

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	<b>TO:</b>	Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
	<b>DATE:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2021
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Tom Smith Assistant Director, Community Safety and Streetscene 07557 313221
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Waste Service – Impact of Covid-19
<b>1. Background</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	<p>A briefing note was presented to the then Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 outlining a contingency plan for the waste service, agreeing the hierarchy of waste services and a six week suspension of the garden waste service from 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member agreed that waste services are critical services to try and maintain during the Covid 19 emergency. Some services are so critical they will be maintained as far as circumstances allow. Others however will be suspended. Decisions on suspensions of service are to be made once risk factors, resource levels and financial impact is known. A suggested order of business continuity is set out in this paper.</p> <p>Cabinet/SLT have previously agreed to the following hierarchy of waste services:</p> <p><i>Clinical, commercial and household refuse would be the critical services that must be provided to ensure public health and minimise threat to life.</i></p> <p><i>Recycling Centres open alongside to ensure residents can remove their recycled waste if this is not collected.</i></p> <p><i>We have set out what our priorities are in terms of collections. The priority list, in priority order is as follows:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Clinical Waste</i></li> <li>2. <i>General Waste</i></li> <li>3. <i>Commercial Waste</i></li> <li>4. <i>Paper Recycling Collections</i></li> <li>5. <i>Glass, Metal, Plastic Recycling Collections</i></li> <li>6. <i>Garden Waste</i></li> </ol>	
<b>2. Key Issues</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	<p>The key constraints around the delivery of the waste service were described as follows:</p> <p><b>“Implementation of the Business Continuity Plan and next steps</b></p>	

The delivery of the above services is predicated on the availability of appropriately qualified staff. Whilst bin deliveries and bulky waste are lower priorities than other collection services, they can be operated by staff with lower level driving qualifications. Therefore, whilst the current drivers of bin deliveries and bulky waste have been redeployed to drive refuse collection vehicles in line with the priorities above in order to maintain services, bulky waste and bin deliveries have not yet ceased as other staff have been redeployed to cover their duties.

The Council could, in theory, delay any waste collection services for a time, but would need to recover them afterwards. The critical aspect is ensuring that the services with the greatest potential impact on health and wellbeing are prioritised. They are clinical general, and commercial waste collections. The service therefore proposes to take steps to prioritise these two services above all others, in order to mitigate the impact of loss of staff within the service.

Whilst staff from other services can be trained relatively quickly (within 48 hours) to undertake loading roles, even qualified HGV drivers require around 2 weeks of training in order to operate safely. Where shortages of HGV qualified staff therefore occur, it is not straightforward to redeploy HGV qualified staff from other services .

Where staff are not available on a particular day, the service cannot operate, which results in collections being missed and needing to subsequently be recovered with additional resources, which may not be available, exacerbating the issues with resources.”

### **Resources**

The refuse and recycling collection service has a structure of around 101 staff to deliver the service.

As at 9 am on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021, 13 drivers and 25 loaders (including 3 agency staff) were absent due to illness or isolation. Of those 17 are directly due to Covid and 14 are self-isolations due to contact with people who have tested positive. To give this context the decision to suspend garden waste collections in March 2020 was taken at the point where 12 drivers and 15 loaders were absent. The number of staff absent is therefore well beyond the point of suspension last year.

Whilst a number of staff should complete self-isolation by next week, it is likely that the current increases in absence will continue and will offset any improvement in attendance.

To mitigate this, the service has attempted to recruit a number of drivers and loaders from agencies, however the situation is exacerbated due to a national shortage of HGV drivers.

As of 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021, staff absence meant that a number of routes were stood

	<p>down due to a lack of sufficient resources. Whilst the service has worked hard to cover this work, a significant number of collections were not completed as scheduled and will need to be recovered over the days ahead.</p> <p>Specifically, on garden waste the lack of resource is already resulting in the service having significant numbers of outstanding bins to collect. The number of bins outstanding will increase day on day and will leave a balance that will be unable to be recovered over the weekend, which will then impact on the following week. If resources do not improve next week, or potentially worsen, the scale of this will continue to increase. The predicted number of garden waste bins not collected based on the current position are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021: 1,800 – 2,100 outstanding collections (3 rounds suspended out of 6)</li> <li>• Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021: 2,500 – 2,800 (3 rounds suspended out of 7)</li> <li>• Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 – 3,200 – 3,500 (3 rounds suspended out of 7)</li> </ul> <p>In the best case scenario the above would lead to 4,000 to 4,500 outstanding collections at the start of week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021.</p> <p>An average garden waste round collects 700 bins per day. Based on the above this would equate to 1-2 days of work to catch up, with limited resources to do so.</p> <p>As at 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021, decisions to suspend garden waste services for two weeks have been made in Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield.</p>
<b>3. Key Actions and Timelines</b>	
<p><b>3.1</b></p>	<p>In order to ensure that priority waste collection services can be delivered reliably, the service therefore proposes to suspend garden waste collections, from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July, initially for a period of two weeks. This will result in residents missing one collection.</p> <p>The more notice we can give to residents of the service suspension, the better. Suspending the service from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July gives appropriate notice to residents, and a ‘clean break’ in terms of the service.</p>
<p><b>3.2</b></p>	<p>An approach in terms of compensation for residents for disruption to the service was agreed by Gold on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The service proposes that the same approach is considered in 2021, should it be required.</p>
<b>4. Cabinet Member and Leader Comments</b>	
<p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p>Leaders comments – 21/07/2021:-</p> <p><i>Thanks Paul / Dominic for the heads up. Understanding the pressures on the service due to staff absence I am content that this is a reasonable step to mitigate. Obviously it is important that the public communications on this are</i></p>

	<p><i>clear, both to assist service subscribers but also from a Public Health point of view.</i></p> <p>Cllr Beck comments – 21/07/21:-  <i>Approved at the 21<sup>st</sup> July meeting with Paul Woodcock, Tom Smith and Barry Connelly.</i></p>
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**5. Recommendations**

<b>5.1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Cabinet Member agrees to the implementation of the business continuity plan for waste above.</li> <li>• It is recommended that the garden waste subscription service is to be suspended from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021 for a 2 week period; recommencing, subject to further review, on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021</li> <li>• Any garden waste bins that are outstanding from week ending Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 will be collected within week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> July.</li> </ul>
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**6. Briefing consultation / sign off**

<b>6.1</b>	Has the above information been considered by:			
	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
	<b>HR</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
	<b>Finance</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>

**Note to briefing authors:**

1. Your report must include details of comments and approvals from relevant officers in Legal, Finance and HR.
2. You must send your report to the relevant Cabinet Member, and copied to the Leader of the Council, to seek their comments and agreement prior to your paper being considered by Tactical or Gold Group(s). Verbatim comments from the Cabinet Member and or Leader of the Council should be included in Section 4 of the above template.
3. Where the Cabinet Member or Leader of the Council do not support the proposed action, this should be referred back to relevant Assistant Director to resolve according to the provisions of the COVID-19 Decision Making Protocol. Where a matter cannot be resolved, it will be referred to the Leader and Chief Executive for determination prior to be considered by Tactical or Gold.