
REVISED WEEKLY REFUSE/RECYCLING COLLECTION

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Nick Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Richard Alty, Director of Place**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the detail of the final scheme being proposed for the introduction of a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service and the outcome of recent consultation.

Summary

2. Included within the MTFP is a proposal to save £400,000 by introducing a revised weekly refuse and recycling collection service, known as Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) service for recycling and residual waste across the Borough.
3. Members previously considered a report on 13 November 2013 agreeing that consultation should take place on the impacts for residents with a further report coming back to Cabinet detailing the final scheme and the outcome of consultation.
4. The consultation and additional work on final scheme design has now taken place and the detail included in this report. While there will be some impacts on particular sections of the community, it is possible to mitigate against this with the adoption of the policies within this report, which will minimise impacts on individuals with protected characteristics.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members note the outcome of the consultation and the measures to be put in place to mitigate impacts;

- (b) Option 3 be implemented for the majority of properties and where it is not suitable due to access restrictions, Option 1 be implemented;
- (c) Alternative weekly collections be introduced across the Borough in October 2014.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) To mitigate potential impacts to individual residents or specific groups;
 - (b) To enable the safe and efficient implementation of an AWC service;
 - (c) To deliver the savings within the MTFP.

**Richard Alty
Director of Place**

Background Papers

- i. Previous Cabinet Report on Revised Weekly Refuse/Recycling Collection (13 November 2013)
- ii. Revised Refuse and Recycling Survey Results
- iii. AWC Option 1 Properties

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LCD

S17 Crime and Disorder	It is not considered that there will be a significant impact on crime and disorder as a result of this report, however on occasions wheeled bins have been used in other areas to assist in criminal activity. In addition, a number of secondary fires are a result of refuse/recycling being left out for collection either loose or within wheeled bins.
Health and Well Being	There is no impact on health and well being as a result of this report.
Carbon Impact	There will be the opportunity to increase recycling and therefore have a positive impact on carbon.

Diversity	The collection system will be universal across the Borough and the Council's existing Assisted Collection policy will continue where individuals because of their personal circumstances are unable to place a wheeled bin/containers out for collection. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out, mitigation developed that will be implemented and monitored.
Wards Affected	All wards will be affected.
Groups Affected	The AWC will operate across the Borough providing the same service to all residents therefore there is no particularly affected group. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out during the consultation period.
Budget and Policy Framework	Within the MTFP is a proposal to implement an AWC system saving £400,000.
Key Decision	This is considered to be a key decision as it will have an impact on all residents as they will need to utilise the AWC service.
Urgent Decision	This is not classed as an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The implementation of an AWC service does not particularly impact on the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy.
Efficiency	The introduction of an AWC will deliver significant financial savings to the Council.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Members previously received a report on 13 November 2013 with regard to a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service, known as Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC).
8. At that meeting Members approved the recommendations:
 - (a) Members agree to the consultation on introducing an AWC scheme as detailed at paragraph 41 in this report.
 - (b) Option 3 be the preferred option for the majority of properties across the Borough.
 - (c) A further report be brought back to Cabinet in January 2014 detailing the final scheme and outcome of consultation.
 - (d) Members agree that the procurement of the wheeled bins and boxes, and also the procurement of the new recycling vehicles be designated as non-strategic.
9. Following approval at November's Cabinet, consultation has been carried out with residents via:
 - (a) Online survey for all residents available between 13 November 2013 and 16 December 2013, attached as **Appendix 1**
 - (b) Display at Dolphin Centre of proposed options and paper copy of the survey.
 - (c) Email contact made with groups representing individuals who may be impacted as a result of the changes and offer of individual meetings (Note: no individual meetings taken up).

The outcome of consultation is included later in this report. Further work has also been undertaken on modelling the final scheme.

10. Three options were presented previously to Cabinet:

(a) **Option 1**

- (i) Residual waste - wheeled bin 240 litre (as existing)
- (ii) Glass – existing box
- (iii) Paper/card – existing blue sack
- (iv) Plastics, Tetrapaks cans/metals – additional box (same as glass)

(b) **Option 2**

- (i) Residual waste – wheeled bin 240 litre (as existing)
- (ii) Glass – existing box
- (iii) Paper/card – existing blue sack

(iv) Plastics, Tetrapaks cans/metals – smaller 140 litre wheeled bin

(c) Option 3

- (i) Residual waste – wheeled bin 240 litre (as existing)
- (ii) Glass – existing box
- (iii) Plastics, Tetrapaks, cans/metals - 240 litre wheeled bin with an internal caddy to keep paper and card separate.

