

Delegated Decisions report



11 February 2020

Waste Collection Pilot

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| Name of Cabinet Member | Councillor Darlington Cabinet Member for Public Realm |
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| Exempt / confidential / not for publication | No |
| Council Plan reference | 4.6 Reduce contamination in recycling by 5% by April 2020 4.7 Start the process to review our waste collection contract |
| Wards affected | Wolverton, Olney, Broughton, Monkston, Bletchley East, Loughton and Shenley Church End. |

Executive summary

Driven by Milton Keynes Council's ambition to become the Greenest City and the Sustainability Strategy 2019–2050, the Environmental Services Programme is reviewing its future service provision, which includes waste collection. A motion (see Annex A) was put forward to Full Council on 17 July 2019, which was referred to Cabinet on 3 September 2019, to explore pilot schemes for waste collection to replace the use of plastic sacks. This included the use of wheeled bins and other

waste management solutions that could address the different challenges faced by different estates.

A revised collection system is required to be tested before a borough wide roll out, to collect data, to review the modelling, operational methods and evaluate resident feedback. The pilot will measure: ease of use; recycling rate, contamination, carbon management and resident satisfaction.

The waste collection pilot will include 5,800 properties and will run for at least a six month trial period. A cross-party working group, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Public Realm, has considered options for the pilot. Details of the scheme are included within Annex B (Waste Collection Pilot Principles). The pilot will consider the effectiveness and practicality of introducing a new waste collection method as an alternative to plastic sacks to residents. This will be tested before decisions are taken for the design and delivery of waste collection in 2023 when the existing waste collection contract expires.

1. Decision/s to be made

- 1.1 That a pilot for a new waste collection system is approved in accordance with the principles in Annex B (Waste Collection Pilot Principles).
- 1.2 That resource allocation and spend approval in the 2020/21 capital programme of £0.3m for the purchase and delivery of waste collection receptacles (wheeled bins and boxes) be approved.

2. Why is the decision needed?

- 2.1 Milton Keynes has led the way in recycling and was the first local authority to introduce separate kerbside collection of recyclables and the use of recycling boxes on a borough-wide scale. In 1990 the Council commenced a trial by providing red boxes for paper (i.e. 'read' papers – red for paper) and blue boxes for glass, cans and plastic bottles. Initially these were collected by a dedicated vehicle which had separate compartments and the recycling was hand sorted at the kerbside. The trial was to be rolled out over 3 years; however as the trial was so well received by residents, in 1992 the decision was made to accelerate the roll-out borough wide and build our own Materials Recovery Facility (MRF).
- 2.2 The current waste collection system includes black sacks (provided by the residents) for waste that cannot be recycled (residual waste); clear bags for recycling (60 bags provided annually allowing tops ups by an online service); a

blue box for glass; and a green 140 litre bin for food and garden waste. There are variations with flats, communal and special kerbside properties.

- 2.3 The Council currently has a high residual waste per household (544kg per household per year with England Local Authorities averaging 543kg) as well as a high waste volume per person (460kg per person per year with England Local Authorities averaging 410kg). The current collection system in sacks means that there is the potential for commercial waste leaks into household stream undetected. The recycling rate is 59.1% which is ranked first out of councils who provide a weekly collection service and 14th out of 364 local authorities. However, the contamination rate in the recycling sacks is currently around 20% and it is a priority for the council to improve quality of recycling inputs.
- 2.4 The pilot will preserve our weekly collection, reinstate our recycling heritage and invigorate the original 1990s red and blue system. It proposes:
- A grey wheeled bin collected weekly for residual waste;
 - A wheeled bin with a red lid for paper and card;
 - A wheeled bin with a blue lid plastic, metals and glass;
 - No change to the food and garden waste wheeled bin; with
 - No change to properties which currently receive a communal collection.
- 2.5 The introduction of two recycling wheeled bins will allow additional volume for recycling and improve quality. Paper is particularly prone to contamination from glass (especially when it shatters) and oily and greasy food containers. The improvement of the quality of paper will assist the Council's efforts for recyclates to be recycled within the UK. Further details of the proposed pilot are included in Annex B.
- 2.6 The Council is aware that having sufficient volume to contain waste and recycling is important to residents. The proposed pilot collection system increases the kerbside volumes available to residents for residual waste and recycling compared to the volumes collected under the current method of collection (see Annex B for further details).
- 2.7 A survey to determine the suitability of residential properties are not suitable for wheeled bins has been completed by a consultancy on behalf of the Council in the pilot area. Tailored collections will be offered to residential properties in the pilot area that cannot accommodate the proposed waste collection trial system (Annex B provides more detail).
- 2.8 84% of councils in England have a wheeled bin-based waste collection service. The potential challenges to wheeled bins potentially include: estate design; bin blight perception (including bin clustering); returning bins to properties; and

