

Somerset Waste Board meeting
31 July 2020
Report for decision OR information

Paper
Item No.

Impact of Covid-19 on Somerset Waste Partnership
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Forward Plan Reference:	
Summary:	<p>Covid-19 and the measures taken to control the virus have had significant impacts on the operation of the Somerset Waste Partnership, especially as it coincided with us changing collection contractor to Suez. Covid—19 has seen staff absences, considerably higher tonnages, difficulty accessing many streets due to parked cars, delays to building works and ICT projects. Mobilising a new contract, with new vehicles, processes and ICT systems, would have been challenging at the best of times – doing it during a pandemic has placed services and staff under incredible stress. The men and women who deliver all our services, be they employed by Suez, Viridor or by SWP, have gone above and beyond throughout this crisis. Covid-19 is still with us and SWP are still significantly affected by it.</p>
Recommendations:	<p>That the Somerset Waste Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the considerable impact that Covid-19 has had on SWP 2. Endorse the additional spend necessary to date to maintain critical services and authorises the Managing Director, in consultation with SMG and s151 officers, to ensure appropriate funding arrangements are in place to ensure that critical services are maintained.
Reasons for recommendations:	<p>Covid-19 and the measures taken to control the virus have had impacts on all aspects of SWP's services – recycling centres, collections, behavioural change programmes, our plans for service change. It has also had considerable cost impacts, which SWP has robustly managed whilst also ensuring that critical services are maintained. Whilst we normally report on</p>

	<p>performance and costs a quarter in arrears, the significance of the impact of Covid-19 means it is important to provide the Board with an update on how it has and continues to impact on services.</p>
<p>Links to Priorities and Impact on Annual Business Plan:</p>	<p>Covid-19 and the measures taken to control the virus have is having impacts across all aspects of SWP's priorities and our Business Plan.</p>
<p>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</p>	<p>Financial Implications: SWP have put in place robust processes to ensure that additional costs have been minimised, whilst also ensuring that additional costs which relate directly to Covid-19 are covered to ensure that critical services can be maintained. SWP have discussed these throughout with SMG. All partners have received MHCLG funding towards Covid-19 impacts. We have regularly updated partners so that the expected costs can be reflected in their monthly MHCLG returns. SWP held a joint meeting with SMG and s151 officers on 14 July to thoroughly review costs. Covid-19 remains with us so this process is ongoing and the latest position on costs is set out in section 4 of this report.</p> <p>Legal Implications: Without prejudice to ongoing contractual discussions with Suez, SWP recognise that this was an unprecedented period in which to mobilise a new contract and that the resulting challenges have had to be addressed. For the initial few months of the contract SWP agreed that we would fund collection costs that are additional and have arisen as a consequence of the steps taken to control Covid-19. This funding is provided on a cost-only basis and subject to satisfactory validation. To not do so in such a period of uncertainty would have likely led to service failures across all services, but clearly we also needed a mechanism to control costs. SWP and Suez are in ongoing discussions about the framework for any further costs, but both SWP and Suez are in agreement that the medium to long term impacts of Covid-19 are too uncertain for any non-time-limited mechanisms to be put in place for the time being. There are no legal implications in regard to our Viridor contracts.</p> <p>HR implications: Keeping staff safe has been a top priority for SWP and our contractors throughout this crisis. SWP staff have followed SCC policies – working from home etc, and this has impacted on our ability to respond to the multiple issues we have experienced over the last few months. Our contractors have followed national guidance and put in place appropriate measures to keep staff safe – staggering starts, many crews driving separately to the start of rounds, reducing the risk of</p>

	spreading Covid-19 by treating crews as family units. Viridor and Suez, at peak, lost 10% of their workforce due to shielding or self-isolation.
Equalities Implications:	An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken on SWP's phased approach to reopening recycling centres given the potential implications of aspects of this (for example not offering assistance). Our collection business continuity plans prioritise assisted collections and clinical waste collections.
Risk Assessment:	<p>SWP has developed and maintains a specific Covid-19 risk register, and section 4 of this report sets out these risks in more detail. Key risks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The risk of a second wave/local lockdown impacting on services (for example due to loss of staff or temporary closure of a depot) - The cost impacts of Covid-19 (due to increased tonnages of recycling) are unaffordable - Measures to contain Covid-19, or the impact of the virus on the contractor's capacity, prevents us from delivering on our business plan, in particular the roll out of Recycle More - Loss of life to SWP or contractor staff due to contracting Covid-19 through work

1. Background

1.1. Covid-19 started to have a major impact on services in Somerset in mid-March, when SWP refreshed its Business Continuity Plan (and required our contractors to do similar) to ensure that we had robust plans for the specific challenges and uncertainties that Covid-19 brought. The pressures on SWP were particularly intense as the end of March saw the transition from Kier to Suez as collection contractor, and with it major changes to our ICT systems. The speed with which we or Suez have been able to deal with mobilisation issues has been negatively impacted by the measures taken by the government and employers to contain Covid-19. Positives do include the further significant increase in our Facebook following (up by about a third in 3 months) which bodes well for the use of this as a key communications channel – albeit that face to face engagement and site visits remain a vital component of both behaviour change and resolving service issues.

