

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 12 th November 2024
Report Subject	Residual Waste Collection Change - Implementation and Policy Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2024, Cabinet approved the transition to a three-weekly residual waste kerbside collection model, whilst retaining the comprehensive weekly kerbside recycling and food waste collection service currently provided. This is a fundamental action set out in the Council's Resource and Waste Strategy to improve the Council's recycling performance, maximise resource efficiency, minimise waste, reduce emissions and minimise the risk of infraction fines. It is also a key action recommended within an internal audit report on recycling performance for the authority, which was rated "red" for assurance, in mitigation against the strategic red risk on the Council risk register.

The report that was presented to Cabinet in July 2024 detailed that a further report would be provided to set out the implementation plan and communications plan, to provide members with assurance that the change to service will be well planned and managed to minimise the impact to Flintshire residents. This update report presents the proposed implementation date and details the action plan and communications plan in place for the service change.

The report also includes an updated Household Recycling and Waste Collections and Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Operations Policy to reflect the previously approved changes to service, and an updated HRC Vehicle Permit Policy to reflect the revised procedures put in place to support customers with disabilities who may need to access the HRCs using their vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Scrutiny supports the proposed implementation date for the residual waste collection frequency change already approved.
2	Scrutiny supports the implementation plan presented with this report and notes the work undertaken to date.

3	Scrutiny supports the communication plan presented with this report.
4	Scrutiny notes the updated Recycling and Household Collections and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy to reflect the previously approved changes to service.
5	Scrutiny notes the updated Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Policy to be published following the adoption of revised procedures put in place to support customers with disabilities who may need to access the HRCs using their vehicles.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the proposed implementation plan and communication plan for delivering service change to recycling and waste collection services
1.01	<p>In July 2024, Cabinet approved the transition to a three-weekly residual waste kerbside collection model, whilst retaining the comprehensive weekly kerbside recycling and food waste collection service currently provided. This is a fundamental action set out in the Council’s Resource and Waste Strategy to improve the Council’s recycling performance, maximise resource efficiency, minimise waste, reduce emissions and minimise the risk of infraction fines. It is also a key action recommended within an internal audit report on recycling performance for the authority, which was rated “red” for assurance, in mitigation against the strategic red risk on the Council risk register.</p> <p>The report that was presented to Cabinet in July 2024 detailed that a further report would be provided to set out the implementation plan and communications plan, to provide members with assurance that the change to service will be well planned and managed to minimise the impact to Flintshire residents. This update report presents the proposed implementation date, and details the action plan and communications plan in place for the service change.</p> <p>The report also includes an updated Household Recycling and Waste Collections and Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Operations Policy to reflect the previously approved changes to service, and an updated HRC Vehicle Permit Policy to reflect the revised procedures put in place to support customers with disabilities who may need to access the HRCs using their own vehicles.</p>
1.02	<p><u>Implementation Date</u></p> <p>It is proposed that the implementation date of the service change is Monday, 28th April 2025. This allows sufficient time for the service to undertake the appropriate planning, testing, and familiarisation of new routes, procure additional resources, such as vehicles and containers, and develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan for residents.</p>

