

Waste and Recycling Service

Cabinet

Date: 16th June 2016

Author: Cabinet Member for StreetSmart
Head of StreetSmart

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out proposed changes to the Waste and Recycling Service during the third quarter of 2016/17, that will enable service improvements and efficiency savings in waste and recycling collections.
- 1.2 The proposed changes to the service will impact some households where their collection day will change. Where any proposed changes impact staff then consultation with staff and unions will be undertaken.
- 1.3 These proposed changes are aligned with the Council's focus to deliver value for money services and Priority 3 of the Council's Vision for Swindon of ensuring clean and safe streets.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Authorise the Head of StreetSmart in consultation with the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, to implement changes to the Waste and Recycling collection service during 2016/17.

3. Detail

Reason for the change

- 3.1 The current refuse and recycling collection services are based on collection rounds developed over five years ago. A review of the collection schedules has established that efficiency savings can be achieved by developing new collection routes that balance the workload between the crews and optimise the productivity of each crew. Savings can be achieved by reducing the number of front line collection crews by introducing a new waste fleet, implementing new in-cab technology, optimising schedules, balancing workloads between collection days and evening out the workload between crews. Additional savings can also be achieved by reducing the overtime costs caused by imbalances in scheduling and incorporating new housing developments into front-line schedules.

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- 3.2 The review of collection schedules is being undertaken by the management team working closely with frontline crews and with support by a specialist route optimisation supplier, Webaspx. An initial assessment has established that routing efficiencies will reduce the overall number of vehicles and crews required to complete front line services. Further detailed work will be undertaken in conjunction with crews and Union during the rest of June and July to refine the proposed routes.
- 3.3 The new routing will incorporate new housing developments built since the last routing exercise and will take into consideration planned housing growth over the next three years. It will also take into consideration other factors that influence productivity such as the performance of the new vehicle fleet and the volumes of waste being generated by the public. Reflecting the increasing pressure on public finances, our focus is to deliver the most efficient service we can and this will include engaging with residents to understand the role they can play to help protect frontline services, for example, by increasing levels of recycling, and self-sorting their recycling enabling us to collect the material more efficiently.

Impact on residents

- 3.4 There is currently an imbalance of workload between the collection days within the ten day cycle, this results in excessive work to be shared among crews on some days and insufficient work on others. It is therefore necessary to change the collection days in many areas to balance workloads. The number of households impacted by a change in collection day will be established during the refinement work in July and a comprehensive communication plan will be developed to help inform residents of the upcoming changes.
- 3.5 It is proposed to implement the new routes during the third quarter of 2016/17, reflecting the time that will be required to undertake the preparation work and looking to avoid the introduction of services changes during known busy periods such as the build up to Christmas and New Year.
- 3.6 It is likely that the changes in collection day will cause some households to have an extended period between collections during the roll out; this will be mitigated by providing additional collection to those households that would have to wait significantly longer than two weeks between collections.
- 3.7 The Head of StreetSmart will work in consultation with the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart to develop the detailed implementation plan and provide recommendations to the Cabinet Member for consideration should any policy changes be required to improve the efficiency of the waste and recycling collection service.

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Benefits of the change

- 3.8 In addition to the financial savings described in paragraph 5.1, the new service is likely to deliver additional savings through improvements in reliability and resilience, cutting the costs of rectifying service failures such as missed collections.
- 3.9 There will be improved information available in customer services to assist with resident enquiries, and real-time information provided back to the crews to assist with frontline collections. We also expect the even distribution of workload to have a positive impact on the wellbeing of our crews.
- 3.10 Optimised routing is also an opportunity to improve safe working methods by considering traffic and safety issues. The new routes will include integrated route risk assessments, reflecting best practice and achieving requirements of the Health and Safety Executive. These routes will also help to avoid operating in high risk areas during peak traffic, such as near schools during drop-off and pick-up, reducing congestion caused by waste collections.

