

Improving Places Select Committee, 18th April 2019

Refuse and Recycling Collections Service Changes Update.

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Tom Smith, Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene
Martin Raper, Head of Street Scene Services

Ward(s) Affected

All Wards

Summary

This report updates Improving Places Select Committee about the implementation of new waste and recycling services across Rotherham.

Recommendations

That Improving Places Select Committee note and comment on the report.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Refuse and Recycling Collections Service Changes Update.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Improving Places Select Committee note and comment on the report.

2. Background

- 2.1 Major changes to waste and recycling services in Rotherham were approved by Cabinet and Commissioners in April 2018. The changes included:
 - A subscription-based garden waste collection service (£39 per year), from October 2018;
 - A new black (with pink lid) 180 litre wheeled bin for household waste, from late January 2019; the colour of the bin was decided following a poll in the Rotherham Advertiser that closed on 25th April 2018;
 - Using the existing green 240 litre bin for paper and card and the existing 240 litre black bin for other recycling (glass, metal, plastic), from late January 2019.
- 2.2 These changes were large-scale and complex. The waste service undertakes over 6,000,000 scheduled collections to 116,000 households each year.

3. Key Issues

Service Implementation and Performance

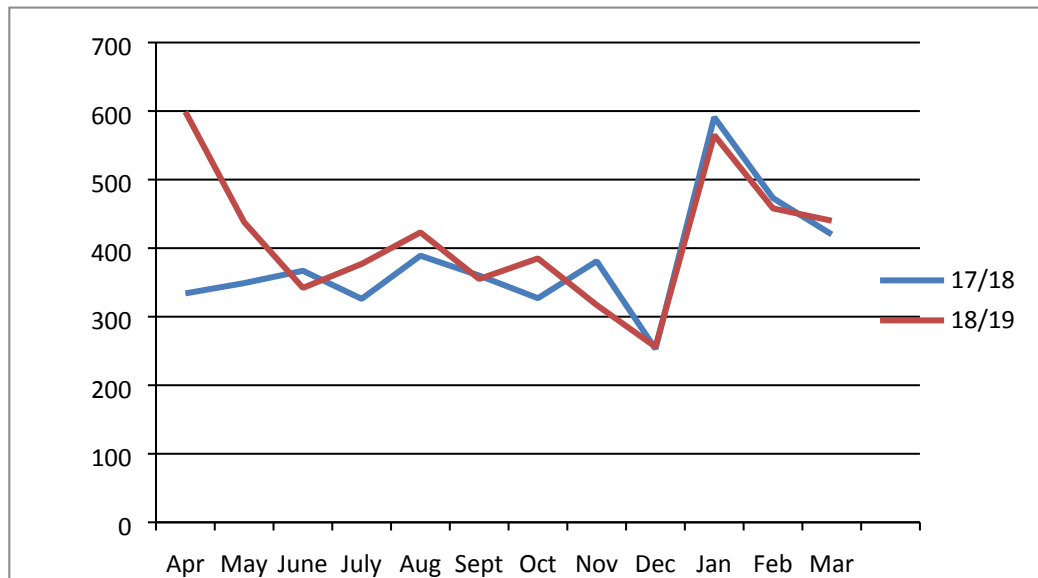
- 3.1 The service changes have been implemented to time and budget, with the new waste and recycling services now being delivered to over 110,000 households. Over 150,000 new wheeled bins have been delivered, including: 115,000 new pink lidded general waste bins, over 35,000 new brown garden waste bins, and around 2,000 replacement green bins for recycling to households who did not previously have them.
- 3.2 The transition to the new green bin service for paper and cardboard in October 2018 has been successful, with levels of paper and cardboard collected at the kerbside increasing by around 27%, when compared to the same October to March period in 2017/18.
- 3.3 Subscriptions to the new garden waste collection service, introduced at the same time, have exceeded expectations, with residents taking full advantage of the introductory offer of 15 collections for the price of 12. Around 35,000 households have subscribed to the service to date, with a small increase in subscriptions now being seen in the run up to Easter.
- 3.4 The roll-out of pink lidded bins to 'standard' housing stock (see sections 3.22 to 3.25) was completed on 15th March 2019 with over 110,000 pink bins being successfully delivered across the Borough. Early indications show a reduction in the weight of general waste of around 7%.

- 3.5 Plastic recycling, using the existing black wheeled bin, was introduced alongside the delivery of pink lidded wheeled bins. All Rotherham residents living in 'standard' housing stock (see sections 3.22 to 3.25 below) are now able to recycle plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays at the kerbside. Collection volumes for these materials have initially increased by 50%.
- 3.6 Whilst the data indicates that the level of recycling has increased, and the amount of general waste being collected has reduced, a longer period of time is required to fully assess the Council's overall recycling rate as a result of the changes.

Communications, Engagement and Customer Services

- 3.7 The delivery of the change to services has required a focus on communications and engagement, and on customer services. An intensive communications and engagement programme has therefore underpinned the programme of service changes across the Borough.
- 3.8 Direct communications with residents were undertaken including letters to all households in September 2018 and January 2019, information hangers and stickers outlining the collection changes. A significant amount of face to face engagement activity has also taken place such as:
- Interactions with voluntary and community groups and organisations;
 - Attendance at Rotherham Show;
 - Static displays at Riverside House and other locations;
 - Drop in Sessions at various locations across the Borough;
 - Locality specific on the ground engagement in more challenging areas, during the roll-out
 - Locality specific on the ground engagement to follow up particular issues.
- 3.9 The use of Social media has been key to the success of communications about the project, and has been used at all stages. The bin changes video, distributed via Facebook and Twitter, has been viewed over 49,000 times.
- 3.10 Customer contact has increased in line with expectations as the new services were rolled out. Following feedback about call answer rates during the transition to chargeable garden waste services in October 2018, additional staffing resources were provided to the Contact Centre as part of the second phase of changes, to ensure that customer demand could be met. Whilst contact increased to a peak in late February, the level of contact has now begun to fall.
- 3.11 As was expected during such a significant collection change, the service has seen a year on year increase in complaints, from 101 in 2017/18, to 171 in 2018/19. Of the complaints received 96% were responded to within the Council's timescales. Of the complaints received fewer than half (48%) were fully or partially upheld.

- 3.12 Prior to the new service being rolled out, a number of stakeholders expressed concern that the new arrangements would lead to an increase in fly tipping across the Borough. The Council records fly tipping reports from residents and have been actively monitoring these during the period of service changes. The graph below tracks the reports for the last two years and shows no major variances have occurred during the period of recycling and waste service changes.



Procurement and Contracts

- 3.12 In order to deliver the new service, the Council had to complete a number of large procurement and contractual exercises.
- 3.13 New recycling treatment contracts for paper and cardboard, and plastic, metals and glass, were successfully procured and commenced, in time for service, on 1st February 2019.
- 3.14 The new recycling service required work to ensure that existing contractual arrangements with Renewi, who are the Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham residual waste PFI contractor, were not negatively affected.
- 3.15 A new contract for the manufacture and delivery of the new 180 litre pink-lidded general waste, and brown garden waste wheeled bins was awarded to MGB, a Rotherham based manufacturer. MGB have successfully met the requirements in terms of delivery timescales and quality of product.
- 3.16 A further procurement exercise for larger communal bins, for use at flats, has been completed, with the award to Storm who are a specialist manufacturer of communal bins.
- 3.17 In addition, 16 additional Council-owned refuse collection vehicles were procured to complement the current fleet. All vehicles in the waste service are now of similar specification, allowing more flexibility of vehicle usage

across the service, and delivering financial savings. Delivery of the vehicles has been completed to programme, and the core refuse collection fleet is now fully owned by the Council, again with savings against historic leasing arrangements.

Further Work – Additional Bins

3.18 As part of the Council's service residents are able to apply for additional general waste capacity if they meet the criteria as follows:

- Households with 5 or more occupants – 140 litre bin
- Households with 7 or more occupants – 180 litre bin.
- Medical reasons where additional capacity is required – 180 litre bin.