11. The three options were previously considered by Cabinet against the following evaluation criteria:

- (a) Overall capacity of containers for residual/recycling material
- (b) Health and safety
- (c) Ease of operation for both resident and collection crews
- (d) Storage capacity for additional containers within residents' properties

12. When Members considered the above criteria, Option 3 was the one that minimised reduction in capacity, was easy to operate for both residents and staff, and from the health and safety point of view for the workforce, the most appropriate.

13. The outcome being that Option 3 for the majority of the properties across the Borough (approximately 37,000 to 38,000) was the preferred option and for the remaining properties, Option 1.

Final Proposed Scheme

14. Following further modelling, approximately 40,000 properties are suitable for Option 3 and for the remaining approximately 8,500 properties, Option 1. The recycling vehicles for both options will be the same, 26 tonnes with three compartments to take the three streams of recycling that residents will have to separate and put out for collection:

- (a) Glass
- (b) Paper and card
- (c) Plastics, tetrapaks (cartons) and tins

15. The reason that approximately 18% of properties will use Option 1 is due to the size of the recycling vehicles that are required, which will be unable to access a lot of the tighter back lanes across the Borough where wheeled bins are currently collected from.

16. Of the approximate 40,000 properties that Option 3 is suitable for, the resident will simply present the wheeled bin with caddy inside and box for glass to the same location they currently present their wheeled bin. The remaining approximately 8,500 properties will present their recycling to kerbside in the existing box for glass, an additional 55 litre box for plastics, tetrapaks and tins, and existing blue sack for paper and card.

17. The new revised arrangements for refuse and recycling collection would operate over a four-day week, Tuesday to Friday. Staff will still work a 37 hour week split across the four rather than five days.
18. Over the two weeks, on Week 1, half the properties in the Borough would have their rubbish collected, with the other half of the Borough having their recycling collected. The following week (Week 2) this would alternate. The collection day will remain the same on both weeks. Residents will receive a calendar clearly identifying which week they are to place out rubbish and which week they are to place out recycling (alternative formats will available on request). Residents would simply:
 - (a) **For rubbish** Put out their rubbish for collection in their wheeled bin where they currently do, and
 - (b) **For recycling:** If on Option 3, place out their recycling where the wheeled bin is currently collected, or if on Option 1, place out their recycling to kerbside (where they currently do for the existing kerbside recycling scheme).

Collection Policy

19. Should Members agree to implement an alternate weekly collection system, the existing policies in place for wheeled bins will remain, however a number of additional policies will also be required.
 - a) The existing policies for residual waste will continue:
 - (i) No side waste (which means additional bin bags could not be placed at the side of the bin for collection, except at Christmas time).
 - (ii) Wheeled bins not to be overflowing.
 - (iii) Bins to be brought to the curtilage and returned within the curtilage of the property or in the case of farms to the end of the farm track on the same day as collection.
 - (iv) For terraced properties with back lanes, wheeled bin is to be placed in the back lane for collection.
 - (v) No green waste to be placed in the wheeled bin.
 - (vi) The existing assisted refuse collection policy would remain and operatives would collect and return the wheeled bin for those residents who are incapable due to ill health or disability.
 - (vii) There are a very limited number of properties that because of their location/ physical access are not able to utilise a wheeled bin. In these cases, the existing black sack arrangements would continue.

(viii) In some locations, particularly restricted back lanes, which are unsuitable for refuse vehicles, collection points would be identified where residents are expected to bring their wheeled bins to, and collect them from.

(ix) The default standard bin is a 240 litre wheeled bin, however a larger 360 litre wheeled bin is available for households of five or more and a smaller 140 litre wheeled bin for properties which due to their design can only accommodate a 140 litre wheeled bin.

b) The additional policies for Alternate Weekly Collection will be:

(i) For the majority of properties Option 3 would be implemented.

(ii) For properties that are unable to be serviced due to the size of the vehicle, Option 1 would be implemented.

(iii) For properties that currently have a 140 litre wheeled bin, Option 1 would be implemented.

