



# Douglas City Council

## Committee Report

<b>REPORT TO</b>	
Environmental Services Committee	
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	
15 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	
<b>REPORTING OFFICER</b>	
Senior Engineering & Waste Services Manager	
<b>SUBJECT</b>	
12 month review following the change in waste service	
<b>1</b>	<b>REASON FOR REPORT</b>
	To review the change in Waste Service through the introduction of fortnightly refuse collections and a garden waste collection service.
<b>2</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
	That Committee notes the report.
<b>3</b>	<b>FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED</b>
	Not applicable
<b>4</b>	<b>SUPPORTING RATIONALE</b>
	<p>This report has been prepared by the Senior Engineering &amp; Waste Services Manager (SE&amp;WSM) to review the change in service, following the first 12 months. The report will set out the background history which led to the Council's decision to proceed with the change, the activities that took place during the roll-out and implementation phases and the 12 month period post implementation.</p> <p><u>BACKGROUND HISTORY</u></p> <p>In August 2018, Members approved the following Council Motion: <i>"To investigate options to substantially increase kerbside recycling collections as a percentage of the monthly domestic waste arising"</i>.</p> <p>Subsequent reports were considered by Committee as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the Household Recycling Rate – Nov 2018</li><li>• Fortnightly Domestic Refuse Collection / Garden Waste Collection Service – Mar 2019</li><li>• Collecting cardboard as part of the Kerbside Service – Oct 2019</li></ul>

- Carry out Market Research into the reason for the static recycling rate – Nov 2020
- Alternate Weekly Collections – Oct 2021
- Carry out further Market Research into the reason for the static recycling rate – Dec – 2021

At a Special Executive Committee Budget Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022, Members agreed the following recommendations: -

- £109,700 for the acquisition of 4,200 brown wheeled bins for garden waste collections to be funded from Capital Receipts;
- £13,300 for the acquisition of 3,000 kerbside boxes to be funded from Capital Receipts;
- £9,200 for the communication phase of the rollout to be funded from the General Revenue Reserve;
- £20,000 for the temporary hire of an additional kerbside vehicle to be funded from the General Revenue Reserve.

This resolution was subsequently ratified at the Council's rate setting meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

Following approval of the change in service, additional reports were subsequently produced in order to facilitate the smooth transition from weekly to fortnightly collections and the introduction of a new garden waste service: -

- Suspension of current policy allowing households to purchase additional wheelie bins – Feb 2022
- Contaminated Garden Waste Policy – May 2022
- Missed Bin Policy – May 2022
- Waste Audit (briefing note) – May 2022
- Second bin buy back scheme – Nov 2022

Having considered the decision making process above, which brought about the change in service, this report will cover both the roll out and implementation phases, considering the following factors: -

Roll-out phase: -

1. Communication campaign
2. Dealing with public enquiries, requests and complaints
3. Delivery of garden waste bins and additional recycling boxes

Post implementation phase: -

1. Commencement of garden waste collection and associated challenges
2. Commencement of fortnightly refuse collections and associated operational challenges
3. Continuation of garden waste bins and recycle boxes deliveries
4. Continued engagement with the public
5. Assessments of individual household requirements
6. Implementation of the second bin, side waste and missed bin policies
7. Environmental issues arising from the change in policy
8. Events that arose following the change in service:
  - Requisition meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022
  - On-line petition challenge to the change in service
  - The Tynwald Commissioner for Administration's findings following a formal complaint to the change in service
9. Climate Impact Assessment Tool
10. Summary of the key outcomes 12 months in to the change

## **ROLLOUT PHASE**

### **1. Communication Campaign –**

After initially planning to engage a Communication Officer on a limited term contract, the appointment of Isle of Man Advertising (IOMA) as the Council's media partner presented an alternative solution, which, with access to a team of experienced specialists and resources made this a more attractive option. IoMA were engaged to provide a comprehensive communication campaign on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. It's worth noting that following the Council meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the press released a bulletin on the resolution, incorrectly reporting the details of the change in service, which resulted in an initial public backlash, setting a negative tone from the outset.

In terms of actual communication with the public the following timeline of publications/ activities took place: -

- On 27<sup>th</sup> January the Council posted details of the Council resolution on its website clarifying the proposed implementation programme.
- In early March the rates newsletter was posted to every household, which included more detail about the forthcoming changes. However that initial press coverage on 26<sup>th</sup> January misreporting the service change continued to irritate certain sections of the public who had not read the Council's official release on 27<sup>th</sup>, despite it being widely reported in the media both radio and print.
- On 25<sup>th</sup> March IoMA issued the first draft of the communication plan, and the plan was broadly approved the following month, including agreement for some funding from Zero Waste Mann.
- On 19<sup>th</sup> May, the Council published a statement 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle' giving greater detail regarding the scheme: <http://douglas.im/index.php/news/council-news/item/2820-reduce-re-use-recycle-douglas-borough-council-details-new-domestic-waste-collection-strategy> in addition the release advised where members of the public can find out more about the change and the frequently asked questions.
- 27<sup>th</sup> June – The Chair conducted a video interview with Manx Radio outlining how the proposals are going to work.
- 4<sup>th</sup> July – Press release with particular focus on the new garden waste service and how households can register for a garden waste bin.
- On 11<sup>th</sup> July The Isle of Man Post Office were given an order to post a leaflet to every household in the City: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:f66b0327-b44b-3bbb-a2e1-5c95213064a4>
- Throughout July and August Waste Services regularly posted information messages on social media and took the Recycling Roadshow in to the Town Centre and exhibited at the Council's Fun Day displaying banners about the new service. A pull up banner was present in the Library throughout the roll-out phase and beyond.
- 19<sup>th</sup> August – Garden waste collection update on the Council's website: <http://douglas.im/index.php/news/council-news/item/2871-embrace-the-environment-with-new-domestic-garden-waste-collections>
- Throughout August and September over 360 radio adverts were broadcast across the Island's three radio stations (Manx Radio, Energy FM and 3FM) giving details including start dates.
- On 15<sup>th</sup> September – The Isle of Man Courier ran a feature in their 'Go Green' section and the article was also covered in September's

Gallery magazine.

[https://issuu.com/galleryisleofman/docs/the\\_green\\_edition](https://issuu.com/galleryisleofman/docs/the_green_edition)

- Waste Services took the recycling roadshow to the Food & Drink Festival on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September, handing out leaflets and displaying the new banners.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> September – family recycling blog was uploaded on social media and the Council's dedicated recycling website: <https://www.recyclenow.im/recycling-blog/>
- Also on 30<sup>th</sup> September – A schedule of garden and refuse collections by street was uploaded on the Council's website, on social media and Recyclenow.
- During the period, Waste Officers attended two political surgeries.

In terms of funding for the communication campaign, the Council were fortunate to secure additional funding from Zero Waste Mann in the sum of £6,065, which contributed towards the cost of radio adverts, leaflet production and promotional banners.

**Objective:** To reach every household in the City, giving clear, unambiguous information about the change, in a timely fashion. To build trust through transparency, providing evidence based justification for the change, whilst allaying people's fears and asserting the environmental and societal benefits of increasing the recycling rate.

**Outcome:** The Council's communication strategy was well intended using a wide range of media and other resources to get the message out and setting a reasonable timetable for the communication phase. Despite this, not all of the goals and objectives were fully met, subsequent feedback indicated that the campaign did not reach every household, it also became apparent that the leaflet drop to every household was poorly executed by the contracted deliverer and the timing of messaging was sometimes later than intended. At times there was disconnect between officers and the media consultant and cost estimates and time estimations for various activities/features provided by IoMA proved unreliable resulting in delays and frequent changes to the communication plan. Equally, there was no single point of contact at IoMA, sometimes resulting in confusion.

Consequently, the campaign did not entirely succeed in building the trust element with all ratepayers, however it was always anticipated that there would be resistance from certain sections of the community and therefore it is difficult to gauge how much of the resistance was due to any shortcomings in the communication campaign. Overall however, the campaign reached the vast majority of households and the actual number of communications from aggrieved persons was relatively low in a population of nearly 27,000 people.

**Lessons learned** – To engage a media partner earlier, establish a clear communication channel with a single point of contact and ensure the budget is aligned with the plan. Also, in light of the procurement process for the Council's new accounting system, where the Council has appointed a project manager to focus purely on the delivery of the project, this may have also been worth exploring for the Change in Service. The appropriateness of making major policy decisions during the Council's rate-setting meeting should be considered in the future as it did not allow for a full communication campaign to be devised ahead of the decision being made. Finally, the team also considers that using bin stickers to inform householders of the change would have ensured maximum reach, and the stickers could be updated periodically with fresh information.

## **2. Dealing with public enquiries, requests and complaints -**

The initial unofficial press release on the 26<sup>th</sup> January triggered a surge in enquiries and in some cases panic amongst ratepayers, where the impression given was

that implementation of the new service was imminent and that householders were not going to be given time to adjust to the change.