	<p>We have considered earlier implementation dates; however, the lead-in times for delivery of the recycling recovery vehicles (RRVs) and bespoke collection vehicles for food waste collections, as well as ordering stock such as recycling bags and containers do not allow for an earlier implementation date.</p> <p>Additionally, the beginning of April 2025 conflicts with the Easter holiday period, which risks some residents not being at home when their first scheduled collection for the new service takes place and could result in collections not being made for up to six weeks if they were on holiday. An implementation date of 28th April 2024 would ensure that we avoid the Easter holiday period when people may be away from home for their first scheduled collection.</p>
1.03	<p><u>Implementation Plan</u></p> <p>To effectively manage the transition in service, a project group has been established to progress the service change, which is meeting on a weekly basis. Several individual workstreams have been established by this group leading to a number of sub-projects. Each sub-project has been assigned a project lead and project support officers to progress required actions. This has required cross-portfolio working and external support to progress. The workstreams include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data cleansing for existing residual waste rounds, recycling rounds, absorbent hygiene products (AHP)/nappy collections and assisted collections. • Residual and recycling round reviews (including five-day working Monday to Friday) • Collection container stock review and new recycling bag trial • Staffing and resource reviews in consultation with employees and Trade Unions • Procedural reviews of current services to data cleanse and improve efficiencies. • Planning for garden waste subscriptions and collection service in spring 2025 • Enhanced excess waste enforcement post implementation. • Time and motion studies of existing working practice • Fleet vehicle review for waste and recycling collection services. <p>Appendix 1 sets out these workstreams and the timescales for their action and implementation.</p>
1.04	<p>To assist with service change planning, WRAP Cymru have shared with us a paper to help local authorities learn from the issues that have been experienced in other areas across Wales, which outlines the steps that can be taken to help mitigate and minimise issues during a service change.</p> <p>Adequate time for planning and preparation has been highlighted as a key risk, and support functions within the local authority (health and safety, information technology, human resources, fleet services, procurement, customer services, communications/public relations) need to be actively involved from the start and have a full understanding of the change and the resources that may be required from them pre, during and post the service change. The project group has included relevant personnel from these support functions, who will be key as the project develops over the coming months.</p>

WRAP Cymru advise that local authorities should not underestimate the demands on resource of continuing to manage business as usual on top of mobilising a new service and adequate time is required to ensure that the pre-mobilisation, planning and support can be planned and resourced. The amount of work and resources required for each element should not be underestimated. This will be a key element of our operational plans going forward.

1.05

Communication Plan

The key to successful implementation will be the managed communication of information to stakeholders throughout the transition period. To aid this, a four-phased communications plan has been developed pre, during and post service change to share the right level of information at the appropriate times. Support from the Communications team, Customer Services, Connects Centres and Contact Centre will be provided to deliver this.

WRAP Cymru has emphasised the importance of ensuring both internal and external plans and lines of communication are clear with a robust communications plan to include appropriate communications for members, frontline staff, residents, all council employees.

Details of the four-phased plan include:

Phase one: September to December 2024

- Instilling current processes ensuring residents are engaged with the service.
- Developing resources to support the service change campaign.

Phase two: November to April 2024

- Promote the date of the service change.
- Launch 'Let's get it sorted' campaign.
- Launch resources to support service change preparedness.
- Update website/social media with relevant resources.
- Community engagement events (Connects/HRCs/community centres)
- Align with national recycling campaigns.
- Staff engagement and training (involving TUs)

Phase three: January – April 2025

- Social media campaign/developing FAQs
- Community engagement events (Connects/HRCs/community centres)
- Door knocking campaigns.
- Member workshops/briefing sessions
- Staff briefings (involving TUs)

Phase four: April 2025 onwards

- Continuation of engagement campaigns
- Door knocking campaigns and route monitoring
- Developing FAQs

Appendix 2 outlines the four-phased communications plan and the timescales for its action and implementation.

1.06

Household Recycling and Waste Collections and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy

The household waste collections and household recycling centre policy was last updated and published in 2017. As part of the implementation plan, an update of this policy has been included with this report to reflect the changes that have already been approved by Cabinet and implemented since this time through various other committee cycles.

The updated policy takes account of the revised residual waste collection frequency, introduction of services such as absorbent hygiene products (AHP) and nappy collections, which were introduced in 2021, and changes to the household recycling centres, such as operational days, booking systems for certain waste streams and charging for some materials.

The purpose of including the policy document update in this report is to publish an accurate and up-to-date policy to reflect the changes that have already been approved previously and for our elected members and residents to have a clear policy to which to refer.

Appendix 3 details the updated policy to be published.

1.07

Vehicle Permit Policy

The household recycling centre vehicle permit policy has been updated to include a procedure for the assessment of vehicles that are required by residents with disabilities who may be unable to access the HRCs due to their vehicle not meeting the criteria of the policy, for example, a high sided camper van or cases where the vehicle has been adapted to accommodate the disability.