1.2. Recycling Sites

In line with the national lockdown guidance and due to the increasing risks of the virus transmission occurring on the recycling sites, all sites were closed with effect from Monday 23rd March. Despite the lack of clear Government guidance, this approach was echoed by nearly all (at peak 98%) local authorities in the UK.

Initial Government guidance did not include the provision of recycling sites within their list of essential services that should be maintained and as such the majority of the Viridor site staff were redeployed to assist on those services that were defined as essential at the kerbside, predominantly providing support to Suez with both the reintroduction of bin & box deliveries and with the kerbside recycling service.

Work continued in the background to prepare the recycling sites to reopen in a safe and controlled manner and once suitable Government guidance was received on the 5th May, that confirmed that such sites should be opened to accept waste determined from a discreet list of 'essential travel reasons', we reopened 11 strategically placed sites on 11th May 2020. There were a number of restrictions imposed that included;

- A reduced range of materials accepted to reduce residency time on site and any resultant off site queuing, whilst allowing the public to dispose of those items that could be constituted as a reason for an essential journey (residual, green, large domestic appliances & hazardous waste)
- Use of off-site Highway support (temporary diversions) and Police Accredited Traffic Officers, strategically placed to ensure the impacts of the essential highway routes were minimised
- Redeployment of Partner Authority Parking Services staff, acting as 'meet & greet' at the site entrances to ensure clear instructions of use were conveyed
- Extended operating hours at most sites, using a standardised opening pattern for all
- The enforcement of social distancing on site with the use of signage and barriers to prevent the 'site wander'
- An odd & even number plate system was employed to control the initial demand at the sites
- Maximum car occupancy of 2 and the wearing of gloves on site were endorsed
- No lifting assistance offered by site staff
- Trailers & large vans were omitted from access, through the initial reopening stage

On the 26th May, due to the success of the initial opening of the first 11 recycling sites, we were able to open the final 5 sites. Whilst we maintained a number of the initial controls and restrictions, we were able to offer;

- Access to all sites, between 4pm & 6pm, to the trailers and large vans that had been previously omitted, to make use of the quieter periods on site
- Cooking & engine oil and metals were added to the waste acceptance list
- A further 4 Q-cams sites were added to allow greater transparency (likely queuing times) for the public wishing to make use of the sites

From the 1st June, Government guidance was amended from only 'essential trips' being made to a recycling site to only where the resident believes 'a trip is necessary'. At this point we;

- Removed the odd & even number plate restrictions as it had served its purpose well
- Reverted the sites to their normal standard opening patterns
- We removed the remaining Police Accredited Traffic Officers

On the 8th June we;

- Added back the option to take plastic pots, tube & trays, waste wood, waste paint and small domestic appliances to the sites

Between the 20th & 24th June we gradually reverted all 16 sites back to 'near normal' operation, with the removal of control barriers and their replacement with suitable 'social distancing' messaging placed around the sites – much like the 'supermarket model'. This meant that we could add back;

- Commercial waste acceptance
- Charged for commodity (hardcore, soil, tyres, asbestos, plasterboard, etc)

And finally from Saturday 27th June we were able to allow access for trailers & large vans at any time during opening time, in line with existing permit requirements. The only materials that we are currently not accepting on site are items for reuse, given the associated additional handling requirements. Work continues to resolve these issues, with the expectation that from 1st August we may be able to reintroduce a reuse option at all of the sites, including the reopening of the Taunton reuse shop.

The response to the reopening of the sites has received generally good support from Somerset residents, with most contacts appreciating the measures put in place to help reduce off site queuing whilst maintaining safety controls both at the entrance and on site. This appreciation has continued, as we've lifted the initial controls and moved back toward near normal operation. A minority, however, have felt that the 'supermarket' style approach of signage & instruction

does not offer an adequate level of control on site. This is continually reviewed, and it is believed that, combined with our public messaging, we are offering an appropriate environment for residents to dispose of their household waste.

Throughout the period of disruption at the recycling sites, SWP established and has chaired weekly regional calls to try and coordinate the actions and responses across the South West. As part of this regional approach, a 'lessons learnt' exercise has taken place that should help us prepare for any second wave of the pandemic or where there may be the requirement of localised shutdowns. A verbal update will be provided to the board on our approach should a second wave of Covid-19 hit Somerset.

