

**REVIEW OF ALTERNATE WEEKLY REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE TRIALS**

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**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This Report updates Members on progress in respect of the alternate weekly collection trial (fortnightly residual bin uplift) taking place on Islay and Jura plus Lismore collections which commenced in November. The Report also highlights other areas of the Council where such collections could be investigated for introduction.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members approve the revised service to Islay/Jura and Lismore for the 2007/08 financial year.
- 2.2 Detailed investigation work is carried out to examine the potential for alternate weekly collections firstly on Mull and Iona, Tiree and then the Helensburgh and Lomond areas. Once such investigations have taken place, reports are prepared and brought to the relevant area committees for approval.

Prior, to such Reports being presented to Area Committees, a Strategic Waste Fund bid for capital funding (and revenue if appropriate) for garden waste bins etc be submitted to the Scottish Executive.

- 2.3 Alternate weekly collections are examined in the Shanks PPP Contract area once the outcome of the mixed waste composting issue is known.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The principle of alternate weekly collection trials i.e. fortnightly residual waste refuse collection alternating with recycling collections was approved at SPC on 19 January 2006. Such trials were to be subject to Reports to relevant Area Committees. The two areas chosen were Islay and Jura and Lismore with proposals reported to relevant Area Committees in April for Islay and Jura and June for Lismore. The trials were instigated mainly to assist the Council in meeting statutory landfill diversion targets which could incur fines from the Scottish Executive if not met.

### 3.2 Islay and Jura Scheme

- 3.2.1 The Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay Area Committee agreed on 5 April 2006 to:
1. To approve a proposed trial on Islay and Jura for fortnightly general refuse collection service uplift, alternating with a garden waste uplift.
  2. With increased garden waste composting provision, the likely implementation at Gartbreck waste facility of a Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) permit and commercial misuse, the open community skips be removed
  3. There should be discussions with the community on the implementation on the foregoing issues.
- 3.2.2 In the weeks and months following the Area Committee approval, a number of actions were taken as follows:
- a) The Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay Area Roads and Amenity Manager attended meetings with the relevant Councillors and Islay and Jura liaison group to discuss further. It was agreed that as there would be limited garden waste uplifted in the winter months, a free bulky uplift collection during the relevant “free” week in those months would be available.
  - b) Householders would be given the choice of a garden waste wheeled bin or a composting bin.
  - c) Survival sacks (for plastic bottles and cans) would be trialed by including full tied sacks in with the paper and cardboard recycling bins.
  - d) A publicity campaign was undertaken including letters written by the Area Manager to the relevant community councils were published in the Ileach (local Islay newspaper). The Ileach also ran a “recycling spread” during one of its May editions highlighting what the Council and Rejig were doing with materials collected for recycling. The Ileach gave a positive report on the benefits of recycling.
  - e) A comprehensive information pack was prepared and issued in June informing householders of the proposed scheme and encouraging them to apply for a garden waste wheeled bin (or compost bin), survival sacks for cans and plastic bottles. Those who did not already have a blue bin for paper and cardboard were encouraged to apply for one.
  - f) During July local staff distributed red sacks, garden waste bins, home composting bins and blue bins.
  - g) Collections date calendars were issued during July and August and alternate weekly collections commenced during week commencing 7 August 2006.

### 3.3 Outcomes so far

- 3.3.1 The collections have only been in place for several months and some of the initial outcomes are listed as follows:
- a) Recycling performance has risen on Islay and Jura from 21% (figure in 05/06) to approximately 32% during the trial period as at 31 October 2006.
  - b) 85% of householders now have blue bins (over 65% prior to trial starting) with 60% of householders using brown wheeled bins for garden waste and 13% of householders applied for home compost bins. The red survival sacks are also

widely used for plastic bottles and cans by the majority of householders using blue bins.

- c) Rejig (who sort and process the plastic bottles and cans) have reported a trebling of plastic and can recycling from 0.5 tonnes a month to 1.5 tonnes a month. There is a need to alter the service level agreement with Rejig to reflect their additional work. This will be done on the assumption that the Strategic Waste Fund budget can afford the expenditure.
- d) Paper and cardboard recycling has increased from an average of 19 tonnes a month to 27 tonnes.
- e) Garden waste composting at Gartbreck has risen from an average of 10 tonnes per month to 60 tonnes.
- f) Landfill tonnages reported to Customs and Excise have been similar to the same period in 2005 with an average of 235 tonnes per month.
- g) The trial free bulky uplift week in November has been well used with 70 householders applying and receiving an uplift accordingly. However it is recommended that in the 2007/08 financial year this service is restricted to recyclable materials only.

3.3.2 The increase in recycling participation and resulting figures is positive but the lack of any decrease in landfill is somewhat misleading.

Landfill tax is paid by the Council to Customs and Excise on a per tonne basis (currently £21 per tonne). In 2005, Customs and Excise accepted average weights for our large refuse vehicle and bulky uplift/skip vehicle. These weights were based on a once a year weighing exercise carried out by the Council using portable weighbridge scales (the site at Gartbreck currently has no fixed weighbridge). The average weights applied per entry in 2005 were as follows:

### Average Weights Applied 2005

Large refuse vehicle - 5.35 tonnes per entry  
Bulky uplift/skip vehicle - 1.03 tonnes per entry

In 2006 average weights were no longer acceptable to Customs for this site and instead maximum vehicle weights had to be applied during the trial period as follows:

### Maximum Weights Applied 2006

Large refuse vehicle - 10.88 tonnes per entry  
Bulky uplift/skip vehicle - 1.27 tonnes per entry

If the maximum weights had been applied in 2005, the average landfill tonnage per month would have been 398 tonnes approx (not 235 tonnes using the average weight criteria).