(iv) Additional bulky card can be left at the side of the bin/box for recycling.

(v) Properties on Option 3 to place wheeled bin and box out for collection to the same location that they present their wheeled bin to.

(vi) Properties on Option 1 to present their recycling using the two boxes and bag to kerbside and continue to place the wheeled bin with rubbish in for collection at the same location as they currently do.

(i) There will be no choice of bin size; 240 litre bin with caddy will be issued to every property on Option 3.

Financial Implications

20. Following revised modelling there will be a reduction of two and a half to three refuse/recycling rounds across the service with refuse crew being driver plus two operatives and the recycling crew being driver plus three operatives. More detailed work has also been carried out on likely waste composition and split across recycling and rubbish, which has resulted in greater estimated savings within the waste contract than previously presented to Cabinet; however the overall savings remain the same due to the additional staff on recycling. The overall financial implications are:

	£
Savings from round reduction (2 ½ to 3 rounds)	300,000
Reductions on waste contract	315,000
Increase in recycling crews (1 man per vehicle)	-100,000

Annual borrowing – wheeled bins (40,000)	-100,000
Annual box/bag/bin replacement	-25,000
Total saving	390,000

Timeline for Introduction

21. At the Cabinet meeting on 13 November 2013, Members approved the Procurement Strategy as non-strategic for the purchase of wheeled bins and vehicles, for which tenders have now been received. Subject to Cabinet approval to implement an AWC service, orders will be placed for the purchase of vehicles, bins and boxes in January 2014. This will enable the new AWC service to be introduced in October 2014.

Legal Implications

22. The Council is a Waste Collection Authority as defined by the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Section 45 (1) (a) requires the Council to arrange for the collection of household waste from any premises and require the occupier by notice served on them (under section 46 (1)) to place waste for collection in a receptacle of a kind and number specified and on a day and at a position or place.
23. The type and number of receptacles required to be used must be such as are reasonable but, subject to that, separate receptacles or components of receptacles may be required to be used for waste which is to be recycled and waste which is not (under section 46(2)).
24. There is no legislation which specifies the frequency of waste collection; rather, arrangements for the collection of waste from households is solely at the discretion of the Waste Collection Authority to suit local needs.

HR Implications

25. Initial indications presented to Members in the November Cabinet report highlighted that there would be up to nine employees at risk as a result of introducing an AWC service. Further modelling indicates that this is more likely to be four employees at risk. This will be subject to full consultation with staff affected within Street Scene.

Equalities Considerations

26. When making its decision, Members will be aware of the requirement to have 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 Equality Act 2010. This duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;

- (ii) advance quality of opportunity between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic, and
- (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding).

Section 149 (3) of the Act states in general terms that having 'due regard' to advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to:

- (iv) the need to remove or minimise disadvantages;
- (v) taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups;
- (vi) encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

27. Following consultation and specific representations from Darlington Association on Disability (DAD), attached as **Appendix 2** and representation from a visually impaired resident sent to Councillor Wallis, attached as **Appendix 3**, the Equalities Impact Assessment (**Appendix 4**) has been carried out taking into account the impacts from the representations received. Members are required to read these documents prior to taking its decision on this proposal and address their minds to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

28. The key impacts identified by the Equalities Impact Assessment are as follows:

- (a) Wheeled bins/boxes being left on the pavement
- (b) Difficulty for those with visual impairments to identify which bin/box to place waste streams in
- (c) Ability of some residents to use wheeled bins/boxes
- (d) Capacity for families with young children using nappies and for disabled individuals who also need to have increased capacity for nappies/incontinence pads
- (e) Larger families who may require additional capacity
- (f) Ability for some residents to understand/remember which week what waste stream is to be placed out for collection
- (g) Difficulty for wheelchair users to manoeuvre in back yard/garden as a result of additional wheeled bins/boxes

29. There are a number of mitigations that can be put in place to minimise the impact to specific individuals as follows:

(a) **Wheeled bins/boxes being left on the pavement**

When wheeled bins were implemented last June, the policy agreed by Members was that residents were to place the wheeled bin to the curtilage of their property for collection, which would then be returned within the curtilage therefore minimising any time the wheeled bin was left on the pavement. Where residents are not following these requirements, officers would visit those

individuals and request that they adhere to the requirements of the wheeled bin service. This has generally worked, however, there have been one or two instances where residents have been placing bins on the pavement, which have caused obstruction. In these cases, officers have visited these residents requesting they adhere to the policy. Ultimately if individuals choose to ignore the Council's request then enforcement action can be taken.

