

Outer North-East Community Committee

10th March 2022

Late Item

Waste Management Services -
Update on the Refuse Service Review

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Report of: John Woolmer, Chief Officer, Communities, Housing and Environment

Report to: Outer North East Community Committee

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To Note/Comment

Waste Management Services – Update on the Refuse Service Review

Purpose of report

1. The verbal report is provided at the specific request of the Outer North East Community Committee.
2. To provide an update on the progress with the route review of the Refuse Service and its impact on improving recycling in the city (the review's objectives and a summary of how we currently collect and process household waste streams for disposal/recycling are provided as Appendices to help discussion).
3. To take the opportunity to provide an update on glass and food recycling in Leeds, within the context of the aims and requirements set out in the national Resource and Waste Strategy and associated Environment Act 2021.
4. To provide the Outer North East Community Committee the opportunity to ask questions and provide the service with the challenges faced in the locality.

Recommendations

3. The Community Committee is asked to note and comment on the contents of the verbal report provided.

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REFUSE SERVICE REVIEW - AGREED OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Objective 1: *To make the rounds/routes more fair through the usual finish times of routes being much more equal. This will require us to establish and agree what a reasonable day's work looks like;*

- Citywide route redesign from a blank map;
- Routes designed around 10 operational areas based on Community Committee boundaries;
- Team approach to task and finish, with Crew Chargehands working together, helped by the same black/green waste stream being collected across each area where possible.

Objective 2: *To add capacity into the rounds to be able to collect from new house builds now and planned in the next few years.*

- Recently built new homes that are being covered by citywide crews will be designed into new local routes;
- All routes will include “future proofing” for known housing developments planned for the next few years, although the scale of some developments planned in Leeds is such that the new routes required for these may need to be designed and resourced at a later date;
- In the period prior to the additional homes being built, the crew will have a degree of spare capacity which may be used for additional tasks – such as helping do recoveries or assisting with area completion of daily collections;
- There is particular pressure with the degree of existing and forecast city centre (inc South Bank) growth and a dedicated city centre team will be created to have the capacity and resources to meet the specific service challenges. There is a recognition this may need bespoke solutions;

Objective 3: *To add capacity to cover seasonal peaks in presentation of garden waste;*

- One, separately managed, garden waste team/service for the city;
- Greater ability/flexibility to “double-up” routes in time of low presentation;
- Routes designed on higher presentation rates, so able to cope in high demand weeks;
- During exceptional periods of high presentation an additional vehicle will be crewed-up;
- Explore whether offering a reduced service throughout winter is needed/feasible – possibly looking to try it out in a part of the city.

Objective 4: *To increase the % bins collected on their due day and where that's not possible, to always recover multiple addresses within 48hrs (so having a clear and achievable solution to addressing how “slippage” is recovered);*

- local solutions to prevent illegally parked cars (eg TRO/yellow lines);
- the introduction of more, smaller size wagons;
- embedding the temp new build and additional brown bin crews into the new local route designs;

- creating dedicated teams for city centre, high rise and densely populated/housing areas that also have high transiency levels (Harehills, Headingley/Hyde Park/Woodhouse has been identified by the Project Board);
- introduction of a new Crew Chargehand role on every vehicle;
- ensuring in-cab technology is fit for purpose and being used by crews, overseen by the Crew Chargehand;

Objective 5: *To establish clearer lines of responsibility within crews for tasks undertaken during the day and how that relates to the role of supervisors/managers. This includes the introduction of a new Crew Chargehand role (see Appendix A for more detail on that proposed role);*

- the introduction of the new Crew Chargehand role as soon as is possible;
- a development programme for new Crew Chargehands;
- better use of in-cab technology used to empower crews to complete tasks and report issues;
- importance of good two-way communication between Team Leader and Crew Chargehand.

Objective 6: *To be more open and accountable as a service to customers, but at the same time being clearer about what is expected of customers in the presentation of their waste and the limitations of the service we provide;*

- achieving reliable and accurate end of day reports every day is a priority for the review, and effective use of in-cab technology is the key to that;
- we need to be better at explaining to customers/residents how to use their green bins to greatest effect;
- we will restructure our service around Community Committee areas to help develop positive relationships with local communities and their democratically elected representatives;
- we will have a clear service agreement with residents (our customers) which will both set out what can be expected of us and what we need from residents.

Objective 7: *To ensure we can reliably make collections in the more challenging locations and bring different solutions and resources to support collections in these areas;*

- we need to do something different in our most challenging locations – and that may include variations on our delivery model and/or closer collaborative working with the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team;

Objective 8: *To deal with changed travel patterns as the service moves to the new headquarters/depot from early 2020, including the facilitation of crew pick-ups.*

- when the new routes are agreed, particular consideration will need to be given to the impact on staff, in particular the Loaders, once they are operational from the new depot/facility.