The policy already allows for mobility vehicles to be allowed unrestricted access if they are within the size criteria of the policy; however, a request has been put forward by some members to make adjustments to the policy for those vehicles outside the size restrictions and concerns have been raised that the council could be in breach of the Equality Act by restricting access to these residents.

Following consultation with the strategic equality advisor, the Council is required to make reasonable adjustments to policy in these instances, on provision of demonstratable need for the adjustment. The policy has therefore been updated to allow for those vehicles to be issued with a permit, subject to the following eligibility checks:

- A standard vehicle permit application should be completed.
- Applicant to provide a copy of a valid blue badge.

Appendix 4 details the updated section (blue writing) to be published.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	As outlined in this report, a project group has been set up for the implementation of this service change and varying resources will need to be allocated as the project progresses. This will include input from several Streetscene teams, including Waste Strategy, Waste and Recycling Operations, Enforcement, Training and Compliance, Fleet Services, Stores Management, Business Admin Support, and the Technical Team.
2.02	Additional support will be required from support functions across the local authority (health & safety, information technology, human resources, fleet services, procurement, customer services, communications/public relations, contact centre), which are currently being programmed into the implementation plan and consulted upon with the relevant teams.
2.03	Work is already underway on the review of current waste and recycling rounds, and staffing and resource reviews will be undertaken in consultation with employees and Trade Unions accordingly.
2.04	Modelling work undertaken has shown that a transition to a 3-weekly residual waste collection model, while retaining the comprehensive weekly recycling service, will deliver annual savings of £0.654m.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	This is an operational update for members following the approval of the Cabinet decision to transition to a 3-weekly collection model. The purpose of presenting the proposed implementation plan and communications plan is to ensure that members have sight of the plans in place and provide an update on progress made to date, as well as identify any potential risks to the programme.
3.02	WRAP Cymru have shared information to help local authorities learn from the issues that have been experienced in other areas across Wales and have outlined the steps that can be taken to help mitigate and minimise issues during a service change. The advice received from WRAP Cymru has been factored into our plans.
3.03	The service change is a fundamental action in achieving the objectives of our Resource and Waste Strategy and mitigating the likelihood of Welsh Government issuing the outstanding infraction charges for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24, which currently equate to £1.2m.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation.
4.02	Chief Officer team
4.03	Council portfolios (via the project group)

4.04	Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	Appendix 1 – Implementation Plan
5.02	Appendix 2 – Communication Plan
5.03	Appendix 3 – Recycling and Household Collections and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy
5.04	Appendix 4 – Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Policy

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	Cabinet Report - Resource and Waste Strategy Cabinet Report - Transition to a Restricted Capacity Residual Waste Collection Model
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	Contact Officer: Ruth Tulley, Regulatory Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704796 E-mail: ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office
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8.01	<p>Residual Waste Materials that remain following efforts to reduce, reuse, recycle or compost. Commonly known as ‘general waste’ or ‘black bin waste’.</p> <p>Dry Recycling Recyclable items collected such as, cardboard, paper, tin cans, plastic bottles/tubs/trays, glass bottles/jars, waxed cartons, aerosols</p> <p>AHP Absorbent hygiene products such as nappies and incontinence pads.</p> <p>Kerbside Collections the collection of recycling and waste from residential properties</p> <p>Household Recycling Centres Waste disposal centres where residents can dispose of domestic waste and recycling items that are not collected at the Kerbside.</p> <p>Resources Materials, such as glass, plastic, paper fibres, that can be utilised to produce new items.</p>
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Infraction fine a financial penalty imposed by government for not meeting statutory recycling targets.

Round Review a review of the waste and recycling collection rounds to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to collect the waste presented as efficiently as possible.

Excess Waste additional residual waste placed alongside the black bin, or on top of the black bin so that the lid does not fully close.