help identify the approximate number of households that might apply

The policy is attached as Appendix 1.

## **7. Routing and areas for wheeled bins**

7.1 One of the key elements of the new proposals has been the decisions around where wheeled bins would be implemented. Following the formal consultation and the first discussion at Scrutiny it was agreed that Ward Councillors would be asked for their input as representatives of their respective wards. All Ward Councillors were individually asked to comment on the implementation of wheeled bins in their wards. A summary of the responses and comments are attached at Appendix 2.

7.2 The other factor that had to be taken into account was that, to be economically viable, four rounds which make up one week of work for a waste vehicle had to be identified. A round for wheeled bins needs to contain approximately 1,800 properties in relatively close proximity. Rounds are not co-terminus with ward boundaries, presenting a further complication.

7.3 The outcome is a number of wards where there was both majority Ward Councillor support and are operationally suitable. These wards are:

- Mile End
- Greenstead
- Old Heath & The Hythe (excluding The Hythe and Rowhedge)
- Shrub End – particularly the Garrison areas. There was a question at the last Scrutiny meeting about any security issues for the Garrison in having wheeled bins. We have been in touch with the Garrison Commander about any security concerns and he has confirmed that he does not consider there to be an increased risk
- Stanway
- Berechurch

7.4 Based on the number of properties in these wards we will be able to implement 8 rounds, 2 routes

- 7.5 Even where a ward has been included in the list, it is recognised that not all properties or areas will be suitable. More detailed work will now be undertaken to clarify exactly where wheeled bins will be implemented. Ward Councillors will be fully involved in discussions, in recognition of their role as community representatives as well as consideration of criteria set out in the exemptions policy:
- Properties situated on a steep slope
  - Properties accessed by several steps
  - Properties where storage of wheeled bins prevent access to the boundary or safe presentation for bin collections (for example terraced houses directly fronting the street)

## **8. Implementation and time scales**

- 8.1 The aim is to implement from June 2017 as this is felt to give the service enough time to put in place the new routes and to undertake the actions needed. There are a number of factors that will impact on this timescale including the speed at which procurement of the wheeled bins can be achieved in.
- 8.2 Prior to implementation a comprehensive communications strategy (Appendix 3) will be put in place and additional resources allocated in both the Customer Service Centre and in the Zone team. Additional staff and existing staff will receive training in the new system to ensure they can support customers with the changes.
- 8.3 Work in areas that will have wheeled bins will identify properties that will not be suitable and will retain black sack collections. The details of how these properties will be identified are outlined in the exemption policy. During this time work will also support households that apply for exemptions where they believe they will be unable to limit their residual waste to the maximum allowed. Before implementation we will continue visits to households who put out lots of black sacks and advise of the changes.
- 8.4 For at least the first six months following implementation the service will identify properties who are not able to limit their residual waste to three black sacks (or contained in a wheeled bin). The emphasis during the first six months of implementation will be education, support and help to households to move to the new system. This will include the promotion of home composting to help reduce the amount of garden waste collected.
- 8.5 This approach is similar to that adopted by other Councils that have recently implemented changes in their waste collection and has proved successful.
- 8.6 A review will be undertaken at six months to consider the introduction of enforcement action to ensure full implementation. The principles of enforcement will be about households that are choosing not to recycle, not against those that are unable to. Further work and decision making will be required on exactly what this will look like. There are a range of powers available to Local Authorities. However the priority for at least the first six months will be education and support. The introduction of enforcement action will be subject to further decisions but is likely to include the option of fixed penalties or similar.

## **9. Strategic Plan References**

- 9.1 The proposals specifically support the Strategic Plan:

- Welcoming – improve the sustainability, cleanliness and health to make the borough a place where people can grow and be proud to live
- Vibrant – work hard to shape our future, develop a strong sense of community across the borough by enabling people and groups to take more ownership and responsibility for their quality of life

## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1 A comprehensive external consultation was undertaken between March and June and has informed the proposals. This consultation was reported to Scrutiny on 21 September 2016
- 10.2 Following the Scrutiny meeting on 21 September 2016 all Ward Councillors were asked if they felt their Wards would support the introduction of wheeled bins. This information has been one of the fundamental elements of deciding where wheeled bins would be implemented.
- 10.3 Only wards where all or a majority of ward Councillors indicated they would support the implementation of wheeled bins have been considered.

