

WASTE COLLECTIONS SERVICE: REVIEW

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with information to assist their scrutiny of the new Waste Collections Service.

Scope of Scrutiny

2. During this scrutiny, Members have the opportunity to explore:
 - Performance levels since the introduction of the new Waste Collections Service
 - Customer feedback since the introduction of the new Waste Collections Service
 - Management actions taken and proposed to deal with any unintended and/or emerging issues arising from the new service
 - Any further changes proposed to Waste Collections Services.

Background

3. On Monday 22 February 2021, the Council moved to a 4-day residential waste collection cycle, collecting waste from residents' homes Tuesday to Friday between 6.00am and 3.30pm. This included general, garden, food, recycling, bulky and hygiene waste. 75% of households saw a change to their waste collection day and/ or the week they put out general and green garden waste.
4. The Council remodelled collection routes to make these more efficient, employing twenty more full-time staff and utilising an additional 24 refuse collection vehicles to provide the service over four days, via one shift.

5. The anticipated benefits of these changes were stated to be¹:
- Cleaner streets - as waste on streets for less time
 - Improved Customer Service – as collections taking place when contact centre open
 - Improved Customer Service – dedicated team to collect from flats and apartments
 - Faster vehicle breakdown resolution – as collections taking place when mechanics working
 - No disruption to collections – as no collections scheduled for Bank Holiday Mondays and staff will work Good Friday
 - Better Working Conditions – as staff have a four-day on, three-day off pattern, giving longer to recuperate from a very physical role
 - Better Working Conditions – as staff will work less time in the dark
6. Residents were informed of the changes by letter. Residents could request a collection calendar and details of the new collection schedules were also available on the Council’s website. Information was posted on the Council’s Twitter, Facebook and Instagram pages and press releases were issued to advise about the changes. Local councillors and community councils were also provided with information to share with communities.
7. Following implementation, there were some initial issues with missed or incomplete collections. A Council press release on 24 March 2021 advised the public that there were 22 drivers absent due to sickness and Covid related issues, such as shielding and self-isolating. This, coupled with the need for staff to take leave that they had been unable to do earlier in the pandemic due to work demands or covid-related issues, meant that there was a reduced number of staff available, resulting in the need to delay garden waste collections to enable other waste to be collected.²

¹ Cardiff Council Press Release – 26 January 2021 - [10 things you need to know about the waste and recycling collection day changes \(cardiffnewsroom.co.uk\)](https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/news/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-waste-and-recycling-collection-day-changes)

² Cardiff Council press release 24 March 2021 - [Waste collections update - 24/03/21 \(cardiffnewsroom.co.uk\)](https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/news/waste-collections-update-24-03-21)

Performance Review

8. To inform this scrutiny, officers have provided a presentation, attached at **Appendix A**, which reviews the 4-day waste collection model. The presentation also encompasses other performance aspects that have been identified during the first 4 months of the new collection model.

Previous Scrutiny

9. In November 2020, this Committee carried out pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet on the proposed changes. Following this, the Chair, Councillor Ramesh Patel, wrote to Councillor Michael, Cabinet Member Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment, broadly welcoming the proposals but identifying the following concerns:

- How missed collections on a Friday would be dealt with, to avoid these being left out over the whole weekend
- Whether collection crews would pick up black bags in future
- Whether the bigger rounds would lead to more missed collections
- How the 4-day shift pattern would impact on sickness absence levels and whether current targets for sickness absence were appropriate
- Whether the 4-day shift pattern would result in more injuries, as staff would be working more intensively
- How the Street Cleansing service would be aligned to the new collections rounds.

10. A full copy of this letter is attached at **Appendix B**, with the response received from Councillor Michael attached at **Appendix C**.

Way Forward

11. Councillor Thomas, Leader, and Councillor Michael, Cabinet Member – Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment, will be invited to make a statement and answer questions. Paul Orders, Chief Executive, Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development, Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director Street Scene, and

Graham Harris, Head of Recycling & Neighbourhood Services will also attend to answer Members' questions.

Legal Implications

12. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

13. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Consider the information in this report, its appendices and information provided at the meeting;
- ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter; and
- iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

30 June 2021