

Cherwell District Council

Executive

4 July 2016

Waste Policies

Report of Head of Environmental Services

This report is public

Purpose of report

To update the Executive on the pressures on the Waste & Recycling service arising from the large housing growth and to review the waste policies with the view of bringing the policies of Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) closer together.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the pressures on the waste service resulting from the rapid housing growth and the actions being taken to deal with these demands.
- 1.2 Note the increased revenue pressures from operating additional crews in future years.
- 1.3 Approve the revised waste policies as set out in Appendix 1

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Waste & Recycling service covers more than 61,000 properties in the District. Waste collection for these properties is covered by 15 rounds. On any given week five rounds are collecting residual waste, five are collecting commingled dry recycling and five are collecting garden and food waste.
- 2.2 Each round, on average, covers over 6,000 properties. The rounds are effectively full. Since each property receives two collections on a recycling week and one collection on a refuse week, each additional 6,000 properties require 1.5 additional crews. Hence an additional crew is required for each 4,000 new properties
- 2.3 Each additional round has extra revenue costs of around £150k/year to cover all vehicle costs (including depreciation, maintenance and fuel) and crew salary costs. With the rounds now being effectively full, a new crew will be shortly required. To

delay this additional need, one vehicle operates on a Monday to deal with the additional properties in Bodicote. This incurs additional overtime costs which is included in the 2016/17 revenue budget but is substantially less than the cost of an additional round. However, the rate of housing growth is so great an additional crew and vehicle will be needed by April 2017. The predicted housing growth means that further crews will be needed by April 2019 & April 2021.

- 2.4 Much of the growth is expected in Bicester so the additional crews are likely to need to operate out of Bicester depot. However, Bicester depot is at full capacity. The search for a new depot is underway. If a new site in Bicester cannot be quickly found the new crews and vehicles may have to operate out of Thorpe Lane depot where capacity exists. However, this will add to revenue costs with an extra 1 hour – 1.5 hours a day being lost in transit.
- 2.5 Besides the main collections, other capacity issues include the delivery of containers. With each new property requiring three wheeled bins and a caddy the number of deliveries to new properties alone has increased greatly. The table below sets out the deliveries to new properties. On top of these deliveries are replacements for lost or damaged containers, requests for additional containers and requests for commercial containers.
- 2.6 The Waste policies which are followed have not been reviewed for a few years. With a shared service being in operation since April 2014 and with a move towards a shared service for Customer Services, a review has taken place of some of the current policies including comparing and contrasting the policies of each Council.
- 2.7 The main proposals for change include no longer supplying recycling boxes except in exceptional circumstances, supplying the first blue recycling bin at no charge, standardising the cost of a second blue bin between the two councils, supplying an additional blue bin for large families. The details are set out in Appendix 1
- 2.8 The proposed changes should make recycling even easier for residents and will mean that the waste policies between the two Councils will be very similar. Bringing the waste policies closer together will help the management of the shared service and assist the Customer Service Centre moving to a shared service.

3.0 Report Details

Housing Growth

- 3.1 The Waste & Recycling service has increased the productivity of the crews through changing working practices, regularly reviewing the efficiency of the collection rounds, minimising transit times to the disposal & recycling outlets and investing in staff training. Each round on average covers 6,100 properties or over 1,500 properties per day. For the District which is a mixture of urban & rural, the averages for purely urban rounds are higher and for rural rounds slightly lower.
- 3.2 Comparison work has been done with other authorities and CDC rounds are significantly bigger than most which indicates a high productivity rate.

- 3.3 Waste & Recycling collections are organised by splitting the District into North & South. On any given week ten crews will be engaged in refuse and dry recycling collections. Five garden/food waste crews will operate in one half of the district one week and in the other half of the District on the other week.
- 3.4 The rounds are now full and from April 2106, the collection day of 700 properties was changed to a Monday. This number is expected to rise as housing growth continues during 2016/17. By April 2017, the number of properties moved to a Monday will be so great an additional crew and vehicle will be required. Projected housing growth means that further additional crews & vehicles will be needed in April 2019 and April 2021.
- 3.5 These three extra crews are expected to be based at Bicester. However the Highfields Depot is at full capacity. A project is underway to find a suitable new depot. If this project can't deliver a new depot in time it will mean that additional crews will operate out of Thorpe Lane where capacity exists. However this is inefficient as 1-1.5 hours per day would be lost travelling to Bicester.
- 3.6 The growth in the number of properties has led to an increase in the number of bin deliveries and changes in the way containers are delivered. The table below sets out the deliveries to new properties. On top of these deliveries are replacements for lost or damaged containers, requests for additional containers and requests for commercial containers.

Financial Year	Number of new properties	Deliveries/week
2015/16	1300	25
2016/17	1845	35
2017/18	2345	45
2018/19	2200	42

- 3.7 The increase in demand means that rather than all deliveries being made from Thorpe Lane the deliveries are done from both depots. With shorter delivery runs, the number of containers which can be delivered each day has increased. Besides new properties there is a significant demand for replacement green bins (which in some cases are 19 years old), replacement brown bins and requests for additional blue bins. In addition, the development of commercial waste services in the South of the district means that more and larger 1100 bins are being delivered to new commercial waste customers.
- 3.8 The costs of the containers for new properties are largely met from S106 funds. Costs for 1100 bins are usually recovered from commercial charges in the first eighteen months or so.

