

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 MARCH 2025</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>SIMPLER RECYCLING – WASTE COLLECTION POLICY &amp; NEW BULKY COLLECTION SERVICE</b>
<b>Executive Lead Member:</b>	<b>CLLR HELEN SMITH, DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE LEAD MEMBER FOR PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL WARDS</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>YES</b>

## **Purpose of Report**

As part of service required changes through ‘Simpler Recycling’ and the requirements of the Council as ‘Waste Collection Authority’ to operate effectively and efficiently, this report seeks approval from Cabinet to:

- Improve the accessibility of information by reducing the number of separate documents into one clear policy for Waste Collection, that also includes the changes needed to ensure that the refuse and recycling collection service, is operated effectively and efficiently.
- Amend the current terms of the existing bulky waste collection service, to offer one free collection each year, to every household within the District.

## **Recommendation(s)**

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approve the collation of several policies into a single Waste Collection Policy, to include the changes needed to ensure equitable and safe methods of operations, that demonstrates the waste services are operated effectively and efficiently and bring the final draft Waste Collection Policy back to Cabinet for approval.
- 2) Approve the changes to the existing bulky waste collection service, to allow one free collection per year, for every household within the District.
- 3) Note the potential changes to the refuse and recycling collection service, due to necessary round rebalancing.

## **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

Following Cabinet approval of the Costed Action & Delivery Plan (CADP) on the 18 November 2024 and the Strategic Leadership Team meeting of the 17 December 2024, officers were asked to review the existing refuse and recycling collection service and where needed implement improvements, to ensure that the service is operating effectively and efficiently, and that the existing Waste Collection Policy (revised 2023) and other waste related documents, reflected the future services needed to deliver the 'Simpler Recycling' reforms.

## **Alternative Options Considered**

Do Nothing – would result in the current service's key documentation being held separately in different locations and the service continuing to not operate effectively or efficiently, which would continue to have a financial impact upon the Council and increase risk. **Not recommended**

## **Detailed Information**

### **Background**

On the 29 November 2024 DEFRA published a 'Simpler Recycling in England: policy update'. This update includes the new default requirements for most households and workplaces to have as a minimum four separate waste containers:

- Residential (non-recyclable) waste
- Food waste (mixed with garden waste if appropriate)
- Paper and card (collected separately)
- All other dry recyclable materials (plastic, metal and glass)

***Note:** the above may include various container types, including bags, bins and stacker boxes.*

In addition, the guidance relating to 'residual waste should be collected at least fortnightly' has been replaced with the following guidance:

- households receive reasonable residual waste collections (local authorities should consider additional services for particular needs, such as households with medical needs)
- there will be no build-up of bad-smelling waste at kerbside
- changes to collections do not lead to an increase in fly-tipping of residual waste
- We expect local authorities to monitor any changes to collection frequencies to ensure there are no unintended adverse consequences.

The above changes means that waste collection authorities, retain the control and discretion to flex collection frequencies to meet the needs of the local demographics and housing types. For example, Underground Refuse Systems (URS) serving flats can be collected when the container reaches capacity, which could be monthly, Communal waste collections may need to be weekly due to available container storage space or residents continuing to be served through a refuse bagged collection.

Changes to business waste compliance was also amended to reflect that micro-firms (businesses with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees) will be temporarily exempt from the requirements. They will have until 31 March 2027 to arrange for recycling of core recyclable waste streams including food waste.

On the 28 November 2024 DEFRA wrote to all Waste Collection & Disposal Authorities setting out the estimated payment to each individual authority, pursuant to the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024, for the financial year April 2025 to March 2026. This letter also set out the new performance assessment criteria that all waste collection and disposal authorities would be measured against.

There are two important elements of the performance assessment that the Council needs to be aware of:

**Effectiveness** – A waste service is effective if it recycles a reasonable proportion of packaging waste (both in each packaging material stream and overall), taking into account factors outside the Local Authority's control such as the demographic and geographical characteristics of the authority area.

**Efficient** – As currently defined in the new Packaging, Extended Producers Responsibility (pEPR) Regulations, an authority provides an efficient waste management service if the costs of this service are as low as reasonably possible, considering:

- The waste management service provided by the authority; and
- Any other factor specific to that authority, or to the area to which it exercises its waste management functions, which in the opinion of the scheme administrator are likely to affect its disposal costs.

## **Waste Collection Policy**

The Council has more than ten separate documents which are a mix of operational and policy documents, that set out the current procedures for waste collection and management, which are designed to maintain clear guidance and understanding for both the Council and the public. The current documentation is not accessible to the public in all cases and does not represent a single coherent Policy position relating to waste management and refuse collection. The review has sought to address these issues by creating a single policy.

## **Key Issues**

The existing Council Waste Collection Policy was last revised in 2023 and in the current format does not include other key waste documents, nor does it reflect the recent changes in legislation covering 'Simpler Recycling' and the new pEPR, where the emphasis of the services delivered as a Waste Collection Authority, need to be operated effectively and efficiently.

The existing contamination policy needs updating. The current policy has limited mechanisms to deal with repeated contamination and provides little guidance to the resident. The extent of the current Policy consists entirely of not collecting the bin and placing an easily removable tag.

The new policy will need to include a section on contamination and include the guidance of what the resident can do to address the issue of contamination, whilst setting out the support that the Council will offer.

Through the review, it has also been recognised that information and communication, needs to be improved to support residents to recycle more and reduce contamination. A robust plan will be developed to underpin the Policy implementation and communications will focus on:

- Effective and routine communications through media outlets and social media.

- The production of effective tools and materials such as digital applications and printed materials where necessary
- Engagement with community and voluntary groups in relation to the effective management of waste and recycling.
- Engagement with children and young people on the benefits of effectively managing waste and recycling.
- Direct engagement with residents as part of any escalating action to resolve individual issues, in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

Officers are currently working on amending the Council's Waste Collection Policy to ensure that future services are operated equitably and safely, whilst demonstrating that the operation of the service is effective and efficient. Set out below are the two key areas of change to be included within the new Waste Collection Policy.

### **Bulky Waste Collection Service**

The Council currently offers a free bulky collection to all households across the District; however, the current service is restricted to the number of slots available in each given area and operates on a first come, first served basis. Where residents are unable to obtain the free collection, or have additional items for collection throughout the year, they can still access a collection at any time for a charge of £21.00 for up to three items, additional items are charged at £8.50 per item.

Following a review of the current service, it was identified that improvements could be made to make the service more equitable and efficient, simply by reconfiguring the service and operating practices, to allow every household across the District to access one free collection of up to three items free of charge, each financial year (April to March).

It is proposed that the new service will be aligned with the householders refuse or recycling collection day and where feasible, all items collected will be sent for reuse and recycling, ensuring that the Council maximise the opportunities to reduce waste going to incineration or landfill.

### **Refuse & Recycling Changes**

The current refuse and recycling collection rounds are out of balance in terms of property pass numbers and vehicles weights and therefore are inefficient.

In rebalancing the current rounds, it is important that we ensure that the service operates equitably and safely, whilst maximising the productivity across the working day. And that any changes to operating times, working days, collection days are reflected in the Waste Collection Policy where needed.

To enable the current refuse and recycling collection service to be reviewed in line with Simpler Recycling, Cabinet established a Member Working Group, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Parks & Environmental Services, to consider the changes and impacts for Ashfield residents and businesses. This working group meets monthly and feeds back to the Cabinet Member on key impacts and issues associated to Simpler Recycling.

In addition, Officers established a Trade Union Working Group and a Supervisors Group to explore potential refuse and recycling operating models and their effectiveness. The working groups were guided by the following five principles:

1. A service targeted operating model (TOM) of delivery that meets legislative changes and is more responsive to local service demands.
2. A sustainable & effective workforce model (including Equitable & Fair Ways of Working).
3. An operating model that demonstrates the effective and efficient refuse and recycling service.
4. Maximising technology, systems and data to drive improvements (evidence-based decisions).
5. Improved customer satisfaction.

