

Waste Strategy Task and Finish Group

WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2016

6.30PM

ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES
CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES

AGENDA

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/scrutiny

Membership: Councillors D McCall (Chair), D Hopkins, D Hosking, V McPake, M Petchey and A Webb

Overview and Scrutiny Officer: Dwight McKenzie

For more information about the meeting please contact Dwight McKenzie by e-mail Dwight.McKenzie@milton-keynes.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair to welcome Members and, officers to the meeting and introduce Members and officers who are present.

2. **Apologies**

3. **Disclosures of Interest**

Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, or personal interests (including other pecuniary interests), they may have in the business to be transacted, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

4. **Minutes**

To approve, and the Chair to sign as a correct record, the Notes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 **(Item 4) (Pages 3 to 5)**

5. **Scope / Terms of Reference**

To approve the Scope and Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group **(Item 5) (Pages 6 to 14).**

6. **Report - What customers want and think of waste services (Evidence of a pilot and satisfactions surveys)**

To consider what customers in Milton Keynes want and expect of waste services in the borough based on data obtained from a pilot and satisfaction surveys. **(Item 6) (Pages 15 to 31) (Annex 3 to Follow)**

7. **Proposed Work Programme**

- **September 28, 2016-** Review of what customers want and think of waste services (evidence of a pilot and satisfaction survey information).
- **October 2016-** Review of future trends/demand predictability (what will waste look like in 5 years), and what happens elsewhere in waste service management such as with other local authorities.
- **November 2016-** Review of shortlist with the varied options/pilots considered in development of the new Waste Strategy broken down into costs, benefits, medium term financial plans/projections.
- **December 2016-** Review of Strategy direction based on evidence gathered and particular option(s) chosen.

Notes of the Waste Strategy Task and Finish Group meeting held on Tuesday, 6 September 2016

Present: Councillors D McCall, D Hosking, V McPake, M Petchey and A Webb

Officers: S Heap (Committee Services and Scrutiny Manager)
D McKenzie (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)
T Blackburne-Maze (Service Director- Public Realm)
A Hudson (Head- Environment and Waste)
D Proctor (Waste Contracts Manager)

Apologies: Councillor D Hopkins

Election of Chair

Councillor D McCall was elected as Chair.

Disclosure of Interest

None

Background Information & Discussion of Waste Strategy in Milton Keynes

Waste Service officers gave Members of the Task and Finish Group background information about the Council's Waste Services and the new Waste Strategy being developed.

Work on a new Waste Strategy is in its early stages and is due to be considered by Cabinet in March 2017. The Strategy will have a particular focus on addressing the Council's financial position ensuring that waste services are cost effective and sustainable, and is being developed on behalf of the governing Council administration. All waste services are in scope for the new Waste Strategy. The new Waste Strategy will have a new vision and commitment relative to the current strategy.

A new Waste Strategy is needed as the old Waste Strategy is out of date and will soon lapse. The new Waste Strategy will have to be approved Cabinet, and not full Council as the strategy is not a framework document.

Serco has the existing contract for the Council's management of waste. This contract is also currently up for renewal, and the contractor's performance will be reviewed by the Service. This is however an operational matter and is separate from development of the new Waste Strategy.

Members recommended consultations as part of development of the new Strategy.

Scope/Terms of Reference

A draft Scoping document containing the Terms of Reference had been circulated and was discussed.

Members were disappointed at the late start of the Task and Finish Group, which limited the time within which the Group had to feedback into the Council's 2017/18 budget. It was noted that this budget will incorporate income projections from a new waste treatment plant.

Members decided the following for the Review:-

1. Quality of service in waste service provision will be included so as to avoid a narrow focus on the financial aspects as relates to provision.
2. Community views will be taken into account where possible including the views of Parish and Town Councils and Ward Councillors
3. Consultation as a part of the review is recommended.
4. Council capacity to sell services to other local authorities will be included
5. A site visit of the Council's waste treatment plants will be undertaken if required.

Members also decided that in undertaking the Review, a wide range of evidence sources will be utilised including:-

1. Evidence of demands upon the service such as litter and flytipping.
2. Evidence of what residents want (Serco satisfaction survey from 2009, call centre and website statistics).
3. Historical data as to amount and type of waste generated in the borough
4. Results of Waste Service pilots.
5. Contractual commitments.

The Terms of Reference set out in the Scoping was revised by Members (attached).

Future Work

The Group decided on the below Work Programme:-

- **1st Meeting-** What customers want and think of waste services (evidence of pilots and satisfaction survey information).
- **2nd Meeting-** Future trends/demand predictability (what will waste look like in 5 years), and what happens elsewhere in waste service management such as with other local authorities.
- **3rd Meeting-** November shortlist with the varied options/pilots considered in development of the new Waste Strategy broken down into costs, benefits, medium term financial plans/projections.
- **4th Meeting-** Strategy direction based on evidence gathered and particular option(s) chosen.

