

Briefing note

Dual-Stream Recycling Update

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Presented to: Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny
Committee

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a further update on the dual stream recycling collections which were introduced in both Tamworth and Lichfield in May. The report responds to the issues that were raised by Members at the last meeting which was held on 6th July.

2. Dual Stream Performance

Service reliability continues to be very good with all rounds being completed on time unless there is an operational issue such as a breakdown or a road closure. The Recycling Service is being provided using an average of 8.8 crews per day compared to the approved budget which contains provision for 8.5 crews per day. The cost of providing this additional infrastructure is currently £1,100 per week which is being met from budget savings and additional income. A further round review will be undertaken before the end of the financial year to see whether the collection infrastructure can be realigned closer to the budget provision. However, the growth of new housing developments in both Tamworth and Lichfield will require additional collection capacity to be provided over the next few years.

The Service has also been able to demonstrate a higher level of resilience as it had to react quickly to events following the death of Her Majesty the Queen and rearrange collections.

Resident participation is very high with most properties presenting both a bin for the glass, cans and plastic and a bag for paper and card every fortnight. Some residents do present side cardboard and additional bags are still being supplied. To date 7,037 additional bags have been delivered (9% of households).

The total tonnage of dry recyclate collected from the kerbside has fallen this year compared to 21/22 but there has also been a reduction in residual and organic tonnages. The reductions have coincided with the country coming out of lockdown and the long hot Summer has certainly had an impact on garden waste yield.

The number of rejected recycling bins did fall by more than a third over the first few weeks of the new service but the figure has now plateaued and averages 172 per day which is

approximately 2% of households. Visits are being made by the Recycling Officers to some of the properties that have had their bin rejected to offer advice on how to use the service correctly, but we don't have the capacity to visit all of them. Therefore, we are proposing to write to each property again offering advice.

The quality of the recycling continues to be very good. One load was rejected recently but this was due to an operational error whereby some residual waste had been left on the truck from the previous day. The fibre stream is very clean and the amount of unacceptable waste in the blue bin averaged 8.8% up until the end of June for both authorities. The figures for Cannock and South Staffordshire who also use the Aldridge MRF were 9.6% and 8.93% respectively. A significant amount of the unacceptable waste is due to some residents continuing to put paper and card in the blue bin which we will attempt to address through regular checks and communications.

The number of assisted collections provided has continued to increase. At the start of 2022 there were 1,852 assisted collections across both authorities; by the end of September this had increased to 2,163. The equality impact assessment completed prior to the implementation indicated that more residents may struggle to handle a bag when compared to wheeling a bin. Residents can easily apply for an assisted collection on-line or over the telephone if they don't have an able-bodied person in their household to move bins or bags.

A breakdown of tonnage and performance data is attached as Appendix A.

3. Other Matters

The issue of the blue bag and its size is still outstanding, and Lichfield has sought legal advice on measures of redress on behalf of all the Staffordshire authorities who were part of the joint procurement exercise. A further update will be provided when available.

The findings of the independent review of the implementation of the new service have been received and are currently being considered by both Councils. A verbal update may be provided by Tamworth's Chief Executive at the meeting.

4. Further Work

Transitioning multi-occupancy properties onto dual-stream collections. These properties (with communal bins) have tended to produce poorer quality recycling with higher levels of contamination which will struggle to meet the more stringent contamination thresholds for dual stream. Officers are currently assessing the 200 multi occupancy sites across both authorities and this work will take approximately 5 months to complete.

The implementation of a Driver Training Strategy to mitigate the national shortage of Class C HGV drivers. The Strategy focuses on assisting existing Bin Loaders employed by the Joint Waste to obtain an HGV licence and become competent drivers of refuse trucks. The Service currently has nine candidates on the training programme.

The plans for the Christmas and New Year collections are in development and likely to be as follows:

- The collection that was due to take place on Monday 26th December will be brought forward to Saturday 24th December and the collection that was due to take place on Monday 2nd January (New Year's Day substitute) will be brought forward to Saturday 31st December. All affected residents will receive a personally addressed letter the week before the festive period and the details will also be widely published on the website and social media.
- The collection that was due to take place on Tuesday 27th December (Christmas Day substitute) will go ahead as normal.
- The service is looking to put additional crews onto the recycling service to cope with the additional cardboard that is likely to be generated over the festive period.
- Discussions are taking place with the Union regarding a change to the local agreement the Joint Waste Service has with the workforce to improve operational resilience.