3.19 Given the changes to services and the need for equity of service across the Borough, the Council is now in the process of reviewing second bin provision. This will ensure that only those residents who are entitled to additional bins have them. The service has identified those residents who have previously made applications for additional general waste bins, and residents where collection crews have identified second general waste bins. During April, identified residents will receive a letter, directing them to make an application via the Council's website to reconfirm that the additional bin is required.

3.20 Successful applicants will receive a pack in the post, including a sticker to identify that the second bin is approved. Residents who currently have a second general waste bin can continue to present it on collection day whilst the process is being completed. All additional bins are expected to be registered by end of May.

3.21 Once the application process has been completed additional unregistered bins will not be emptied and arrangements to collect them will commence. Support is available to residents who do not meet the criteria and continue to have concerns about capacity, either through the Council's web-site or via support from our engagement team.

Further Work - Flats Project

3.22 In autumn 2018, a successful flats recycling trial saw residents positively engaging with the service and supporting the introduction of recycling, and significant increases in the levels of recycling being collected. Since then work has continued with Housing Services to develop a programme to deliver recycling to all Social Housing flats across the Borough.

3.23 An initial assessment of sites (Table 1) shows that around 53% of flats can accommodate the standard individual bin provision, but around 40% will need communal bins to enable recycling. In a number of cases this is likely to require the construction of purpose built communal bin stores. The balance of sites (7%) are a mix of individual and communal bins.

Table 1 – Flats: Summary of required bin types

	Blocks	Block %	Properties
All individual bins	628	53%	2343
Individual Pink Bin & Communal recycling	79	7%	449
All communal bins	477	40%	3085
Totals	1184		5877

3.24 The service has prepared a full implementation programme with Housing Services, to deliver site-specific arrangements. The timetable for this work is broadly as follows:

Task	Date(s)
Assessment of bin options by location	Mid-March (complete)
Communal bin tender exercise	March (complete)
Communal bins in stock	End April
Joint communications work with Housing Services	Mid-March to Mid-April
Site-specific communications to residents	4 weeks prior to change
Standard individual bin rollout delivery commencement	Mid-May to End October
Site Survey completion for communal bin infrastructure works	End April
Communal bin Infrastructure delivery	End March – End September
Communal bin delivery programme	Mid May – End October

3.25 Communications materials and methods are currently in production for both residents and Elected Members in relation to service options at each location.

Further Work – Communications and Engagement

3.26 Communications and engagement with residents will continue to yield further improvements to recycling quality and to sustain the current position. Engagement staff continue to work within the service providing support to those areas identified as needing assistance with understanding the scheme and materials which can be recycled, this support will continue into the summer.

4. Risks Associated with Project

4.1 All of the key risks, identified at the outset of the project have been successfully mitigated during the implementation. The only remaining risk is the volatility of recycling markets which could see higher treatment costs incurred due to this fluctuation. This risk is mitigated via contract arrangements, and close and regular monitoring of material markets.

5. Options considered and recommended proposal

5.1 The approach outlined has been considered and agreed by the Council's Waste Board.

6. Consultation

6.1 Consultation on the implementation and communications approach has taken place with the Elected Members. The approach to communications is in line with that agreed by Cabinet in April 2018.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 Within the revenue budget agreed by Council on 28th February 2018 annual revenue savings of £1.383m from 2019/20 have been agreed in respect of these waste collection service changes. In addition the Council also agreed that £965k of additional Council Tax income generated from a 1% increase be earmarked for the kerbside collection of plastic waste, giving an ongoing net savings requirement of £418k. The financial impact of these service changes will be assessed during 2019/20.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications for this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no specific implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults from this report.

10. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

10.1 There are no specific implications for Partners and Other Directorates from this report.

11. Risks and Mitigation

11.1 Any risks of this approach are routinely monitored through the Project Team and Waste Board.

12. Accountable Officer(s)

Martin Raper, Head of Street Scene Services

Tom Smith, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene

Approvals Obtained from:

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	N/A	
Assistant Director of Legal Services	N/A	
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	N/A	

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