To assist the Review, Members decided on the following witnesses:-

- Councillor M Gowan (Cabinet Member- Public Realm)
- Waste and Resources Action Programme (to provide a national overview)
- Council partners possibly including Serco and Amey

Meetings

- Members decided by a majority that Review meetings would be held in public
- However where necessary review of confidential matters such as contractual and commercially sensitive information will be done in private.
- Meetings will be held every 3 - 4 weeks with a meeting at the end of September, in October, and November 2016. October's meeting will include a site visit to the Council's waste treatment plant.
- The need for Waste Service officers to give the Scrutiny Review officer support in organising meetings including data and information was underscored by Members, and committed to by officers.
- D. McKenzie will finalise meetings dates and make necessary arrangements for future Group meetings after consultation with the Councillor D. McCall.

WASTE STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT

| Review Topic | |
|---|---|
| New Waste Strategy | |
| Origins of Review Group | Review Group Membership |
| Scrutiny Management Committee Planning Group | 2:2:2 Cllr Douglas McCall (LD)- Chair Cllr Vanessa McPake (LD) Cllr David Hosking (C) Cllr David Hopkins (C) Cllr Martin Petchey (L) Cllr Alan Webb (L) |
| Overview & Scrutiny Officer | Initial Scoping of Review |
| Dwight McKenzie Scrutiny Management Committee Planning Group Budget Scrutiny Committee | 26 th July 2016 4 th February 2016 15 th October 2015 |
| 1. Purpose | |
| <p>What is the purpose of the Review?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help provide local Councillor input, feedback and comments into the development of the Council's new Waste Strategy | |
| 2. Rationale | |
| <p>What does the Review hope to achieve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Waste Strategy will have a particular focus on addressing the Council's financial position to reduce the Council's revenue costs whilst providing the best sustainable outcomes for the residents of Milton Keynes within the resources available. Review will ensure that Waste services of the highest quality are provided to the residents of Milton Keynes, including identifying any area where there is scope for service improvement. <p>Why is the Review taking place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the Council's meeting on 17th February 2016 the Council agreed that the current provision of pink sacks be kept until the Waste Strategy Task | |

and Finish Group had reported upon the results from pilots into alternative forms of provision.

- The Council agreed to one-off funding of £0.400m being provided to allow for a delay to changes to recycling containers (S92), to allow for a potential second phase of pilots; full evaluation of the results of ongoing pilots; and scrutiny by the Waste Strategy Task and Finish Group before committing to details of any replacement scheme. The £0.400m savings are expected to be delivered in the 2017/18 budget.
- Work on the new Waste Strategy is in its early stages and is due to be considered by Cabinet in March 2017. All waste services are in scope including collections, community recycling centres and waste disposal.

This is a service that is very public-facing and effective Councillor involvement will provide a significant and positive benefit in the development of the Strategy.

What is the community importance and benefit?

- Waste collection and disposal is a statutory service that affects all households and some businesses in Milton Keynes. It is a vital service for good public health and protection of the environment.

How does it fit in with the Council's corporate priorities / scrutiny priorities?

- Budget: in light of ongoing significant Conservative government funding reductions, securing a balanced medium-term budget that mitigates as far as possible against impacting adversely on the most vulnerable.
- Waste: to review our Waste Strategy to ensure recycling rates are increased and waste is minimised.

What are the opportunities to make a distinctive impact?

- To provide comments and feedback on the emerging options for future waste management services in Milton Keynes to help deliver a service that is effective, sustainable and affordable within the resources available.

How will the Review influence what the Council does?

- The impact of this review should help in the development of sustainable waste services in Milton Keynes.
- The Council will consider the input put forward during this Strategic Review, which may have an impact on the waste services provided by the Council.

3. Proposed Outcomes

What are the proposed outcomes of the Review?

- To ensure that future waste services are fit for purpose, meet the needs of the local population and can be provided in a sustainable cost effective manner, addressing the Council's financial position.

4. Background

Is the Review looking at existing policy or a new policy?

- The new policy is currently being developed by officers and it is hoped that the review will provide value in the development of options within the strategy.

How does it relate to existing policy?

- The existing policy is being replaced.

Has the need for the Review come about from an issue arising from national or local events?

- The previous Strategy is out of date and doesn't reflect the current and future financial constraints the Council is facing.

How does the issue relate to the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme?

