

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	10 February 2021
Title:	Adaptations to the waste collection service
Report of:	Tim Whelan, Director of Service Delivery
Cabinet member:	Councillor Colin Swansborough, Portfolio Holder for Place Services and Councillor Jonathan Dow, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	In order to improve the town's recycling rate and to contribute to meeting carbon reduction and financial objectives, this report seeks approval for waste collections to become predominantly alternate weekly (with flexibility as required in the town centre and for most large blocks of flats)
Decision type:	Key
Officer recommendation(s):	<p>That Cabinet -</p> <p>(1) Approves an alternate weekly refuse and recycling collection service as standard across the borough.</p> <p>(2) Agrees to certain areas and dwellings remaining on a weekly refuse collection with operational flexibility to adjust rounds as required.</p> <p>(3) Authorises the Director of Service Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place Services and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, to develop and progress operational plans to ensure new service arrangements are in place for April 2021.</p> <p>(4) Approves the business case as set out in section 6 and exempt Appendix 4 of this report.</p>
Reasons for recommendations:	Eastbourne Borough Council's ambitions for higher recycling rates and increased resource efficiency, alongside helping to meet challenging financial and carbon reduction objectives.

Contact Officer(s): **Name: Jane Goodall**
Post title: Strategy and Partnership Lead, Quality Environment
E-mail: jane.goodall@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk
Telephone number: 07788515359

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Eastbourne's recycling rate is circa 35%* against a national target of 50% for 2020 and moving to alternate weekly collections (AWC) is a well-established route for a local authority to improve performance in this respect.

*Provisional national indicator rolling 12-month recycling rate to November 2020 - 35.1%, to be confirmed by Defra.

- 1.2 In 2019/20, the majority of the 606 collection authorities across the UK collected on an alternate weekly basis, with twenty-six on 3 or 4 weekly refuse collections:
- 196, or 32.3%, collect refuse weekly
 - 353, or 58.3%, collect refuse fortnightly

- 1.3 In common with every other local authority currently, the council faces significant financial challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The proposed adaptations to waste collections represents a more cost-effective service delivery model.

- 1.4 The council has committed to making the town carbon neutral by 2030. Optimising waste collection operations to reduce fleet mileage will contribute to a lower carbon footprint and improved air quality in Eastbourne.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that refuse (or 'residual waste') and recycling are collected on alternate weeks from April 2021. There will be communications to ensure residents know when the adapted service will begin and on which day to put out the right receptacle (it is anticipated that very few households will have a change of collection day).

- 2.2 It is proposed that certain areas in the town centre and certain large blocks of flats will continue to receive a weekly refuse collection service owing to lack of space for receptacle storage and to meet standards of cleanliness in those locations.

- 2.3 The round provisionally designated to remain on weekly collections takes in the area that straddles the ward boundary for Devonshire and Meads and sits within the main A259, Marine Parade up to Ashford Road and roads either side of Gildredge Road. (Appendix 1, Map of area provisionally designated as 'town centre, weekly collections'). This may change subject to operational imperatives. Residents will be notified in due course, as will the managing agents and others as appropriate for the affected blocks of flats.

- 2.4 It is proposed that the Director of Service Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place Services and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, is authorised to develop and progress operational plans to ensure new service arrangements are in place for April 2021.
- 2.5 The operational service will be afforded an element of discretion in setting these boundaries to ensure a flexible response as the service beds in, for example, to address issues of littering and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.6 The proposed business case is in summary at section 6 of this report.