From the response received from DAD and also from the visually impaired resident, wheeled bins being left on the pavement is more of an issue than is currently being raised with officers, therefore additional publicity will be carried out to inform residents of their responsibility to place their wheeled bin at the correct location for collection. Following further publicity, if residents continue to place their wheeled bin on the pavement they will be written to and enforcement action taken if they continue to ignore the policy.

With the introduction of AWC as proposed in this report, there will actually be a significant reduction in obstacles on the pavement as a result of the refuse/recycling service. Prior to wheeled bins, black sacks were placed on the pavement at kerbside and boxes/bags are currently placed at the kerbside for recycling. The introduction of wheeled bins has minimised obstructions on the pavement from black sacks. Option 3 will not increase any obstructions on the pavement as bins and boxes are to be placed at the curtilage of the property or in the back lane where existing wheeled bins are collected from. For the remaining 8,500 properties, there will be a slight increase in obstructions on the pavement as residents will be requested to place the two boxes and blue bag at kerbside for collection. In the publicity material, residents will be requested to place one box inside of the other and place at kerbside, and not adjacent to their property. This arrangement will help minimise obstructions on the pavement and with all boxes and bags placed at kerbside as opposed to being randomly placed on the pavement, will assist visually impaired in knowing where potential obstructions are.

Again where residents do not adhere to this policy, officers will visit and request that they adhere to the requirements and if/where appropriate, take enforcement action.

(b) Difficulty for those with visual impairments to identify which bin/box to place waste streams in

It would be possible to provide some form of identification sticker for individual bins/boxes, either with braille or an alternative depending on the resident's requirements. If requested, officers will work with those individuals and provide the most appropriate solution for them.

(c) Ability of some residents to use wheeled bins/boxes

Residents who are currently on the assisted refuse collection service will continue to receive that as part of the AWC arrangements. Assistance will be available for both residual and recycling service where appropriate.

(d) **Capacity for families with young children using nappies and for disabled individuals who also need to have increased capacity for nappies/incontinence pads**

In most cases this will be a time-limiting impact where, if required, an additional or larger wheeled bin can be issued for increased capacity for storage of waste. In the case of individuals who require this capacity in the longer term, again an additional wheeled bin or larger wheeled bin can be issued.

(e) **Larger families who may require additional capacity**

For larger families of five or more, as in the original policy, a larger wheeled bin is available. A small number of families have contacted the Council where they have struggled even with this larger wheeled bin due to the size of their family and in these cases an additional wheeled bin has been issued. Officers will work with individual families to resolve their concerns and come up with a solution that works for both the resident and Council.

(f) **Ability for some residents to understand/remember which week what waste stream is to be placed out for collection**

Calendars will be issued to all residents and updated annually on the Council's website, which will assist residents in knowing what waste stream is to be placed out which week. In cases where residents are unable to remember due to learning disability or mental health impairment, an assisted collection can be offered and officers will work with individuals or carers where appropriate.

(g) **Difficulty for wheelchair users to manoeuvre in back yard/garden as a result of additional wheeled bins/boxes**

For some wheelchair users with homes with small back yards/gardens there may be difficulty for them to manoeuvre within the yard/garden. In these cases, officers will work with the individuals to come up with an appropriate solution. Where there is a registered social landlord involved, discussions will take place with regard to appropriate storage locations and collection arrangements.

30. The above were the main impacts that have been identified through the consultation, however if any other specific concerns/impacts arise through the implementation, officers will work with those residents to try to resolve and mitigate where possible.

Outcome of Consultation

31. Below is the summary table of the revised refuse and recycling service questionnaire. In total 576 residents have either completed the survey online or forwarded paper copies.

