

ITEM No ...6.....

REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 21st AUGUST 2017
REPORT ON: DOMESTIC WASTE & RECYCLING SERVICE CHANGE - UPDATE
REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
REPORT NO: 276-2017

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update Committee on the progress of the rollout of the revised domestic waste and recycling collection service change project, following the completion of Phase 4 of the programme of implementation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Reference is made to Item II of the Neighbourhood Services Committee of 27th June 2016 detailing the revised service profile for domestic waste and recycling services within the city and implementation programme.

4.2 The Waste Scotland Regulations (2012) stipulated the requirement for all local authorities to offer collections of key materials to householders by 2016 – namely paper, card, metals, plastics, glass and food waste.

4.3 Following the introduction of these regulations, a full options appraisal was undertaken and a phased programme of implementation outlined to the Environment Committee on 24th April 2014. This was later followed by the rollout of the new services to approximately 24,000 households in parts of the West End, Broughty Ferry, Charleston, Menzieshill and Dryburgh during 2015.

4.4 The subsequent introduction of the Charter for Household Recycling in Scotland and associated Code of Practice in March 2016 necessitated a temporary suspension of the remaining phases of the rollout to allow the Council to take cognisance of this new guidance which detailed the prescribed methodology for collecting each material type. Following an appraisal of the change requirements, the recommendation to sign the charter was approved by Committee on 27th June 2016 and the Charter was formally signed on 21st July 2016.

4.5 The new service profile followed the prescribed Code of Practice model and is detailed below:

MATERIAL	CURRENT	CoP MODEL
RESIDUAL	240-L wheeled bin collected fortnightly	No change
PAPER and CARD	240-L wheeled bin collected fortnightly	240-L wheeled bin collected 4-weekly
METAL and PLASTIC		240-L wheeled bin collected 3-weekly
GLASS	140-L wheeled bin collected 4-weekly	Enhanced local bring site provision
FOOD	23-L caddy collected weekly	No change
GARDEN	240-L wheeled bin collected fortnightly/4-weekly	No change

- 4.6 The timescale end date for the implementation of this new Code of Practice model were unchanged from the original rollout, with all services to be introduced City-wide by March 2017. This deadline was enforced by SEPA in light of the requirements of the Thermal Treatment of Waste Guidelines 2014 which require all Local Authorities which utilise Waste to Energy facilities for residual waste disposal to either have front-end treatment in place at the facility to remove all potential recyclable or to have introduced the necessary kerbside collections to render this front-end treatment unnecessary. SEPA granted a 3-month extension to this deadline, requiring all new services to be introduced by June 2017. It was therefore planned to introduce the new services to the remaining 48,000 households in Dundee in two Phases during April and June 2017, later followed by small revisions to the original 24,000 properties which received new services as part of the 2015 rollout.
- 4.7 The details of each key aspect of the phase 4 implementation programme are detailed in sections 5-8.

5.0 COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 As in previous phases, pre-emptive written communications took two forms, the initial “teaser” leaflet which is delivered to applicable households approximately six weeks before service commencement, and a detailed full service information leaflet providing householders with collection schedules, further guidelines for use and associated information, normally delivered immediately prior to service commencement.
- 5.2 The teaser leaflets indicated the service to be implemented and also highlighted the series of local drop in events hosted by project team staff in weeks leading up to the service commencement date. Seven drop ins were held in locations throughout the areas where the service change was to be implemented. In addition, project team staff attended a number of LCPP meetings, and resident or community group meetings
- 5.3 13,184 teasers and full service information leaflets for kerbside properties were delivered, with 10,882 teasers and leaflets being delivered to flatted property occupants, who would not require collection schedules as the service provision was communal in these areas.
- 5.4 All information material was funded by Zero Waste Scotland grants and therefore had to be approved by Zero Waste Scotland prior to arranging for printing schedules. All applicable pre-printing timescales were met. All information was sent to printing contractors, who printed and collated the documentation and prepared this for postage.
- 5.5 Immediately prior to the launch date of 26th June, the project team were made aware that a printing contractor had failed to print the flatted property leaflets on time, and consequently these were not delivered until the week commencing Monday 26th June, leaving residents no time to have been able to fully understand the guidance information. This supplier default led to reparation payments made to the Council and more robust contract management procedures put in place by the supplier.
- 5.6 Use was made of advertorials in the Evening Telegraph, the Council website, twitter feed and Facebook to further promote the service change and advise residents.
- 5.7 A short period of doorstep engagement was carried out during the implementation process, covering the period two weeks before commencement date to two weeks after.
- 5.8 Once the service change commenced, communications from householders were received by the project team through a number of channels – most notably email (to individual staff or to the dedicated Council “recycle” email address as advertised in the information leaflets), and via telephone calls. Complaints and related issues were logged on the citzlive complaint recording system. On this system, some 1,775 complaints were logged between phase 4 commencement date and 27th July, with the principal complaint type (72%) being missed collections.
- 5.9 As the majority of email correspondence generally related to technical or operational issues, these were handled by the waste project team members.

