

Redesigning Waste Collection

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Allan Holliday
LEAD OFFICER: Keith Parker, Head of Neighbourhoods
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WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS?

The proposal will ensure the Council's waste collection services are delivered in the most efficient and cost effective way possible.

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE? (eg Key Decision, Policy recommendation for Full Council, at request of Council,etc.)

The report outlines the proposals to develop the Council's waste collection services in the most efficient way available and asks that Executive agree that the project progresses to implementation stage.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That Executive support in principle the developing project to redesign the Council's refuse and garden waste services and approve proposals for rounds redesign and EIA consultation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The project to improve refuse collection services has been included in the Council Implementation Plan 2011-12 and 2012-13. It is divided into two distinct pieces of work. The first part involves the transition from black sack collections of the remaining 7000 properties on black sack collections to the now established Copeland standard service of twin bins as the preferred option, with single 240l black bins fortnightly where there is suitable storage but no garden, and limited blue sacks where bins are not suitable. The task of completing this transition has been underway since commencing in Millom in June 2011 and finishing in Whitehaven in February 2012. This stage of the project has seen changed arrangements successfully put into place for around 7000 homes across the Borough.

- 1.2 The completion of the standardisation of arrangements, in effect forms the “baseline” that enables the next part of the project, which involves re-designing collection rounds to be implemented.
- 1.3 With support from external waste management consultants, Gordon Mackie Associates, a review of the existing service was carried out in 2011. The review involved looking at potential operational delivery options with a view to identifying the most efficient and cost effective way to collect waste in Copeland.
- 1.4 The resulting report was extremely positive about the existing service stating that:-
- productivity levels for both refuse and recycling collections are good and are higher than is sometimes provided by private sector contractors
 - the Council has a strong operational and strategic team in place with a good level of experience and skill
 - a productive and progressive service is being operated
 - the services are appropriately resourced and managed and there is little benefit to be gained from externalising the services
- 1.5 Given the above comments and the strong service starting point the review identified a relatively small number of options that would enable the Council to realise yet further financial savings whilst optimising resources and making improvements to service delivery. In summary plans to realise the suggested savings of up to £120k per annum are now being developed by the Waste team. The savings, which cannot be guaranteed, will only result from a fundamental redesign of the service and delivering the existing refuse and garden waste services as separate dedicated services.
- 1.4 Designing the most efficient collection service to realise the suggested savings is predicated on the inclusion at the planning stage of a number of elements, some of which are likely to be challenging. Without these elements however, efficiency savings would be jeopardised, because in an already cost effective service more dramatic actions have to be taken to realise further efficiencies. Executive are therefore asked at this stage to support the project incorporating the elements outlined below.

2. PROPOSALS FOR A REDESIGNED SERVICE

2.1 Dedicated collection rounds for refuse and garden waste collections.

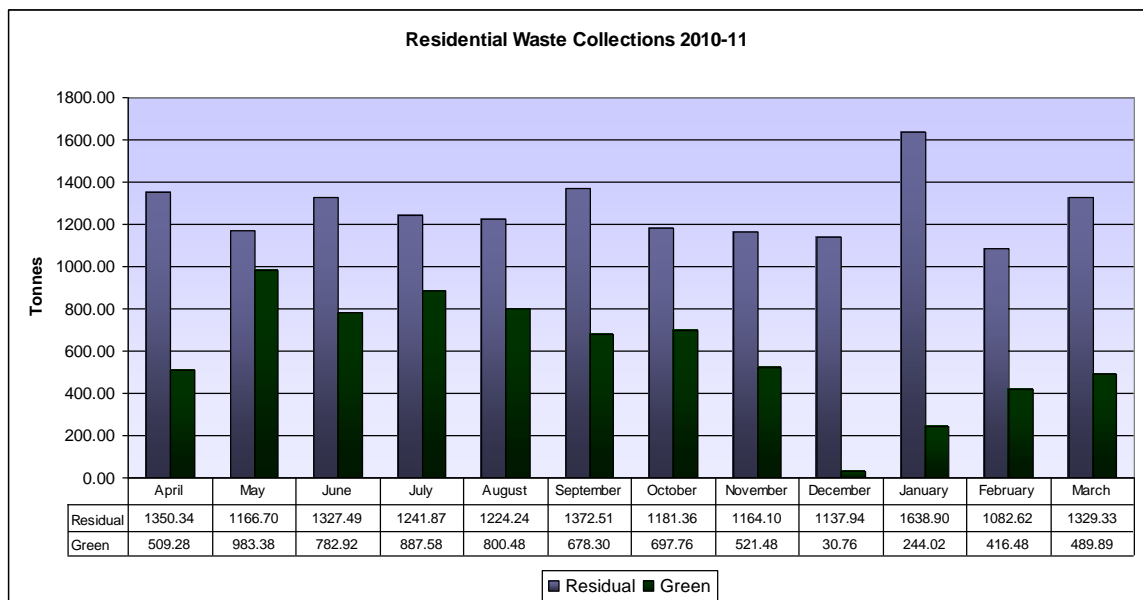
In the current system crews collect both black and brown bins from the same properties on alternate weeks. The system proposed separates the two services so that crews are dedicated to either household waste or to

garden waste collections collecting from different properties on a 2 week cycle. It is suggested this reconfiguration of the alternate week collection service may result in the Council being able to reduce the service by one refuse vehicle and crew. The proposal is to operate a geographical zoning collection system so that crews collecting black bins will start their week in the south of the Borough and work north, the crews collecting brown bins will start in the north and work south. Operating vehicles in relatively close proximity means outstanding work from vehicle break downs can be managed more easily.