1.3. Collection services

As set out in section 4 of this report, the national response to Covid-19 has had significant impacts on our services – be it from increased tonnages, greater participation in recycling, staff absence, the measures introduced to ensure crews are protected from the risk of Covid-19 transmission have slowed down collections, as have significant issues with parked cars. The pressures on SWP were compounded because this came at the same time as we were mobilising a new collection contract. In line with our Business Continuity Plan (which was fully reviewed and refreshed as the specific risks associated with Covid-19 became apparent) we suspended a number of services. No staff working on our collection, recycling centre or disposal staff were furloughed – where they were not performing their normal role (e.g. collecting garden waste) they were supporting other services – be it refuse, recycling or clinical waste collection. The suspension and recommencement of services was as follows:

Service suspension:

- Container deliveries: Suspended new requests 18 March.
- Bulky collection: Collections from inside the home suspended by 19 March. All suspended 23rd March.
- Garden waste: Suspended 23rd March
- Returning for missed recycling collections: 30th of March

Service recommencement:

- Container deliveries – Tuesday 21st April 2020
- Bulky collections – Monday 27th April 2020
- Garden waste collections – Monday 11th May 2020
- Returning for missed recycling collections – Monday 18th May 2020

Whilst our garden waste service terms and conditions allow us to suspend the service, we recognised that the length of service suspension (especially with recycling centres closed) was exceptional. Accordingly, all subscribers have had their service extended to mid-May 2021 to reflect this exceptional disruption.

Section 4 of the report sets out the impact of the national response to the virus on tonnages, service performance and costs. On 9 April SWP's Managing Director took the decision that we had to suspend the roll-out of Recycle More due to the ongoing impact of the national response to Covid-19. The implications for Recycle More are set out in the separate paper on a revised timetable for Recycle More.

1.4. Energy from Waste: moving away from landfill

The build of the Energy from Waste plant at Avonmouth was also delayed, especially with some key parts of the plant coming from other European countries and hence relying on expert staff coming with them for installation/testing. There were also issues of securing adequate accommodation for those working on the build site during the initial Covid19 lockdown stage. The new plant started taking Somerset's non-recyclable waste on Thursday 11th June, meaning that only those limited materials that aren't suitable for the Energy from Waste process will continue to be taken to landfill. Whilst some of the plant commissioning was able to be carried out in the absence of waste, we are now in the critical phase of fully testing its functionality through burning waste material and it is currently expected that Viridor will be able to take overall operational control of the facility in early Autumn.

2. Options considered and reasons for rejecting them

2.1. SWP has followed its Business Continuity Plan throughout and aimed to be robust but reasonable with our contractors. Lessons learnt from this phase will inform any subsequent phase – for example we would seek to maintain container deliveries through any second wave as prolonged suspension of this service has made recovery very challenging, and we would seek to keep HWRCs open with a restricted service rather than close the entire network again. Key options considered and rejected are:

- Taking an even harder contractual stance and refusing to fund any costs from our contractors (e.g. additional staff/overtime to support collection crews deal with additional tonnage, or traffic officers to manage queues at recycling centres) – rejected as this would have led to significantly greater service disruption and potential contractual disputes.
- Suspending more services for longer to reduce costs – rejected as not in the public interest.
- Brought back services more quickly – rejected as to do would have been unsafe for our staff or risked further disruption to services to bring them back before we were ready
- Delayed the transition of the collection contract from Kier to Suez – rejected as Kier are exiting the waste market and whilst mobilising the

new contract has been extremely challenging during Covid, it is the building block for the service improvement we still expect to deliver.

3. Consultations undertaken

- 3.1.** SWP had weekly virtual SMG meetings throughout the worst of the Covid-19 crisis in order to involve partners fully in our decision making. SWP has also taken part in the multi-agency meetings and updated partners regularly on Covid-19 costs. SWP have updated board, scrutiny and other members frequently throughout the crisis. The approach to Covid-19 costs (to date and looking forward) has been discussed at joint meetings of SMG and s151 Officers.

