



URN: 21-021

Subject: Waste and Recycling update

Report to: ELT 14th July
Environment Committee 28th July

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SUBJECT MATTER

This report provides an update for Members with regard to the waste services that the Council provides focusing on kerbside recycling and flytipping.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee:

- Notes the information contained within this report.
- Note that service delivery in the main has been sustained with limited disruption despite the impact of Covid and the significant increase in tonnages and service demand.
- Continues in its support the enforcement stance of Environmental Services around street scene issues including flytipping
- To support the continuing educational work to address flytipping through localised targeted work (hotspot project) and collaborative work of the Norfolk Waste Enforcement Group

1. Introduction

1.1. The Borough Council is classed as a Waste Collection Authority. It has legal duties to collect household waste, provide a recycling service and carry out the removal of flytips on land under its control.

1.2. The majority of properties in the Borough are serviced by an alternate weekly collection using twin bins (grey for residual and green for recycling). A further 7000 properties, mainly Community Housing flatted properties, are collected using communal waste and recycling bins which are collected weekly. There are approximately 400 properties where storage is an issue (e.g. flats above a shop) and these remain on a bag collection. Residents also have the option to subscribe to the chargeable garden waste service using either a brown bin collected fortnightly or

garden waste sacks which the resident phones in to arrange collection of as and when required.

- 1.3.** Residual waste once collected is delivered to Caister Transfer Station where responsibility for it is then handed over to Norfolk County Council, who are the Waste Disposal Authority. Recycling is collected comingled which means all accepted materials are collected together and subsequently sorted. Recycling is also delivered to Caister transfer station where it is then bulk loaded to the NEWS Material Recovery Facility (MRF) at Costessey. Here it is mechanically and manually sorted into its individual material streams and then passed to reprocessors for recycling. Garden waste also goes to Caister Transfer Station where it is then bulk delivered to the NEWS composting facility at Marsham.
- 1.4.** Whilst the disposal of residual waste sits with the County Council for recycling and garden waste this responsibility sits with the Borough Council. As an incentive for diverting these materials away from the residual stream the County Council pays the Borough Council a recycling credit which currently sits at £65.96 per tonne. The Borough Council is in a contract with NEWS for the bulk transfer, sorting of recycling and processing of garden waste and is charged a “gate fee” for every tonne of material it delivers. The current gate fees are £36.14 per tonne for recycling and £40.50 per tonne for garden waste. The Council contracts with NEWS for recycling and garden waste are due to expire in 2024.
- 1.5.** Flytipping (the illegal depositing of waste) also falls upon the Borough Council to remove where it is placed on land under its control. GYBS operates 1 dedicated flytip removal crew (cage wagon plus driver and 1 operative) and another crew which does a mixture of flytip removal and litter clearance. Flytipped material is taken to Caister Transfer Station where it is passed to Norfolk County Council for disposal. Electrical items are unloaded and kept separate from other waste at the transfer station which County arranges to be recycled.
- 1.6.** Flytipping is a criminal offence under the Environmental Protection Act. The Borough Council employs a team of four Environmental Rangers whose remit is around street issues including enforcement and education around flytipping. As with any criminal offence adequate evidence must be obtained to progress enforcement action such as an admission of guilt, CCTV footage or a witness statement. Whilst paperwork found in waste does provide a starting point for enquires it is classed as circumstantial and cannot be relied upon on its own as evidence. As per the Councils Enforcement Policy any action sought must be appropriate to the offence. The Council has a range of enforcement options open to them including informal and formal warnings, community protection warnings/notices, fixed penalty notices, formal cautions and

prosecution. The maximum penalty for flytipping is an unlimited fine and/or a custodial sentence.

2. Waste and Recycling

Tonnages

- 2.1** The onset of the Covid outbreak and subsequent lockdowns has had a significant effect on waste and recycling tonnages. Obviously during this period people lifestyles changed with a large volume of people working at home, being restricted in being able to go out and socialise and generally spending extended periods at home which in turn has prompted people to busy themselves with DIY and general household clear-outs. Additionally, for part of the first lock down Norfolk County Council closed their Household Recycling Centres meaning residents did not have the option to take waste there. This all generated additional waste and recycling much of which the Borough Council picked up through its kerbside collections.
- 2.2** Residual tonnages have seen the biggest tonnage increase with over 1700 tonnes additional waste being collected in 2020 against the previous year, this equates to a 6.8% increase. Though covid restrictions were still in place at the start of 2021 the trend has slowed down, and tonnages do appear to have started to decline towards their normal level. The below chart shows tonnage comparison for previous years and the effects of the March 2020 lockdown is clearly evident:

Residual Waste Tonnage

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jan-March	6485	6430	6373	6682 *
April-June	6832	6572	7164	
June-Sept	6332	6384	7023	
Oct-Dec	6198	6216	6791	
Total	25,847	25,602	27,351	N/A

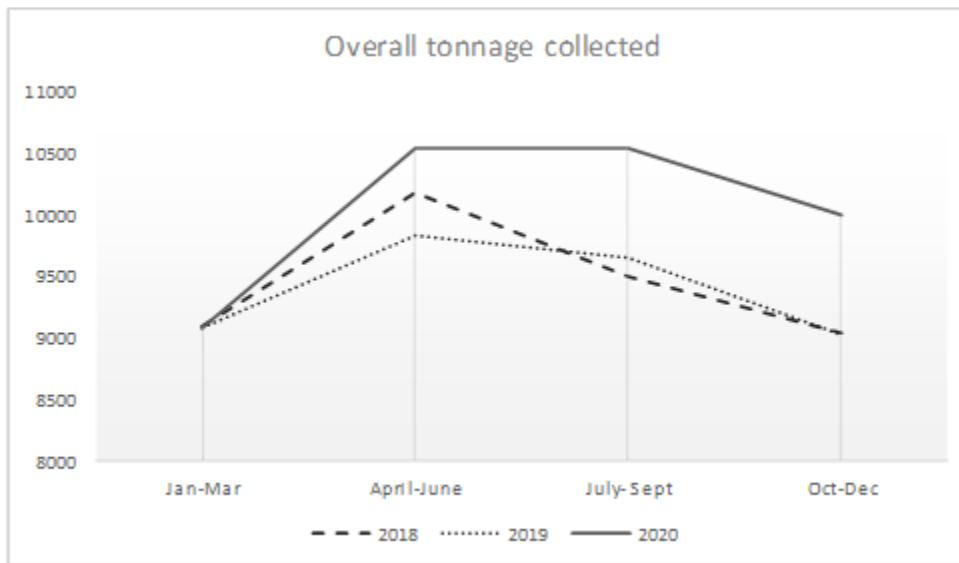
- 2.3** Whilst it is disappointing to see any residual waste increase it is reassuring that during the same period kerbside recycling proportionally saw a larger increase in the tonnage collected against the previous year. This was an increase of nearly 750 tonnes which equates to an increase of 8.75%. In recent years generally recycling has seen a slowdown in growth and at time a decrease in tonnage as manufactures reduce the amount of packaging used. Similar to the waste tonnages the effects of lockdown are evident in the tonnage breakdown both for the March and leading up to Christmas:

Kerbside Recycling Tonnage

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jan	891	883	884	869
Feb	663	635	624	635
Mar	752	653	701	751
April	698	696	761	783

May	729	704	751	
June	692	647	816	
July	735	771	840	
Aug	752	725	704	
Sept	655	649	765	
Oct	704	709	740	
Nov	685	667	760	
Dec	716	740	875	
Total	8,672	8,479	9,221	N/A

2.4 The overall effects of this tonnage increase were dealt with well by GYBS who had the pressure of picking up the additional volumes of waste and recycling. Though rounds often took longer to complete with additional tipping required there was not any significant effect to service delivery for refuse and recycling. Most rounds were completed on their scheduled days. It does appear that tonnages are dropping to normal levels, however these figures will be monitored and should any sustained increase risk service delivery this will be reviewed with GYBS. The difference in overall tonnage of waste collected (residual, recycling and garden) can be seen in the following graph:



Recycling Contamination

2.5 Contamination where unsuitable items are placed in the recycling bin has continued to be an issue in the Borough and this trend has been seen generally at national level. Contamination can have significant detrimental effects on the recyclate its mixed with, creating unnecessary work at the MRF to remove it and potentially affecting quality and subsequently its value. Gate fees for recycling are partially based on levels of contamination which the MRF has to deal with and dispose of. Main sources of contamination include general waste, food, unsuitable plastics, textiles and nappies. Whilst our current level of contamination is above what the Council hopes to achieve it is decreasing and has seen over a 5% drop since 2019. Give that the tonnage of

kerbside recycling increased by 8.75% last year it is reassuring that this increase was not due to inappropriate waste being placed in the recycling bin. The drop in contamination appeared to start when the first lockdown began – the reason behind this is unclear.