2.2 Annualised hours/Change in working times

To maximise the use of resources and thereby achieve savings, annualised hours for those working on garden waste collections will be necessary to cope with the seasonal variations in demand for the service. This element will require discussions with, and ultimately agreement from the relevant trade unions and Executive is asked to endorse this approach. Whilst this approach to seasonal working is new for Waste Services, members of staff employed in the Council's Open Spaces service have been working to annualised hours for many years.

The following graph (fig 1) illustrates the difference in service demand for household and garden waste collections over a year. This graph demonstrates, how to maximise efficiency, the services need to be operated separately and illustrates how annualised hours will ensure resources are better utilised especially for seasonal green waste collections.



On the parallel residual waste rounds, particularly due to the significant distances vehicles have to travel to make collections from the south of the Borough, the team are looking at whether the service would be operated more efficiently if working hours were averaged over a two week period, This approach could also lead to a need to change working practices, with crews potentially working alternately longer and shorter working weeks.

2.3 **Rescheduling rounds.**

The project will lead to all routes/rounds being re-designed to operate as efficiently as possible. Wherever possible the project will ensure that collection days are rationalised, so that whole towns or “areas” collections are made on the same day. This will lead to fewer permutations for waste collection calendars and information on the service will be much easier to communicate.

2.4 **Efficiencies**

To ensure the service is delivered in the most efficient and cost effective way possible further changes will need to be made to the way in which the service is delivered on the ground to our customers. It is not possible at this time to identify the full potential of these changes but the intention is to work with ward councillors and individual residents where significant change is likely. For clarity, changes arising from amended day of collection or time of collection would not necessarily be included in this category as these are likely to affect the vast majority of properties in the Borough as we move to a more systematic north/south – south/north collection arrangement.

Significant changes will be subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment which needs to be programmed in as part of the project plan for revised service arrangements. It is anticipated that up to 25 ward meetings may be involved as part of the EIA consultation.

3. **THE OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN**

3.1 An in-house project team consisting of members of the waste management and supervisory team along with the Council’s GIS officer are developing draft feasible waste collection rounds. The rounds will be based on industry standards, available fleet configuration and capacity, local knowledge of the area and travelling distances.

3.2 A focus group of staff from the collection crews is being consulted to ensure known localised issues or peculiarities have been taken into consideration in the plan.

- 3.4 Once the new rounds have been finalised, a detailed implementation plan for the new rounds will be introduced. At the same time a communication plan will be produced detailing how and when residents will be advised of the changes. These plans are expected to be developed for the end of March with the changes planned to be implemented from Monday 2 July 2012. The plan is to implement the changes along with a new collection calendar which will run concurrently from the existing one which runs to 30 June.
- 3.5 During the implementation stage (April to June) the project team will extend to incorporate Communications and Customer Services who will have a vital role to play in communicating the changes successfully to residents. An initial project briefing was held in January to highlight the project to those services who will be involved in implementing the project.
- 3.6 The key milestones for the project are:-
- 1 April – 23 June EIA Consultation/Ward consultation
 - 30 June – Revised rounds finalised
 - 2 July - Communications campaign launched
 - 30 July – Calendars issued
 - 3 September – New service begins

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Without the draft revised rounds' being complete it is difficult to quantify the full level of savings that will be achieved from this project. However it is safe to suggest that at minimum rescheduling rounds will reduce fuel use. As the service uses approximately 125,000 litres of fuel, a 10% reduction would realise savings of around £12k. If as the consultants suggest, the service can be reduced by a vehicle and crew, this will realise around £100k of savings pre annum.

That said, to reschedule the rounds without implementing the changes outlined above will not result in the maximum level of savings and the most efficient and cost- effective service for Copeland.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Executive are asked to support the project as outlined and ensure the Council's refuse and garden waste services are operated as efficiently as possible and that maximum potential savings are realised.

6. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

- 6.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are: No further comment.
- 6.2 The Section 151 Officer's comments are: The report highlights that change to the Waste Collection rounds will result in savings which will contribute to the Council's overall savings target. At this point the actual amount of savings cannot be fully quantified and this will need to be done as part of the project.
- 6.3 EIA Comments
Due to the potential impact of this project, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out.
- 6.4 Other consultee comments, if any:

7. HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE PROJECT MANAGED AND HOW ARE THE RISKS GOING TO BE MANAGED?

- 7.1 The project is being managed by the council's Waste Services Manager. The project will require input from a number of other internal services at different stages and the resource requirements will be highlighted in the implementation plan. It is anticipated that as well as the ingoing and invaluable support from the GIS Officer, HR, Communications and Customer Services all have a role to play in implementing this project.

8. WHAT MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS WILL ARISE FROM THIS REPORT?

- 8.1 Apart from the savings the project will provide some improvements to the current service including:-
- A reliable service for customers as collections will be made for whole areas on a single day of the week making communications easier
 - Balanced rounds and effective use of resources.

- Dedicated residual and green waste collections working independently and structured to deal with seasonal demands.
- Employees routinely working to core hours, without reliance on overtime.
- Fleet and other resource use optimised
- Customers, Employees and Trades Unions engaged with and owning the service changes
- Capacity to deal with potential developments in planning pipeline

List of Appendices

Appendix A - none

List of Background Documents: