

Report of: Director of Environment and Housing

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 9th October 2013

Subject: Alternate Weekly Collections Phase One Evaluation

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Phase One Wards and Phase Two Wards as detailed in paragraph 2.3 and 2.5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

Phase One of the roll out of Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC) has successfully achieved the objectives to implement the collection of residual waste and recycling on an alternate weekly basis, increase the amount of waste sent to be recycled and decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill.

In the first twelve weeks of the scheme there has been a 23% decrease in the amount of waste sent to landfill from households in the Phase One area. Based on this data there is increasing confidence that the full roll out of AWC to 80% of the city will generate the forecasted savings of £2.5m per annum. This position, however, will need to be closely monitored over an annual cycle and through the subsequent phases, as even small changes on waste volume can have a significant financial impact.

During the implementation of Phase One, through lessons learned workshops, post project review meetings and Safer Stronger Communities working group sessions, learning has been identified in route design (3.9), communications (3.17-3.24), operations (3.15-3.29 & 4.6) and consultation and engagement (4.1-4.4). This learning will be applied to the delivery of Phase Two and subsequent phases, in both amending processes where required and the replication of good practice and successes from Phase One.

A “no side waste” policy has been successfully trialled in Phase One as detailed in sections 3.10-3.16. This policy has been clarified with elected members in the Phase One and Phase Two wards as part of the programme of member briefings and will be included in briefings to the Environmental Leads of area committees.

This policy will be implemented and led by the Chief Officer, Waste Management Services and will be applied to the Phase Two area and to subsequent phases.

Following this, further work, is required to understand the approach and operational implications behind a principle of taking forward a full city-wide no side waste policy as recommended by the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board.

Recommendations

1. That Executive Board note the initial performance data indicating that the new service has increased recycling via the green bins for the AWC collection routes, reduced residual waste being sent to landfill and reduced the total waste generated.
2. That Executive Board approve refinements to and endorse the implementation of Phase Two of AWC, as stated in the report.
3. That Executive Board approve the ‘no side waste policy’ to be applied throughout the city where households have residual and recyclable waste collected on an alternate week basis.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to assess the early success of Phase One of the Alternate Weekly Collections project (AWC). This is measured against the expected deliverables and objectives in both project delivery and operational implementation. In addition to measures of success this report will highlight learning from Phase One that can be adopted to progress and improve further phases.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The main Waste Strategy targets are as follows:
- To recycle 55% of household waste by 2016;
 - To exceed 60% recycling in the longer-term;
 - To recover value from 90% of all household waste by 2020.
- 2.2 In terms of performance, the service has made good progress in recent years. In 2012/13, in excess of 40% of household waste in Leeds was recycled, with 24,000 fewer tonnes of waste sent to landfill than the previous year. In June of this year, as a stand alone month, the city recycled over half of its waste for the first time, achieving a figure of 52%.
- 2.3 Phase One of alternate weekly collections of residual waste and recycling (black and green) bins was introduced on 29th April 2013 for over 56,000 residents in Kippax, Methley, Garforth, Swillington, Morley, Ardsley, Robin Hood, a small part of New Farnley and additional properties in Rothwell.
- 2.4 At the same time, food waste expanded to an additional 3,800 suitable households, in the Rothwell area, maintaining same day collections.
- 2.5 Phase Two of the roll-out is anticipated to be introduced, to around a further 100,000 properties. Preparations to roll the new service out to all suitable homes in Adel and Wharfedale, Alwoodley, Bramley and Stanningley, Calverley and Farsley, Guiseley and Rawdon, Harewood, Horsforth, Middleton Park, Otley and Yeadon, Pudsey and Wetherby are underway. In addition, some suitable properties in parts of Armley, Kirkstall and Weetwood wards, along with a very limited number of properties in Farnley and Wortley and Ardsley and Robin Hood wards will be included in the next phase of the new service.
- 2.6 A third and final phase is also anticipated to be introduced during 2014/15 to achieve coverage for the estimated 80% of properties City-wide that are thought suitable for this service.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 In light of the substantial costs associated with waste collection and disposal, achieving efficiencies or innovation in these areas has the potential to realise substantial savings to the Council.
- 3.2 Initial performance data indicates that the new regime has resulted in the intended increase in recycling via the green bins for the AWC collection routes, reduction in residual waste being sent to landfill and reduction in total waste generated.
- 3.3 In the first twelve weeks, there has been an increase of 42 % in the amount of recyclable waste collected from the AWC Phase One area. (561 tonnes).
- 3.4 There has been a decrease of 12% in the overall amount of waste produced, equivalent to over 950 tonnes, indicative of residents improved management and minimisation of household wastes.
- 3.5 In the Phase One area, in the first twelve weeks there has been in total a 23% decrease in the amount of waste sent to landfill.
- 3.6 Based on the efficiencies that are expected to be achieved through a City-wide implementation of AWC, and the avoided disposal costs, primarily as a result of the reduction in residual waste, it is still anticipated that the Council should achieve its targeted savings of £2.5m per annum on completion of the AWC roll-out.
- 3.7 The Alternate Weekly Collections project team have liaised closely with the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board during this evaluation. The measures of success and lessons learned from Phase One of the project will be applied to the delivery of Phase Two.
- 3.8 Initial feedback indicates that Phase One has been successful, with broad acceptance from the public of the new collection arrangements and associated policies including 'no side waste'.