- The issue has been an item for consideration since the Budget Scrutiny Committee meeting of September 2015. The Committee as a part of its report on the pressures being faced in compiling the 2016/17 budget discussed the option of moving to fortnightly waste collections and associated issues such as how much it would cost. The Committee at its October 2015 meeting requested that the Scrutiny Management Committee establish a Task and Finish Group to look at the development of a new Waste Strategy for Milton Keynes to replace the existing Waste Strategy which has approximately one year left to run. The Scrutiny Management Committee at its February 2016 meeting agreed to the Budget Committee's request.

Are there any relevant community views to refer to? e.g. any previous consultation?

- The Council measures resident satisfaction with waste and recycling services by the "Serco Tracker"; a quarterly satisfaction survey.
- Parish and Town Council views
- No public consultation on the Strategy has been undertaken since 2005, therefore public consultation is recommended.

What is the gap between provision and need?

- The Council needs to deliver significant financial savings over the next 4 years and the statutory requirement to collect and dispose of household waste is a large cost. The Council has already invested heavily providing a

new Material Waste Recycling Facility and Residual Waste Treatment Plant which reduces the Council's disposal costs greatly. The development of the new strategy will identify what the opportunities are for further financial reductions and when they would generate the maximum benefit.

5. Timetable

How frequently will the Task and Finish Group need to meet?

- The Group will meet every 3 - 4 weeks leading up to 7th March 2017 to provide valuable feedback and comments to the emerging strategy.

What are the key deadlines?

- The new Waste Strategy is due to be considered by Cabinet on 7th March 2017.

Who needs to see the analysis and who needs to contribute to the report?

- It is envisaged that feedback and comments will be provided through the development of the new strategy.

When will the Task and Finish Group report back to the Scrutiny Management Committee and Cabinet?

- It is hoped that the Group will report back to the Scrutiny Management Committee and Cabinet respectively at their meeting on 25th January 2017 and 7th March 2017.

When is the proposed end date?

- 7th March 2017

6. Methodology / Approach

What method of enquiry will be most suitable for the Review?

Consider some of the following:

- Desk-based review of papers
As options are developed
- Site visits / observations
If required
- Comparisons with other authorities
As required
- Workshops / Focus Groups
The review will take the form of ongoing workshops

- Interview officers
Within the presentation of options through the development
- Calling witnesses to give evidence
As required

7. Evidence Sources

What types of evidence will be needed.

In order to understand and consider options effectively, evidence will need to be provided which might include but not be limited to;

- Results of pilots
- Government guidance / legislation
- Independent research articles, papers and websites (Environment Agency and letsrecycle.com)
- Serco satisfaction surveys (2009 onwards) so as to identify what residents want
- Statistics from the Call Centre and website (complaints/commendations)
- Historical data regarding waste, and projected future trends
- Government efficiency savings requirement
- Existing Serco contract performance
- Other Local Authorities (Lesson learning and best practice)
- Waste data (flytipping, litter etc)
- Justification/rational for pilot selection and rejection
- Looking at external information sources so as to identify future trends

8. Witnesses

Apart from representatives from the agencies working on the Review, who else does the Task and Finish Group wish to invite to its meetings?

- As required but possibly partners including Serco and Amey.
- Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)
- Cabinet Member- Public Realm

9. Site Visits / Observations

Is there scope for potential site visits / observations?

- Yes- Residual Waste Treatment Facility (Old Wolverton)

10. Public Meetings

Should the meetings be held in public / private / mixture of both?

- Meetings will be held in public.
- Where there is a potential disclosure of confidential and commercially sensitive contractual information for example from partners in the

consideration of different options, that segment of the meeting will be held in private.

11. Officer Support

Identify Scrutiny Officer and any other officers that will be of assistance to the review process.

- Dwight McKenzie- Overview and Scrutiny Officer
- David Proctor (Waste Contracts Manager) and other officers as required

12. Resource Requirements

Estimate the amount of 'person' time required and the potential costs involved?

- Scrutiny Officer overtime for evening meetings where applicable.

13. Risk Assessment

Identify potential obstacles to an effective Review:

- Short timeline within which to feed into Cabinet budget decision (7 March 2017)
- Management of expectations
- Limited Member availability
- Limited officer availability
- Review steps outside terms of reference
- Additional, duplicated or conflicting desires

14. Proposed Terms of Reference

1. Provide constructive local Councillor feedback and comments in the development of the Council's new Strategy to deliver a sustainable future waste service within the constraints of the Council's finances and resources available.
2. Assist in the development of the new strategy which will receive cross party agreement when presented to Cabinet on 7th March 2017.
3. Evaluation of the types of containers used for collection in the various waste streams (reusable/non-reusable bags/pink sacs, bins/boxes etc) in accordance with Minute CL103 of the Council meeting of 17 February 2016 (attached).

TASK AND FINISH GROUP PROTOCOL / OPERATING GUIDELINES

(Approved by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee Planning Group on 21 October 2013)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Task and Finish Groups are set up to undertake an in-depth investigation or review of an issue and operate on a relatively informal basis. Most detailed investigative Overview and Scrutiny work takes place in this type of working environment. Task and Finish Groups are a forum for information gathering and discussion between the Group and officers rather than a formal, decision making body and have no delegated powers.
- 1.2 This document sets out Milton Keynes Council's Operating Protocol for Task and Finish Groups.

2. Membership

- 2.1 Membership of each Task and Finish Group is politically balanced and numbers usually vary between a minimum of 3 to 6 elected Members.
- 2.2 All non-Executive Members of the Council are eligible to participate in Task and Finish Groups, regardless of whether or not they are members of the 'parent' Select Committee.
- 2.3 Where appropriate, Task and Finish Groups can co-opt non-Members with a particular expertise / experience / interest to participate in the review being undertaken, eg the Older Persons' Champion.
- 2.4 The members of the Task and Finish Group will elect a Chair for the duration of the review its full first meeting.

3. The Review Process

An initial planning meeting will be held involving the Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the Task and Finish, the elected Members nominated to sit on the Task and Finish Group, and where appropriate, other Council officers and representatives of Partners or other outside organisations who may be expected to make a significant contribution to the work of the Task and Finish Group, in order to scope the review and agree a plan for the task.

The scoping document / plan should set out:

- (a) A clear statement of the scrutiny topic;
- (b) Proposed outcomes of the review;
- (c) The aim (or purpose) of the review;
- (d) The scope of the review – what will be included and excluded;
- (e) Agreed Terms of Reference;
- (f) Any specific outcomes to be achieved;
- (g) Specific concerns or issues, which should be addressed;
- (h) How the review will contribute to achieving Corporate Priorities;
- (i) An initial list of key stakeholders, partners or other agencies to be involved;

- (j) An initial list of witnesses;
- (k) How evidence will be gathered;
- (l) Any risks which may delay progress;
- (m) A timescale for completion of the task;
- (n) A suggested mechanism for following up / monitoring progress of recommendations which may be made in the final report.

3.3 As well as receiving evidence from witnesses and scrutinising printed matter, consideration should be given to the use of site visits, workshops and other activities in order to gain first hand knowledge of the topic under review.

4. Witnesses

- 4.1 A Council's Overview and Scrutiny function has the power under Section 21(13) of the Local Government Act 2000 to require the attendance of members of the Executive and Council officers at Scrutiny meetings.
- 4.2 There is a statutory duty (Section 21(14) of the same Act for any member of the Executive or Council officer invited to attend a Scrutiny meeting to comply with the request.
- 4.3 Other witnesses from external organisations may also be invited to give evidence to Task and Finish Groups.
- 4.4 The Task and Finish Group should identify:
 - (a) the persons to be invited;
 - (b) the issue in respect of which the person's attendance is requested;
 - (c) the reason why the attendance of the person would assist the Task and Finish Group in its task.
- 4.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the review will endeavour to give both internal and external witnesses as much notice as is practicable of the Task and Finish Group's request to attend a meeting.
- 4.6 The invitation will give details of the review being undertaken, including any supporting documents which may be relevant, state why the witness has been invited to attend and whether or not the Task and Finish Group requires written reports in support of the witness's evidence.

5. Conduct of Meetings

- 5.1 Meetings of the Task and Finish Group shall be scheduled to enable the Group to complete its task within the timeframe identified in the scoping exercise. However, it is recognised that on occasion additional time may be needed to complete a task, but the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should be sought for this.
- 5.2 Task and Finish Groups should aim, where possible, to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings do not become out of date before completion of the task.

- 5.3 Unless the evidence given to a Task and Finish Group is likely to be confidential or exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, all Task and Finish Group meetings will be treated as public meetings and arrangements made to accommodate any members of the public who might attend.
- 5.4 No witness giving evidence to a Task and Finish Group will be under any obligation to disclose publicly personal information about an employee, a looked after child, or any supplier or recipient of council services.
- 5.5 All Task and Finish Group meetings will be Chaired in a manner which ensures mutual respect between all those participating.
- 5.6 The Chair will ensure that questions put by members of the Task and Finish Group relate solely to the issue in respect of which the person's attendance has been requested.
- 5.7 Questioning should be aimed at trying to understand and explore issues rather than at catching witnesses out.
- 5.8 Members of the Task and Finish Group should avoid making statements rather than asking questions.
- 5.9 Witnesses, including Executive Members, are not members of the Task and Finish Group and should confine themselves to answering questions put to them by the Task and Finish Group or supplying evidence requested by the Task and Finish Group.
- 5.10 Members of the Task and Finish Group should operate within the agreed plan for the task and should not disclose or use any information/knowledge obtained through involvement in the group for any other purpose.
- 5.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the Task and Finish Group will take notes to record the evidence given at meetings and at site visits which will be used to form the basis of the final report.

