



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 25 November 2025	Matter for Information
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Report Title: **Alternate Weekly Waste Collection Review**

Report Author(s): **Ben Wilson (Head of Neighbourhood Services)**

Purpose of Report:	To provide an update on the outcomes of moving to an alternate weekly waste collection model, one year after implementation.
Report Summary:	The Council moved to an alternate weekly collection model in September 2024 and this report evaluates the effectiveness of the change in consideration to environmental, financial, behavioural, and operational benefits.
Recommendation(s):	That the content of the report be noted.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Teresa Neal (Strategic Director) (0116) 257 2642 teresa.neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Ben Wilson (Head of Neighbourhood Services) (0116) 257 2711 ben.wilson@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Environment (SO4)
Vision and Values:	"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Customer & Community Focused (V1) Proud of Everything We Do (V2) Collaborative & Creative (V3) Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out at section 3 of this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1) Key Supplier / Partnership Failure (CR2) Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.

Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	None.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 During the Council's financial sustainability work undertaken in 2023, a decision was made to introduce refuse and recycling alternate weekly collections (AWC) for households within the Borough. A project team was initiated, and a timeline was defined. The overall transition was planned for Autumn 2024.
- 1.2 Moving to this new AWC model was a proven strategy that has been undertaken by the majority of other local authorities looking to seek sustainable and cost-effective waste collection and management solutions.
- 1.3 This report outlines the key benefits of the transition to an AWC model for household refuse and recycling waste within the Borough.
- 1.4 The new AWC scheme commenced in September 2024.
- 1.5 While AWC faced initial resistance from some residents, especially around concerns of hygiene and capacity, these were mitigated through:
 - 1.6 Effective communication and engagement campaigns – Full communication strategy for the transition was created and used throughout, ensuring all stakeholders were aware of key messages, including contact centre.
 - 1.7 Provision of adequate bin capacity – At the point of moving from bags to wheeled bins (2018/19), households as standard were provided with 240 litre recycling bins, and 140 litre refuse bins. Households had the option to reduce their recycling bin to 140 litres if this was more suitable to their household and property type.

On moving to AWC, residents were able swap their bins for the larger size at cost price (£38).
 - 1.8 Support for larger households or those with medical waste needs – Where a household could demonstrate they had a medical need for a larger bin, this was provided free of charge.

There were 80 households who made enquiries into a free bin, with 36 households providing suitable evidence and the Council swapping their smaller bin for a larger bin free of charge.
 - 1.9 Promotion of recycling – all communication channels and customer contact was used as a method to promote alternative waste management techniques, notably around better

utilisation of recycling bins.

- 1.10 Continued cardboard side waste – The approved waste policy continued to allow cardboard side waste to still be presented and collected by the authority (when majority of other Councils have ceased this service).

2. Environmental Benefits

- 2.1 Increased recycling rates - AWC encourages residents to recycle more as it limits the frequency of residual waste collection, and data shows that Oadby and Wigston has increased its recycling rate by 1.1% since the transition to AWC.

Latest data shows the Council now re-uses, recycles or composts 40.6% of the waste it collects, up from 39.5% in the previous year.

- 2.2 Reduction in landfill and incineration - By diverting more waste into recycling streams, AWC has reduced the volume of waste sent to landfill or incineration, helping to meet national and local waste reduction targets.
- 2.3 Lower carbon emissions - Fewer collection rounds for residual waste mean reduced fuel consumption and vehicle emissions, contributing to local climate action plans. The Council was able to reduce its fleet size by 2 vehicles with going to AWC.

3. Financial Benefits

- 3.1 Operational cost savings - AWC has reduced the number of weekly collections, leading to lower fuel, maintenance, and running costs. These savings helped contribute towards the Councils overall long-term financial sustainability plan.

Reducing the operational costs by moving to AWC seen a saving of over £50,000.

- 3.2 Staff cost savings - There was a mixture of vacant posts being deleted from the establishment, and 3 employees taking voluntary redundancy.

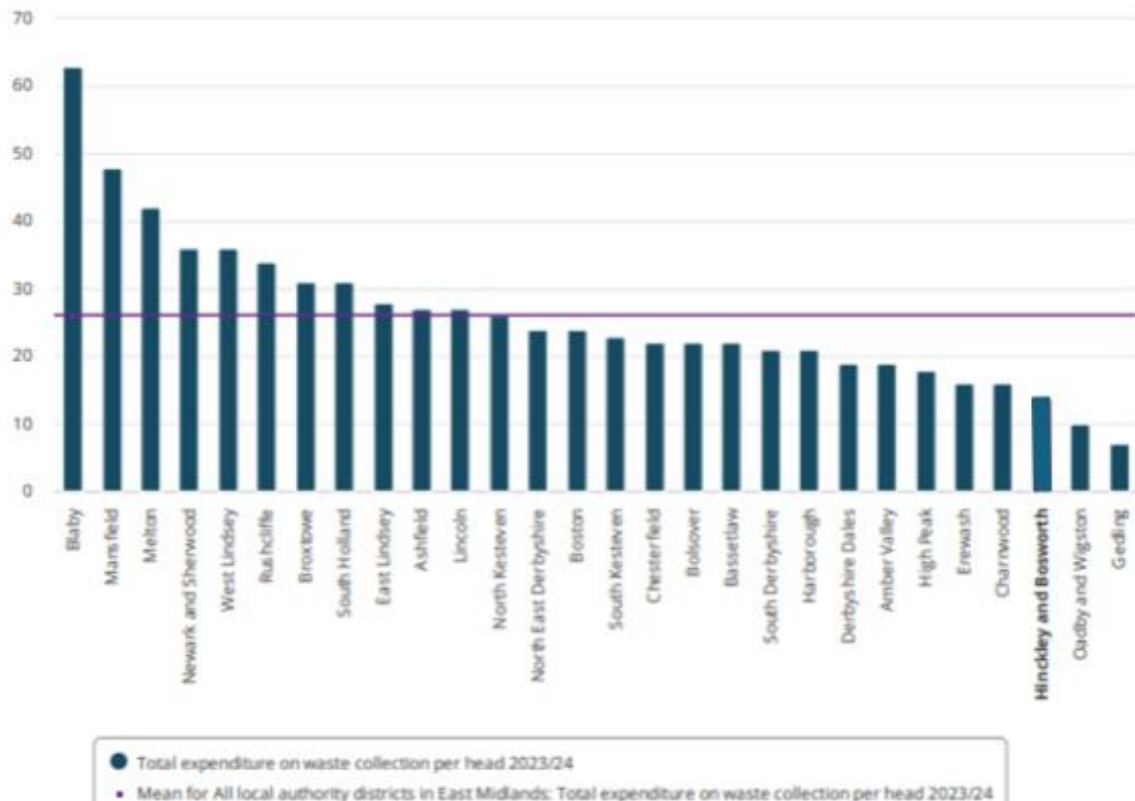
The waste collection crews went from 27 posts to 23 posts. This saw a saving of over £110,000 in 2024/25.

- 3.3 Chargeable bin swaps - The Council generated £88,616 in income to cover the costs of replacing waste bins, whereby a household required a larger wheeled bin. This did not generate income that can be classed as a revenue saving, but this income offset the costs of purchasing and delivering the bins to the households.

This totalled 2,360 bin swaps, meaning nearly 10% of households were requiring a larger bin at the point of transitioning to AWC.

- 3.4 Chargeable bulky collections - Moving to this operating model has seen an increase in bulky waste collections that has generated an income of nearly £10,000 more than previous years.
- 3.5 Overall saving - Moving to AWC saw an overall revenue saving of £200,000 for the first year which equals £2 million over 10 years.
- 3.6 New operating model cost – Benchmarked Data provided by DEFRA and WRAP, confirm that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council have the second most cost-effective service model across the whole of the East Midlands.

Total expenditure on waste collection per head (2023/24) for All local authority districts in East Midlands



4. Behavioural and Social Benefits

- 4.1 Promotes waste awareness - It is widely understood that AWC encourages residents to think more carefully about their waste habits, fostering a culture of waste minimisation and responsible disposal. We have found residents have utilised their recycling bin capacity more.
- 4.2 Supports waste hierarchy goals - The system aligns with the waste hierarchy by prioritising waste prevention, reuse, and recycling over disposal. Something we will continue to promote.

5. Operational & Logistical Advantages

- 5.1 Optimised collection routes - Moving to AWC allowed for the optimisation of routes and amendment to the collection days of waste therefore the service is now operating in a streamlined, improved, and efficient model. This has further benefits of reducing wear and tear on vehicles and reducing costs.
- 5.2 Flexibility for future innovations - While working through the implementation of AWC we were aware that nationally food waste collections would be introduced in 2025/26 . Having this knowledge has allowed us to consider and plan for the long-term changes in the collections of all waste. Thus allowing us to integrate food waste collections, digital tracking and other innovations into our waste management plans.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Alternate weekly collections offer a balanced approach to improving environmental outcomes, reducing costs, and encouraging sustainable behaviour. With the appropriate planning, community engagement, & supporting residents during the transition and since,

AWC can be considered to have been implemented successfully, with a considerable yearly saving working towards the long-term sustainability of the Council.

- 6.2 The financial savings achieved in total for the period from implementation of AWC till September this year has been £200,000.
- 6.3 Households are now settled into the AWC scheme, with waste management habits and behaviours of residents focussing on utilising recycling alternatives than using their residual waste bins. This has seen an increase in recycling rates, reduced customer contact, and a service model that is sustainable for the Authority.
- 6.4 Moving into 2025/26, the Council will be rolling out food waste collections to further increase recycling rates, whilst looking to further embed and improve a culture of recycling across the borough through further awareness, campaigns and appropriate channels which will see further environmental and financial benefits.