It is clear that an actual landfilled amounts are difficult to compare between 2005 and 2006 due to weights applied difficulties described.

A weigh bridge facility is planned to be in place by 31 March 2007 and this will result in more accurate actual landfill figures from 2007/08 onwards.

### 3.4 Complaints

- 3.4.1 As expected there were complaints and issues raised, most of which were by phone to the local area office on Islay. A range of comments were received with a selection of these listed in the Appendix to this report:

### 3.5 Operational Issues

- 3.5.1 As referred to previously, a lot of work by Council Area staff in particular was carried out between May and August to introduce the scheme, which should not be underestimated.

After initial “teething troubles” where a number of householders did not know the start date, the collections have generally settled down well but have placed increasing pressure on the blue bin recycling uplift, subsequent sorting of paper and cardboard by the Council plus plastic bottle and can sorting by Rejig, (which they are currently not funded for but had agreed to carry out as part of the trial).

The current blue bin collection vehicle for this has a 7 cubic metre body capacity with a driver and loader to carry out the collections. With uptake now at 85% plus the introduction of the red survival sacks, the body capacity is struggling to cope with the volume plus additional sorting is required at Gartbreck site due to the higher amount of material.

Some additional contamination has resulted due to the greater uptake of recycling due to the reduced residual waste collection frequency. As a result some overtime is being incurred on the recycling runs which is being contained within the Strategic Waste Fund Budget for this scheme. A larger vehicle replacement i.e. 10 cubic metre size instead of the current 7 cubic metre body vehicle will be beneficial when the normal replacement cycle takes place.

### 3.6 Costs

- 3.6.1 The kerbside recycling capital budget for 06/07 of £78,000 was fully spent to provide bins and some additional composting and shredding equipment on Islay.

As referred to previously, carrying out such collections with existing resources has been quite challenging with staffing and vehicle savings unlikely.

There has been some additional commercial refuse income to the value of approximately £1,000. The additional garden waste composting of 150 tonnes during the three month period could arguably save £3,150 in landfill tax (150 x £21 a tonne) and £50 a tonne in landfill allowance target penalties amounting to £7,500. By 2008/09 when landfill allowance penalties reach £150 per tonnes the saving will rise to £22,500. It is clear, that £40,000 target figure for the year is unlikely to be achieved but savings have been made by non-filling of other posts within Roads & Amenity Services

### 3.7 Lismore

3.7.1 The June, Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee approved a proposed trial on Lismore for a fortnightly residual refuse collection alternating with a paper and cardboard uplift, plus a free home composting bin was to be provided. In addition the unstaffed open community skip on Lismore was to be removed and instead quarterly bulky uplifts provided by the Council.

3.7.2 Actions taken since include:

- a) Each domestic property received a green wheeled bin for residual refuse (Lismore householders did not previously have wheeled bins), a blue wheeled bin for paper and cardboard and a home compost bin. Domestic properties in Port Ramsay were provided with communal bins due to access issues.
- b) Recycling banks for cans and plastic bottles were placed beside the existing glass banks at Achnacroish.
- c) The skip at Achnacroish has been removed and the first quarter bulky uplift will take place on 13 January 2007.

3.7.3 The first paper and cardboard collections were due to take place at time of drafting the report.

3.7.4 The costs for providing bins are included in the capital amount reported in the Islay and Jura section. It is estimated that approximately £4,000 will be saved on ferry fares over a full year.

### 3.8 Other Council Area where Alternate Weekly Collections may be possible

3.8.1 For the islands of Mull, Iona and Tiree a move to alternate weekly collections will be feasible in due course. This will require additional recycling equipment and bins on Mull plus recycling infrastructure such as a recycling shed and equipment on Tiree. Using information from Lismore on the success of the home composting against the composting collection on Islay and Jura will be instructive when considering future collection plans. Initial results from Islay and Jura do indicate that while composting collections increased recycling tonnage such collections may not necessarily reduce the volume of other material landfilled.

For Helensburgh and Lomond increased recycling collections and lesser mixed waste collections will be possible, but detailed investigations have to take place first. Also funding for bins would have to be sought. Details on sorting costs for recycling and the capacity of Greenlight or other destinations for collected materials have to be further identified.

3.8.2 An additional Strategic Waste Fund Application will be prepared for submission to the Scottish Executive for additional capital funding for bins etc. and revenue funding for existing recycling gaps e.g. some tenemental properties.

### 3.9 PPP Contract Area with Shanks

3.9.1 Members will be aware of the on-going and as yet unresolved issue in relation to mixed waste composting which is a large part of the PPP diversion targets. Discussions involving the Council, Scottish Executive, SEPA and Shanks are continuing. Once an outcome of the issue is known work will commence investigating what mix of collections would best fit increased recycling in this area. At present, should the current plants in use by Shanks produce material acceptable to SEPA, there may be little seeming benefit by introducing alternating collections.

#### 4. IMPLICATIONS

**4.1 Policy** - These trials will assist in the extension of alternate weekly collections to other Council areas as appropriate.

**4.2 Financial** - Some potential saving in landfill tax and avoidance of Scottish Executive landfill allowance fines, but from our first experience it seems clear that the costs for overall refuse collection and recycling will not fall appreciably due to a shift to differential collections. The commentary at 3.3.2 expands on this.

**4.3 Personnel** - Some changes in working practise regarding collections. Unlikely to be any overall work reductions

**4.4 Equalities Impact Assessment** - Nil

For further information, please contact Alan Millar – Assistant Operations Manager (Waste Management) (Tel: 01546 604628)

List of background papers

- SPC Report – 19 January 2006
- MAKI Area Committee Report – 5 April 2006
- OLI Area Committee Report – 7 June 2006

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