Eventually the initial panic subsided as the Council's official press release was able to reassure householders that nothing would change until later in the year and in the intervening period the Council would fully inform ratepayers of the proposals.

However, enquiries continued to come in from MHK's and members of the public looking for greater clarity and in some cases seeking evidence based justification for the proposed change. During this period Waste Services formulated a standard response stating that the change was consistent with the International community in terms of reduction of greenhouse gases and other sustainable goals, that support would be given to those households who were unable to cope with the reduction in waste capacity, they were provided with a copy of the FAQ's: [index.php \(douglas.im\)](#) and signposted to various resources which evidenced the Council's strategy e.g. *BS5906:2005 Waste Management in Buildings – Code of Practice*.

During the rollout phase it is estimated that Waste Services dealt with more than 6,000 telephone calls, 3,897 e-mails between July 2022 and October 2022 were logged, as well as other forms of enquiry such as Facebook or via Councillors. The vast majority were related to requests for garden waste bins and/ or additional recycling boxes. Indeed the sheer volume of incoming requests prompted Waste Services to seek an additional resource from the Government's workplace scheme.

IoMA were tasked with providing a response to comments made on social media, particularly where a common theme arose. Whilst this did occur it was not with the anticipated proactivity and was often too late, due to IoMA seeking verification of the Council's position before putting out the reply. As is the nature of social media, debunking misinformation or responding to queries needs to be dynamic otherwise the issues escalate disproportionately.

At one stage, inbox messages from the Council's FaceBook page were not responded to and a generic response was provided to contact the Waste Services email address. This worked well on several levels – it took the pressure off the small team that monitors the Council's social media presence having to try and respond to queries on social media as well as all the other channels that needed to be managed, and as some residents were emailing as well as making contact through social media, it eliminated duplication of response about the same query, and made for a more streamlined response process.

**Objective:** To deal with the enquiries in a timely and informative fashion. To allay fears and reassure those with genuine concerns. To accurately record bin and box requests and create job tickets to ensure deliveries were achieved in reasonable timescales. To escalate and deal with complaints in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure and to monitor social media and clarify/correct misinformation wherever possible.

**Outcome:** The waste team together with the additional temporary resource rose to the challenge and met most of the key objectives. However it is acknowledged that the social media response was more difficult to manage both in terms of the volume and the scale of misinformation and its vexatious nature at times. Also, use of IoMA to help respond to social media posts was not as effective as hoped, sometimes due to the time it took to obtain facts from the Waste Team, formulate a reply, and obtain verification which led to delays in response time. The physical delivery of bin/ boxes is covered below.

**Lessons learned** – To be better prepared for the potential high volume of communications and the often hostile nature of them. Ensure sufficient resources

to deal with all types of communication including social media. Also, earlier engagement with Flats/Apartment management companies. The option of applying a phased roll out, whereby an area is selected, ideally a large conurbation such as Governors Hill where the change is implemented, monitored and fine-tuned before being rolled out to the rest of the City was rejected at the outset because all of the research indicated that the proposals had succeeded elsewhere so it is not possible to say whether it would have been more effective. However, it would be reasonable to assume that those resistant to the change, outside the test area, would have capitalised on any weaknesses, amplifying them to upset the project and making it harder to win support amongst the wider community.

### 3. Delivery of garden waste bins and additional recycling boxes

It was flagged up during the approvals phase that securing the garden bins well in advance of the implementation date was fundamental to being able to deliver the proposed roll out programme. Initial concerns of a four month lead time for the 4,200 bins proved to be unfounded with the bins arriving well in advance of the critical date and similarly with the additional recycling boxes.

The first meaningful communication regarding the garden waste bins was issued once the delivery date of the bins was known in early July nearly a month later than originally planned, the communication advised that the service would be starting in late August and to contact waste services to order a bin. At this point incoming communication increased exponentially and has only started to return to pre-rollout levels over the last few months. As bin and box requests started to flood in, Waste Services reviewed the level of resource needed to prepare and deliver the bins, given that deliveries were being carried out alongside normal day to day activities. The resource capacity identified prior to the rollout was not always available, eventually resulting in a large proportion of bins being delivered at weekends and using non Waste Services council staff as well as agency staff.

Due to resource constraints, recycling box deliveries were prioritised over garden waste bin deliveries resulting in delays sometimes upwards of six weeks. The table below, shows the number of bin requests and deliveries by month:

#### Garden Bin deliveries

Month	Requests	Delivered
Jul-22	257	230
Aug-22	272	0
Sep-22	372	496
Oct-22	352	252
Nov-22	243	233
Dec-22	206	0
Jan-23	186	233
Feb-23	226	244
Mar-23	219	267
Apr-23	230	217
May-23	261	244
Jun-23	243	376
Jul-23	210	239
Aug-23	215	322
Sep-23	190	302
Oct-23	187	214

Nov-23	29	0
Dec – 23	16	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3914</b>	<b>3869</b>

Table 1 – Garden bin deliveries

The status as at 31<sup>st</sup> December is as follows: -

- Outstanding bins - 45 to be delivered from requests made toward the end of 2023
- Total recorded requests – 3976
- 62 of the requests were either duplicates or out of Douglas which leaves 3914 bona fide requests

As can be seen from the above table, no deliveries were made in August 2022, this meant that from then onwards Waste Services were working at least one month in arrears. September was a productive month for deliveries, but not enough to clear the backlog and meet the target time of two weeks. This was one of the most difficult periods for the waste team, knowing they could not match the public's expectations which fuelled anxiety amongst the team, exacerbated by the growing levels of criticism on social media.

The main problem with deliveries, aside from the resourcing issue was that, as was expected, there was no logical pattern in the way bin requests came in, so for some of the earlier deliveries the driver would be delivering ad-hoc across the Borough and the pre-labelled bins had to be loaded on the 'box van' in such a fashion that they came off in the order they needed to be delivered. This early approach was highly inefficient with only 30 – 40 bins being delivered per day/ per vehicle. Eventually as the number of requests grew, waste services were able to send the vehicle to a specific area and at its height was achieving between 60 bins per day/ per vehicle. Another factor was the box vans used to deliver the bins have a classified gross vehicle weight limit of 3.5 tonnes and a pay load of approximately 550kg, which meant the maximum number of bins that could be loaded on the vehicles was around 30 at a time, again reducing the effectiveness of the operation.

Another process which was more time consuming than anticipated was the pre-delivery bin preparation, this involved reading the pre-installed RFID chip and designating it to a property, producing a label for the bin and also labelling the property address with indelible ink. Apart from producing the labels and inputting the property and chip number on the system, most of the preparation was done outside, which was extremely difficult in wet and windy conditions, at one point a gazebo had to be erected in the car park and also at the Nursery to avoid the labels and check sheets getting wet.

As part of the original assessment, Waste Services relied on WRAP guidance for the number of bins for a start-up service, the 4.2k bins ordered represented approximately 60% of all households with gardens. To date 3,914 garden bins have been issued or are due to be issued, which has to be considered a success both in terms of the original projection and the scale of the delivery operation, which was maintained mostly within existing resources.

Similarly a spike in box requests occurred during the same period, fortunately boxes are not specific to any particular address and can be transported in small vans or even on the kerbside vehicles so deliveries were less problematic.

**Objective:** To deliver garden waste bins to households in a timely fashion. No specific timescale was set but generally the team aimed to deliver within two weeks of receiving a request. To deliver kerbside boxes to households in a timely fashion prioritising those households who had no boxes.

**Outcome:** This element of the rollout was particularly frustrating due to resource availability for deliveries. Average delivery times became excessive during periods of high demand also adhering to chronology was highly inefficient. Notwithstanding the difficulties, ratepayers on the whole, were very understanding, patient and apart from a small handful of outliers, most households would have missed only one or two garden waste collections. The efforts by the staff in delivering the bins should also be commended particularly those coming in at weekends.

**Lessons learned:** Consider using an external company to deliver the bins e.g. removals company. If the job is to remain in-house, consider alternative delivery vehicles with higher payload. Have a strategic plan for deliveries, possibly having a scheduled roll out, whereby households in a given area are provided an initial window of opportunity to order their bin. Also investigate if the bin preparation can be done at the dwelling, which would make loading and unloading the delivery vehicle more efficient.

**POST IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: -**

**1. Commencement of garden waste collection**

The garden waste service commenced on Tuesday 30th August 2022 in line with the programme and a full six weeks before the scheduled commencement of fortnightly refuse collections. At this point there was only a few hundred garden bins in circulation so the collections were relatively light.

As the new service was scheduled to start in advance of the move to fortnightly refuse, it meant collecting garden bins and refuse bins as a concurrent process for a temporary period. This meant crews were continuing with their existing jobs whilst also doing the garden collections, this resulted in some overtime working and the use of agency staff, however the additional workload remained manageable due to the time of year. As garden bins in circulation increased general garden growth reduced, this helped minimise the impact of running the services concurrently prior to the change in service.

In terms of problems, initially there was a certain level of confusion, most notably in the Saddlestone area where the collection maps appeared to conflict with the collection schedules. However collection schedules showing the alternate week arrangements were published prior to the refuse going fortnightly and households quickly adjusted to the changes with the confusion relatively short lived.

The table below shows the tonnages collected for each month from commencement in late August/early September 2022 up until the end of October 2023. In the original plan the service was scheduled to run between the start of February to the end of October each year, but following representation from residents, the Council agreed to extend the service until November from 2023 onwards.



Table 2 – Garden waste collections

At the end of October 2023 approximately 667 tonnes of garden waste had been collected from households since the service commenced and 460 tonnes were collected in the first 7 months of 2023/24 (April to October).

For balanced analysis we would ideally want a minimum of two full years of data as the number of bins in circulation start to level out enabling a meaningful comparison, but we can say with a fair amount of confidence that a significantly large proportion of the material collected is a direct diversion from the Energy from Waste Facility (EFW) and whilst some will be diverted from the Civic Amenity site, skip tonnages at the site have not yet shown a significant change in weight since the garden waste service commenced. Overall, garden waste weights at the CA site are 100 tonnes down on the preceding 12 months but this is sporadic and no firm trends have yet been identified.

In terms of composting arrangements, the waste team agreed a price with a local composting facility and apart from a small number of occasions the loads have passed their quality control (BSO PAS100:2018), on occasions where plastic bags and other non-compostable materials have been found amongst the loads, collection staff have removed the contaminants.

**Objective:** To introduce garden waste collection on alternate weeks to refuse collections. To reduce compostable waste going to the EfW and the associated gate fee costs. To accommodate the new service within existing resources and to collect high quality material suitable for composting.

**Outcome:** Taking the garden waste collections in isolation has to be considered a success story, seamlessly embedding a brand new service in the daily round schedules and receiving positive feedback from ratepayers and the composting facility, as well as the gate fee savings from material diversion means our primary objectives were achieved.

**Lessons learned:** Whilst any service can be leaner and more efficient, there are no obvious areas for improvement in terms of collection.

## 2. Commencement of fortnightly refuse collections and associated operational challenges

Fortnightly refuse collection officially started on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023, however that was the last weekly collection for every household, thus on w/c 10<sup>th</sup> October only half of the Borough's refuse bins were collected. The other half who had

subscribed to garden waste collections would have the garden bin collected and their next refuse collection on w/c 17<sup>th</sup> October.

Unsurprisingly the change took some households by surprise and this triggered the next spike in communications (covered in more detail below). In terms of dealing with this early confusion and in anticipation of its potential impact, the Council agreed in advance to apply a flexible approach for the first month or so and not enforce the newly adopted policies, whereby crews would return to missed bins, would accept a degree of side waste and collect second bins.

In the first few months, side waste was by far the biggest issue, the vast majority of households had clearly started to adjust their behaviours during the roll-out phase and therefore, whilst side waste was problematic it tended to be confined to communal flat bins, areas where kerbside was not present or recycling facilities were limited and those typical locations where bins cannot be easily removed from the highway. At one point Waste Management had identified around 70 hot spots mainly in the Central Douglas area and locations such as Castle Mona Avenue and Clarence Terrace on the promenade. In many cases the problem related to little or no recycling provision and this was corrected as quickly as possible, albeit awaiting delivery of new bins with apertures did lead to delays.

Some of the larger flat blocks on the promenade also had capacity issues, which weren't always straightforward. Again a lot of the problems identified were due to residents failing to use the recycling bins and placing everything in the refuse bins. During this period waste services engaged with landlords/management companies to help get the message across to residents and apart from one or two exceptions Waste services were able to demonstrate that there was sufficient capacity if residents used the correct bins. Whilst this period was time consuming and at times frustrating, with the support of management companies the occupants eventually adjusted their behaviours and the issues reduced over time.

In terms of the hot spots, admittedly it did take several months to find solutions for each area, rarely were two situations the same and in a few cases, after investigation, it materialised that a property was an unregistered HMO (multiple occupancy) so clearly reducing their residual capacity by half was always going to be problematic. According to records the number of problematic areas was down to single figures by May 2023, and even in those cases temporary arrangements had been implemented to mitigate the impact, which in most cases was due to awaiting bin orders or communication issues with landlords.

From an operational perspective, it did take time to fine tune the new rounds to ensure workload was distributed fairly amongst the crews, and a great deal of credit must be given to the refuse operatives for their cooperation, patience and teamwork in adjusting to the changes, in what was a difficult period particularly when being asked to take side waste outside the Christmas period.

**Objective:** To move to fortnightly refuse collections on alternate weeks to the new garden waste collections. To ensure refuse rounds were well balanced in terms of workload so that none of the crews were disadvantaged by the changes. To ensure every household in the City has access to recycling facilities either at the kerbside or in a communal arrangement. To resolve issues in problem areas quickly with minimal disruption. To assist households who were finding it difficult to cope with the reduced residual capacity.

**Outcome:** Whilst there were problem areas, in real terms this was very small relative to population size. A degree of resistance was anticipated from the outset and it was known that some households would genuinely struggle and therefore in those scenarios, systems were introduced to assist and/or educate. Unfortunately resolving issues in many of the problem hot spots, became protracted,

perpetuating the inconvenience to some residents. Notwithstanding the issues faced in the hotspot problem areas, the core objectives were met.

**Lessons learned:** ideally, identifying all of the hotspots in advance, although this wasn't always possible due to lack of details regarding multiple occupancies. Ensuring there is an adequate stock of bins with apertures for collective recycling and similar to the garden waste service, ensuring there is adequate staff to deliver recycling bins.

### **3. Continuation of garden waste bins and recycle boxes deliveries**

The issuing of garden waste bins prior to moving to fortnightly collections was considered above, however it is also worth briefly reviewing the service after the change to fortnightly refuse collections commenced because access to the garden waste service would prove to be a major component in households coping with the reduced residual capacity.

Whilst many of the issues experienced during the rollout continued after the change in early October, these were relatively short lived as the service stopped at the end of October so whilst requests for bins continued to come in, there was no initial pressure for deliveries as the service was not due to recommence until February.

Unfortunately, the loss of a key member of staff in January and changes to key personnel through promotion meant a lack of capacity in the day to day operational management side. To their credit promoted staff continued to offer support but the primary focus was ensuring our statutory functions and recycling collections were prioritised and during this period the opportunity to clear the backlog of garden waste bin requests wasn't fully exploited. This resulted in a backlog of bins remaining undelivered after the service resumed in February. The total requests for garden bins were now in the thousands and a shortage of staff to deliver and/or prepare the bins for delivery was becoming a serious concern, often taking management and technical staff away from their daily duties for days at a time. The situation was further exacerbated, albeit in a positive way, due to the greater than anticipated increase in recycling participation resulting in a third recycling crew becoming established meaning fewer resources to deliver garden bins.

Referring to the garden bin deliveries (*table 1*) above, eventually a dedicated team was established, but at times other Council staff were drafted in to help deliveries at weekends.

In terms of recycling box deliveries, by and large waste services were able to maintain the two week turnaround and ordering the additional 3,000 boxes proved crucial in mitigating residual capacity concerns and complaints.

Please refer to the earlier comments in the rollout phase for Objectives and Outcomes.

### **4. Continued engagement with the public**

Similar to garden bin deliveries, it was felt that this needed to be addressed in two parts, the communication for the roll out phase is covered above. This section is concerned with what happened after we moved to fortnightly collections. As mentioned above, the initial change caught some households by surprise, resulting in the office being inundated with enquires including questions such as, why their bin hadn't been collected, when was their refuse and/or garden collection, others failing to put the bin out because they didn't think it was refuse week and obviously a large number of people complaining that they couldn't cope with the reduced capacity. Dealing with householders who genuinely couldn't cope with the reduced capacity is covered in more detail below, but early evidence indicated that the

majority of householders who expressed concern about capacity issues were not recycling and those properties were prioritised for box deliveries.

During this period we started to receive more enquiries and complaints regarding environmental quality, including a few reports of rodents in the vicinity of the bins. Side waste was by far the biggest issue and presented the biggest challenge for the Council, not only with refuse and cleansing staff but also the City Wardens. This will be covered in more detail below.

Whilst the vast majority of the public appeared to acknowledge the need to reduce waste and recycle more, a small number of groups and individuals emerged that were vehemently opposed to the change and questioned the supporting evidence. In one or two cases the dispute became protracted and significant Council resources were expended gathering evidence, responding to, in some cases, daily correspondence. During these occurrences the Waste Team documented the evidence with photos, schedules and where appropriate adjusted arrangements to accommodate genuine concerns. It must be said that the Waste team's job was made easier by the continued support and in some cases intervention by Councillors and Senior Management. Sadly one complaint was pursued through to Stage 4 of the Council's complaints procedure, which is an appeal to the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration. The complaint was not upheld, and this is covered in more detail below.