4. Implications

4.1 Staff

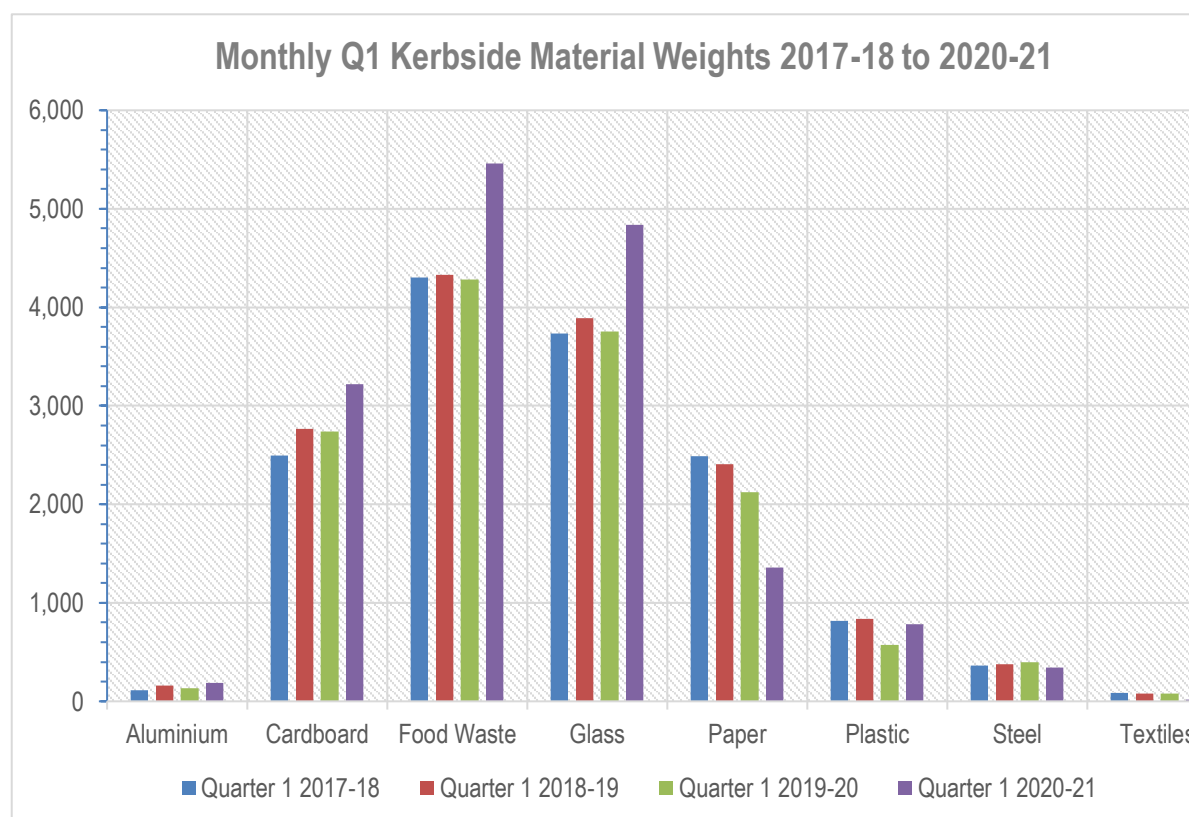
The national response to, and the risks posed by, Covid-19 have placed all our staff (working for Kier/Suez, Viridor or directly for SWP) under incredible pressure. The gratitude shown by the public towards key workers, including those dealing with their rubbish, was warmly welcomed by SWP and helped motivate staff who were working incredibly hard to maintain services. Key highlights include:

- Viridor staff undertaking container deliveries & supporting the kerbside recycling service whilst recycling sites were closed
- Partner Streetscene staff providing support on cardboard collection
- Suez collection staff working long hours and coping with the significant increases in tonnage,
- Suez collection staff coping with the disruption to routes caused by parked cars, supported by a collaboration between SWP and the Fire & Rescue service which saw Suez staff place fire service flyers on cars to remind them of the importance of parking considerately
- SWP staff working long hours and supporting teams under particularly acute pressure (such as our customer service team) to ensure that we coped with the impacts of the response to Covid-19, the considerable increase in demand for containers, and the impact where services didn't go as well as we hoped. This has included exceptional work to identify and resolve the unprecedented number of ICT issues we experienced.
- Partner customer service staff coping with exceptional levels of call volume, particularly as a result of disruption to the garden waste service and ICT issues. SWP appreciate the pressure that these staff have had to work under, and their support as we continue to work through the issues with the service. A lessons-learnt exercise with customer services from each partner is planned for early August to ensure we learn lessons for any second wave – though we expect that the ICT issues we've experienced are a one-off.

- SWP staff have also been grateful for the support from Councillors, who we know have had to deal with a larger than normal number of complaints from the public due to service disruption.

4.2 Tonnage

There have been a number of noticeable impacts with regards the tonnages handled at the kerbside, since the national lockdown and the temporary closure of Somerset's recycling sites. Residual waste being presented at the kerbside rose by 3% (an extra 11 tonnes per day) in April and by 5% (an extra 18 tonnes per day) during May. Food waste continues to show an encouraging rise, partially driven by the increased number of people at home during the lockdown but also due to the 'Slim My Waste' campaign. Green waste collections were suspended for the whole of April in order to allow our collection contractor to concentrate on managing the increased residual tonnage and both the clinical waste and kerbside recycling operations – all of which were deemed as essential services by Government guidance. The green waste collection service was reinstated from the 11th May and as can be seen by the exponential rise (46% or an extra 52 tonnes per day) from the same period last year, there was a pent-up demand.