concerns about manoeuvrability of heavy bins. The potential advantages to wheeled bins are; higher recycling rate, less contamination, less litter from split bags and animals, safer environment for refuse collectors and a better service for residents. All of this will be monitored and recorded during the trial period.

2.9 As part of the waste collection pilot:

- We are surveying every property to establish suitability to accommodate wheeled bins as included in paragraph 2.4 above;
- It is expected that street scene blight will be reduced as residents currently present sacks which exacerbate litter and it has been proven that streets where waste collection is in bins have higher levels of street cleanliness;
- The new service will include a “contract management tool-box” to address returning bins;
- Contamination in recycling sacks currently is 20%. Loose material presented in a wheeled bin is preferable, as this provides an option to separate incompatible materials and provide potential savings;
- Recent local “Public Opinion” surveys by MKFM and the MKCitizen show that the majority of residents who responded would prefer wheeled bins (85% and 78% respectively);
- The HSE recommend that “wherever possible, refuse collection should be carried out using wheelie bins of appropriate sizes rather than bags or small dustbins”;
- Modern bins incorporate ergonomic design for ease of use; and
- Assisted collection will continue to be offered and this service will continue to include returning bins to the correct locations.

2.10 There are 18 refuse and recycling collection rounds (see Annex B) covering c104,000 kerbside properties. For practical and operational reasons it is best to select one collection round for the trial, as this means that one crew can be trained for deployment on the trial and the vehicles required can be used to maximum efficiency over a whole week.

2.11 The factors used to select a round for the pilot were based on the below, which take into account the Full Council Motion on 17 July 2019 to understand the different challenges that different estates face:

- Diversity of types of housing
Milton Keynes contains a wide range of types of housing, from housing that is centuries old to the present day, and including some areas that can be difficult for wheeled bins such as Victorian/Edwardian terracing and the most recent housing that may have little garden space.
- Diversity of Location

Not all of Milton Keynes is urban. In the rural areas travel times for collection vehicles are longer.

- Diversity of socio-economic composition
Generation of waste and recycling per property varies according to socio-economic status.

2.12 The round selected contains the following residential properties: social housing; rural housing; Edwardian / Victorian terracing; Post Edwardian to 1950s; 1960/70s; early MK (before 1990); modern MK (1990 to 2015); new MK (post 2015). The streets within the pilot can be seen in Annex C (Streets in the Waste Collection Pilot).

2.13 Monitoring will be carried out before, during and after the pilot to inform the decision for the new collection services to provide:

- CLEANER - Benefits of cleaner streets due to decreased bag ripping from animals.
- GREENER - Higher quality recycling and less contamination.
- Climate Emergency underpinning decision making process
- SAFER - Less injuries to residents and staff using wheeled bins instead of sacks and boxes.

2.14 This delegated decision covers the operation and collection logistics of the proposed waste collection pilot. A separate delegated decision will be taken on the formal consultation of the waste collection services across the whole borough.