Again, most of the correspondence coming in by phone or e-mail, concerned things like missed bins, collection day enquiries, requests for garden waste bins or recycling boxes, requests for assessments and raising environmental concerns. Whilst the volume of calls was extremely high, most of the issues were common and easily dealt with and even where the complaints were escalated to the SE&WSM, these were generally straightforward and did not need to be escalated further, apart from the one notable exception which is referred to above and later in the report.

During this period waste services continued to use assistance from the Governments Workplace Scheme as well as more technical assistance from the Chief Executives Department, which after some coaching, meant reception staff were able to deal with more detailed enquiries such as advising of collection days or simply signposting people to the website or social media sites. This additional support helped reduce the volume of enquiries considerably for the Waste Team where at times the workload became very stressful e.g. e-mails alone amounted to more than 5,200 from October 2022 to the present.

**Objective:** Continue with campaign messaging, keeping ratepayers fully informed of the new service. Deal with enquiries promptly and adhere to the Council's complaints procedure.

**Outcome:** The experience gained through the rollout phase helped the waste team deal with the volume of calls, as enquiries became more predictable it was much easier to deal with them. Only one formal complaint was made, which proceeded to stage 4, with all other enquiries being addressed at the earlier stages. Under the circumstances, the SE&WSM feels that the waste team achieved their primary objectives, resolving the vast majority of enquiries in an informative, amicable and timely fashion.

**Lessons learned:** With the benefit of hindsight and now having an appreciation of the sheer volume of calls and e-mails, it would have been prudent to utilise Town Hall reception staff sooner in the process. A lot of the enquiries related to people just seeking information, which for whatever reason, they had not picked up during the communication campaign which feeds in to the earlier point about engagement of a media partner.

## 5. Assessments of individual household requirements

In anticipation that a proportion of households would not be able to cope with reduced residual capacity following the change in service, waste services formulated a protocol for dealing with this scenario. According to the 2021 Census around 5% of households contained 5 or more occupants, comprising 422 with 5 occupants and 142 with 6 or more. The calculation used to assess household waste requirements is based on BS5906:2005, which prescribes that each bed should have 75L + 30% (97.5L) capacity per week. So for example a typical 3 bedroom house containing 4 occupants, would require 292.5 litres week according to the Code of Practise (CoP). See table below.

### Before the change in service

Number of beds	(Litres) total household required per week according to BS5906	(Litres) Actual household refuse capacity per week	(Litres) Actual household recycling capacity per week (3 x 55L/ 2)	(Litres) Total capacity	(Litres) difference between required and actual per week
2	195	240	82.5	322.5	127.5
3	292.5	240	82.5	322.5	30
4	390	240	82.5	322.5	-67.5
5	487.5	240	82.5	322.5	-165

Table 3 – Household waste capacity prior to the change in service

The above table represents what each household should have had available in terms of capacity before the change in service. It makes the assumption that every household has at least one 240L refuse bin and at least three recycling boxes. It is also based on the assumption that one of the beds sleeps two persons with the remaining beds being single occupancy, thus a 3 bed house would contain four persons.

Households comprising three beds (four occupants) clearly meet the code of practise, with 30 litres spare each week. Those households with five occupants (4 beds) may have needed additional assistance and in most cases an additional recycling box or two would have been sufficient, particularly if they didn't have a garden or made their own arrangements for garden waste e.g. self-composting or taking to the civic amenity site. Properties with six or more occupants are clearly going to struggle but these represent just 1.2% of the population and would be eligible for additional capacity in most cases.

### After the change in service

Number of beds	(Litres) total household required per week according to BS5906	(Litres) Actual household refuse capacity per week	(Litres) Actual household recycling capacity per week (3 X 55L/ 2)	(Litres) Actual household garden waste capacity per week	(Litres) Total capacity	(Litres) capacity per person
2	195	120	82.5	120	322.5	127.5
3	292.5	120	82.5	120	322.5	30
4	390	120	82.5	120	322.5	-67.5
5	487.5	120	82.5	120	322.5	-165

Table 4 – Household waste capacity after the change in service

As can be seen from the above table the actual capacity needed and what the Council provides remains the same as it did prior to the service change, this is based on the assumption that every household has a garden, so that the 120L lost in refuse capacity is gained in garden waste. Clearly not every property has a garden, but the British Standard does not differentiate i.e. its model assumes everyone does, so in effect those properties without gardens technically had more residual capacity than those with a garden, before the change in service. Again households with four or less occupants are well within the requirements set out in the CoP, households with five occupants should be fine with a couple of additional recycling boxes, which leaves the 1.2% that will almost certainly need additional refuse capacity.

Aside from large family households, the other cohort that emerged requiring additional capacity was households where an occupant was receiving acute medical care and in such cases it was important to get the balance right between verifying the household's situation whilst respecting the dignity of individuals in those circumstances, this was one of the main reasons for changing the activity's title from 'assessment' to 'review'.

To date the Council has received 252 requests for a review (formally known as "assessment of household waste capacity"). Officers have conducted 242 reviews (10 outstanding) and 213 households were granted additional capacity (1.8% of households in the City), a further 29 did not receive additional capacity but were supported with additional recycling receptacles and waste minimisation advice.

A flow diagram showing the review protocol is attached below.

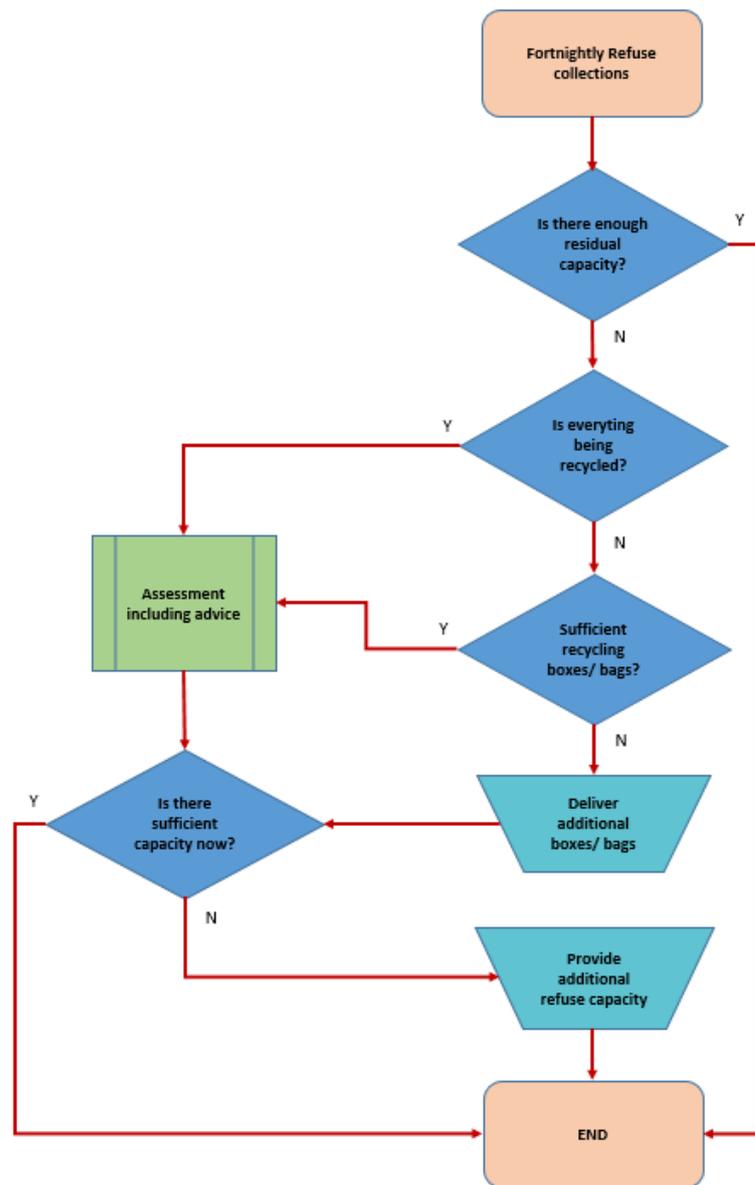


Fig 1 – Flow diagram of assessment process for additional refuse capacity

The first stage of an enquiry for additional capacity, is ordinarily dealt with in a telephone call, which is about understanding the householder’s basic circumstances, whether they recycle and do they have enough recycling boxes. A large proportion of the calls received about lack of capacity, amounted to the householder either not having (a) any recycling boxes; (b) not having enough recycling boxes, or; (c) not knowing which materials they could recycle. Again, in the vast majority of cases once householders understood the Council’s aims and objectives, and were provided with additional receptacles for recycling or a garden waste bin, this generally resolved the situation.