3 Outcome expected and performance management

- 3.1 Recycling rates are expected to improve. According to Alternate Weekly Collections guidance issued by WRAP, 'AWC is designed to encourage participation in recycling and composting by restraining the extent to which recyclable waste can be put into residual waste'.
- 3.2 Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) is the best performing of Eastbourne's 20 'nearest neighbours' (local authorities with similar geographic, demographic and economic characteristics) in terms of recycling. CBC's experience suggests that Eastbourne's recycling rate will increase by 5-7% by moving to alternate weekly collections.
- 3.3 With a reduction in rounds, the fleet will be reduced by two collection vehicles initially, with potential further efficiencies from future round optimisation. These changes will contribute to meeting carbon reduction and financial objectives.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 A public consultation exercise ran from 28 September to 21 December 2020 inviting responses to potential waste collection changes. The aim of this consultation was to learn how the changes would affect people in Eastbourne and what measures might be needed to help residents under the new arrangements.
- 4.2 We received 1,578 responses which was one of the highest response rates of any council-run consultation in recent years.
- 4.3 Most respondents are single, older couples or live in 3 person households. Of the 57% of respondents who chose to answer the equality monitoring questions in the survey:
- 36.08% (328) of respondents were male, 62.38% (567) were female.
 - 14.88% (135) of respondents identified themselves as having a disability or long-term health condition.
 - 15.49% (140) of respondents identified themselves as having a caring responsibility.
 - 84% of respondents were aged between 35 and 75.
- 4.4 When asked 'How important do you think it is to recycle?' 84.83% (1336) stated they considered it to be very important.

- 4.5 When asked 'What positive or negative impacts would moving to fortnightly waste and recycling collections have on you and your household?' the following themes emerged:
- Concerns about hygiene, mess, smell or vermin: 463 comments
 - Concerns about bins being too full or overflowing: 514 comments
 - The changes would have no or very limited impact: 266 comments
 - More refuse bin capacity would be needed: 137 comments
 - It would cause issues with properties with shared bins: 112 comments
- 4.6 We then asked what would help people under the proposed new arrangements and the most frequently cited examples were:
- More information about what I can recycle from home: 33.75% (464)
 - A bulky waste collection: 32.07% (441)
 - An additional recycling bin 33.53% (461)
- 4.7 In response to the issues in 4.6 above: provision will be made for additional recycling bins requested; the council runs a bulky waste service; communications and engagement about what materials can be recycled is ongoing. Indeed, every household received a leaflet from East Sussex County Council at the end of 2020 with detailed recycling information.
- 4.8 The volume of concerns about constrained communal bin facilities in flats confirmed the view of those running the operational service that weekly collections should continue for many of the larger blocks of flats in the town.
- 4.9 A detailed account on the results of the consultation was presented to Scrutiny on 8 February 2021 and is included at Appendix 2.
- 4.10 A thorough Equality and Fairness Analysis of the proposals has been conducted and the report is at Appendix 3.
- 4.11 While many residents have expressed concerns about these proposals, the experience of neighbouring authorities where AWC was introduced several years ago is that these fears are not realised.
- 4.12 It is encouraging to note the comments of some residents who have moved to Eastbourne from areas where alternate weekly collections were the norm, that the change in service they experienced in their previous locality had very quickly become accepted once implemented and that the process was straightforward.

5 Corporate plan and council policies

- 5.1 The Eastbourne Borough Council Climate Emergency Strategy - Baseline Report and Action Plan (November 2020) vision for waste is: 'We have a clean town that enables residents and visitors to reduce waste, our recycling rates put us in top 25% of authorities nationally and we have reduced non-recyclable waste'.
- 5.2 A key performance indicator is to 'increase the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting'.

6 Business case and alternative option(s) considered

- 6.1 A weekly food and a weekly recycling collection service (among suggestions raised in the survey), may be assessed in the light of the forthcoming Environment Bill (and associated available resource) as they would have significant financial implications.
- 6.2 The business case indicates a net revenue saving in year one of £206k rising to £249k in year two as a key financial benefit of alternate weekly collections.
- 6.3 The total costs of implementation stand at £28k which includes additional bins, additional initial support to the contact centre and additional communications. The detail for costs and benefits is at exempt Appendix 4 (exempt under paragraph 1).
- 6.4 Post implementation, there may be further efficiencies from fine-tuning the balance of rounds.
- 6.5 Related carbon savings are anticipated to be in the region of 60,000 kgCO₂e (60 tonnes) based on working estimates. Progress on actual carbon savings will be reported through the Climate Change Action Plan (updated in September).

7 Financial appraisal

- 7.1 Full details of the financial appraisal are included in Appendix 4.