6. Reports, Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 Final reports need to be written in clear English which can be easily understood by the lay reader. Over use of jargon and acronyms should be avoided and, if necessary, a glossary should be included as part of the report.
- 6.2 Final reports should be based on facts collected, give a full picture of the issues scrutinised and contain both conclusions and clear recommendations.
- 6.3 Reports should be an expression of the views of the Task and Finish Group on the basis of the evidence received and it is therefore important that members of the Task and Finish Group express their views at the drafting stage.
- 6.4 When reaching conclusions and making recommendations, the members of the Task and Finish Group should endeavour to reach agreement by consensus. However, if agreement cannot be reached, a minority view on a particular issue may be included in the final report, or as part of a minority report.
- 6.5 Depending on the topic scrutinised by the Task and Finish Group and the recommendations made, the final report will be presented to Cabinet, Council, an Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee or even an outside organisation for consideration and action.

Scrutiny: Waste Strategy Task and Finish Group

Meeting: 28 September, 2016

Reports: What customers want and think of waste services (evidence of pilot(s) and satisfaction surveys)

Introduction

Milton Keynes Council as a local authority is legally obliged to provide waste service within the borough for the benefit of the borough's residents (109,000 households). In the provision of waste services, the Council has always placed a high value on achieving customer satisfaction as reflected by the **Zero Waste Strategy Refresh 2013**¹. For this reason the Council's Waste Strategy has always been informed by what is wanted by customers in the borough evidenced historically evidenced by the Municipal Waste Strategy and Waste Development Plan 2005. This Plan was predicated on what customers wanted at that point in time and it has guided the Council's waste service provision up to the present (period for development of a new Waste Strategy).

In evidencing the Council's efforts at undertaking valuable customer engagement, this report:-

1. Outlines the results of a Trial of Reusable Bags in Beanhill (January/February 2016)- Appendix 1, and Survey Returns Summary- Appendix 2
2. Outlines customer satisfaction as determined by Serco satisfaction surveys, customer contact centre and website statistics- Appendix 3 (Report to follow)

For the Council the above is important as they provide valuable insight as to the expectations of residents of not only what they are obliged to receive, but what they demand as customers of waste services.

Milton Keynes Council Waste Service Obligations to Residents

Milton Keynes Council as a local authority is governed by legislation which guide waste service provision to customers². Recently the Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 has meant that from 1 January 2015, the Council must collect waste paper, metal, plastic and glass separately. It has also imposed a duty on the Council when making arrangements for waste collection, to ensure that arrangements are by way of separate collection where it is technically, environmentally and economically practicable. The duties apply to waste from households and commercial or industrial waste.

Guided by legislation, the Council provides a number of waste services to the borough's customers including Waste Streams Collected Weekly: Residual, dry recyclables, mixed glass, mixed food and garden waste. Development of a new Waste Strategy by the Council will ensure that the Council's waste service provision is in keeping with current legislation determining quality service to customers.

¹ Overarching Goal/Vision- To be rated highly by local residents (in terms of satisfaction)

² *Environmental Protection Act 1990, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, Animal By Products Regulations 2005, Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995, Local Government Act 1999 - Part 1, Best Value, Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010, Waste Regulations (England and Wales) 2011, The Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012, Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002, Controlled Waste Regulations (England and Wales) 2012, and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2006*

**TRIAL OF REUSABLE BAGS IN BEANHILL
January/February 2016**

Background and Objectives

A trial of reusable bags for the collection of recyclables instead of pink sacks was undertaken in Beanhill in January/February 2016. The primary objective was the gathering of information to ascertain whether this method of collection could yield cost savings and to improve recycling quality or quantity versus the current system of providing pink sacks. Secondary objectives were to ascertain any issues that might be expected on a larger scale roll-out, both operationally and from resident's perspective; the number of bags that will be needed per property; and to determine any other impacts.

Method

Four streets of Beanhill were selected for the trial covering 218 properties. In two streets – Capron and Chervil – totalling 107 properties, residents were given one bag. In the other two – Wastel and Simnel – totalling 111 properties, residents were given two bags.

Benchmarking observations on these streets were carried out on 16th December 2015. Officers recorded the number of all refuse and recycling containers put out in the half an hour before collection started. Refuse and recycling collections start early in this area, at just after 7am, so recording started just after 6.30am. The total amount of time that the collection vehicle took to complete the round was also recorded.

On 13th January residents were given a “prewarning” leaflet that a trial was to start the following week, and on 20th January the relevant number of bags were distributed to properties in each street, together information and instructions about using the bags and a survey card for the resident to send back any comments, as early feedback was required where possible.