Those situations are not recorded as having received a review. Where additional capacity is provided, the general presumption is that the arrangement is likely to be temporary, whether it is families growing up and leaving home or changes in medical circumstances. On this basis it is intended to carry out a review of those households in 2025 to establish whether their circumstances have changed. This

approach is consistent with how Assisted Collections (Red Lid Bins) are currently administrated.

**Objectives:** To establish a protocol that is fair and equitable and stands up to scrutiny. To enforce the protocol in a fair and transparent way, respecting people's individual circumstances and attending reviews in a timely fashion.

**Outcome:** The protocol and its implementation met the Council's objectives, perhaps with the exception that, there were occasions due to workload and/ or availability of officers to conduct the on-site review that didn't happen as timely as intended, with some reviews taking up to a month, exceeding the target time of two weeks

**Lessons learned:** Ensuring there are sufficient trained staff to conduct the reviews, which may require utilising staff from other areas of the Council e.g. Community & Enforcement Team.

## **6. Implementation of the second bin, missed bin and garden waste contamination policies.**

As mentioned earlier in the report, three new policies were introduced to facilitate the change in service. Arguably the most controversial policy change was second bins, whereby prior to February 2022, householders could purchase a second bin and there was no requirement to justify why it was needed.

On Thursday 24th February 2022, the Executive Committee resolved that; *"the policy of selling second bins to households was to be suspended with immediate effect"* and; *"once the service change was implemented, a new policy of collecting only one standard 240-litre bin per household on collection day be introduced and enforced, subject to any variation as a result of an assessment."*

The above message was communicated to households throughout the rollout phase, but still caught some households by surprise once the change was implemented. During the first four weeks, refuse staff were asked to continue to collect both bins, primarily to ensure no household was left with rubbish for up to a month, however as part of this amnesty period, those households presenting two bins were given advisory notices that going forward the new policy would be instigated and if the policy presented capacity issues they should contact waste services for a review.

In November 2022, the SE&WSM brought forward a proposal to offer compensation to any householder that had purchased a bin in the preceding three years to the new service commencing. According to records approximately 66 households fell within the criteria and each household was written to, with a buy back offer in the sum of £25. To date no households have taken the offer up. Once the amnesty period elapsed and waste service started to instigate the policy, initial complaints by householders started to dissipate, and in many cases additional recycling boxes and a garden waste bin satisfied their concerns. In cases where the household had purchased a second bin through genuine need and their circumstances hadn't changed, they were able to keep their second bin following review.

The introduction of the missed bin policy is in real terms a reinforcement of the Council's existing, albeit unwritten policy, whereby unless there is evidence the bin was set out at the correct time and location, then it is assumed the bin was not made available for collection and the householder is advised that the Council will return on the next collection day. The new policy sought to establish two principles, firstly, in the first month/six weeks following the change in service, the Council would give an amnesty to households who failed to put their bin out irrespective of

the circumstances. The second principle was to establish the kind of circumstances where the Council would return once the policy is instigated.

Unsurprisingly in that first month, waste services returned for missed bins on dozens of occasions, mainly due to confusion about whether it was refuse or garden waste collections that week. Gradually, things did settle down particularly when the garden service finished in November, however waste services continued to support households during the following couple of months allowing a little flexibility to continue.

Twelve months on, and the situation is back to pre- fortnightly refuse collection levels, with just one or two calls per day and in the vast majority of cases they fall in to the 'extenuating circumstances' category e.g. just back off holiday, just moved in or the householder is a night shift worker.

In terms of garden waste contamination, the policy was primarily drafted in anticipation of householders using the bin to get rid of excess refuse, which was the experience in other jurisdictions. However, Waste Services has been pleasantly surprised, as this situation hasn't transpired; the quality of material coming from households has generally been very good, and apart from a few minor hiccups, no loads have been rejected by the Council's contracted composting outlet. Contamination generally amounts to plastic bags containing the garden waste which is easily remedied. Since the service started a total of three households have received warnings of contamination, none of which have repeated the offence. In addition, the Council's decision to extend the service to November for 2023 has been well received by service users and demonstrates the Council's willingness to listen to ratepayers and to do everything possible to help households adjust to the change in service.

**Objectives:** To formulate policies which help underpin the change in service. To allow a 'grace' period for households to adjust to the changes.

With regards to the 'no second bins policy', the aim was to increase recycling capture whilst supporting those households who are, or perceived to be adversely impacted by the change in service.

To help reduce the Council's carbon footprint by adhering to the missed bin policy whilst recognising those extenuating circumstances where the Council should return to collect.

To ensure high quality garden waste is diverted from the Energy from Waste Plant reducing disposal costs and contributing to the circular economy.

**Outcome:** The three policies met those objectives and instigation of the policies has been successful, evidenced through the following:

- Second bin policy – Only 213 households out of 11,600 households to date have applied and received additional capacity through the review process which suggests that the many hundreds of households who had a second bin prior to the change in service, didn't actually need it.
- Missed collections – The numbers of calls for missed collections has returned to the levels seen before the change in service, indicating that households have adjusted.
- Garden waste contamination – No rejected loads and only three warning notices issued since the service began.

**Lessons learned:** Generally, Waste Services is very satisfied with the outcomes of each policy, extending the garden service to November is a positive move and demonstrates the Council's willingness to engage and respond to ratepayer concerns. As the service change was introduced on the run up to Christmas, it

became necessary to extend the missed bin policy in to the Christmas period, not only to help households still adjusting to the change but to ensure any environmental issues arising from the change weren't exacerbated. Thus, in the future, greater consideration should be given to the best time to implement a change of this magnitude.

## **7. Environmental issues arising from the change in policy**

As alluded to earlier in the report, the biggest issue, by far, arising from the change in service was side waste. The Council's policy has always been "lids down, no side waste", and where it has occurred historically, these have been isolated incidences and dealt with fairly quickly. The Council has always operated a relaxation of this policy during the Christmas period and that has not changed under the new service. Similar to the other policies referred to above, it was always intended that the Council would allow an amnesty period so that households could adjust to the change and initially the period set was a month to six weeks, but it became apparent very quickly that this was not achievable in all areas.

As the service entered the Christmas period, households were reminded that the Council operated a more relaxed approach to side waste, providing guidance on how and what could be presented as acceptable side waste for collection. As part of this guidance it was made clear to households that the 'no side waste' policy would be fully enforced in the New Year.

During this period evidence started to emerge that in many cases the side waste was not necessarily the fault of the occupants but because of a genuine lack of residual capacity, which had not been apparent before the change in service, this primarily related to multi-occupancy dwellings and apartments usually served by communal bins. As mentioned above, at one point waste service had identified 70 hotspots, these were areas where a lack of residual capacity and limited recycling facilities compounded the problem. As discussed earlier waste services managed to work through the list, with delays mainly due to awaiting bin deliveries.

Another contributory factor which also came to light in the period, was that a number of HMO's had not been registered or at least their registration had not been shared with the Council's Building Control section. This meant Waste Services didn't always get notified of the need to increase capacity and why a lot of these hotspots were unexpected. On a positive note, there is now a much more proactive system in place between DEFA, Building Control and Waste Services in terms of sharing all newly registered HMO's.

To evidence what impact the change in service was having on the City, it was intended to conduct a Local Environmental Quality Survey, so that it could be benchmarked with previous years and against other UK Local Authorities'. Unfortunately due to the unavailability of trained surveyors, the survey has had to be repeatedly delayed and is now scheduled for early in 2024. However, it is not disputed that certain areas presented a challenge to all concerned in those first four to six months.

As mentioned above, alongside reports of heavy side waste the Council received numerous reports of an increased presence of rodents, there was also posts on social media, albeit these weren't necessarily reported direct to the Council. After receiving the first couple of reports, the SE&WSM contacted DEFA's Environmental Health to see if they had evidence showing a spike in reports, the Council were advised by EH they were not aware of any discernible change.