## **11. Publicity Considerations**

- 11.1 The waste and recycling service touches every household every week and changes will need to be clearly communicated. Given the level of change we need to use many different communication mechanisms to make sure every household understands the changes. A full communications plan is in place. This is not a static document and will continue to develop over time.
- 11.2 For two months prior to implementation and for six months following it is planned to have additional resource to support the change. This will include:
- Additional resource in the Customer Service Centre to respond to specific enquiries
  - Additional Zone wardens to work with households who need help in reducing residual waste and increasing their recycling so that they do not exceed the three bag limit for residual waste. This resource will also support households who need to make applications for exemptions
- 11.3 These changes will require a change of behaviour for many of our residents and the principle for at least six months following implementation will be education and support
- 11.4 Previous changes in the waste service give a set of lessons learned about which methods of communication are most effective and these are reflected in the communications plan

## **12. Financial Implications**

- 12.1 This strategy carries a range of financial implications, including one-off and ongoing costs, recurring savings and a requirement for capital investment

### **Revenue Implications**

- 12.2 The ongoing revenue implications of the Waste Collection Strategy primarily revolve around recycling income, supplies and services costs.
- 12.3 To deliver the changes to waste services there will be a number of one off revenue costs incurred. These will include:

- a project manager
- communications and print costs
- additional customer service centre support
- dedicated Zone wardens who will be required as additional temporary resources to accommodate the project requirements.

- 12.4 Any one-off costs incurred in 2016/17 will be met from existing budgets, however, there is a forecast one-off in 2017/18 of £159k. The 2016/17 Government Finance Settlement included the announcement of a grant paid to those authorities affected most by the reductions announced. Cabinet has already allocated the grant in 2016/17 and a further one off grant of £87k will be received in 2017/18. It is proposed that this is used to part fund the one-off costs arising from this review.
- 12.5 We currently receive £1.1m of recycling and composting credits. It is anticipated that with the increase in recycling levels referred to in the report, income will increase by £46k in the first year (5% for the part year) and by £110k ongoing (10%).
- 12.6 White Garden Sacks are currently chargeable but will now be provided free of charge which will result in a loss of income of £46k per year, with an increase in cost of £30k to purchase the sacks.

***Table of Revenue Implications***

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Revenue Implications	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b><i>Expenditure:-</i></b>				
Black Sacks		-100	-100	-100
White Sacks	0	30	30	30
Routing Software Licence Costs	0	7	7	7
Medical Waste Collection		25	30	30
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-38</b>	<b>-33</b>	<b>-33</b>
<b><i>Income:-</i></b>				
Recycling/Composting credits	0	-46	-110	-110
Sales of White Garden Sacks	0	46	46	46
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-64</b>	<b>-64</b>
<b>Net Recurring Saving</b>		-38	-97	-97
One-Off Costs	87	159	0	0
Less: Transition Grant		-87	0	0
<b>Overall Net Revenue Impact</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-97</b>	<b>-97</b>



- 12.7 The capital expenditure requirements of the Strategy will include the costs of vehicle adaptation, the purchase of bins and green boxes and routing software. It is estimated that based on eight rounds these will require capital expenditure of circa £860k as set out in the following table:-

### **Capital Implications**

Item	Homes	Rounds	Unit Cost (£)	Total (£)
Wheeled bins	1,800	8	20	<b>288,000</b>
Wheeled bins for Garden Waste (75% take up)	1,350	8	20	<b>216,000</b>
Green boxes	60,000		5	<b>300,000</b>
Vehicle conversion (x 2)			18,000	<b>36,000</b>
Routing software licence (x 1)			16,500	<b>16,500</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>856,500</b>

- 12.8 Based on the current forecast of resources there is sufficient unallocated funding in the capital programme to meet these estimated costs.

### **Summary**

- 12.9 Based on the assumptions within this report it is estimated that there is a net recurring revenue saving from 2017/18. It is proposed that the revenue implications, costs and income, arising from this review are reflected in the final budget proposals for 2017/18 and the medium term financial forecast. As part of this consideration will be given to funding the net one off costs from balances.
- 12.10 Unallocated funding remains in the capital programme to meet the estimated costs of this strategy.

## **13. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is attached in Appendix 4.

## **14. Community Safety Implications**

- 14.1 There are no community safety implications.

## **15. Health and Safety Implications**

- 15.1 A full review of Health and Safety requirements as a result of any changes to the waste service will be undertaken to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. This will include specific training for waste staff in new equipment required specifically bin lifting equipment.

## **16. Risk Management Implications**

- 16.1 The Waste Service is the only service that impacts on all households every week and there is a significant reputation risk if changes are not communicated clearly and implementation is not effective.

16.2 A full risk assessment of all the service changes taking place will be carried out.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Exemptions Policy

Appendix 2 - Summary of Ward position on wheeled bins and comments made

Appendix 3 - Communications Plan

Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

QA consultation report.