Observations were then repeated on 3rd and 10th February, after which residents were given information that the trial had finished and survey cards were again distributed. All the information also contained a website address where a survey could be completed online.

Results

The pre-trial observations indicated that recycling habits are not particularly strong in this area. Very few blue boxes and green bins were being placed out, and some of the properties were not placing any pink sacks out but were placing out large numbers of black sacks.

As the trial was during the winter, collections were taking place partly in the dark, and, possibly as a result of this, there was little littering - few animals were about, particularly birds which can attack pink bags.

It was also observed that many residents were waiting until the collection time was very close to put out sacks, black sacks in particular, and this made recording of sacks placed out for collection of sacks prone to undercounting. This is particularly suspected in Simnel in the benchmark observations. This practice may also be a reason for the lack of littering.

On 3rd February operational circumstances impacted on schedules which meant that part of Chervil was collected before the observers could count the sacks there, so for this area only the 10th February observation was used.

Immediately prior to the trial a lot of negative discussion took place in the press and on social media about the bags which may have coloured the views of residents. Survey cards received early commented on negative events that residents thought would happen (evidenced by use of the word “will” in replies) as opposed to their actual experience with the bags.

Usage of blue bags (Tables 1-3 below)

It was observed that:

- Many properties seemingly did not start using the reusable bags at all and large numbers of pink sacks continued to be used. In the blue bag area only 25% of the recycling containers that were put out were blue bags and in the two bag area this increased to 46%.
- There was an overall increase in the number of recycling containers put out in both areas.
- In the one bag area and overall, there appeared to be a decline in the number of black sacks put out (in the two bag area, an under-reporting in Simnel in the benchmarking may account for an apparent increase).
- It is not known why there appears to be an increase in recycling containers set out, but possible reasons include that the area has been given more capacity for recycling collections, as well as the information and attention focussed on the area.
- The average number of recycling containers used per household per week was 1.08 in the trial area pre-trial and 1.24 post-trial.

| Table 1 Pre-trial count 16th December 2015 | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| | One Bag Area | Two Bag Area | Total |
| Total number of properties | 107 | 111 | 218 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Total number of pink sacks set out | 111 | 125 | 236 |
| Total number of black sacks set out | 155 | 119 | 274 |
| Total number of green bins set out | 14 | 14 | 28 |
| Total number of blue boxes set out | 6 | 14 | 20 |

| Table 2 Post Trial 3rd and 10th February (Average) | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| | One Bag Area | Two Bag Area | Total |
| Total number of blue bags set out | 32.0 | 65.5 | 97.5 |
| Total number of pink sacks set out | 94.0 | 78.0 | 172.0 |
| Total number of blue bags and pink sacks | 126 | 143.5 | 269.5 |
| % of recycling containers put out that were blue bags | 25% | 46% | 36% |
| Total number of black sacks set out | 92.5 | 150 | 242.5 |
| Total number of green bins set out | 8.0 | 23.5 | 31.5 |
| Total number of blue boxes set out | 5.5 | 5.5 | 11.0 |

| Table 3 change in number of recycling containers and black sacks | | One Bag Area | Two Bag Area | Total |
|---|--|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Change in number of recycling containers | | +14% | +15% | +14% |
| Change in number of black sacks | | -40% | +26% | -11% |

Time taken to collect refuse and recycling

| Table 4 Time taken to collect using one-pass vehicle, minutes | Pre trial | Post Trial | Increase |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Time taken to collect from one bag areas | 21:47 | 30:10 | 38% |
| Time taken to collect from two bag areas | 20:57 | 23:52 | 14% |

The observers noted that, instead of providing the usual driver plus two crew, during the trial Serco provided a driver and three. Nevertheless, the collection took longer, and Council observers noticed that the crew were also slowed by the presence of the Serco supervisor and other observers with whom they spoke at times and that they seemed to be working at slower than the normal pace, even given that they had to return the bags to the properties.

Survey responses

By 26th February, 44 residents had returned a survey, either online or by post, giving a 20% response rate.

5 of these replied twice, 4 sending in two postal surveys - one early on and one later - and the other sent in both an online and a postal survey. Four of these did not change their views between the surveys but the fourth changed from positive to negative. Only one response was recorded for each of these properties for the closed questions – the later response. All the comments were recorded from both surveys in the open ended questions.

Most of the responses were by post.

Table 5 Survey Returns Summary

| | One Bag Areas | Two Bag Areas | Total |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Total number of properties in the area: | 107 | 111 | 218 |
| Number of properties responding to survey: | 19 | 25 | 44 |
| Response rate | 18% | 23% | 20% |

| Table 6 Method of Response | By Post | Online | By post and online | Total |
|--|----------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of properties responding: | 37 | 6 | 1 | 44 |

Most residents had negative views of the reusable bags with 57% disliking or strongly disliking them (Table 7). However 22% liked them or strongly liked them. Dislike was slightly stronger in the one bag areas.