Several months later, around mid-spring, following further claims of rodent infestation and a request from the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration relating to the above mentioned complaint, the Director of Environment & Regeneration, contacted the Head of Environmental Health seeking the most up

to date statistics compared with previous years. The table below shows a comparison over the past three years and the current position:

#### RODENT REPORTS IN DOUGLAS

2021	2021 - Year	2021 - Q1	2021 - Q2	2021 - Q3	2021 - Q4
Mice domestic	190	51	23	41	75
Rats domestic	221	53	87	39	42
Rats domestic in house	41	12	10	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>132</b>
2022	2022 - Year	2022 - Q1	2022 - Q2	2022 - Q3	2022 - Q4
Mice domestic	161	55	30	23	53
Rats domestic	190	43	64	55	28
Rats domestic in house	88	35	8	11	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>105</b>
2023	2023 - YTD	2023 - Q1	2023 - Q2	2023 - Q3	2023 - Q4
Mice domestic	85	49	26	21	9
Rats domestic	176	53	103	59	6
Rats domestic in house	29	14	11	14	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 5 – Rodent reports (Data provided by Dept. of Environment, Food and Agriculture - Dec 2023)

The time period of particular note is Q4 - 2022 through to Q3 - 2023, (Q4 - 2023 is incomplete so is not used). Thus Q4 - 2022 represents the period when fortnightly collections commenced, comparing this with the corresponding period in 2021 shows an actual reduction of 21% in the number of reports. Similarly Q1 - 2023 showed a 13% reduction compared with the corresponding period in 2022. However there was noticeable spike in Q2 - 2023 (Apr-Jun) where reports increased by 37% compared with the same period in 2022 and was up 16% on 2021. A slight increase (5 additional reports) occurred in Q3 - 2023 but for analytical purposes this would be considered typical for that period. We can draw the conclusion from the above data that the periods where an increase in rodent presence could be expected i.e. the first 6 months after the change in service, did not materialise and actually showed a reduction in the number of reports. Q3 did show an increase on the previous two years, but at this point side waste was getting back to pre-change of service levels, so it would be difficult to explain the anomaly and could simply be linked to weather conditions for that period.

Another issue that arose after the change in service concerned litter bins, where evidence emerged that they were being used for household waste. The problem was twofold, firstly the bins were filling up much quicker resulting in overtopping with litter strewn in the vicinity requiring cleansing crews to be deployed and secondly, traditional litter bin emptying routes which had been devised using data from sensors, could no longer be relied upon resulting in reactive litter bin emptying, which is inefficient both in terms of time and vehicle fuel consumption and the associated emissions. At this point the Assistant Waste Services Manager

(street cleaning) compiled a list of litter bin hotspots, where household waste was regularly present, the original list contained over 30 locations at its peak. Working with the Community & Enforcement Manager, the Assistant Waste Services Manager (AWSM) identified an action plan, whereby the litter would be inspected in order to gather evidence of households who were misusing the bins. Whilst this was time consuming, in many cases it did reveal households who were given warnings to desist, as well as advice on how they could deal with their excess waste. Where no household could be identified, a general letter was circulated to households in the immediate vicinity of the litter bin, reminding householders not to use litter bins for household waste and again advising of the avenues available for excess waste. During the period four bins were removed or relocated out of more than 350 bins in circulation. The purpose of removing or relocating the bins was to compel offenders to adjust their behaviours. Interestingly, one or two of those households who complained about the litter bin being removed, were the households who had been misusing the litter bins. Within a few months, all bins were reinstated and on the whole the problem has radically reduced albeit not totally eradicated. The Council's experience in this regard is similar to that of other jurisdictions who have adopted restricted residual policies.

A further environmental concern, that never really transpired, was the potential of unpleasant odours arising from decomposing food waste, particularly associated with communal bin stores. Apart from one particular site that said odours had worsened since the change in service, it was not a major concern raised by ratepayers in general. The site that did raise odour as a concern, had also raised a number of other concerns, which did not materialise and after working very closely with the management company, the Waste Team were able to provide reassurance that their arrangements were appropriate in terms of the size of the bin store, the number and type of bins, relative to the number of occupants. After three to four months it would appear the residents were satisfied with the arrangements as the complaints stopped.

It is also worth pointing out that the environmental issues raised above are no different to that experienced by other jurisdictions, who have made a significant service change and this knowledge helped the Council anticipate and prepare for them

Finally, conducting an Environmental Quality Survey would be the best gauge of whether the change in service has had a detrimental impact on the City and so this particular issue will be reported once the survey is completed in early 2024.

**Objectives:** Reinforce the Council's existing policy regarding 'lids down, no side waste', allow a grace period for households to adjust, support households to minimise waste through education, ensure there are adequate receptacles and capacity for all households.

**Outcome:** The Council's objectives were well intentioned but a lack of historical data for certain areas with regards to occupancy levels, caused an issue. Issues in the first 2 – 3 months were predictable but a large number of problematic areas carried over in to the New Year and at times became protracted taking until mid-spring before the situation was fully resolved. Again, on reflection the litter bin issue was foreseeable but had not been identified as a significant risk, and clearly impacted the cleansing side of waste services, as well as the Community & Enforcement Team who at times were diverted from other essential activities

**Lessons learned:** Most of the issues faced were foreseen with the exception of the number of previously unknown HMOs and the need to have purchased more bins for communal recycling.

## 8. Events that arose following the change the service:

As discussed earlier in the report, the policy change was not universally well received and whilst responses to the 2021 on-line survey indicated that the change would be unpopular, it was believed that the introduction of the garden waste service and strong communication campaign would help to address householders concerns and in the vast majority of cases, it is believed this was achieved. However, three events occurred during this period which demonstrated the dissatisfaction felt by some ratepayers. These events are as follows: -

- Requisition meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022
- On-line petition challenging the change in service
- Tynwald Commissioner for Administration's findings following a formal complaint to the change in service

**Requisition meeting** – A requisition meeting was called by 20 residents and was held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at the Manx Legion. The event was hosted by Captain Stephen Carter as Captain of the Lonan Parish. The meeting would normally be hosted by the Mayor as Captain of Douglas but the then Mayor was unavailable due to personal circumstances. The meeting lasted approximately one and a half hours and was attended by approximately 143 people, not all of whom were residents of Douglas. There were a number of MHKs, Council officers and local media included within this overall figure. The event was fronted by Councillors Claire Wells and Falk Horning. The meeting was heavily covered by local media and while the majority of attendees disagreed with the change in service, a few spoke out in its favour. The meeting began, on advice, with an opening statement by the Leader followed by a question and answer session. The outcome of the meeting was the agreement to review the change in service in 12 months' time, hence the compilation of this report. Specific issues raised by individuals on the night were responded to by the Waste Services team in the days and weeks following the meeting.

**On line, Facebook (Meta) petition** – During the first few months following the service change, a small group of individuals started a Facebook page opposing fortnightly refuse collections. One of the individuals had been in regular e-mail exchanges with the Council Leader and in those early weeks, quite rightly flagged up some of the initial teething issues. Waste officers took on board the points they had raised and wherever possible acted on the constructive feedback.

However, it became apparent fairly quickly that no matter what measures or evidence the Waste Team produced to justify the change, in order to reassure the individual's concerns, their opposition could not be overcome. A Facebook group was formed with a number of followers and a fewer number of regular contributors. At this stage it is worth pointing out, that many of the posters had genuine concerns, whether it related to unsightliness, the presence of rodents, capacity issues or a perceived lack of information and in such cases the Waste Team diligently worked through the daily threads to distinguish between the real issues from the perceived. It is also worth bearing in mind that every individual looks at their own circumstances and projects them on the wider community e.g. a householder is struggling for capacity therefore everyone must be. The threads continued to be monitored to ensure misinformation wasn't detrimental to the Council or that any officer or individual was defamed.

Disappointingly, several press reports during the time repeated the misinformation circulating without affording the Council an opportunity to comment.

During Christmas/New Year 2022/23, an online petition was launched which sought to see the return of weekly refuse collections with immediate effect or the resignation of Councillors Wells and Horning. The Council reached out to the petitioners and gave advice on how the petition could be formally presented to the

Council so that it may be formally responded to. To date that advice has not been taken up and the petition remains unrepresented. Had the petition been presented the Council is likely to have responded to the first request to immediately return to weekly refuse collections by way of this report, reviewing the change in service and the consequences and implications of returning to weekly refuse collections. The second request calling for the resignation of two Councillors is not a valid petition request.

**Tynwald Commissioner for Administration's findings** – As mentioned above, only one formal complaint was made about the service change and this proceeded to stage 4 of the Council's complaints procedure. The initial enquiry was received by the Council in the summer of 2022, before the change in service or garden waste collections had commenced. The complainant raised concerns about the impact fortnightly collection would have on their immediate vicinity in terms of environmental quality. The individual had a long standing issue with bins being left in the back lane, in what they considered to be a breach of the Council's bylaw 24. Initially the Waste Team tried to reassure the complainant that their concerns were being treated seriously and that the Council would put measures in place to ensure their fears did not materialise. Regrettably the individual was not satisfied with the assurances from the waste team or the SE&WSM and sought to formalise their complaint which culminated in a referral to the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration. The Tynwald Commissioner for Administration considered the complaint over nine months and found the Council to not be guilty of any maladministration or that the complainant could prove they had suffered harm or injustice.

## 9. Climate Impact Assessment Tool (CIA) Nov 2023

The Isle of Man Government's describes the CIA's purpose as follows:

*"The primary purpose of the Climate Impact Assessment Tool is to ensure that the decisions of public bodies align with the climate change duties for public bodies (section 21 of the Climate Change Act 2021), as follows:*

- (1) A public body, in performing its duties, must act in the way that it considers best to contribute to —
- (a) the meeting of the net zero emissions target by the net zero emissions target year;
  - (b) the meeting of any interim target;
  - (c) supporting the just transition principles and the climate justice principle;
  - (d) sustainable development, including the achievement of the United Nations sustainable development goals; and
  - (e) protecting and enhancing biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services.