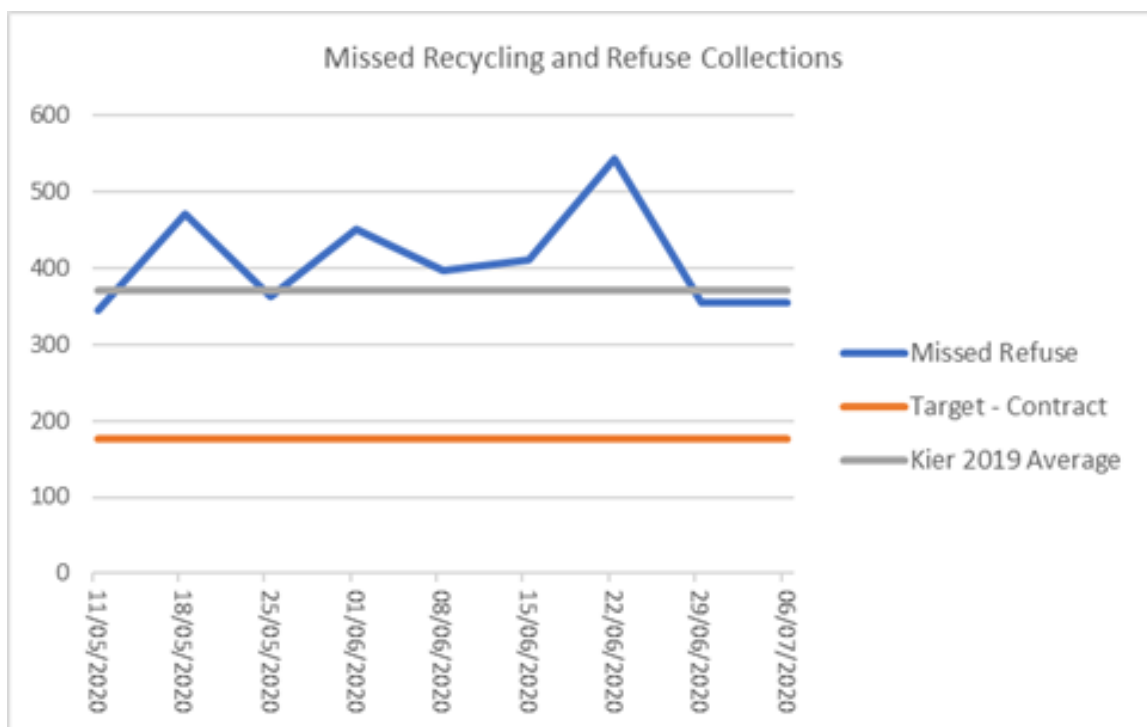


Month	April					May				
Kerbside Tonnages	2019	Average Per Day	2020	Average Per Day	% Change	2019	Average Per Day	2020	Average Per Day	% Change
Residual Waste	8,543	388	8,789	400	3%	8,244	375	8,263	393	5%
Food Waste	1,515	69	1,895	86	25%	1,475	67	1,815	86	29%

Green Waste	2,067	94	0	0	-100%	2,497	114	2,484	166	46%
Recycling Input	3,465	158	4,196	191	21%	3,195	145	4,060	193	33%

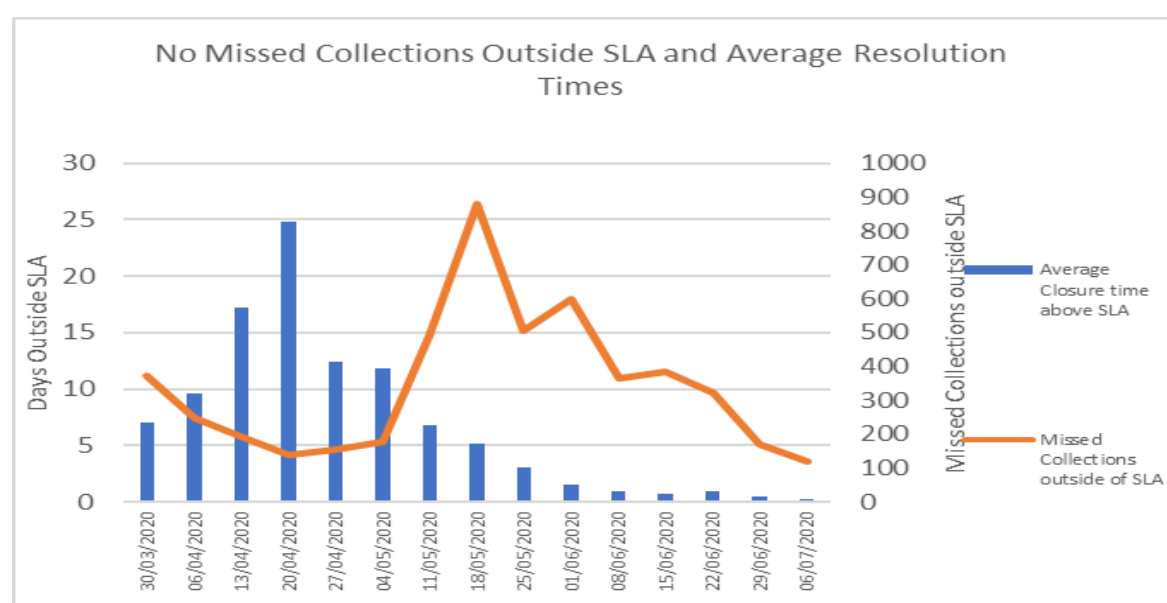
4.3 Collection service performance

Broadly speaking, recycling, refuse, assisted collection and clinical waste collections held up well through the Covid-19 first wave – they remain broadly at the level we experienced under Kier and Suez are working to improve performance (whilst still coping with the ongoing challenges of Covid-19). Where there were issues with the service, they related to the major issues we had with systems and data – contract mobilisation issues but ones that were harder to solve given the pandemic. As figure 1 shows, the service overall was improving up until the point when the garden waste services and recycling missed collections were reintroduced in May. Suez have allocated substantial additional resources to rectify the service issues since then, but garden waste performance continues to be significantly below the level of performance we would expect it to be. Suez have a performance recovery plan in place to drive further improvement and have ongoing additional resource allocated (at their own cost) to rectify these issues, with SWP having provided funding to cover the costs arising as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 response.