Objective 9: *To help inform decisions on future fleet requirements – reviewing types & numbers of vehicles needed now and in the future;*

- if working correctly and used effectively by staff, the use of in-cab technology to report/record issues the crew come across would help empower them to have frustrations such as repeat recycling bin contaminations dealt with.
- staff need the appropriate training and support;

- the technology needs to be reliable/fit for purpose.

Objective 10: *To ensure we have a reliable electronic record of what's gone on in each round, every day;*

- if working correctly and used effectively by staff, the use of in-cab technology to report/record issues the crew come across would help empower them to have frustrations such as repeat recycling bin contaminations dealt with.
- staff need the appropriate training and support;
- the technology needs to be reliable/fit for purpose.

Objective 11: *To build in time for proper staff appraisals and training and development*

- allowing staff to have dedicated appraisal days is key to ensuring quality discussion;
- development programme for new Crew Chargehands needed (as per objective 5);
- opportunities for Loaders to progress within the Council need to be highlighted
- staff to be encouraged and supported to spend a day working with other services where they feel it would be a good/useful experience for them;
- mainly through the appraisal process, Loaders aspiring to become Team Leaders should be identified and opportunities to shadow Team Leaders (inc. in other services) offered.

Objective 12: *be a basis to build on as different kerbside collections are considered to increase recycling rates;*

- to ensure that we are getting the most out of the available resources/infrastructure to deliver a reliable service for Leeds with a workforce motivated and supported to do the best they can;
- to continue to work closely together following the review to consider what future changes to kerbside recycling requirements will mean and what would work best for Leeds.

Objective 13: *enable implementation of the Council's policies on excess bins, contamination and side waste;*

- excess bins – to develop a process to initially target and remove excessive black bins which will involve the identification of the bins by crews
- contaminated bins – to develop a process initially targeting green bins that have been contaminated with non-recyclable material. To involve the identification by crews and then an agreed process that makes clear what then happens to the bin, what the message to the resident is, what punitive action is taken and at what stage, and who does each element of this process (including evidence gathering).

Objective 14: *ensure enhanced services (e.g. assisted collections/pull outs and medi-waste) are provided where justified.*

- the Medi-waste service should be a priority and the most reliable service we provide;
- assisted wheel-outs should be reliable and the effective use of in-cab technology is key to that;
- there needs to be a better process for crews to report where they believe a change in occupier has taken place at an assisted wheel out address.

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Collection of household waste and recycling in Leeds – current position**Purpose:**

This appendix summarises how we currently collect and process household waste across Leeds for our 357,000 households, including how we ensure as much of that is recycled as possible and that next to nothing goes to landfill.

1. How we collect and process waste currently:**(a) Dry recyclable waste (green bins)**

COLLECTION - All residents in Leeds have access to a green bin (or green bags) where they can choose to dispose of a wide range of items/material for recycling. The vast majority of households have their own green bin, but some share communal green bins (eg in flats/high rise). Most (76%) of households have a fortnightly collection of their green bin, alternated with the black bin. However, about 5,000 properties in the Headingley, Hyde Park and Chapeltown areas receive a weekly black **and** fortnightly green bin collection. The rest get a 4-weekly collection (with a weekly black bin collection). A small number (approx. 5,000 households) have opted out of green bin collections altogether. The current household guide to what is accepted in a green bin is included in this appendix for info. In summary, that includes most plastics, metal cans, pots/tubs/trays, paper, cardboard – but not glass or food.

DISPOSAL – All waste collected in green bins is taken to our current contractor, HW Martins, to sort and process at their site off Dewsbury Road. Known as the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), through a series of mechanical and manual sorting processes the different recyclable materials are separated, cleaned and processed into the required format ready to send to manufacturers who will recycle into new products. The facility does as much of the separating and processing as possible to minimise a further stage being necessary before recycling. An example is the sorting and processing into flakes of plastics at the site into the various types ready for the market. This cuts down on unnecessary transportation, and helps ensure more direct, sustainable and valuable markets can be found; reducing cost, allowing more materials to be collected in the green bin and improving the recyclable life of materials.

(b) Garden waste (brown bins)

COLLECTION – Leeds currently collects significantly more garden waste from households than any other council in the UK. We are in the minority of councils that still offer this discretionary service without an additional charge. Most councils charge, and consequently collect significantly less waste. When councils have moved to a chargeable service, they have typically seen a reduction of around 50-60% in the number of households they collect from. Leeds collects brown bins every fortnight from 216,000 households citywide. The service was designed and introduced with the aim to help those households with sufficiently sized gardens reduce the amount of garden waste going in their black bin, and to supplement home composting and free disposal at HWRCs. Hence the policy agreed in 2014 for one brown bin per household, around which the routes are designed and resourced.

DISPOSAL – Currently we have two contractors that we use to take our garden waste to, for them to process into compost. These are Wastewise (located near Esholt) and Biffa (located at Skelton). Wastewise mainly dispose of the compost they create to farmers for agricultural use. The compost created by Biffa is used as part of the land reclamation project at Skelton.