It should be noted that this survey is self-selecting and therefore it is more likely to be completed by those with stronger views or who wish to make a point. To obtain a more complete view, house-to-house surveys should be considered.

Table 7 Opinion of blue bags and pink sacks

| | One Bag Areas | | Two Bag Areas | | Total | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Blue Bag | Pink Bag | Blue Bag | Pink Bag | Blue Bag | Pink Bag |
| Strongly Like | 2 | 10 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 15 |
| Like | 2 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 13 |
| Neither like nor dislike | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| Dislike | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Strongly Dislike | 8 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 15 | 1 |
| Not ticked/No response | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 17 | 17 | 20 | 20 | 37 | 37 |
| % like/strongly like | 24% | 76% | 20% | 75% | 22% | 76% |
| % dislike/strongly dislike | 59% | 6% | 55% | 0% | 57% | 3% |

76% of residents in the one bag areas felt there was not enough space provided versus 50% in the two bag areas. It should also be noted that some residents felt that while the space provided by the bag(s) might be enough for them, they would not be enough for larger families or that there would not be enough space at peak times such as Christmas. The issue of amount of space provided is an important factor in colouring the views of both the one bag and two bag areas.

Table 8 Size comments

| The amount of space in the bag was: | One Bag Areas | % | Two Bag Areas | % |
|--|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Too much | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| About right | 3 | 18% | 9 | 45% |
| Not enough | 13 | 76% | 10 | 50% |
| Not answered | 1 | 6% | 1 | 5% |
| Total | 17 | 100% | 20 | 100% |

Apart from the capacity of the bag, a range of other comments were received, and these are shown in Table 9. Most were negative comments about the blue bags but there were also positive comments about them and both positive and negative comments about the pink bags along with some more general comments.

The negative comments can be split into four areas:

- Design – with the insecure flap being the main area of concern, together with the quality of the bag.
- Operational issues - with the bags not being returned properly or the perception that crews were working slower.
- Issues relating to how the resident manages the bags, with the issues of the bags getting wet, of cats or dogs urinating on the bags, having to retrieve the bags and not the bags fitting into their current system being of most concern. Note that many of these comments were received early and were issues that the resident perceived would happen in the future rather than had actually happened; these have been indicated by the bold “Will” in the comment.
- More strategic /political issues such as whether the bags are a waste of money

The proportion of comments in each area is as shown below:

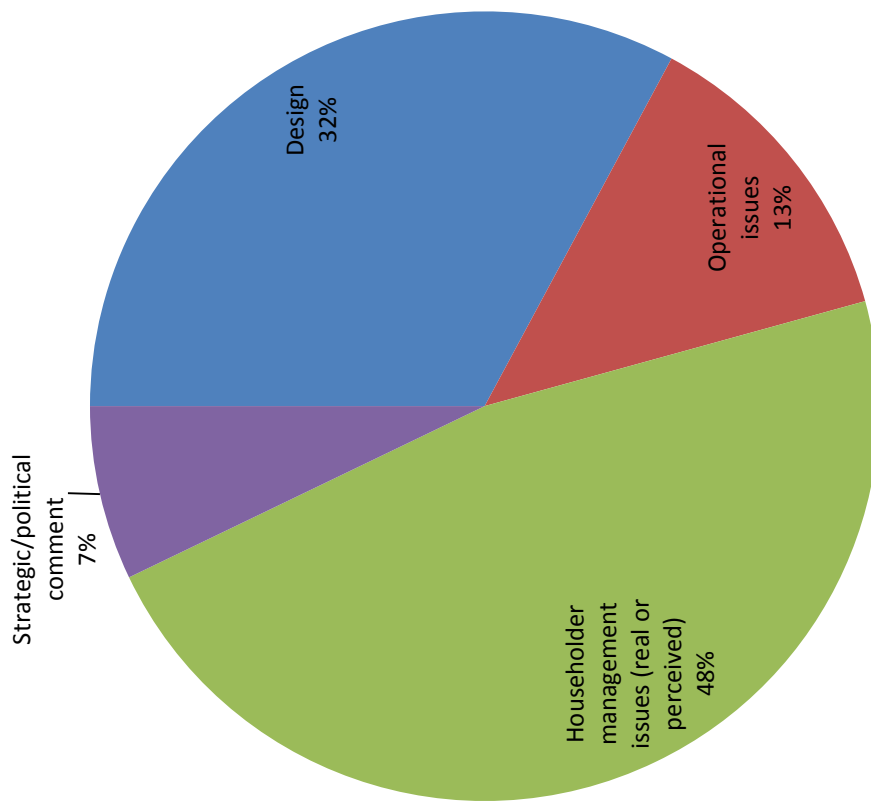


Table 9 Issues (other than size) raised by residents (both areas)