4.4 Dealing with missed collections

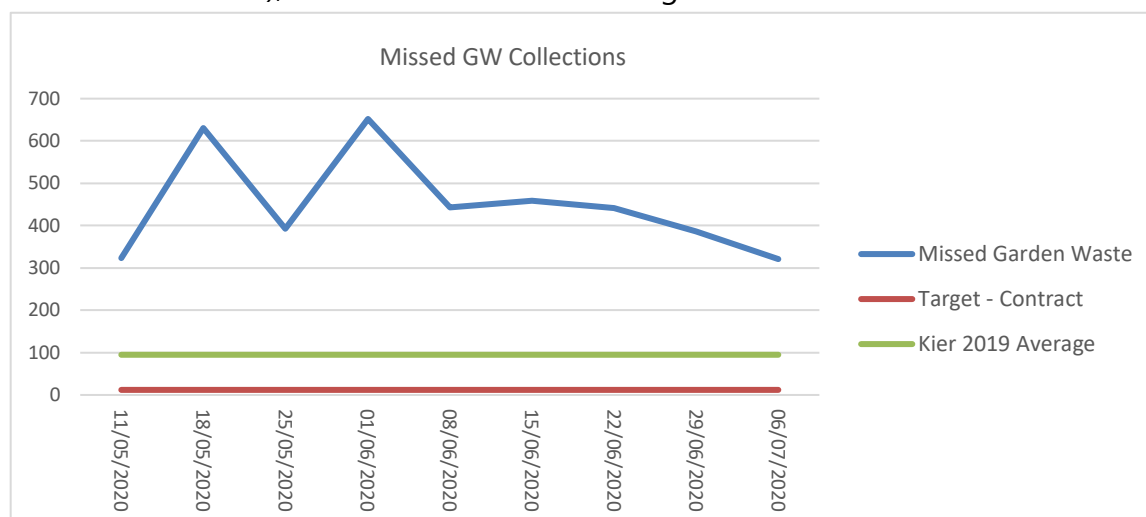
Whilst clearly we don't want to see missed collections, if they do happen we need to get back quickly to resolve the issue and address the root cause to ensure it doesn't happen again. When the pressures on the service were most acute this was not been happening as well as it should have been, particularly on garden waste. This placed customer services in our partners and in SWP under considerable pressure when combined with the service issues we've experienced on garden waste and the integration issues that meant some problems were slower to be able to fix. As the graph below shows this is now well under control, but we continue to monitor this closely. Note that due to integration issues some invalid missed collections are likely to be included in the missed collection statistics – as we bed in the new technology we will address these issues (for example crews reported 20 instances of needles being in recycling containers in June – clearly we don't expect our crew to take this recycling and nor will we return for this as a missed collection).



4.5 Service pressures: garden waste

Garden waste was re-introduced on 11th May with the new routes; however, this was not undertaken effectively as the route mapping was not undertaken as effectively as it should have been. The reintroduction of this service also highlighted a number of underlying ICT integration/data issues that meant that where customers tried to report issues, we were not able to rectify the issue as quickly as normal. Whilst 50% additional resources were initially deployed on the service (to cope with heavy tonnage and high levels of presentation after the service was suspended) this has been increased to over 100% additional resource, particularly on narrow access vehicles. A re-route of the garden waste service was undertaken on 6 July to address the underlying issues and hence improve performance. All customers were written to and free garden waste sacks provided to those customers whose day change meant they were waiting 5 or more days

longer than usual for a collection. At the time of writing this report the re-route had delivered a significant improvement in service quality (30% reduction in missed collections), but there is still further to go.