Lessons Learned: Route Design

- 3.9 The route modelling process was based on the principle that a vehicle would be assigned to a particular zoned area for six days. Based on guidance from the national Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), a reasonable level of daily contingency has been factored into the route modelling process to provide capacity to address any missed collections, as well as accounting for new builds and increased bin weights. Linked to this, the service also operates a 'buddying' system whereby vehicles within zoned areas can be called upon when required to assist for such as, cover for breakdowns. This approach is to be developed further in Phase Two.

Lessons Learned: "No Side Waste Policy"

- 3.10 Side waste is excess waste from the household, which is presented for collection at the side of the black wheeled bin. Households must place their waste in the black wheeled bin.
- 3.11 Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 states that local authorities have a duty to '*arrange for the collection of household waste in its area*'. This is discharged when an authority prescribes receptacles under section 46 of the EPA1990 and makes arrangements for the collection of waste from those receptacles. Section 45 imposes no further duty to collect household waste deposited in breach of these requirements.
- 3.12 The 'no side waste' policy has been successfully implemented in Phase One. Input from crews and Ward Members prior to the commencement of Phase One helped to identify particular areas to target Waste Recycling Advisors (WRAs) to educate residents and support the implementation of the scheme.
- 3.13 By discouraging householders from leaving side waste beside their residual waste bins, residents are required to actively manage their household waste and place materials that can be recycled into the green bin with material destined for landfill being placed into the black bin. Without this policy, residents could choose not to recycle and leave all their household waste arising out for collection for a fortnightly black scheduled collection.
- 3.14 As an exception, on the first collection only after Christmas and New Year or after service disruption through such as severe weather, a reasonable degree of side waste will be taken
- 3.15 During Phase One, following a six week amnesty period, a pragmatic staged approach to the implementation of this policy was adopted. Initially one bag of side waste was put back into residents bins and further excess waste was taken to provide residents, supported by Waste Recycling Advisors where needed, further time to adjust to this change. Any side waste is now put back into the resident's bin with a notice reminding the resident of the Council's 'no side waste' policy, with such incidents being recorded to help determine whether further input from Waste Recycling Advisors is required.
- 3.16 Residents' participation to increase recycling and reduce overall waste indicates an acceptance to this approach and feedback to Waste Recycling Advisors has generally been positive. Where there have been limited problems these have been dealt with locally through community engagement. In Phase Two closer working with relevant agencies is expected to continue to support and develop this policy.

Lessons Learned: Communication

- 3.17 Direct communications with residents: The initial introduction letter, sent on 20 Feb 2013, generated very little customer contact. This letter was required as Waste Recycling Advisors were still being appointed and the New Recycling Service web page was still in development. In Phase Two introductory

communications will be carried out through a programme of community engagement and events by the Waste Recycling Advisors.

