



Report to Cabinet

Subject Refuse Collection - Collection arrangement changes

Author David Parton, Head of Direct Services

Date April 2008

1 Purpose of the Report

To advise Members of the changes to the collection schedules of approximately 17,000 homes due to operational difficulties caused by disposal problems.

2 Background

- 2.1 There are now more authorities collecting and delivering recycling materials to the Biffa site in Colwick and therefore we are now experiencing longer delays, with queues up to 2 hours in some cases. In addition, when they are unable to cope with all the materials being delivered they have no choice but to close the site. On 17th April 2008, they decided to close the site at 1.30pm and we were diverted by the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) to a site at Balderton in Newark. Three of our refuse freighters were affected and returned to the depot just after 5.00pm. This has resulted in additional costs in overtime and fuel. I have complained to the WDA and requested compensation.
- 2.2 One of the freighters had just over 5 tonnes of dry recyclates but the other two freighters only had 1 tonne on them. The payload capacity is around 8 tonnes of dry recyclates per freighter. If we were to receive compensation as proposed in the draft waste partnering agreement from the WDA the total amount payable would be less than £100.00 and this is not sufficient to cover our costs.
- 2.3 Biffa provide the facilities for Veolia Environmental Services. This is through a third party contractual arrangement and is short term until Veolia provide new facilities at Freeth Street in Nottingham and the MRF at Mansfield. It is clear that Biffa are making alternative long-term arrangements to ensure the future of the existing site facilities and recover the investments they have made. We have to accept this.
- 2.4 However, our operational problems need to be addressed and I also need to ensure that we fully comply with legislation such as the driving hours restrictions. I also need to make sure that we limit the cost of any future disruptions, as these are not accounted for in our waste management budgets.

- 2.5 Delays in not being able to discharge of our recyclable materials are lowering the morale of the workforce. It gives them the impression that the service is disorganised and that this on-going problem is being ignored. This is not the case but I understand their frustrations.
- 2.6 Staff are often unable to work longer hours due to family commitments and the restrictions on their driving hours.
- 2.7 We are also currently unable to go back to any missed green bins and recycle the waste, or if there are road closures or road works, as we may not have a vehicle in the area on the following day, which is collecting recyclates. When this happens we have to make alternative arrangements, often having to use staff employed on bulky household waste or fly tipping.
- 2.8 The problem is not going to be resolved over the next 8 months. The WDA are confident that the MRF, currently under construction at Crown Farm, Mansfield, will be operational from January 2009 and this will then ease some of the pressure on our existing service. I understand that detailed plans for the Freeth Street transfer station for dry recyclables have been submitted for planning approval at Nottingham City. If they receive approval, the Freeth Street facility could be operational sometime in 2010.
- 2.9 Members will recall that the twin bin roll out was phased in over 3 years and as a consequence, a weekly refuse collection round can consist of a number of days on different coloured bins i.e. Monday black bin, Tuesday green bin, Wednesday black bin collections. Therefore, using the example above, on Monday evening when the freighter returns to the depot, it has to be washed out to avoid contaminating the following days loads. Then we need to make sure that the dry recyclates collected on Tuesday are delivered to the Biffa site (or any other site we get diverted to by the WDA) before the freighter is used on domestic waste again on Wednesday. If we landfill dry recyclates the residents would quickly lose confidence in the recycling scheme.
- 2.10 It is also currently not possible to simply divide the freighters up and keep some dedicated to collect dry recycling for two reasons; -
- On some days I need 6 freighters on domestic and 3 on dry recyclates (and vice-versa the following week)
 - I agreed with the refuse operatives, when the twin bin scheme was first implemented, that I would not create dedicated dry recycling collection rounds as this would be unfair as the workload (and in particular the weights of the black bins compared to the green bins) would not be balanced.
- 2.11 It would also be useful to make any minor changes necessary before the weekly collections of domestic waste commence in late June. I do not however, intend to change the day of collection to any household. A full review of the refuse rounds is currently being undertaken, as part of the joint working project but any major changes to maximise efficiency from these results will not be implemented until after the weekly collection of domestic waste finishes in mid September.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 In order to overcome some of the problems mentioned above, I propose to change the collection arrangements to approximately 17,000 households. In addition, I am investigating alternative options such as discharging small loads of recyclates either at Jubilee Depot or at a neighbouring authority. If we are to use the depot then a waste transfer licence may be necessary.
- 3.2 I am proposing to re-organise every refuse freighter's weekly collections so that on week 1 they are always on black bin (domestic waste) and on week 2 they are on green bins (dry recyclates).
- 3.3 In order to achieve this, the 17,000 households affected will be receiving two subsequent black bin collections in early June prior to the weekly summer service introduction.
- 3.4 As with last year we plan to leaflet drop every household to inform them about the summer service and this is an opportune time to also make these changes and inform those affected by providing a revised calendar.

4.0 Financial issues

- 4.1 The purpose of the above proposals is to reduce costs currently being incurred that were not foreseen and hence not budgeted for in the waste management accounts. Projections of likely costs are difficult to work out. Over the past 5 weeks we have been diverted to both Giltbrook and Balderton and costs incurred between these sites vary considerably in terms of overtime and fuel. However, prior to reporting the first quarterly budget monitoring I will try to identify the costs incurred during that period and if necessary, request an adjustment to the budget to cover this.
- 4.2 Investigations will be made into acquiring a waste transfer licence in order to discharge small amounts of dry recyclates into storage in the depot. The cost of this will be reported at a later date when known.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the information and be aware that costs currently being incurred may not be able to be contained within existing budgets.

6.0 Wards Affected

All wards will be affected.

7.0 Equalities Impact Assessment

An equalities impact assessment has been completed and has found no concerns or actions that need to be addressed prior to the changes.

8.0 Legal Issues

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 gives the Council the authority to determine the frequency of collection.