*To assess your proposal for alignment with these duties, the tool prompts consideration of the impacts of the proposal on a range of environmental and social criteria.*

*The tool also supports alignment with wider government priorities relating to economic, environmental and social value and sustainability, including Our Island Plan.*

*Completing this assessment as early as possible will help strengthen your proposal by highlighting positive areas and areas for improvement, improving final outcomes, value for money and sustainability."*

Whilst the CIA tool was not available when Committee was considering the change in service, and its primary use is for public bodies in the decision making process

concerning new proposals, the tool can also be used to verify whether a previous decision aligns with the Climate Change Act 2021. Thus the Council's Net Zero Team undertook a retrospective Climate Impact Assessment in September 2023, the results are shown below: -

### Alternate Weekly Refuse Collections



KEY	IMPACTS	ACTION
	Significant and/or long-term positive impact identified.	No changes needed.
	Slight or short-term positive impact identified.	No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
	Not applicable or no cause for concern.	No changes needed.
	Slight or short-term negative impact identified. Review to identify possible improvements.	Review to identify possible improvements.
	Significant and/or long-term negative impact identified.	Changes needed before proceeding. If changes are not possible, justification required.
	Responses incomplete.	Please return to assessment and answer all of the questions in this section.

Fig 3 – Climate Impact Assessment (Dashboard) completed in December 2023.

As can be seen from the chart above there are 10 Environmental Impacts (outer ring) and 11 Social Impacts (inner ring). Overall the change in service achieved three significant or long term positive impacts, four slight or short term positive impacts and just one slight or short term negative impact. The ‘Democratic Voice’ factor which scored a slight/short term negative impact, related to the extent of involvement the ratepayer had with regards to the change in service.

**10. Summary of the key outcomes 12 months in to the change**

Having considered all of the key activities, actions and events that took place, both before and after the Council moved its refuse collections to fortnightly, it now remains to evaluate whether the Council’s overarching objectives were met, which fundamentally goes back to the original 2018 motion: *“To investigate options to substantially increase kerbside recycling collections as a percentage of the monthly domestic waste arising”*.

Many of the following statistics are covered in the November 2023 Committee report, which considered the ‘Short To Medium Term Strategy for Processing Recyclables’ as well as Monthly Member’s Bulletins.

Whilst the Council’s overarching objective is clear, identifying a solution resulted in multiple reports, case studies, research from industry experts, on-line and door step surveys and information gathered from composition studies in order to determine a way forward. The first major step in the journey was in 2020/21 when the Council started collecting cardboard at the kerbside, members had recognised that if fortnightly collections were to succeed then removing bulky cardboard from household refuse bins was a crucial first step, to facilitate the new service the Council identified an alternative recycling vehicle which had more compartments, compaction capability and greater capacity.

Alongside cardboard, the 2018 Report ‘Increasing The Household Recycling Rate’, identified garden waste as the other waste stream which, if removed from refuse bins, would make fortnightly collections achievable and why it was critical that the garden waste service started in advance of the fortnightly collection in the implementation programme.

Referring to *tables 1 and 2* above, May 2023 represented the biggest garden waste collection since the service commenced at 104 tonnes, over a thousand additional bins have been issued since then, which would theoretically give a potential increase of circa 25% to 28% or 130 tonnes for a peak month. With regards to vehicle emissions, the garden collection service, directly replaces a previous refuse collection round, so is neutral in terms of the Council's carbon reduction targets. In addition, assuming a conservative 70% of that garden waste would have historically been placed in the refuse bin then in effect 91 tonnes was diverted from the EFW for that month alone.

In terms of dry recyclables (excluding garden waste), the figures are published in the monthly members bulletin but for comparative purposes the table below shows the twelve month preceding the change in service compared with the twelve months after implementation:

Material collected at kerbside (tonnes)	Oct21 - Sep22	Oct22 - Sep23	% change
Paper	126.86	179.69	142%
Cardboard	35.27	47.6	135%
Plastic & Cans	104.99	120.28	115%
Glass	286.3	359.74	126%
<b>Total</b>	<b>553.42</b>	<b>707.31</b>	<b>128%</b>

Table 6 – Comparison of dry recyclables collected at the kerbside before and after the change in service

The chart below shows the trend lines for the totals dataset broken down by months. Month '1' being October when fortnightly refuse started. Month '5' is February and is historically a lean month for recyclables, whereas August (month 11) is historically high.

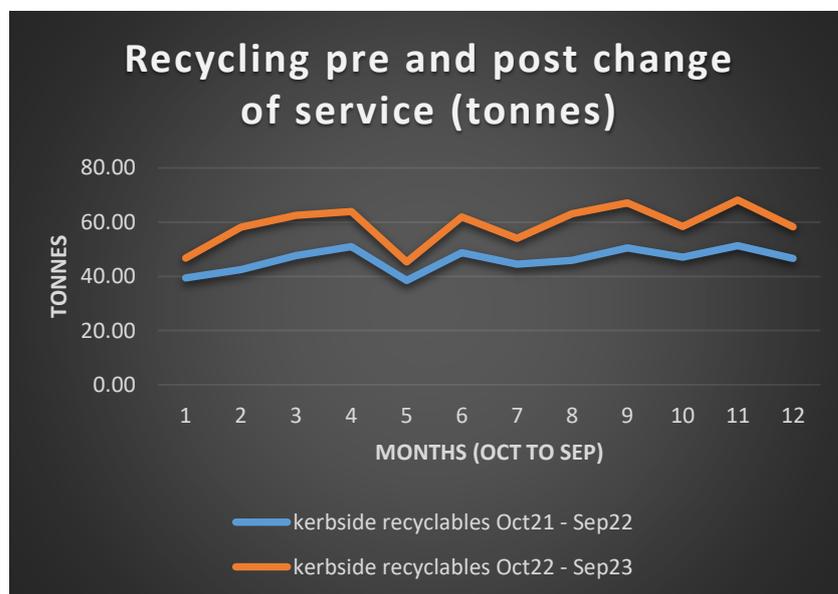


Fig 3 – Chart showing comparison of tonnages for 12 before and after change in service

The twelve months preceding the move to fortnightly collection gave an average recycling rate\* of 5.8%, this figure has been fairly consistent over the past few years and one of the main reasons why members sought to understand why it had remained static despite various campaigns and door knocking. Since the change in service the average figure for the following twelve months was 9.2%, with a record high of 10.3% in August 2023.

\* The recycling rate is the amount of recyclables in tonnes as a proportion of total household waste arising's.

Factoring garden waste in to the recycling rate shows an average of 6.2% for the twelve months before the change in service, bearing in mind that garden waste collections had started 6 weeks before fortnightly refuse, moving to an average 16.6% for the subsequent twelve months, with a year high of 24.13% in May 2023.

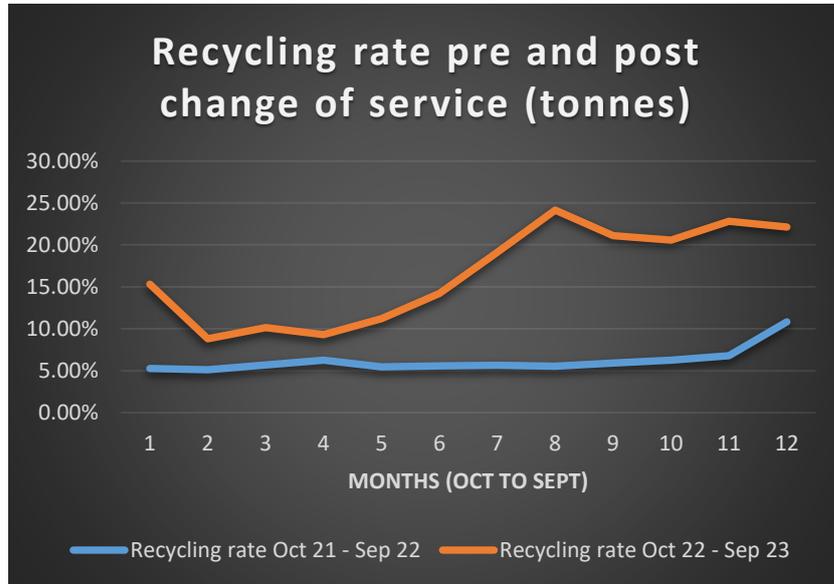


Fig 4 – Chart showing recycling rate before and after the change in service

The above chart shows the trend line for the recycling rate per month before and after the service change, month '1' representing October 22 and 23.

Months 2, 3 and 4 (Nov to Jan) are periods where the garden waste service didn't operate, and why the differential between the two datasets is marginal. The upturn months 11 & 12 for 2022 (blue line) is when the garden waste service commenced.

