

Decision Report – Officer Key Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/10/06

Decision Date – 20 November 2023

Key Decision – yes

Confidential Information – no



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## Authority Wide Waste Collection Changes in Two Phases During February 2024 and June 2024

Executive Member(s): Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Mike Cowdell

Author: Mike Cowdell – Strategic Manager – Waste Services

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### Summary / Background

1. Somerset Council Waste Services, waste collection contractor (SUEZ) have requested that rubbish and recycling collection days affecting the majority of residents are changed across Somerset in two phases, starting in February 2024 and June 2024. The purpose of the change in collection days is to allow Suez to make their service offering more efficient, manageable, and reliable.

The change will impact 122,000 households in the west of the Council (former Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and a small part of South Somerset) during February 2024, a further 96,000 households will have a day change in the former Mendip, and South Somerset areas during June 24. There will be no change to the type or frequency of waste collection services and the change is limited to solely Standard Kerbside Collected Properties. Importantly schools, communally serviced flats and garden waste collection services remain out of scope.

Communications surrounding the day changes are pivotal and we will replicate the same methodology as utilised during the Recycle More changes, where, six weeks prior to the collection day change, Residents will receive a warm up notification and 3 weeks prior to the change a Service Guide and Calendar. Suez will provide a presence to correct Residents presenting waste on their 'old'

collection day and observations from collection activities such as Resident non-presentation of waste will be analysed and acted upon if necessary.

The main objective of the proposal is to afford Suez the opportunity to optimise their routes to reduce the amount of fleet and staff required to service the contract. By having more efficient routes, Suez anticipate significant reduction in Staff overtime costs as well as reduction in fuel costs and associated CO2 savings.

2. The implementation of Recycle More (extended plastics recycling and 3 weekly rubbish kerbside collections) was delivered in four phases between 2020 and 2022 and required significant communications, education and stakeholder engagement. To make this exercise effective, each phase was delivered on approximate existing district boundaries to align to communication and member engagement channels at the time. After nearly 18 Months of operation of the service, Suez recognise by further optimisation and rationalisation of routes that the operational efficiency of the waste collection service can be improved by removing the routing constraints placed upon it approximate old District Council boundaries.

Furthermore, changes in waste composition have altered that assumptions that Suez used to initially plan their routes. The new routing structure reflects these changes in assumptions ensuring that the payload capacity of vehicles and routing are better aligned.

All lessons learnt from the Recycle More changes have been reviewed and practical benefits have been utilised in the development of this project and associated planned communications.

With any significant alteration to the route structure, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of missed collections and related complaints as our crews adapt to their new routes. However, since the commencement of our contract in 2020, Suez has consistently enhanced its performance in addressing missed collections and has introduced process improvements to minimize the impact of complaints stemming from recurring missed collections. An integral aspect of the proposal provided by Suez is the assurance that these controls and enhancements will be incorporated into the new collection system. Notably, in contrast to previous service changes like 'Recycle More,' where Somerset Council offered contractual relief in case of service degradation, this Suez-led initiative

will not grant any such relief in the event of service quality decline due to the route reconfiguration.

### **Recommendations**

3. The Executive Director, Climate and Place
  - a. Agrees the communication method outlined in Appendix 1.
  - b. Agrees the scope, scale and timings of the change as outlined in Appendix 1.
  - c. Authorises the change of collection days as described in Appendix 1
  - d. Agrees that there will be no contractual relief to Contract thresholds of missed collections, assisted collections and repeatedly missed collections will apply during the delivery of the proposal.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

4. The proposal seeks to reduce the cost of service provision for our Waste Collection contractor, SUEZ. We recognise that it is important to allow our Strategic Partners to innovate and explore cost reduction opportunities to improve the financial sustainability of the service.

By improving the routing of the waste collection fleet, in Phase 1, of the re-route Suez believe that they can reduce total fuel usage by 7% creating a reduction of CO2 from the fleet of 185 tonnes per year. The impact of Phase 2 is not yet know but similar improvement levels are expected.

5. There are no confidential appendices
6. There are no urgency provisions

### **Other options considered**

7. The alternative option is to maintain the existing waste collection routing provision, where the financial, environmental and customer benefits will not be realised.

### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

8. The project is solely funded by Suez.
9. Suez are a key strategic partner, the savings and efficiencies identified within the project will provide the opportunity for Suez to improve the financial sustainability of the Contract with no legal or financial implications for the Authority.

### Financial and Risk Implications

10. Suez will fund all communications, mobilisation activities and sundry activities regarding the change in collection days. During the period there will be zero contractual relief against contractual defaults and penalties, and if necessary, customer service and operational support will be funded from contract deductions.
11. The below table deals with the 4 main component risks if the project.

Risk and mitigation description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score
<b>Communication with Residents</b> - Residents will receive a warm up communication and collection day calendar as their secondary communication which will help with the clear messaging. Lessons learnt from Recycle More will be applied	3	4	12
<b>Service Disruption.</b> Change in configuration in service will lead to a temporary reduction in service quality, Suez will employ lessons learnt and process improvements to mitigate service disruption issues, in addition to ensure that crews are fully brief on new routes and improved mapping system to utilised.	3	4	12
<b>Local Amenity.</b> During Phase 1, three interim collection days will be conducted on a Saturday to ensure that residents do not have to wait more than 24 days without a rubbish collection	3	3	9
<b>Customer Services Impact:</b> Waste Services will work in advance with Somerset Council	3	3	9

Customer Services to ensure strong lines of communication and engagement occur prior to project initiation and to ensure that sufficient levels of resource are applied to the operating unit			
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**Legal Implications**

- 12. The proposal is due to remove resources (fleet and staff) from the Waste Collection Contract that Suez hold with Somerset Council. The levels of resources removed (4%) is not less than the levels stipulated within the Contract. There is a contractual requirement that Somerset Council cannot refuse unreasonable requests, as the proposal does not remove resource levels below tendered requirements and offers the opportunity to improve the financial sustainability of the Contract for, the Authority considers the request as reasonable.
  
- 13. There are no procurement or commissioning implications associated with this project.

**HR Implications**

- 14. There are no HR implications associated with this project.

**Other Implications:**

**Equalities Implications**

- 15. Please see below Equalities Assessment

**Community Safety Implications**

- 16. There are no Community Safety implications

**Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

17. The proposal is to reduce the amount of vehicles required on the Waste collection contract by 6 and to improve the routing and operational efficiency of the remaining fleet of 123 vehicles planned to be utilised on the contract.
- The proposal increases the efficiency of the fleet, equating to around to a potential fuel saving of 58,445l during Phase 1 and similar level in Phase 2.
  - The re-route proposal is expected to reduce strain on the collection service and increase its reliability, it is likely that the improved reliability of the service as a consequence of this change would increase participation in the recycling service and reduce waste nuisance issues, but at present the yield of this is unquantifiable.
  - We estimate through the decrease in fuel usage we would expect a kgCO<sub>2</sub>e saving of 185,200. Finalised modelling of Phase 2 is yet to be complete, however a similar level of CO<sub>2</sub> saving is expected.

### **Health and Safety Implications**

18. The transition to new routes places crews into novel surroundings. It is a requirement that Suez have full route risk assessments and that crews are briefed upon potential hazards in their operating area.

All crews have devices that inform them of potential route hazards and restrictions around collection times (i.e. schools drop off and collection times). During the mobilisation period additional supervisors will be available on contract to ensure that Safe Working Practices are followed and safety concerns and clarifications raised by the crews are acted on expediently.

All vehicles above 3.5t in weight have 360 degree cameras to enable remote viewing of collection activities and any high risk manoeuvre such as a reverse a spotter is deployed.

19. The Health and Safety roles and responsibilities are clearly defined within the method statements that the Council hold with Suez. Waste Services officers regularly assess crew performance independently to affirm compliance with Method Statements and Safe Systems of Work.

### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

20. The waste collection service is supplied to all domestic residences in Somerset. Consequently an adjustment made to waste collection schedules could have implications to a broad spectrum of people.

As a standard offering, those groups and individuals that cannot access the kerbside with waste receptacles are offered Assisted Collections. Instructions of assisted collections are maintained electronically on the crews hand held devices. Crews will be briefed upon the significance of these collections and wherever possible, where they are not made an escalation route to a crew supervisor is followed.