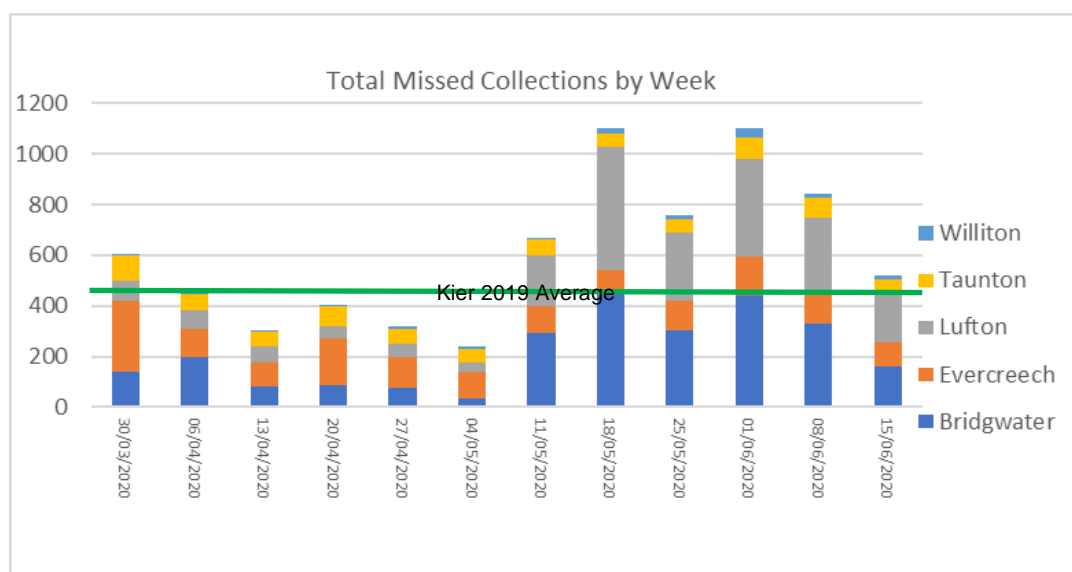


4.6 Container delivery services

Container delivery services were suspended from 19th March 2020 to 11th May 2020 with the resources devoted to supporting the recycling service. This resulted in a build-up of demand, compounded by high ongoing demand for new containers (potentially with more people having more time and inclination to recycle, and more waste to dispose of as they are at home more).

Currently there are around 2500 requests for individual containers a week (around 60-70% more requests than normal) and at peak 2000 Garden bin requests were received. Suez have doubled the resources delivering containers (with Viridor seconded staff also supporting container delivery until recycling centres reopened), worked Saturdays and overtime, and SWP have extended the SLA to 20 days to ensure that customer expectation matches our resource level. SWP are aware that some customers may have been waiting considerably longer than we would expect due to a backlog in SWP customer services where requests need a review (being addressed with additional resource focused on these transactions), by ICT issues which have prevented us from passing a request through to Suez (all identified issues addressed) or where there have been delays in transactions moving from a District Council partner to SWP (again – all now resolved).

The additional resources to catch-up on this service have meant that there are no outstanding requests in the system from March and April and very few outstanding requests from May – with these expected to be resolved in the next few days. The overall number of containers outside of the contractual SLA has reduced from over 5,000 at peak to 1283 as of the 10th of July.



4.7 Costs

SWP has incurred additional expenditure due to Covid-19. These costs have come from five main areas:

- 1) *The cost of the delayed Recycle More roll-out programme:* SWP had planned to have undertaken two roll-outs during this financial year (one in June and one in September). A different roll-out programme results in costs for Districts as the current service package is more expensive than Recycle More, and for the County because the expected disposal savings are not realised. s151 Officers were verbally updated on this at a meeting on 14 July. Costs are estimated at £494k for SCC and £1.806m for Districts. A higher 'worst case' cost has been included in returns to MHCLG to date, and this revised cost will be reflected in partner's July submissions should the Board agree the revised roll-out schedule.
- 2) *The costs associated with the phased reopening of HWRCs:* c£140k of costs have been incurred through the use of Police Accredited Traffic Officers, signage, barriers. The redeployed parking enforcement officers have not been charged for by SCC.
- 3) *Additional collection costs:* Collection costs have increased due to there being so much more recycling, the higher costs associated with some services after they were suspended, the impact on productivity of measures to keep crews safe and of parked cars causing delays on rounds. Given that mobilisation will also have caused Suez to incur additional costs, and because there was no steady state with Suez to compare to, ensuring that SWP could validate the costs was challenging. Accordingly, SWP used an