2.15 The cross party working group is currently considering with council officers the development of a communications plan with that will keep residents in the pilot areas and across the city informed of the pilot before, during and after. This will also be a significant opportunity to share messages, for example about improved recycling practices all residents can take. In addition, briefings will be held for Councillors and Parish and Town Councils within the pilot area. There will continue to be engagement with chairs and representative groups of people with mobility challenges and other disabilities to ensure that all voices are heard.

3. Implications of the decision

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| Financial | Yes | Human rights, equalities, diversity | Yes |
| Legal | Yes | Policies or Council Plan | Yes |
| Communication | Yes | Procurement | Yes |
| Energy Efficiency | Yes | Workforce | Yes |

a) Financial implications

The anticipated cost of the pilot, which includes the purchase, storage and delivery of waste collection receptacles (bins and boxes); the leasing of vehicles; communications; IT (Customer Resource Management and contract management); monitoring and supervision; and potential contract changes is around £550k. The activities include both capital and revenue and will be funded from a Government grant, one off funding and the £100k allocated in the Council's 2020/21 budget.

There would be an additional one off cost with the reinstatement of services (return of waste collection receptacles after the pilot) of around £130k, however within the pilot evaluation there will be a decision to consider continuing the service. If these costs are incurred, they will be funded from the contract revenue budget.

b) Legal implications

The Council has a duty, under section 45(1)(a) of the Environment Protection Act 1990, to arrange for collection of household waste from premises. Collection of waste under the pilot scheme will still enable the Council to fulfil its statutory with regard to the areas within the pilot.

Under section 46 of the EPA 1990, the Council may by notice require occupiers to place the waste in receptacles of a kind and number specified. The Council currently has contracts for street collection and cleansing and for recycling that may be affected by the proposed pilot.

c) Other implications

- *Communication:* A dedicated communications plan will be prepared and will play an important role in engagement, education and feedback with residents and other interested parties.
- *Energy Efficiency:* The waste collection pilot option considers carbon emissions and energy use and will be monitored before during and after the pilot.
- *Human rights, equalities, diversity:* An equalities impact assessment has been carried out and will be considered in the protocol for the collection pilot to ensure no groups are disadvantaged. It considers where properties and residents may have difficulties to have a wheeled bin for collection.
- *Workforce:* The Council will be working with our Waste Collection and Recycling Contractors to consider impacts on resources in terms of numbers, training, process and health and safety. Where identified additional training will be provided by the contractors.

4. Alternatives

4.1 Do nothing

Milton Keynes would remain one of the 16% of councils left in England that do not use wheeled bins. It would continue to impose potential health and safety risks for the collection staff. It will not test the potential to deliver increased recycling, reduced carbon, and improved resident's satisfaction of the service.

4.2 Desk Top Exercise

Milton Keynes Council could consider undertaking a desk top exercise of other local authorities to assess other collection systems and the lessons learned from previous service commissioning.

4.3 No Pilot. Borough-wide roll out of new services in 2023

The change of the collection service borough wide is a significant operational change. The last change to the waste collection service in the borough was in 2009 when food and garden waste was introduced for collection. A number of trials were carried out before the full implementation to the service. It would also not support the commissioning processes, ability to review the approach of the collection option.

4.4 Pilot (Preferred Option)

This is the preferred option and is recommended as a stepped change to residents. It will provide feedback and collect operational information to facilitate delivery of a council wide collection system from 2023. The pilot accords with the Council motion considered at Cabinet on 3 September 2019. A formal consultation is proposed for later in 2020 will also be used to collect resident's feedback to the approach borough wide.

5. Timetable for implementation

Mobilisation: February-June 2020

Pilot commence: From late June 2020

Evaluation and Feedback: March 2021

List of annexes

Annex A - Full Council Motion 17 July 2019 [Council Meeting 17 July 2019](#)

Annex B – Waste Collection Pilot Principles

Annex C – Streets in the Waste Collection Pilot

List of background papers

[Cabinet 3 September 2019 \(C46\) - Wheelie Bin Referral from Council 17 July 2019](#)