Future Waste Strategy

- 3.11 While work is underway to drive out efficiencies and improvements to the waste and collection service over the next couple of years, we will be completing an exercise throughout 2016/17 to develop a future waste strategy. This will provide the framework for maintaining and developing waste services in the medium and long term, encompassing all waste collection, treatment and disposal under the authority's control. The strategy will consider statutory obligations, targets and local objectives alongside service improvements and efficiencies.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Consideration has been given to adopting three alternative collection models - six day working, four day working adopting longer shifts and double shifting of crews. It was considered that these models offered potential reduce costs by using the vehicles for longer each week, gaining more value from the capital assets. However in all three cases there are additional costs and inefficiencies that offset the vehicle benefit. These are primarily due to reduced productivity caused both by staff working longer days and vehicles undertaking collections during peak traffic periods. Evaluation of these operating models included research into experiences of other local authorities and professional advice from Webaspx.
- 4.2 There is potential to achieve further savings through reconfiguring waste services and considering alternative waste and recycling models such as co-mingled recycling or communal provision in locations that are not well suited to individual bins. Such fundamental changes to the service are outside of the scope of the

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current re-routing exercise, but will be considered within future waste strategy, and may be subject to significant capital investment.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The efficiency savings that will be delivered by the re-routing exercise will reduce the number of front line vehicles by 3 and staff by 9. The net annual saving will be circa £287,000 from 2017/18. The savings in year one will be lower due to being implemented part way through the year and one-off costs, giving a net saving in 2016/17 of £100,000 taking account of implementation costs described below.
- 5.2 Initial Implementation costs are projected to be around £45,000, primarily covering printing costs for communications materials and operational costs during the change-over period. There will also be ongoing costs of £24,000 per year for the in-cab routing system which is accounted for within the annualised saving of £287,000.

Staffing implications

- 5.3 The service changes will result in a reduction of 9 posts within the waste and recycling collection service. These posts are currently delivered by agency staff so we do not anticipate any compulsory redundancy for permanent staff.
- 5.4 As we develop the detailed proposals, there may be some changes to working arrangements that could have an impact on staff, for example, adopting new team based working patterns. Therefore a process of staff and Union engagement will take place to consult on any changes that may impact on staff terms and conditions.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.5 There are no legal or human right implications to the proposed changes.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.6 The changes will improve the efficiency of collection crews and this is likely to reduce overall fuel use and traffic impacts through better routing. This will improve the environmental sustainability of the collection service, however it is not possible to accurately project the fuel savings until the detailed routing work is undertaken.

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Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.7 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been produced and is available on request. The outcome of the Diversity Impact Assessment is that up to half of all households could be impacted by the change of collection day but that no minority group would be disproportionately impacted. Those individuals on assisted waste collections will remain on assisted collections despite the potential change in collection day.

Risk Management

- 5.8 Changes to routes and collection days can lead to service delivery issues in the weeks immediately after the changes are implemented. This can be caused by a number of different factors including crews being unfamiliar with routes and unanticipated issues with vehicle access. Householders will also need time to become accustomed to the new schedules and may make mistakes; wherever possible it is intended to assist householders to ensure they are not left with excess waste. The detailed planning of the service changes will include consideration of additional resources that may be needed to have available in case they are needed during the roll out, for example extra vehicles and staff.
- 5.9 The proposed changes to working methods may have an impact on staff, including adopting team working arrangements across all services and potential changes to working hours. We have engaged with unions and staff on the development of the service improvements, and as we understand the detail of any impact on staff, we will engage and formally consult with unions and staff prior to implementation. Positive engagement and discussions with the workforce is essential to the success of the project, therefore a detailed engagement plan will be developed to reduce the risk of any negative impact on implementation.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports. The Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, The Board Director, Service Delivery.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 There are no background papers associated with this proposal

8. Appendices

- 8.1 There are no appendixes associated with this proposal

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9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is / is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for Month Year.