- 5.10 Call handling was set up within the Neighbourhood Services call system, with callers to the number advertised in the information literature being given a range of automated options to ensure calls were channelled to the appropriate area within Neighbourhood Services, i.e. reception, admin support, waste project team or waste operations. If a call was unanswered after a period of 90 seconds, the call was redirected to Customer Services (noting that calls also came in directly to Customer Services). Customer Services staff were fully briefed on the new collection scheme details in order to be able to deal with queries. Records indicate that approximately 447 calls per day were received in the period from commencement of phase 4 on the 26th of June to the 17th July. Current figures show a steady decline in calls, with numbers returning to normal levels.
- 5.11 Following a number of complaints from householders relating to call waiting time, a previously unknown system error was uncovered which had not allowed the appropriate re-direction for some callers, meaning they were left unanswered. This system failure was repaired as soon as possible after it was known to exist, but led to additional complaints being generated.

6.0 CONTAINERS/EQUIPMENT

- 6.1 Following a mini competition via Public Contracts Scotland, containers for on-street communal use ("eurobins") were ordered from the supplier who was awarded the contract. This supplier has previously provided containers to the Council for routine stock and in large volumes for many previous rollouts competently and on time.
- 6.2 Following the orders, a meeting was held with the supplier's area business manager on 26th May, where the supplier indicated that a production press used in the manufacture of containers was unavailable and this could delay the delivery, but the intended delivery date was by week beginning 19th June. Whilst later than anticipated, this would have been manageable.
- 6.3 Approximately 900 containers were ordered, and in the weeks up to and including the week beginning 19th June, only 174 containers were delivered by the supplier. 201 further containers were delivered in week beginning 26th June, by which time the project had gone live, and a further 412 containers were subsequently delivered between Monday 3rd July and Friday 28th July, well after the implementation date.
- 6.4 Despite numerous telephone calls and email correspondence from project team staff throughout this period, the supplier was unable to confirm the bin types being delivered and when, which in turn made planning for onward delivery to street locations difficult and the installation plan timescales had to be constantly adapted to ensure resource availability for this task.
- 6.5 The contractual issues detailed above are currently being dealt with by Corporate Procurement via Scotland Excel.
- 6.6 All remaining Eurobins have been delivered and are now in place.

7.0 COLLECTION ROUTES

- 7.1 Throughout the implementation programme, routing for each phase has been carried out with a view to ensuring the most efficient collection systems in each area for each commodity collected. Where possible, lessons learned from other similar areas in the city with regard to population density, probable required numbers for on-street containers per area and anticipated waste outputs have been factored in to the routing process.
- 7.2 As phase 4 covered some of the central core of the city's households, a variety of different solutions were to be employed, utilising a range of bin types in slightly different ways to elsewhere in the city.
- 7.3 This period of time spent resolving phase 3 issues unfortunately had a serious impact on the completion of the routing process for phase 4. Although all available staff resources were fully employed on this task, a number of areas were not properly allocated to the appropriate routes at the time of phase 4 commencement.

- 7.4 Consequently around 1800 properties were not correctly identified on collection routes pre-launch, and no collections were made from these properties during the first collection cycle post-launch. This did not become apparent to the team until a large number of complaints came in relating to missed collections.
- 7.5 The situation was immediately rectified, with additional collections being carried out by the operations team wherever possible to make up for the delay in collections, and all properties being allocated to appropriate collection routes. In addition, some collection frequencies which had been incorrectly applied to bring sites were amended to the applicable frequencies.
- 7.6 Some route balancing still requires to be carried out to ensure appropriate distribution of workloads. This work will commence in August.