Recycling Contamination

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jan-March	20.8%	22.2%	20.6%	18.2%
April-June	20.2%	23.5%	18.6%	
June-Sept	21.2%	21.3%	18.1%	
Oct-Dec	22.1%	21.3%	18.4%	

2.6 Work around contamination continues but has not been as proactive over the past year due to emphasis of the Environmental Services department being directed towards the Covid response. Where bins are identified as being significantly contaminated work is done with the resident(s) by the Environmental Ranger team to educate them on correct use. As part of the targeted work being carried out in North Yarmouth communication is being delivered to properties which covers a range of issues including contamination. Moving forward contamination will be one of the main focuses as officers’ step back from the Covid response.

Recycling Consistency Consultation

2.7 The Government has recently released a consultation on a number of proposals which would place new requirements on local authorities and could have significant effects on the way the Borough Councils delivers its services. The intent of these proposals is to increase recycling both at a household and business level. If instigated these proposals could start to come in from 2023. The main points covered by these proposals are-

- The collection of specific recycling materials separately from other recycling materials
- The requirement for Councils to operate a weekly food waste collection service
- The free collection, or capped pricing, of garden waste
- Putting additional requirements on businesses to recycle and methods of providing services to them more affordable

2.8 This consultation which closed on 4th July 2021 has been responded to both by Great Yarmouth Borough Council and by the Norfolk Waste Partnership. The date the government response to the consultation will be published has not yet been released. Until this response is released and the proposals are finalised it is very difficult to

determine the changes to service that will be required. Environment Committee will be updated as further information is released.

Garden Waste

2.9 The garden waste service was suspended for a 6 week period in March 2020 due to the covid restrictions and the extra crews needed to deliver the waste and recycling collections. A further suspension of 4 weeks was needed in Feb 2021 due the cold weather and icy conditions. This has impacted on the existing contracts being extended to cover these periods. We have also seen an increase in tonnages of garden waste collected when the service was operating and have also seen an increase in subscriptions after a recent promotion leaflet drop.

2.10 Due to the complications around current contract extensions and new customer sign ups all being in progress we will bring a separate report to committee in the future to provide more detail on the tonnages and impacts on the service.

Bulky Items

2.11 Alongside the other waste streams and flytipping figures (covered in 3.) the demand for the bulky items collection service has seen a year on year increase. GYBS operate a Monday to Friday chargeable collection for large items. This service is one dedicated crew (driver plus one operative) and vehicle.

2.12 During the first lockdown this was one of the services which was suspended due to the Covid restrictions and staff supporting the core waste and recycling services. Even with this 6 week suspension overall during the year service demand for it still increased. The following figures are the number of collections carried out in recent years-

	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2020 - March 2021
No of collections	3843	4525	4634

Based on the demand had the service been operational for the full year and not been suspended the overall number of collections would be of been in the region of 5168, which would be over a 34% increase since 2018/19.

2.13 Due to the increase in demand there is a wait for people between requesting the service and having their items collected. This is currently between 1-3 weeks dependant on location, however towards the latter end of 2020 this was as much as a 4-6 week wait due to the demand.

2.14 As part of the work of the bulky item collection team they have historically also delivered wheeled bins to properties, including to new builds, replacements bins and to people subscribing to the garden waste service. Due to the increase in demand of both the bulky item collection service and the volume of new bins/garden waste requiring delivery there has been a delay in getting the bins out and the service is

stretched. Currently there are 400 properties awaiting delivery of bins. As the crew are working to capacity in collecting bulky items delivery of bins is being carried out at the weekends by staff at GYBS working overtime. Should current levels of demand for both bulky items and bin delivery continue this will something that will need to be reviewed.

3. Flytipping

3.1. Like kerbside waste and recycling tonnages saw an increase during last year so did the number of incidents of flytipping. This is a similar pattern nationally and has gained a lot of media attention. Reasons for this are being put down to people spending extended time at home and taking the opportunity to undertake home improvements at their properties or having a general clear out. The closure of recycling centres and some licensed waste collectors scaling down operations making it more difficult to dispose of items meant more people may have taken waste disposal into their own hands. 2019 had seen a decrease in the number of incidents of flytipping. There was a noticeable increase in February 2020 which is unexplained. The sustained increase in flytipping did not initially occur at the start of the first lockdown but took a number of months to see a noticeable difference. This increase continued and was very much the case though to Christmas with some month's numbers doubling against the previous year. Numbers do appear to now be falling. Data against previous years is below:

Number of flytipping incidents per month

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jan	383*	137	125	155
Feb	108	128	183	144
Mar	106	94	132	176
Apr	125	144	123	
May	115	125	195	
Jun	126	96	192	
July	190	117	205	
Aug	148	101	169	
Sept	140	127	204	
Oct	138	116	238	
Nov	116	112	251	
Dec	98	113	104	
Total	1793	1,410	2,031	N/A

*Recording was being carried out differently at this point and included side waste

3.2. The issue of flytipping in the Borough is very much orientated in the urban area. Rather than the perhaps traditionally perceived image of the flytipper being the

“white van man” dumping in rural areas the number of incidents of this nature is extremely low and not a regular occurrence. Most incidents do occur in Great Yarmouth and in particular in rear service roads and alleys in terraced or flatted areas. These alleys provide opportunity for people to place items out from their back gate with limited chance of being seen especially if done under the cover of darkness. Routinely flytips will consist of general bagged refuse, white goods and furniture. To provide a comparison of the incidents by area the below shows a breakdown of the flytips reports received via the Report It App by Ward for 2020.

Flytipping Reports Via the App By Ward for 2020

(this does not include reports phoned in direct to GYBS)

Ward	No. Of Reports
Bradwell North	21
Bradwell South and Hopton	29
Caister North	6
Caister South	15
Central and Northgate	710
Claydon	61
East Flegg	12
Flegg	12
Gorleston	31
Lothingland	16
Magdalen	32
Nelson	420
Ormesby	24
Southtown and Cobholm	174
St Andrews	68
West Flegg	18
Yarmouth North	149

Flytipping Enforcement

- 3.3.** As highlighted in section 1.6 flytipping is a criminal offence. The Environmental Ranger team were created in 2002 to address a range of street scene related issues and are the primary officers dealing with flytipping offences. The team cover seven days a week so that a visible presence is about on the weekends which has the added factor follow up investigations can take place when people are more likely to be at home. The Rangers has by far the best enforcement record in Norfolk. As an Authority a stance has been taken that where evidence is adequate, and it is in the public’s interest to do so further action will be sought in cases of flytipping using the enforcement options outlined in section 1.6 above.
- 3.4.** Though flytipping incidents increased in 2020 enforcement and investigatory work did decrease as a result of the Ranger team being redeployed for much of the year for the Covid response providing support in food deliveries, operation of the food hub and

welfare checks. When the Rangers did return to their substantive roles due to the delays experienced in Courts cases were dealt with through alternative options such as issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and Formal Cautions. As information in the past five years the Rangers have carried out the following enforcement actions with regard to waste related offences-

Enforcement Type	Number of actions taken
Prosecution	63
Formal Caution	37
Fixed Penalty Notices	24
Community Protection Warnings	50
Formal Warnings	101

3.5. Proactive work is also undertaken to address flytipping including a social media presence through the Rangers Facebook page which is one of the Councils most viewed sites. Checks on business's have been carried out to ensure they are legally compliant in how they are disposing of waste with over 150 checks having been made in the past two months. The Rangers are heavily involved with the targeted work taking place in north Yarmouth an update of which members will received separately. At a County level ,through the Norfolk Waste Enforcement Group a SCRAP flytipping campaign was launched which reminds people to check their waste is being taken away for disposal by a licensed carrier – either by asking to see a Waste Carriers Licence or by looking up the company on the Environment Agency website.

4. Financial Implications

4.1. There are no current direct financial implications within this report. However the points raised in section 2.7 if instigated will create significant service change. The Government has said it may financially support these service changes however details around this and the extent any budgetary support would cover would not be expected until proposals are finalised.

5. Risk Implications

5.1. This report is for member information only and no risk have been identified.

6. Legal Implications

6.1. None identified

7. Conclusion

7.1. Despite there being many challenges during the pandemic, the waste service has continued to operate with minimal impact to the residents of the Borough. We have

seen a significant rise in tonnages for both waste and recycling but also some reduction in the contamination rates.

- 7.2.** The rangers although redeployed have still achieved a high level of enforcement against those who fly tip, the challenge now is to stop the flytipping the first instance and change peoples behaviour has enforcement alone will not work. The committee are aware of the hotspot project, this will be the subject of another report on its progress and success.

8. Background Papers

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	N/A
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	N/A
Existing Council Policies:	Yes – Refuse and Recycling
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	None
Legal Implications (including human rights):	None
Risk Implications:	None
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	The flytipping section of this report links into environmental ASB and also the selective licensing area where these issues are prevalent. Joint working done as required across this area.
Every Child Matters:	N/A