

## **Officer Decision**

### **Report Title**

Waste Service Route Optimisation

### **Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

### **Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene

### **Report Author(s)**

Jim Maguire, Interim Waste Service Manager  
jim.maguire@rotherham.gov.uk

### **Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

### **Report Summary**

Waste collection routes have been fully reviewed in order to identify the most efficient and effective model of collection. This is primarily to ensure the Council is compliant with new legal requirements which seek ensure waste services are delivered in the most efficient and effective way. Different models of collection have been considered, including a four-day working week.

Following a thorough assessment of the options, a new fully optimised five-day collection model is recommended for implementation. This model has been chosen as it has the least operational impact whilst also significantly minimising disruption for residents. The optimisation of the collection routes sits as part of a wider approach to modernise the service, including over £3m of investment in refuse collection vehicles, recent investment into two new Narrow Access Vehicles and future plans to improve the digital tools available to crews.

### **Recommendations**

1. To confirm that officers carry out an operational reroute of the Waste Collection service to ensure the efficient and effective collection and disposal of Waste and Recycling.

### **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment  
Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Waste Service Route Optimisation**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 In spring 2024 the Waste Service identified an opportunity to review and optimise waste collection routes to seek to:
- Demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness in line with the Environment Act 2021
  - Distribute work tasks appropriately utilising all available resources.
  - Promote the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of staff
  - Mitigate forecast budget pressures
- 1.2 Route optimisation work has sought to identify the most efficient model of refuse collection both based on the current 5-day collection model as well as a potential 4-day collection model. To explore this a high-level report was provided by externally appointed consultants Bartec in the Autumn of 2024 which demonstrated that there were no significant savings to be gained through changing to a four-day model and as a result, in light of the additional risks this would present operationally and to the public, the service began to develop the detailed routing required to enact the 5 day optimised model. The 5-day model did present the opportunity to deliver some savings and in March 2025 Council approved the Revenue Saving entitled Waste Service Route Optimisation. Further information is provided on the final financial forecasts below.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 To minimise disruption to the residents it was identified early in the project that in all cases where possible there should be no collection day change for residents.
- 2.2 Any changes that are required will be where residents are transferred to collections via the Narrow Access Vehicles (NAV). These are mainly on access and egress to and from narrow lanes and streets and where turning a normal collection vehicle is not possible. This should help to address some challenges in relation to regular collections from some of these properties and hopefully increase satisfaction with the service. Approximately 80% of Ward areas will see at least 1 property affected by day change however the exact numbers will not be known until the NAV routes are tested and other efficiencies identified.
- 2.3 The proposed timing of the reroute has identified that during the period from 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October to mid-December and from mid-January to early March a number of waste collection streams see a decrease in wheeled bin presentation rates and therefore can see crews with capacity. This capacity therefore minimises any potential resident impact whilst new routes are deployed.

2.4

Recently approved Business Cases have included opportunities to remove the existing reliance upon agency workers and recruit to permanent opportunities in the structure. This provides both job security and an opportunity for long term employment. The Council is also investing more broadly. Firstly, an additional £3m of total funding is currently available to replace several of the large refuse collection vehicles, following on from recent investment into the two new Narrow Access Vehicles. Alongside this, further investment in new IT within the vehicle cabs will assist the crews to deliver their role, report issues and provide support to residents through clear identification of Assisted Collection clients.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 Considerations have included route analysis and mapping of 4-day collection routes. After considering the implication of the 4-day options and the requirements to reroute collections and change collection days to over 85% of residents, this was discounted.
- 3.2 The focused 5-day route optimisation work has been identified as the most efficient model of refuse collection after taking into account all known route constraints and the results of the 4-day analysis. Furthermore, the report provided by Bartec in the Autumn of 2024 demonstrated that there were no significant savings to be gained through changing to a four-day model. The service began to develop the detailed routing required to enact the 5-day optimised model with a potential go live date of Autumn/Winter 2025. The 5-day modelling has provided opportunity to deliver savings and a figure of £500k was committed to in the 2025/26 budget. There are also potential Carbon reductions available totalling circa ca. 80 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.
- 3.3 The recommendation therefore confirms that officers carry out an operational reroute of the Waste Collection service over 5 days to ensure the efficient and effective collection and disposal of Waste and Recycling.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Formal Trade Union consultation regarding the potential impact on the workforce of any reroute will commence in early July 2025 before the commencement of implementation. This consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Councils agreed Change Management process.
- 4.2 A communications plan is in development that will see members from affected wards provided with details of areas requiring change. Any residents affected by a day change, will also be contacted directly. This is currently estimated to be 1,500 households out of the Borough's 115,000, which is approximately 1.3%. Any changes are likely to occur after the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025. New and revised collection calendars will be supplied only to the affected households. Those affected will likely be on routes serviced by the Narrow Access Vehicle or where efficiencies would be gained by transferring to this vehicle. Until routes are fully tested and confirmed it is not possible to provide an accurate number affected.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The Decision will be taken by the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene on or around the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.
- 5.2 A project timeline has been developed that indicates that the proposed roll out of efficient and effective routing will commence on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025. This date is indicative and remains subject to formal Trade Union and staff consultation.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