2013 - Revised Refuse and Recycling Service - Results Summary	Yes		No		Answered	Skipped
	%	Num	%	Num	Num	Num
Would the introduction of the alternative weekly collection service have a particular impact on you?	46.2%	266	53.8%	310	576	0
Would you find these containers cause you difficulties? OPTION 1 - This would include a black bin for non-recycling waste, box for glass, a blue sack as now for paper and card plus an additional box for other recycling	55.0%	312	45.0%	255	567	9
Would you find these containers cause you difficulties? OPTION 2 - This would include a black bin for non-recycling waste, box for glass, a blue sack as now for paper and card plus an additional 140 litre wheeled bin for other recycling	62.6%	352	37.4%	210	562	14
Would you find these containers cause you difficulties? OPTION 3 - This would include a black bin for non-recycling waste, box for glass and an 240 litre wheeled bin for other recycling	49.0%	271	51.0%	282	553	23
Are any of the impacts you have identified in the previous questions a result of any of the characteristics listed?	18.2%	91	81.8%	408	499	77

Total Number of surveys	576
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Date information printed	19/12/2013
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32. Overall 53.8% of residents completing the survey did not feel the introduction of an AWC service would have any particular impact on them. The containers used in Option 3 would create the least amount of difficulty for residents at 49% responding 'yes it would cause them difficulty', followed by Option 1 at 55% and Option 2 at 62.6%.
33. The individuals with protected characteristics have been identified and included in the Equalities Impact Assessment.
34. The Equalities Impact Assessment, attached as **Appendix 4** includes impacts raised by residents from the questionnaire and from other responses, and mitigations have been developed where possible.
35. Individuals completing the questionnaire were asked to provide their comments. Below is a summary of the key themes raised.

<p>On AWC generally:</p> <p>Main concerns were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulation of waste / fortnightly collections not sufficient / wheeled bin full now even though recycle / wheeled bin not big enough, will need larger bin / will have to make numerous trips to Household Waste Recycling Centre • Storage – lack of space to store extra bin / communal flats no space for extra bins in bin store • Smells from food waste in hot weather / dog, cat and other pet waste from hutches / unhygienic / disease / flies/maggots / vermin (rats/foxes) • Holidays would cause problem because waste may not be collected for one month • Will attract fly tipping / litter in streets
<p>On Option 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant number of comments on storage: lack of storage space to store it all / too many containers / stackable boxes would be better / cannot store boxes outside as no lid / open boxes allow access for animals/children, are unsightly and messy / smelly if don't wash out plastics and cans • Some felt boxes too small / not big enough for plastics and cans / too heavy to carry • Significant number considered bags no good at all / blow away • A number of preferences for box rather than bin because of less storage space required
<p>On Option 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant number of comments on storage: storage of all containers an issue / fewer containers to store the better / no room for more bins / don't want a second bin • Covered containers thought preferable / where to store if no lids / no inside storage for box and bag / box and bag not secure • Some felt boxes for glass and bag for paper too heavy to carry / fill up too quickly / awkward to use • Significant number of negative comments regarding blue bag: poor quality / splits / blows away • Small number of conflicting comments on size of 140 litre bin; some residents preferred, some felt still too large • A number of comments considered Option 2 their preferred option

On Option 3:

- Significant number of comments on storage: not enough space for 2 bins / bins too big / bin for plastics and cans too big / too many containers / best option for elderly with space to store 2 bins
- Number of negative comments on box: pity glass can't go in bin / box too heavy for older people
- Significant number of comments that caddy may be too small for paper, but that caddy is better option than bag as paper more secure
- Significant numbers stated this was their preferred option / best option
- Preference for out of sight storage that is cleaner, tidier and safer

36. Place Scrutiny considered the proposal on 5 December 2013 to introduce an AWC service and resolved that :
- (a) This Scrutiny Committee welcomes the provision of Option 1 for 25% of the properties in the Borough.
 - (b) Members be provided with details of the properties where Option 1 would be operated.
 - (c) This Scrutiny Committee welcomes the initiative to increase recycling and anticipates an improvement in recycling figures.
 - (d) Wheeled bin storage be taken into consideration by developers of new houses.
37. These resolutions will not be approved until the next ordinary meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee on 6 February 2014.
38. Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 19 December 2013 also considered the introduction of an AWC service and resolved that “subject to approval by Cabinet on the introduction of an AWC Scheme within the Borough, this Scrutiny Committee monitors the anticipated savings through the Medium-Term Financial Plan and receives further information from Officers on the Procurement process to be followed for the purchase of boxes and wheeled bins and for the vehicles.”