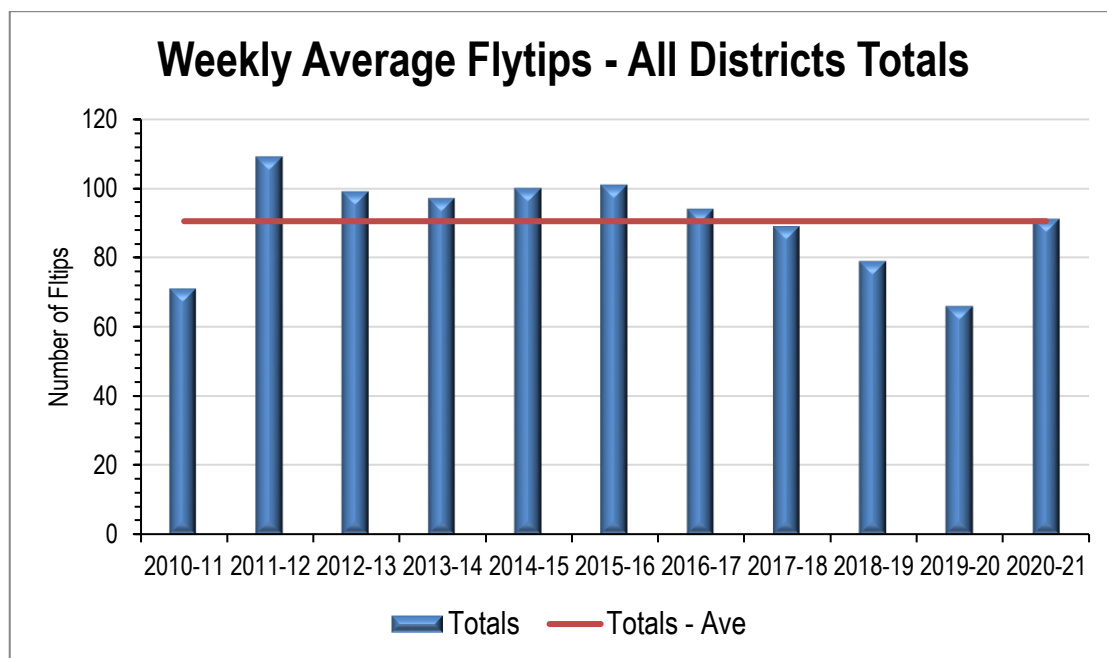
independent consultancy (Eunomia) to validate Suez's costs. After negotiations with Suez it is expected that the proposed costs for which partners will make a claim will be substantially lower than initially proposed and will be validated by a report from Eunomia which demonstrates the reasonableness of the claim. SMG and s151 Officers have been kept informed throughout this process and supported the approach at our virtual meeting on 14th July. It is expected that costs for April – June will be below £500k, that a similar approach will be adopted for July and then further discussion will be required with Suez (informed by the impacts of Covid, the national response, the contractual position) to ensure that we balance the need to deliver critical services with our financial context.

- 4) *Tonnage*: SWP have taken a conservative approach and assumed that tonnage that did not go through recycling centres when they were closed may return (and hence not reflected a saving from this as this point), but have reflected the costs to Somerset County Council of additional tonnage at the kerbside - £270k. There are no tonnage related costs for District partners.
- 5) *SWP head office costs*: These include £20k for the element of savings from Slimmy that will not be realised due to suspending the campaign, and under £3k for equipment for SWP staff (inc hand sanitiser and kit to enable effective long-term home working).

4.8 Fly Tipping

Since the closure of the Recycling Sites from the 23rd March, we have been monitoring the level of fly tipping around the County, with the assistance of District Council colleagues. From the 30th March to the 26th June, we had 1,193 recorded fly tipping incidents, peaking at 142 during a week at the end of April, and an average of 92 incidents per week over the 13-week period. Whilst this is 47% up on the similar period in 2019, due in part to the exceptionally good performance by both Somerset residents and partner authorities last year, it is only 1 incident per week higher than the 10-year trend in Somerset's fly tipping reports, as shown below. The District breakdown of this is that Mendip is 5 above the 10-year trend, Sedgemoor shows no change, South Somerset is down 6 & Somerset West & Taunton is up 2. The most significant move in the type of material fly tipped relates to that recorded as 'black bags' which has seen a rise from 15% last year to 25% during this period.

We have also been monitoring the number of reported nuisance bonfire events through the 13-week period, these showing a total of 208 reported incidents, with an average of 16 per week or 4 per District area per week.



4.9 Lessons learnt

Whilst SWP are confident that we made the best decisions we reasonably could, given the uncertainties of the first wave of Covid-19, we want to ensure that we learn the lessons from this for any future wave. It should be noted that any future wave affecting Somerset could look very different – for example potentially higher levels of staff absence (e.g. due to track and trace impacting on a higher proportion of the workforce) or local lockdowns. It is also likely to have cost implications – and whilst we are working to develop plans that minimise these we cannot realistically eliminate them. SWP has undertaken an internal lesson-learned exercise, reviewed this with SMG and with our contractors (Viridor and Suez). We expect to undertake a specific lessons-learned exercise with customer service colleagues in early August. Key lessons-learned which will inform revisions to our business continuity plan are:

- We will seek to not close our HWRC network now that government have provided the requested clarity on what is an essential journey. This means that should there be another lockdown we would seek to keep a core number of sites open with appropriate measures (e.g. odds and evens, a limited range of materials – though probably a wider range than previously).
- We will seek to reduce the number of steps of phased reopening before sites are back at their new normal. We are also likely to reduce the number of Police Accredited Traffic Officers we use to focus them on where they had the greatest impact – not least because this is an expensive resource.
- We will prioritise maintaining container delivery services for longer – the resources this released did not deliver sufficient benefit compared to the challenges of dealing with the pent-up demand, and the delays in receiving containers caused considerable customer frustration.
- We will develop a Business Continuity Plan specific to the roll-out of Recycle More Phase 1 and have identified key individuals within our collection contractor on which we are particularly dependent for a smooth roll-out, with substitutes identified.

- We are seeking to train some partner Streetscene staff ahead of any second wave so that they could provide additional support, in particular to recycling crews coping with huge volumes of cardboard. This and Suez's focus on training up additional banks of agency staff should mean we are more resilient to staff absence.

5. Background papers

5.1. None