- 3.18 Two weeks ahead of "Go Live" residents were mailed a household information pack and collection calendar. Feedback has suggested that the calendar needed to be more date specific and, as such, Phase Two will include a more user friendly calendar that can be produced without compromising quality assurance and minimising logistical issues. The household information pack will also be streamlined making information more accessible, it will include helpful information on how to manage and contain waste when bins are collected on alternate weeks and, with less duplication, the overall pack size will be smaller. This information will also be made available online
- 3.19 Contact centre: The contact centre normally handles 400 to 600 calls per day on behalf of the waste management service.
- 3.20 Based on previous experience of significant changes to waste and recycling collection arrangements, an anticipated tripling of contact in the Phase One area was anticipated and resources were deployed accordingly.
- 3.21 Between the mailing of introductory letters on 20 Feb 2013 and the end of July (19 weeks) there were 250 calls to the contact centre asking for advice around AWC, this represents approximately 0.5% of households in the Phase One area. There was an expected spike in the week before and after go live on 29 April 2013 of 129 calls.
- 3.22 Overall the contact in relation to the introduction of AWC has been minimal
- 3.23 Waste Recycling Advisors (WRAs). Following appointment, the WRAs commenced speaking to residents one month ahead of Phase One "Go live". 96 referrals for a Waste Recycling Advisor visit have been recorded from the Contact Centre with 85 recorded contacts made. In addition to this WRAs have utilised libraries and public attractions to increase awareness and education of AWC. It will be a significant benefit that the WRAs will be able to begin communications with residents for Phase Two at a much earlier stage.
- 3.24 Web site (www.leeds.gov.uk/newbinservice) In the six weeks following "Go Live" of AWC Phase One there were 2,887 hits from unique visitors to the New Recycling Service dedicated web page. This was a considerably higher figure than the calls to the contact centre, emphasising the increasing use of this communications channel. Phase One also trialled the use of dedicated Twitter and Facebook accounts, which will continue into Phase Two.

Lessons Learned: Operations

- 3.25 New bin requests: In Phase One there were 381 requests for a new green bin. A programme of deliveries was developed to meet these deliveries for the beginning of AWC collections and continue with city wide deliveries. This plan will be taken

forward into Phase Two to ensure new / additional bins are provided in line with the wider bin delivery programme.

- 3.26 Missed bins and recovery: In the first six weeks of service 487 instances of missed bins were reported to the contact centre from the Phase One area. As expected many of these calls were due to residents becoming familiar with the new service and new AWC calendars as well as the impact of severe weather throughout April.
- 3.27 In the subsequent six weeks this figure had decreased to 309 instances reported. The majority of these are localised to specific pockets of the Phase One area. The service continues to work with crews and the Waste Recycling Advisors to improve this figure.
- 3.28 Based on 2012 contact centre information, the average contact over a similar six week period was 253 instances.
- 3.29 The need was noted by the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board, for regularised and more detailed analysis of performance information, to identify trends or issues by ward and round to assist with the understanding and then the speedy resolution of issues.

Phase Two.

- 3.30 Phase Two of the roll-out is anticipated to be introduced, to around a further 100,000 properties. Preparations to roll the new service out to all suitable homes in Adel and Wharfedale, Alwoodley, Bramley and Stanningley, Calverley and Farsley, Guiseley and Rawdon, Harewood, Horsforth, Middleton Park, Otley and Yeadon, Pudsey and Wetherby are underway. In addition, some suitable properties in parts of Armley, Kirkstall and Weetwood wards, along with a very limited number of properties in Farnley and Wortley and Ardsley and Robin Hood wards will be included in the next phase of the new service.

4 Corporate Considerations

Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 The Alternate Weekly Collections project team have liaised closely with local ward members throughout the design and implementation of Phase One. The same approach is being adopted during Phase Two.
- 4.2 A series of initial member briefings are currently being held for all those Councillors whose wards will fall into the Phase Two area. These briefings and regular highlight reports will report on progress made and key tasks ahead. Importantly, they will also provide an early opportunity for Councillors to help shape the design of the new service in their wards. It is acknowledged that there is some opposition to the concept of AWC but also an acceptance to progress against the reality of the success of Phase One.