Waste Policies

- 3.9 The waste policies to which the Waste & Recycling service operates have not been reviewed for a few years. With a shared service being in operation since April 2014, it seemed sensible to compare and contrast the waste policies of SNC and CDC bringing them together where possible. With a shared Customer service coming into operation it will make this operation simpler if the waste policies are the same wherever possible.

- 3.10 The number & size of some bins are set by the number of residents in each household. A 180 litre green bin has been provided to most households for some time. For households of 5 or 6 a 240 litre residual waste bin is provided with larger households being provided with a 360 litre bin. Until now no allowance for more recycling capacity has been provided for larger families. Hence it is proposed to issue a second blue bin for households of 5 or more.
- 3.11 In SNC a second residual bin has been provided when a rental charge of £90/year is paid. In total there are less than 50 properties which take up this service. The proposal is for the Council to adopt this policy. The number of requests is expected to be low.
- 3.12 Currently blue bins are supplied to all new properties at no cost. There are relatively few properties in the District which do not have a blue bin but use blue boxes. Blue boxes are becoming an increasing problem, they are the source of some wind-blown litter, they create lifting problems for staff and they are no longer significantly cheaper than a wheeled bin. Hence, the proposal is to no longer supply blue boxes except in exceptional circumstances such as at a property that cannot accommodate a wheeled bin. There are around 2,000 boxes and lids issued each year. The change in policy will reduce the number of boxes to extremely low numbers, will help reduce wind-blown litter and reduce some manual handling risks. There will be some increase in the issuing of blue bins but much of the increased cost will be offset by the reduction in boxes and the increase in recycling.
- 3.13 The make up of commingled dry recycling has been changing with less newspapers but more plastic bottles & cardboard present. Hence, there has been an increase in volume of recycling leading to some households choosing to pay for a second blue bin. Currently the charge is £20, this has been the same charge since 2003. In SNC the charge for a second bin is £30, this covers the purchase, delivery and administration. The proposal is to charge a £30 one off cost for a second blue bin but for bin sales and Neighbourhood Blitz events offer a reduction to £18.
- 3.14 In SNC garden waste is collected separately and each property is issued with a garden waste bin. For second garden waste bins a charge of £30/year is made. In this Council garden waste & food waste are collected together. All properties are issued with a brown bin. Second brown bins can be acquired for a one off charge of £20, this charge has remained unchanged since 2003. The proposal is to increase the one off charge to £30, the same as the one off charge for a second blue bin. The one off nature of the charge reflects the difference in this Council where garden and kitchen waste is co-mingled which is not the case in SNC.
- 3.15 Both SNC & this Council operate the in cab technology Bartec. SNC has a newer version as they adopted the system in 2013. This Council will move over to the newer version during 2016. This change will make the management of the shared service easier and more uniform. One area of difference which can be addressed by the new system is around missed bins. Currently this Council returns to empty all reports of missed bins. In SNC, if bins are not put out for collection they are logged on Bartec so if residents claim their bin has been missed but the crew have reported as it not placed out for collection the crew will not return to collect it.
- 3.16 The intention, subject to Executive support, is to commence these new policies from the 1 September 2016.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The district is rapidly growing from a growth rate of less than 1%/year in recent years to more than 3%/year this year and 4%/year next year. This rapid growth has meant the collection rounds are now full. The productivity of the collection rounds is very good and there are few opportunities to increase this further. Consequently, additional rounds will be required in future years. The next round will be required in April 2017 with further rounds needed by April 2019 and April 2021. Each additional round will increase revenue costs by around £150k/year.
- 4.2 One of the major constraints to additional rounds is capacity at Bicester depot. The depot is full and unable to accommodate a growth in vehicle numbers and staff. A project is underway to locate a new depot in the Bicester area.
- 4.3 The waste policies of this Council and SNC have been reviewed with a view to bringing them closer together wherever possible. This should make it easier for a shared Customer Service Centre and for Environmental Services to manage the shared Waste & Recycling service

5.0 Consultation

South Northamptonshire Council

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified

Option 1: To reject the proposed changes

Option 2: To ask officers to consider alternative improvements

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The cost of additional crews and vehicles will be considered in the financial plans during the annual budget setting process.

Comments checked by Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer, 0300 0030106,
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Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no legal implications with this report.

Comments checked by: Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance
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Risk

7.3 The Waste & Recycling service is delivered to all domestic properties in the District. There is a reputational risk if the Council does not deliver a high quality, consistent service. This risk will be managed as part of the services operational risk register and escalated to the corporate register as and when necessary.

Comments checked by Louise Tustian, Senior Performance & Improvement Officer, 01295 221786, louise.tustian2@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met No

Community Impact Threshold Met No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cherwell: Safe, Clean and Green - Provide high quality waste and recycling services helping residents recycle as much as possible.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Debbie Pickford, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Proposed waste policy changes
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
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