(c) Residual waste (black bins)

COLLECTION – Every household has access to a black bin (or bagged collection), most have their own and some share communal bins. Most (76%) of households have a fortnightly collection of their black bin,

alternated with the green bin. The rest get a weekly collection of their black bin (or bag). If residents were using the green and brown bins/composting to their fullest and taking glass and textiles to a local bring banks, the main contents in black bin would be food waste, a small number of plastics non-recyclable paper and card and other items such as nappies and other miscellaneous non-recyclable items.

DISPOSAL – All our black bin waste is collected and taken to the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF) at Cross Green, operated through a contract by Veolia. None of our black bin waste goes to landfill. A small amount of the waste is separated for recycling before incineration (ferrous and non-ferrous metals). The waste material is then incinerated and the energy created used to generate electricity that is fed into the national grid and the heat created is used to feed the Leeds Pipes network which provides heating to households and businesses. The resultant ash from the process has further metals extracted for recycling and the remaining ash is mostly used in construction aggregates, such as for road building.

(d) Glass (glass banks)

COLLECTION – We currently provide a local network of over 700 bottle banks throughout the city where mixed glass bottles and jars (and lids) can be disposed of. The bottle banks are provided by LCC, but the collection/emptying and transportation to the processing plant is through the contractor, URM Ltd. A bunker at Kirkstall HWRC is used as a waste transfer facility by the contractor.

DISPOSAL – All our glass is collected and taken to their processing plant by our contractor URM Ltd. The glass is washed, separated and processed into “cullets” at the plant. Because we collect glass separately, the glass produced at URM is of the highest grade. This means the glass can be recycled more times and has a greater financial value. The cullets are taken to a neighbouring plant, where new bottles are made. The carbon footprint of the recycling/manufacturing process is therefore minimised.

(e) Food (Rothwell kerbside trial) – currently suspended

COLLECTION – A small scale trial started in 2009 in the Rothwell and surrounding area/villages. About 12,400 households are able to use a kitchen caddy/compostable liners system to leave food waste out for collection. One refuse crew/vehicle was dedicated to this, offering a weekly collection service. Each caddy would be emptied into a wheely bin which, when full, would then be emptied into the wagon as normal.

DISPOSAL – Under the existing contract, the food is taken by our crew to the contractor’s transfer facility in Dewsbury operated by Biffa Waste Services. From here Biffa transfer the food to an Anaerobic Digestion plant in Cannock. The process of anaerobic digestion produces bio-methane which is a source of renewable energy and bio-fertiliser which is rich in nutrients and used in agriculture.

(f) Other materials

Textiles (on council land)

COLLECTION – We currently have 50 banks on 40 sites which are council bring sites (usually alongside glass and paper banks) and venues such as leisure centres. We have in recent years undertaken expansion of the network of banks during the student changeover period to help with waste reduction. The contract is held by Nathans Wastesavers who provide the banks, collect, re-use and recycle the textiles, and are based in Denny, Scotland where the mixed textiles are sorted and graded.

DISPOSAL - The graded textiles are sold by the contractor. The textiles unsuitable for re-use are recycled in the UK to make rags and cloths. The council receives an income for the textiles collected which is at the current market rate.

Paper Banks (on council land)

COLLECTION – We currently have 79 banks on council bring sites (usually alongside glass and textile banks). The long-term contract is held by Saica Nutur who provide the banks, collect and recycle the paper. Saica are based in Doncaster where the material is taken to for processing.

DISPOSAL – The material is sorted and then baled for onward transport to Saica’s papermill in Manchester where the material is recycled into new paper products. The council receives the current market rate for the paper materials which is offset by a service charge.

WEEE Banks (on council land)

COLLECTION – We currently have 40 banks over 31 sites that collect a range of WEEE (Electrical) Items. The contractor, Wastepak are responsible for the collection and onward recycling/treatment.

DISPOSAL – The electrical Items collected are sorted into high value items such as mobile phone, games consoles and laptops etc. The high value items are wiped using various mechanical and electrical methods and are then stripped down to their valuable component parts which are sold to be reused or used as raw materials. The sale of these materials generates an income to the council. The lower value items are recycled with other mixed electricals whereby the process involves stripping down the products mechanically and separating the various materials into things that have a value and can be recycled.

Batteries

COLLECTION – We currently have around 400 battery collection points at business, community halls and council buildings around Leeds. The contractor Wastepak are responsible for the collection and onward recycling/treatment of the batteries.

DISPOSAL – The batteries are collected and bulked up and taken to a treatment facility in Manchester where the batteries are both mechanically and chemically processed to extract valuable metals, earth metals and compounds which are then used as raw materials to be recycled into other products or used in the manufacture of new batteries.

Paint

COLLECTION – We collect unwanted paint from residents at each of the 8 Household Waste and Recycling Centres. We have a contract with the social enterprise Seagulls, who collect the paint direct from our sites.

DISPOSAL – Seagulls process and recycle the collected paint and sell it at their shop in Kirkstall.

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