- 6.1 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report. However, it must be noted that the reference within the Key Issues above to new IT equipment in the cabs will need to be procured in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 or the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, dependent on the route to market selected as well as the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.
- 6.2 As part of the 25/26 budget, a Revenue Saving of £500,000 was approved for Waste Service Route Optimisation. This recommendation proposed will deliver the work required to deliver this saving.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

- 7.1 Waste collection is the responsibility of the Council acting as a waste collection authority s. 30, Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA). A waste collection authority must arrange for the collection of household waste (s.45 EPA). Pursuant to this duty it is for the Council to provide for a system for the collection of waste and this report sets out changes to that system. The system provided and the changes made to it must be reasonable and the Council must provide sufficient notice to residents of any changes.
- 7.2 Any changes which effect employees' conditions of employment must be subject to appropriate negotiation and consultation.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are potential implications for the workforce and therefore the Council's Change Management process will apply. There should be formal consultation with the recognised trade unions, and communication with the workforce throughout the process.
- 8.2 It is important to recognise that any change may provide uncertainty for the workforce and therefore management support for staff wellbeing, including

the Employee Assistance Programme, should be in place and communicated to staff.

8.3

Learning and development requirements should be considered as part of the formal consultation process, and any transition to new ways of working should be supported with regular feedback and review.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 None identified

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 The proposal does not affect any existing policy or arrangement such as Assisted Collections, Hazardous and or Clinical Waste. Bulky Waste collections are also unaffected by this proposal.

10.2 A Part 1 Equality Impact Assessment has been completed which refers to the above.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 Route optimisation is expected to cut greenhouse gas emissions from household waste collections by ca. 6% (central estimate), a carbon saving of ca. 80 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum. This is of the same order of magnitude as anticipated carbon savings from new solar PV installations and decarbonisation works in Council buildings, in the 2025/26 municipal year.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1. None identified

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 Risks associated with the re-route of the collections relate to the location of tips or contractor receiving the waste in relation to the areas for collection. Additional distance can add time which may impact overall service delivery times and resources. This will be closely monitored through testing phases and adjustments made where necessary to mitigate this risk.

13.2 In addition, there are risks associated with collection day changes for residents. These have been mitigated by seeking to maintain, wherever possible, the same collection days and product stream collections. Of the circa 115,000 households receiving collections only circa 1,500 (1.3%) will see any change to collection day. Further risks will be mitigated through effective and direct communications when the specific changes are finalised. These changes are likely to be those that are serviced by the Narrow Access Vehicle (NAV). The NAV is utilised where access issues exist meaning that a normal larger sized collection vehicle would have limited access or where for safety reasons cannot attend the property.

13.3 Further future risks of development growth are mitigated by the re-route to provide resilience into the service and seek to identify opportunities to provide capacity as new developments are brought into the collection cycles.

**14. Accountable Officers**

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene  
Barry Connolly, Head of Environmental Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.

*Report Author:* Jim Maguire, Interim Waste Service Manager  
[jim.maguire@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:jim.maguire@rotherham.gov.uk)

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