| Negative Comments Blue Bags | Number of residents making the comment |
|--|---|
| Cover is not very secure/flap not very good/zip would be better/can't tie | 11 |
| Bag will get wet - where/ how to dry out | 6 |
| Contents will blow away when windy inc shredded paper issue/only good for heavy stuff | 5 |
| Badly made/shoddy/cheap | 5 |
| Issues with dogs and cats (urinating etc) | 5 |
| Don't like having to retrieve them | 4 |
| Not practical in house | 4 |
| Blown away - found in bushes/middle of garden etc | 3 |
| Could be delivered back to the property better/isn't put back | 3 |
| Bin collectors do not like them/heard them moaning | 2 |
| Not easy for elderly/disabled | 2 |
| Not fit for purpose | 2 |
| Unightly in the house | 2 |
| Waste of money | 2 |
| Will be thrown back into middle of garden | 2 |
| If you go ahead with this we will put recyclables into black bags | 2 |
| Will need cleaning | 2 |
| Rubbish will blow out of back of vehicle | 1 |
| Takes a long time for operators to empty & replace | 1 |
| Bag is heavier | 1 |
| Can't put the bags into bins | 1 |

| Negative Comments Blue Bags continued | Number of residents making the comment |
|---|---|
| Invitation to burglars | 1 |
| Couldn't fold the sides in | 1 |
| It's a con (and related to losing black bags) | 1 |
| Can't fit in bin cupboard | 1 |
| Bags were stolen | 1 |

| Positive comments Blue Bags | |
|---|---|
| Strong, ideal for us, good, kept in kitchen/good for normal use | 3 |
| It's a good idea/great | 2 |
| No problem - as easy as a pink bag | 1 |
| Easy to store | 1 |
| Things fit better in the blue bags | 1 |

| Positive Comments Pink Sacks | |
|---|---|
| Pink sacks are more flexible re size of household or easier to handle | 2 |
| Pink sacks are taken away, do not litter street | 2 |
| Pink bags are OK (with qualifications) | 1 |

| Negative Comments Pink Sacks | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Pink sacks rip easily/poor quality | 3 |
| Pink sacks are not eco friendly | 1 |

| Other Comments | |
|---|---|
| Would prefer a wheelie bin instead | 6 |
| What will happen when they tear/wear out | 2 |
| If the bottom was perforated would be good replacements for boxes | 1 |
| Would be better to return to boxes | 1 |

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Consideration is given to the size of the bag, providing as much space as possible, and in particular that consideration is given as to how to address the capacity at peak times.
- At least two bags should be provided per property and provision made for a system to replace lost bags as they have already been recorded as going missing.
- The flap on the bag and its general quality is improved.
- That consideration is given to the main concerns of householders, how they may be helped to make the change to the new bag and generally more information about the bag and why the change is being made. This would include for instance, information on what will happen at Christmas and other peak times and what to do if they have problems with bags. A detailed communications plan should be put together involving the Council's media team.

Survey Returns Summary

| | One Bag Areas | Two Bag Areas | Total |
|--|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Total number of properties in the area: | 107 | 111 | 218 |
| Number of properties responding to a survey: | 19 | 25 | 44 |
| Response rate | 18% | 23% | 20% |

| Method of response | Post | Online | Both | Total |
|--------------------|------|--------|------|-------|
| | 37 | 6 | 1 | 44 |

Method of responseOpinion of blue bags v pink sacks

| | One Bag Areas | | Two Bag Areas | | Total | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Blue Bag | Pink Bag | Blue Bag | Pink Bag | Blue Bag | Pink Bag |
| Strongly Like | 2 | 11 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 17 |
| Like | 4 | 4 | 5 | 13 | 9 | 17 |
| Neither like nor dislike | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| Dislike | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Strongly Dislike | 8 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 16 | 1 |
| Not ticked/No response | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 19 | 19 | 25 | 25 | 44 | 44 |
| % like/strongly like | 32% | 79% | 24% | 76% | 27% | 77% |
| % dislike/strongly dislike | 53% | 5% | 52% | 0% | 52% | 2% |

Size comments

| | One Bag Areas | % | Two Bag Areas | % |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| The amount of space in the bag was: | | | | |
| Too much | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| About right | 3 | 16% | 10 | 40% |
| Not enough | 14 | 74% | 12 | 48% |
| Not answered | 2 | 11% | 3 | 12% |
| Total | 19 | 100% | 25 | 100% |