The communications to Somerset residents will be in a plain English format produced using Accessibility Guidelines. Large Print, Braille, Audio and foreign language documents will be available on request.

### **Social Value**

21. There are no social value implications attached to this proposal.
22. This report has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

### **Background**

23. Please see the Appendix 1 “Somerset Reroute 2024 – Authority Wide Waste Collection Changes in Two Phases During Feb 24 and Jun 24”. The document authored by Suez details the scope, scale and timings of the proposal.

### **Background Papers**

24. Appendix 1 “*Somerset Reroute 2024 – Authority Wide Waste Collection Changes in Two Phases During Feb 24 and Jun 24*”. The document authored by Suez details the scope, scale and timings of the proposal.

### **Assurance checklist (if appropriate)**




	Officer Name	Date Completed
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Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	08/11/23
Communications	Peter Elliott	07/11/23
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	09/11/23
Workforce	Alyn Jones	08/11/23
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	N/A
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Mickey Green	06/11/23
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	08/11/23
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Bill Revans	09/11/23
Lead Member Environment and Climate Change	Cllr Dixie Darch	09/11/23
<b>Consulted:</b>	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members	All - Through Member Briefings	
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr David Fothergill Cllr Steve Ashton	08/11/23 08/11/23
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Martin Dimery	07/11/23



## Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or [www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment)

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)			
Version	1	Date Completed	25/10/2023
Description of what is being impact assessed			
Authority Wide Waste Collection Changes in Two Phases During Feb 24 and Jun 24			
Evidence			
<p>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the <a href="#">Office of National Statistics</a>, <a href="#">Somerset Intelligence Partnership</a>, <a href="#">Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA)</a>, Staff and/ or <a href="#">area profiles</a>,, should be detailed here</p>			
Existing performance data.			

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?**

We have a comprehensive data-set of all customers that have requested an assisted collection. An integral part of the proposal requires that all assisted collection are stored and made available to crews undertaking collections. Crews will be briefed upon their whereabouts and any know issues where historic issues have been apparent will be highlighted to the crews separately and subject to

**Analysis of impact on protected groups**

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted collections are provided to the elderly people on request. Change in routes can negatively affect the likelihood of successful collections</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐

<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted collections are provided to people with Disability on request. Change in routes can negatively affect the likelihood of successful collections.</li> <li>Instructions to residents surrounding day changes are provided, if these cannot be read/understood this may result in missed collections</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No anticipated Impact</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No anticipated Impact</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted collections are provided to the pregnant people on request. Change in routes can negatively affect the likelihood of successful collections</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructions to residents surrounding day changes are provided, if these cannot be read this may result in missed collections</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No anticipated Impact</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No anticipated Impact</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No anticipated Impact</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No anticipated Impact</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No anticipated Impact</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Negative outcomes action plan</b> Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.				
<b>Action taken/to be taken</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>How will it be monitored?</b>	<b>Action complete</b>
Crews briefed on locations of all assisted collections and all systems updated	01/02/2024	Mike Cowdell	Review of Missed Collections	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ensure escalation and investigation where missed assisted collections have taken place	01/02/2024	Mike Cowdell	Review of Complaint Process	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure Availability of Large Print, Braille, Audio and Alternative Language Service Guides and Customer Notifications are available.	01/02/2024	Mark Ford	Provision of Alternative Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure capacity for reporting resident issues are open and available through phone and internet	01/02/2024	Mike Cowdell	Analysis of customer interaction volume	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure Communication of the day changes through VCFSE groups	01/02/2024	Mark Ford	Analysis of customer interaction volume	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				

<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Mike Cowdell</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>26/10/23</b>
<b>Signed off by:</b>	<b>Mike Cowdell</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>26/10/23</b>
<b>Equality Lead sign off name:</b>	<b>Tom Rutland</b>
<b>Equality Lead sign off date:</b>	<b>08/11/23</b>
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>	<b>Mike Cowdell</b>
<b>Review date:</b>	<b>01/02/23</b>

October 2023