8.0 OPERATIONS

- 8.1 Waste operations management and staff were integral to the pre-planning stages of the process and appropriate staffing and vehicle resources were identified for the new services based on the routing profile.
- 8.2 The lateness of the eurobin deliveries caused significant collection issues. The introduction of eurobins allowed for shorter collection times per street in affected areas. The available time resulting from this was factored into the overall collection time matrix, which allowed resources to be utilised elsewhere. The delay in eurobin delivery therefore had a significant impact on the route capacity.

9.0 PHASE 1 AND 2 REQUIRED REVISIONS

- 9.1 Properties in phases 1 and 2 are scheduled to have services amended (primarily relating to collection provision realignment for dry mixed recyclates and glass to the new service profile). This will follow once phases 3 and 4 are bedded in.

10.0 SUMMARY

- 10.1 A key objective for the City Council within the Corporate Plan has been to improve Dundee's recycling performance and to regain our position as a leading recycling authority.
- 10.2 Through the introduction of phases 1 and 2 some progress had been made, however a step change was required in order to deliver improved outcomes at pace. Alignment to the Scottish Government's Charter for Household Recycling in Scotland demonstrated our wider commitment to the recycling strategy for Scotland with Dundee being the first Council in Scotland to deliver this.
- 10.3 The overall objectives we set out to achieve have been met in that we now have fully rolled out the infrastructure to allow all householders in the city to have a full recycling service. In the few months of this infrastructure being introduced we are seeing green shoots of improvement in our recycling figures which we are confident will go from strength to strength.
- 10.4 For a number of reasons the roll out has not been without its challenges particularly around phase 4 from which there are lessons to be learned. Some issues were outwith the Council's control and were not foreseeable.

The Issues

- a) Containers – The service experienced a shortfall of over 700 containers at the beginning of phase 4. This had a significant impact on communications and the routing schedule. Contingency plans were in place within the contract, but the contractor failed to deliver on this.
- b) Collection Routes – Around 93% of the collection routes were delivered as planned. The gaps, once identified, were quickly addressed by the team and these have all been rectified.

There will still be some work required to balance routes as we develop our knowledge and information of how our citizens are using the facilities, and in some cases will require us to add or remove some containers. This work is ongoing.

- c) Communications – Every effort was made to communicate the changes to our citizens using a variety of mediums including drop in sessions, written information and newspaper articles.

It is now recognised that more could have been done to provide information in advance of the roll out and to harness our excellent community networks better. We will take this learning into the review of phases 1 and 2.

A higher level of calls were received over a three week period due to the impact of problems experienced. The corporate contact centre was invaluable in dealing with this volume of calls and will be used as the main source of call handling for any future projects of this scale. Call levels are now reducing to normal levels for this time of year and we are not receiving any complaints regarding waiting times.

- 10.5 In conclusion, this was a very complex project which had to be delivered within very tight timescales. Staff worked meticulously in planning the roll out and were equally frustrated as our citizens and elected members of the problems experienced. Staff worked tirelessly to resolve the issues as they arose and remedied them with diligence and speed. These have now all but been addressed. We acknowledge the impact this has had and thank our citizens for their patience in allowing us to resolve them.
- 10.6 There are lessons to be learned and we will ensure they are reflected in the realignment of phases 1 and 2 which will be rolled out early 2018. This is a less complex exercise as the infrastructure is broadly in place but requires switching the burgundy/blue bin usage. We will use the time to ensure phases 3 and 4 are fully embedded and direct our resources towards helping our residents to utilise fully the recycling services we have made available to them.
- 10.7 We have had many communications from householders welcoming the new facilities and growing evidence that they are utilising them fully.
- 10.8 Despite the initial challenges, we now have full recycling services for every household in the city giving us the opportunity to achieve our corporate goal of being one of the best performers in Scotland.

11.0 OUTCOMES

- 11.1 Early indications are that recycling levels are increasing and we are confident with the new infrastructure we can achieve the targets set by the Scottish Government.

12.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainable Development, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

13.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 13.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 14.1 None.

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