Following the work of the groups, who reviewed a selection of different operating models, three models were put forward for further consideration and analysis, these included:

1. **As is**: which is based upon a five day week, includes working Saturday's prior to bank holidays. Rebalancing the existing rounds to ensure that they are equitable and fair, whilst maintaining safe working practices.
2. **Monday – Friday**: the service would be required to work bank holidays, with the exception of Christmas day, Boxing Day and New Years Day.
3. **Four Day Week**: A four-day week model that optimises the use of the vehicles when operating and allows one day per week for essential maintenance.

The above options are currently being modelled through the Whitespace and Route Optimisation Software used by the Council. Once this work is completed the outcomes can be used to firm up the final proposal with the Trade Unions, for consideration by the Council prior to implementation.

The work underway will identify the most effective routes and rounds for the collection of household waste and recycling, it will also identify any potential impacts on householders by way of collection day changes. Once the information is available, officers can start to identify the mitigation and actions needed to support residents that may be impacted by future changes to the current refuse and recycling service.

**Implications**

**Corporate Plan:**

The details within the report which are set out above, play a key role in delivering the Council Greener & Cleaner, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability objectives.

**Legal:**

The legal requirements placed upon the Council are detailed in the body of the report. The acceptance of the recommendations will ensure the Council is compliant with its legal duties within the statutory timeframes. [RLD 25/02/2025]

**Finance:** [PH 28/02/25]

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The changes to the Bulky waste collection are within existing budget provision. The potential changes and impact to the refuse and recycling collection service budgets, were identified within the Costed Action Delivery Plan approved by Council on the 28 October 2024.
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

**Risk:**

Risk	Mitigation
------	------------

<p>Capital and revenue financial uncertainty (New burdens funding) and shortfall in meeting costs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of DEFRA announcements to identify key funding opportunities when available.</li> <li>2. Close budget monitoring during the service change implementation phases.</li> </ol>
<p>Customer engagement and participation in new service offer.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scheduling demand and supply through automated calendar, with clear data available through Whitespace to allow manual changes due to increased demand</li> <li>2. Availability of additional resources to operate during periods of high demand.</li> </ol>
<p>Staff and Trade Union engagement with changes to ensure service is operating effectively and efficiently.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regular engagement and involvement of the trade unions in proposed changes and service improvements.</li> <li>2. Consultation on proposed changes prior to implementation</li> </ol>
<p>Residents impacted and understanding of any potential collection day changes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear and effective communication plan and engagement.</li> <li>2. Engagement with residents and householders impacted by any change in collection day.</li> </ol>
<p>Resource capacity to ensure the effective transition to new ways of working.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Simpler Recycling is being monitored as a project within the Neighbourhood Services Transformation programme and the Member working group.</li> <li>2. Effective project and resource planning for service changes</li> </ol>

## Human Resources:

Changes to the existing working practices may require changes to the Local Waste Agreement, existing role profiles and terms and conditions of employment. Officers will continue to work with the Trade Unions to ensure all parties are engaged and full consultation with all affected, where



required, will be undertaken in relation to any changes in terms and conditions of employment.

[KB24/02/25]

### **Environmental/Sustainability:**

The refuse and recycling modelling work being undertaken by officers will inform the Council's new approach to waste and resource management. This will lead to a refresh of the Council's Waste Collection Policy.

Future operating models will have fleet considerations, and these will play a part in the Council achieving its Climate Change Strategy.

### **Equalities:**

A separate equalities impact assessment will be developed and considered as part of the overall decision making associated to changes in the refuse and recycling collection services and against the Waste Collection Policy when final draft is available.

### **Other Implications:**

N/A

### **Reason(s) for Urgency**

N/A

### **Reason(s) for Exemption**

N/A

### **Background Papers**

*Environment Act 2021*

*Environment Act 2021, Simpler Recycling, Cabinet Report 16 September 2024*

*Simpler Recycling Costed Action, Delivery Plan, Cabinet Report 18 November 2024*

*Waste Collection Strategy (revised 2023)*

### **Report Author and Contact Officer**

**Mike Brown**

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – Neighbourhoods (Interim)**

[mike.brown@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:mike.brown@ashfield.gov.uk)

### **Sponsoring Executive Director**

**Charles Edwards**

**Executive Director Operations**  
[charles.edwards@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:charles.edwards@ashfield.gov.uk)