18.01.21 AC

8 Legal implications

- 8.1 Waste collection authorities such as EBC are required by section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to “arrange for the collection of household waste” in their areas. However, there is nothing in the Act or any regulations relating to it that impose any particular frequency of collection on authorities. Frequency is therefore a policy matter to be decided by individual authorities.
- 8.2 The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (made under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999) require a reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill* and an increase in recycling, in order to help address the economic and environmental impacts of waste. The recommendations set out in this report should, if approved, help to achieve that objective.
- 8.3 Cabinet is required to have “conscientious regard” to the outcome of the public consultation in determining the council’s policy on alternate weekly waste collections.

Lawyer consulted 06.01.21

Legal ref: 009817-EBC-OD

* NB collected residual waste goes to the East Sussex Energy Recovery Facility

9 Risk management implications

- 9.1 The council will rely on excellent communications and engagement to mitigate any service disruption for residents, ensuring accurate records are maintained.
- 9.2 Excellent team management, communications and good HR practice will ensure that employee engagement is maintained throughout changes to the operational service.
- 9.3 It is sometimes assumed that a move to AWC will result in the weight of the refuse bin on a fortnightly collection doubling from that on a weekly collection. Experience suggests that it is more likely to be 1.5 times the weight (e.g. 17-22kg fortnightly compared to 12-15kg weekly). This is a result of the reduced capacity for residual waste and the increased diversion of material into recycling schemes. Nevertheless, the impact of this higher weight per collection must be taken into consideration when reviewing risk assessments (WRAP).
- 9.4 Other risks and mitigations are set out below:
- Ensure residents have enough capacity for their recycling (mitigated by large 240L bin provided as standard and additional bin if required).
 - Potential increase in fly-tipping and littering if not clear to residents when collections will take place (mitigate with communications while changes bed in).
 - A potential increase in refuse with the standard 180L bin being increased to 240L will be monitored.
 - Reducing 6 rounds to 4 will increase weight loads per truck therefore potentially increasing 'tip-runs'. If necessary, this can be off-set by offering a 'turn-around vehicle' from the 2 spare vehicles. (This is where a spare driver gives the crew an empty truck so they can continue with their round, while the full truck is run to tip. This is what happens throughout the Christmas catch-up). Once the rounds are properly balanced, then the need for a 'turnaround' should be eliminated. Retaining the 2 spares for a short period would afford that flexibility.
 - Smaller blocks of flats throughout the borough, and there are not many, are currently serviced by the regular crews on a weekly basis. If, following review, they do not have the bin store capacity to last a fortnight for domestic waste collections, then the 'narrow access vehicles' can absorb these and continue them on a weekly collection.
 - The public can take excess waste and recycling to the Eastbourne Household Waste Recycling Site.

10 Equality analysis

- 10.1 An Equality & Fairness Analysis has been undertaken for this report. It concluded that while it is hoped that increased recycling, decreased noise and improved air quality will positively impact the local population generally, potentially negative impacts have been identified for those households generating non-infectious personal waste (carers, disabled people, older people, women and households with children requiring nappies). Any negative impacts and experiences by these groups may indicate that aims 1 (Eliminate

discrimination, harassment and victimisation) & 3 (Foster good relations) of the PSED may not have been met.

11 Environmental sustainability implications

- 11.1 Eastbourne Borough Council aims to minimise waste and to recycle or reuse as part of a circular economy approach to tackle the climate and nature emergency
- 11.2 The treatment and disposal of waste accounts for 2% of the borough's carbon footprint as calculated using the Scatter methodology, this amounts to around 9,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents emitted during 2017.
- 11.3 Increasing the recycling rate and optimising waste collection operations to reduce fleet mileage would contribute to a lower carbon footprint in Eastbourne.

12 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Map of area provisionally designated as 'town centre, weekly collections'
- Appendix 2 – Report on the response to the public consultation on waste collections
- Appendix 3 - Equality and Fairness Analysis
- Appendix 4 Exempt – Financial report

13 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- [WRAP: Alternate weekly collections guidance, 2007](#)
- [Scrutiny Committee, 3 February 2020: 'Improving recycling'. Agenda Item 10](#)
- [Cabinet, 16 September 2020: 'Improving recycling – public consultation' Agenda Item 13](#)