In terms of the financial benefits of the change in service, whilst not being the primary driver, potential cost savings were considered in the reports regarding the change. Early projections indicated a potential net saving of circa £25k in year one.

The actual gate fee savings, were as follows:

From	01/10/2021	01/10/2022	
To	30/09/2022	30/09/2023	Difference
	£	£	£
Domestic waste - tipping charge	£1,001,182.80	£803,523.97	-£197,658.83
Garden waste - tipping charge	£1,534.30	£21,997.90	£20,463.60
Combined waste - tipping charge	£1,002,717.10	£825,521.87	-£177,195.23

Table 7 – tipping costs pre and post change of service – source Finance Department Jan2024.

The above table shows a tipping cost saving of £177k some of which will be re-invested to improve the service and this is the subject of separate reports.

The additional recycling material should theoretically generate additional revenue income and this will be evaluated at the end of the financial year. The early indications are an approximate 10 to 15% increase in revenue from disposal of recyclable material from 72k in 2021/22 to £98k in 2022/23 (incl. 6 months post change of service) to a predicted £110k for 2023/24. Members are reminded that the commodity market for recyclable material is volatile so any estimate is only a gauge, for example, the table below shows plastic bottle prices for 2022/23:

Plastic bottles and PTT prices £ per tonne 2023	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Clear and light blue PET	340 - 430	290 - 360	280 - 350	280 - 350	240 - 300	200 - 300	120 - 220	100 - 180	100 - 170	100 - 175	70 - 155	90 - 170
Coloured PET	-45 - 0	-50 - 0	-40 - 0	-40 - 0	-50 - 0	-60 - 0	-80 - 0	-80 - 0	-80 - 0	-75 - 0	-80 - 0	-80 - 0
HDPE natural	840 - 940	850 - 950	900 - 1000	920 - 1000	980 - 1080	990 - 1090	930 - 1030	800 - 870	700 - 780	680 - 780	600 - 750	610 - 730
HDPE mixed colour	330 - 400	320 - 400	325 - 405	325 - 405	300 - 360	330 - 400	330 - 400	330 - 400	330 - 400	290 - 380	260 - 340	260 - 340
Mixed bottles	60 - 150	50 - 130	50 - 130	70 - 150	100 - 160	130 - 200	110 - 200	80 - 150	70 - 140	70 - 135	20 - 100	40 - 100
PTT - Pots, Tubs and Trays	0 - 40	0 - 30	0 - 30	0 - 40	0 - 50	0 - 55	0 - 50	0 - 50	0 - 50	0 - 50	-15 - 30	-15 - 25

Note: PTT - pots, tubs and trays - price indicators were introduced in May 2020.

Table 8 - Plastic bottles prices (mixed bottles) per tonne – source: Let's Recycle 2024

Members will note a year high value of £130 to £200 per tonne in June, to a year low £20 to £100 per tonne in November 2023 in the 'Mixed Bottles' category. The Council doesn't have the equipment to separate Type 2, HDPE bottles (High Density Polyethylene) from the lower quality Type 1, PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) or Type 5, PP (Polypropylene), which is why it is sold as mixed.

Similarly with Aluminium cans, the most valuable commodity collected at the Kerbside saw a drop in value throughout 2023 from a year high of £1k per tonne in January 2023 to a year low of £880 per tonne by December:

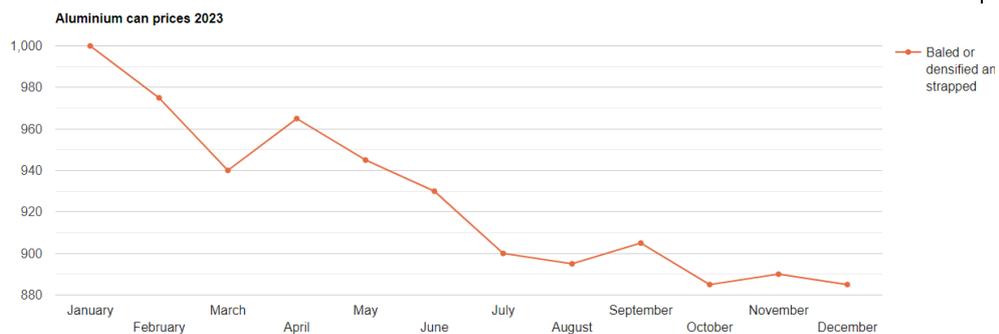


Fig 5 – Chart showing Aluminium prices ,per tonne for 2023 – source: Let's Recycle 2024

**Objectives:** Substantially increase kerbside recycling collections as a percentage of the monthly domestic waste arising, reduce the Council's carbon footprint (see CIA above), reduce waste disposal costs at the Energy from Waste facility and increase revenue through sale of processed recyclables.

**Outcome:** All of the Council's key objectives were met and with more garden bins and recycling boxes in circulation it is believed that the trend will continue upwards as households continue to adjust.

	<p><b>Lessons learned:</b> Whilst this covered in more detail above, some of the less successful aspects of the roll out/communication phase, resulted in some households not seeking garden waste bins or additional recycling boxes earlier, which could be considered as a missed opportunity to reduce disposal costs and increase revenues through disposal of recycling material.</p> <p>Generally, despite some of the issues faced, it is considered that the change in service succeeded in terms of increasing the recycling rate. The October 2021 report 'Alternate Weekly Refuse Collections' identified a minimum target capture rate of 8% dry recyclables and 3% garden waste, the feasible capture rate gave 15% dry recyclables and 6% garden waste. As discussed above, the dry recycling rate is averaging around 9.2% exceeding the minimum target and garden waste is at least achieving the feasible target.</p> <p>Another concern raised prior to the change in service was the impact on the Energy from Waste Facility by diverting material from incineration to reprocessing, the evidence thus far is that there has been no adverse impact and clearly removing items such as glass and metal, which have no calorific value is a positive outcome.</p> <p>A separate report entitled "Waste Transfer Station" was considered by Committee in November 2023 which covered the sustainability of the current processing operation at the Council's Operational Service Centre. The report analysed the impact of increased recycling material capture on the facility and the circumstances where alternative arrangements would need to be made in order to future proof the service.</p> <p>Committee may wish to note that the Council received six Freedom of Information requests throughout the entire process.</p> <p>As a final note, the change in service was never going to be straightforward. As with any major change to public services there will be resistance, particularly if there is a perception that ratepayers are getting less value for their money. It is the SE&amp;WSM opinion that the key to meeting that challenge was how the Council as a collective, responded to adversity, furthermore as the author of the report the SE&amp;WSM would like to take the opportunity to single the Waste Services Technical Assistants out for special praise, who for a sustained period went above and beyond, in what, at times, was an extremely stressful, occasionally hostile and highly pressured environment, and they should be extremely proud of themselves.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT RECOMMENDED</b>
	Not applicable
<b>6</b>	<b>IF PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE OR COUNCIL, DATE AND DECISION</b>
	A twelve month review of the change in service has not been conducted previously.
<b>7</b>	<b>CAPITAL COST AND FUNDING SOURCE</b>
	None arising from this report
<b>8</b>	<b>CHANGES TO REVENUE ESTIMATES AND FUNDING SOURCE</b>
	None arising from this report
<b>9</b>	<b>STAFFING/HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS</b>

	No implications arising from this report	
<b>10</b>	<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
	None foreseen	
<b>11</b>	<b>EQUALITY ACT COMPLIANCE</b>	
	Not applicable. There are no adverse impacts on those with key characteristics arising from this report and therefore an Equality Impact Assessment has not been conducted.	
<b>12</b>	<b>COMPLIANCE WITH CORPORATE PLAN</b>	
	<p><b>2.0 Delivery of services to support the community and local economy</b></p> <p>2.3. Deliver quality services to support a vibrant diverse local economy</p> <p>2.3.3. Deliver an effective street cleaning and refuse &amp; recycling collection service</p> <p><b>4.0 Environmental improvement</b></p> <p>4.3. Reduce the Council's carbon footprint and support others to do so</p> <p>4.3.1. Align with the Isle of Man Government's net zero emissions by 2050 strategy and aim to be net zero ready by 2035</p> <p>4.4. Become an exemplar for environmental sustainability</p> <p>4.4.5. Continue to actively promote the reduce, reuse and recycle waste approach</p>	
<b>13</b>	<b>BUSINESS RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
	As the change in service is now fully implemented any anticipated business risks have been eliminated or mitigated.	
<b>14</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</b>	
	Positive. Please see Climate Impact Assessment (page 23 above).	
<b>15</b>	<b>IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (of the City or Island)</b>	
	None arising from this report	
<b>16</b>	<b>CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES</b>	
	None arising from this report	
<b>17</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	
	Not applicable	
<b>18</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
	None.	
	REPORTING OFFICER	Senior Engineering & Waste Services Manager
	RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OFFICER	Director of Environment & Regeneration

DATE	<b>10<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>	
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