- 4.3 One of the keys to the successful approach adopted for Phase One was the involvement of collection crews during the planning stages. This will be replicated for Phase Two. A series of workshops have been scheduled with crews working within the Phase Two area so that they can be fully involved in the design of their new alternate weekly refuse and recycling collection routes.
- 4.4 The service has worked closely with the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board during the evaluation of Phase One. Observations, conclusions and recommendations from the Scrutiny Board are appended to this report.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.5 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to cover the city wide roll out of AWC. Processes are in place to enable groups identified in the EIA to participate without disadvantage.
- 4.6 Assisted collections: The same policy is applied for assisted collections across the city. In Phase Two closer working with crews and other agencies will be required to gain full picture of assisted wheelout requirement.

Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.7 Alternate Weekly collections are a key contributor to achieving the Waste Strategy targets as follows:
- To recycle 55% of household waste by 2016.
 - To exceed 60% recycling in the longer-term.
 - To recover value from 90% of all household waste by 2020.

Resources and value for money

- 4.8 Should observed trend of increased recycling and decreased waste to landfill continue (both on the Phase One area and also in Phase Two) then the net saving (13/14), less expected Phase One and Phase Two implementation costs, is likely to exceed the budgeted assumption saving of £400k.
- 4.9 Based on this data, there is increasing confidence that the full roll out of AWC to 80% of the city will generate savings of £2.5m per annum
- 4.10 However, the service will need to continue to monitor this position closely to ensure that the 2014/5 disposal budget is reflective of the latest available data from Phases One and Two as even small changes in volumes can have a significant financial impact.

- 4.11 A separate piece of work is underway to assess whether there has been any impacts on the volumes of residual waste arising at Household Waste sites in the AWC areas, although direct year on year comparisons will be affected by changes in other policies, such as the restrictions on trade waste.

Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.12 No specific issues.

Risk Management

- 4.13 Risks and issues were identified in the planning and delivery of Phase One and managed through existing project and programme arrangements.
- 4.14 In acknowledging that the Phase Two scheme is expected to commence in the winter period, additional risk factors, such as the potential for adverse weather conditions, have needed to be considered by the team. A winter contingency plan will be implemented by the service, if needed, to prioritise residual waste collections.
- 4.15 The availability of suitable tipping off points is essential to the efficient running of the waste collection service. Disruption due to the unavailability of landfill sites would impact on the plan. The council is working with landfill operators and the Environment Agency to mitigate this risk.
- 4.16 The number of WRAs for Phase Two is to be kept under review to ensure suitable support is provided for the implementation of Phase Two but also that for a small number of residents within the Phase One areas support continues to be accessible.
- 4.17 A number of residents in the Phase Two area receive a fortnightly recycling and weekly residual waste collection. It is important that the new service is communicated effectively to these residents as it may be perceived as a reduction in service.
- 4.18 There is a risk that the trend seen in the first twelve weeks of service does not continue in Phase One or Phase Two and that disposal savings will be lower than originally anticipated. As outlined in 4.10, this will be continuously monitored.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Phase One of the AWC project has successfully achieved the objectives to implement the collection of residual waste and recycling on an alternate weekly basis, increase the amount of waste sent to be recycled and decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill, The achievement of these objectives demonstrates that residents are now provided with greater convenience to participate in recycling which will realise a significant saving for LCC.
- 5.2 A number of lessons have been learned through the implementation of Phase One, covering the elements of round design, collection policy, communications and operations. This learning will be applied to the delivery of Phase Two and subsequent phases.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Executive Board note the initial performance data indicating that the new service has increased recycling via the green bins for the AWC collection routes, reduced residual waste being sent to landfill and reduced the total waste generated.
- 6.2 That Executive Board approve refinements to and endorse the implementation of Phase Two of AWC, as stated in the report.
- 6.3 That Executive Board approve the 'no side waste policy' to be applied throughout the city where households have residual and recyclable waste collected on an alternate week basis.

7 Background documents¹

December 2011 Recycling Strategy Report to Executive Board

Appendix

Phase Two area map

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board Report: Observations, conclusions and recommendations

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.