

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: CHANGING BIN COLLECTIONS TO ALTERNATE WEEKS

DATE: 18 MAY 2017

RECIPIENT: OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide background information to the budget decision (for 2017-18) made by Full Council on 15 February 2017, to implement changes to bin collections, whereby general waste will be collected one week and recycling and glass the next week. This is often called alternate weekly collections. This will commence from 5 June 2017. Also included in this paper are the changes being made to collection days, implementation timetable, communications plan and arrangements to support residents.
2. Public consultation about budget proposals was undertaken and took place from 16 November 2016 – 8 February 2017. Following this consultation, investment has been agreed to support the introduction of bin collection changes with the use of a reactive vehicle and crew and the recruitment of Streetscene Enforcement Officers.
3. Changes will also be made to collection days and residents will be sent a new collection calendar in the post with their new collection dates later in May 2017.
4. The majority of flats will not experience changes to collections at this point in time and this will be reviewed later in the year. A number of low rise flats that are collected by wheeled bin rounds will have changes to their bin collections.
5. The introduction of changes to bin collections will reduce collection costs and by encouraging residents to recycle will reduce disposal costs, thereby increasing income from recyclable materials and reducing further landfill and the incineration of waste which will help to protect the environment. One of the Council's four priority outcomes is for 'Southampton to be a modern, attractive city where people are proud to live and work'. By modernising and transforming the waste collection service, to include the introduction of alternate weekly collections, this will be achieved as a key priority for the service will be to ensure that streets remain clean and tidy.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

6. Over 230 authorities across the country have implemented alternate weekly collections. It is therefore a tried and tested collection method put in place by large and small cities, resulting in a proven reduction in collection and disposal costs, and an increase in income from recycled materials.
7. The Council spends c£15.78 million on waste management (£7.78 million collection, £8 million disposal, including the household waste recycling centre). Approximately £4.22 million income is generated by commercial waste, garden waste collection services and services provided to housing. The average annual net cost per household for the service is around £128 (£54 collection, £74 disposal).

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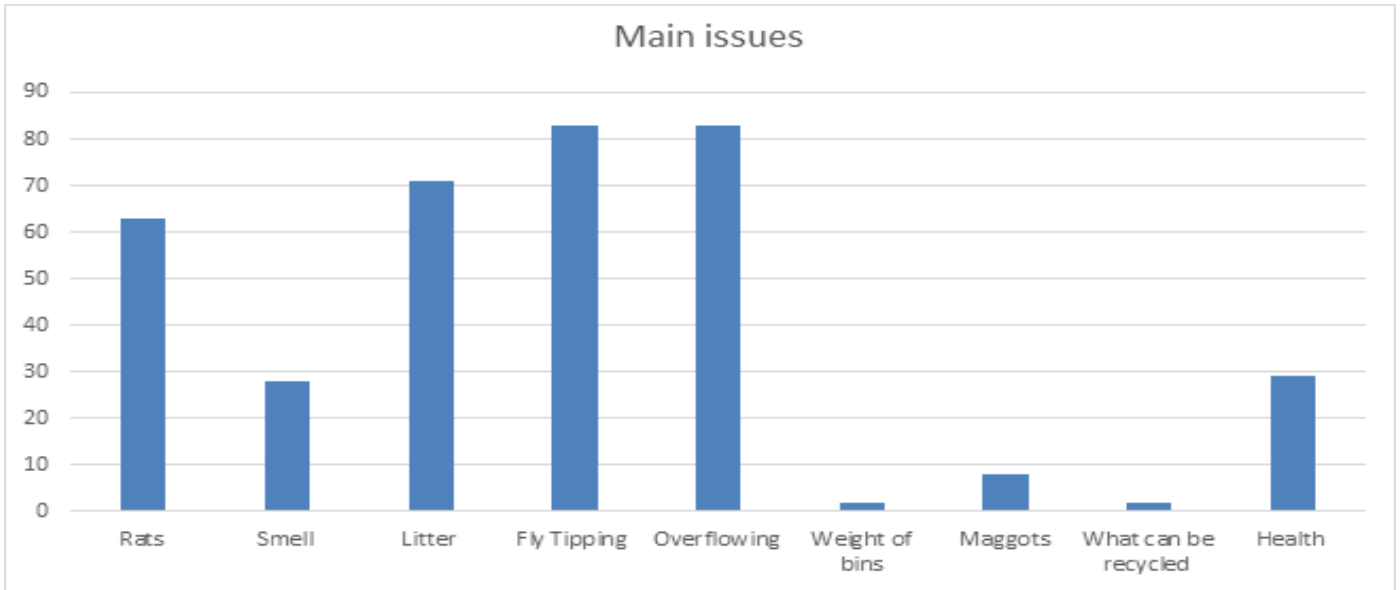
8. By introducing a change to waste collections there will be a projected cost avoidance of £800,000 per annum from 2018/19, due to a reduction in crews, vehicles and disposal costs along with increased recycling income.
9. Since 2013, the following service improvements have been implemented:
 - >introduction of a city wide sweep system to enable more efficient collections
 - >introduction of two-weekly glass collections
 - >a chargeable garden waste collection service, which enables a cost neutral service to be delivered to residents.
10. The implementation of bin collection changes, which also include improving the efficiency of collections through changes to collection days is an important improvement for 2017.
11. Apart from introducing alternate weekly collections, there are no other significant opportunities for changes that will deliver the same level of savings and increase significantly the recycling rate.
12. Service standards continue to improve with a recent 82% satisfaction level achieved for bin collections in the 2016 City Survey. This is matched by a recent survey completed by MORI which showed an 80% satisfaction level, compared with a national satisfaction level of 77%. With support arrangements in place for the introduction of collection day changes, the service will strive to maintain and improve satisfaction levels, once these changes have been embedded.
13. The following benefits are summarised below:

Benefit Area	Benefit Description
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in waste disposal costs • Vehicle and fuel savings which supports clean air strategy • Reduction in payroll costs • Opportunity to revise the sweep system/collection days • Team working • Increased income due to increased collection of recyclable material
Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear communications informing residents how to recycle and manage their waste • Each week there is a waste or recycling/glass collection • Glass collections are retained • There is no increase in bulky waste collection charges • Requirement for residents to better manage their waste and to segregate it into the correct container.

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BUDGET CONSULTATION

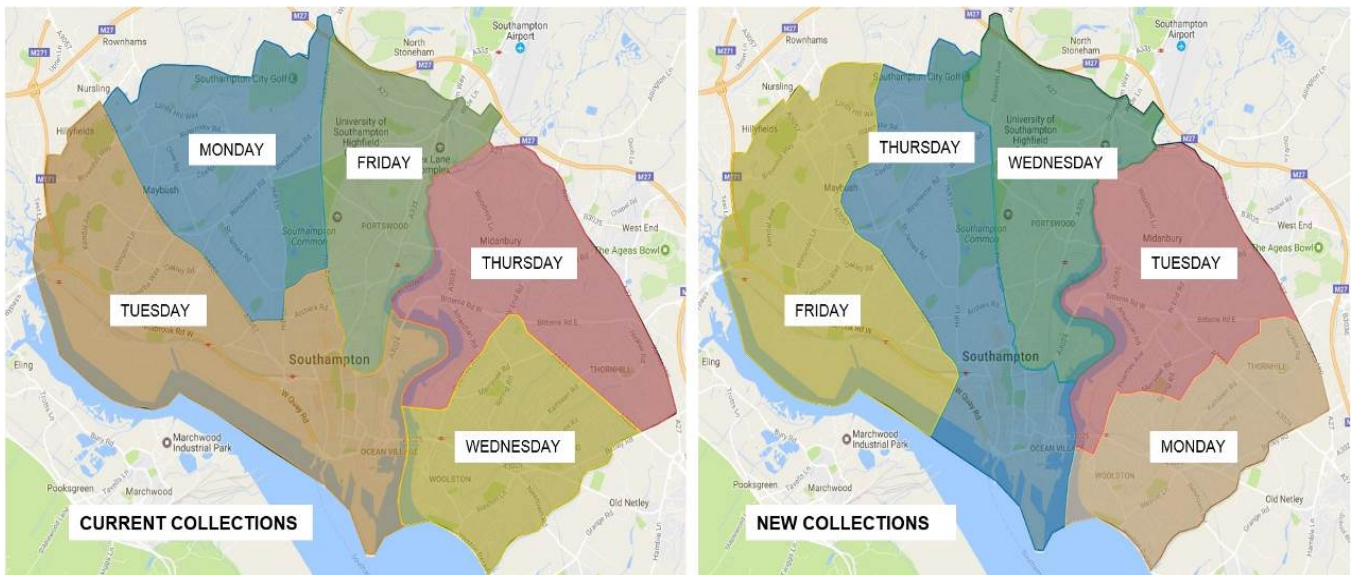
14. Public consultation about budget proposals was undertaken and took place from 16 November 2016 – 8 February 2017. Budget consultation included feedback about the introduction of changes to bin collections. The table below identifies the main issues and sections 14 – 23 include details about how these will be managed:



CHANGES TO COLLECTION DAYS

15. The maps below show current collection days and new collection days which will come into effect from 5 June 2017. All residents will have changes to their collection days and residents can check collections days using the online postcode checker and a calendar will be sent through the post as part of the direct mail pack week commencing 15 May 2017.

In week one, each day, half of the area will have general waste collections and the other half will have a recycling and glass collection and this will alternate in week 2, so those that had general waste in week 1, will have recycling and glass in week 2 and so on.



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COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

16. A programme of communications is in place to ensure residents are aware of the changes to their bin collections, and what they can do if they have concerns about the size of their bins. The programme of communications includes:

- A direct mail A5 teaser postcard to 74,729 households in city has been distributed. The postcard simply explains that alternate weekly collections are coming in June (Please see Appendix 1).
- A direct mail letter and flyer to 74,729 households in the city. This takes the form of a letter and A5 flyer and will be delivered week commencing 15.05.17. The letter to the resident will reinforce the changes and explain 7 top tips to recycle right. The A5 flyer will include their new collections calendar and explain what to put in their recycling bin and what to put in their general waste bin (Please see Appendix 2).
- Face to face community engagement by the service using A6 information postcards, a pop up banner, and posters. The information postcards are also in Gateway and Civic Centre for residents to pick up (Please see Appendix 1).
- There is a page on the Southampton City Council website explaining the changes www.southampton.gov.uk/binchanges This page includes an FAQ section which covers the most common enquiries customers are likely to have <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/bins-recycling/bins/binchangesfaq.aspx> There is also a post code look up facility where residents can find out which bin they need to put out first, and on which day.
- People are being nudged to the webpages via an advertising banner on the homepage and other relevant web pages on council website.
- Bin guidance tags are being produced to help smooth the implementation and provide a feedback loop to residents.
- A press release was issued week commencing 1/5/17.
- A JC Decaux poster campaign will go live throughout city 23/5/17 to 6/6/17.
- A banner advert will be used on the bottom of Stay Connected e-alerts which go out from week commencing 1/5/17.
- A programme of social media posts will go live on our corporate Facebook and twitter feed to inform residents, educate them and myth bust. An e-alert on alternate weekly bin collections will be sent to all Stay Connected subscribers (c100,000).
- A programme of internal communications is scheduled for Leadership Group, via Dawn's Bulletin, The Bulletin, and on Staff Stuff.
- Three one-hour long live Facebook Q&A sessions with the first starting 11 May 17 are being set up so that residents can ask a panel of internal experts any questions they have.
- The new online postcode look-up collection calendar will be available at the same time as the 1st direct mailing.

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- A set of IVR messages have been created and training has been given to Customer Services staff. Call waiting messages have been recorded notifying those who call Actionline of the bin changes.
- Cards for crews to give to residents if they are asked who to contact have been produced.
- Spare calendars - for crews, Actionline staff, and Polygon/Bevois/Portswood for when students return in September.

ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS

17. The following resources and arrangements have been implemented and made available to support residents before and after the introduction of changes to bin collections:

- Webpage advice <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/bins-recycling/bins/binchanges.aspx>
- Communications materials to promote consistent messages as part of the communication plan detailed above.
- An engagement team consisting of Waste & Recycling staff are involved in a number of activities to inform residents about the forthcoming changes.

These include:

- Resident and community group visits
- Unity 101
- Supermarkets
- Street markets
- Shopping centres and precincts, including West Quay
- Civic Centre foyer and Gateway displays
- School gates
- Door knocking
- University and letting agents/landlords

18. Changing your bin size - residents can apply for extra bin capacity via an online form or contacting Actionline. Criteria are in place to ensure that a genuine need exists and Waste officers will assess each request for a larger general waste bin on an individual basis. Requests for larger recycling bins are granted to support the Council's aim to increase recycling rates as long as the resident is recycling correctly and there is space to safely store the container.

19. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) - See Appendix 3. These are being developed and added to as required.

20. Reactive vehicle – this vehicle and crew will be in place to support crews and helping residents to manage their waste. Excess waste and contaminated bins will be removed during the changeover period in order to keep streets clean and tidy.

21. An integrated team approach is being adopted across waste, parks and open spaces and street cleansing services in order to provide consistent and cohesive support. Service development work has taken place between service stakeholders to provide a consistent approach to bin collection changes. Examples include street sweeping changes to better match the new collection rounds especially in 'higher risk' areas and communications developing

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consistent messaging to enable resident contact points such as Actionline, service areas and customer relations to respond consistently.

STREETSCENE ENFORCEMENT TEAM

22. The recruitment of three additional Streetscene Enforcement Officers is being undertaken. Their role will be to supplement existing permanent and seconded staff to help residents understand their responsibilities when managing their waste. They will be undertaking both an education and enforcement role, in conjunction with the reactive vehicle and crew, and contribute to wider joined up enforcement team.
23. Their key focus will initially be to help residents recycle better and reduce the wrong items in the recycling bin that ends up contaminating the bin and prevents materials from being recycled. The officers will also focus on reducing bins left on the pavement at the end of the collection day, reducing contamination and side waste issues.
24. Enforcement will start with education but where issues persist more formal enforcement action will be taken, for example through the issuing of a fixed penalty notice if behaviours don't change.

RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

25. **Resource** - A project team has been established with the support of the Project Management Office. Project governance is through a Steering Group and internal Implementation Board. Four staff have been temporarily seconded from service roles to provide technical support and work with residents and, as identified above, this will be supplemented by a further three permanent Streetscene Enforcement Officers. A specialist customer service team in Actionline has been set up to ensure that the change to alternate weekly collections is as smooth as possible for customers. A reactive vehicle and crew will also be put in place.
26. **Policy** - The current Waste Management policy has been reviewed and changed to take into account changes to bin collections. The new policy has gone through Council process and will come into effect from 5 June 2017. The most significant policy change is the reduction in frequency of the collection of general waste from houses using green lidded wheeled bins from weekly to fortnightly. The following changes have also been made:
 - Supporting policies for side waste, additional bin capacity, closed lids, heavy bins and enforcement have been reworded to provide greater clarity for resident and operational needs.
 - Policy enforcement will continue to be preceded by education and awareness before any formal Fixed Penalty Notice procedure is initiated.
 - From September 2017 replacement of green lidded general waste bins charges will be introduced that have been lost by the resident.
27. **Financial** - There are no further financial implications that need to be considered.
28. **Legal** - There are no legal implications that need to be considered.

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OPTIONS AND TIMESCALES

29. **Options** - Alternative options are not applicable as the budget decision has already been agreed.

30. **Timescale** - Changes to bin collections will commence from 5 June 2017. Listed in the table below are significant milestones for the forthcoming changes to bin collections:

Community engagement via a range of events	March-June 2017
Supporting residents with specific needs to manage their waste	March – June 2017, with ongoing support
Specialist customer service team commence	10 April 2017
Rounds design completed	26 April 2017
Changes to website and online forms	April – May 2017
Publish revised policy on the SCC Website	Mid-May 2017. Policy effective from 5 June 2017
Crew and staff training	May 2017
First Direct mail to residents	Received 2 or 3 May 2017
Second direct mail	To be sent 19 May 2017
All members briefing	8 May 2017
Go live	5th June 2017
Post implementation support	June - July 2017/as required

31. **Appendices/Supporting Information:**

Appendix 1 – Information Card and first direct mail

Appendix 2 – Second direct mail

Appendix 3 – Frequently Asked Questions

Further Information Available From:

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Appendix 1 – Information Card and First Direct Mail Information Card



First Direct Mail



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Appendix 2 – Second Direct Mail



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Appendix 3 – Frequently Asked Questions

Will my general waste bin get collected every week?

No. The changes will mean your general waste bin will be collected every two weeks. You will still get a weekly collection, general waste one week and glass and recycling bins emptied the next week.

Will my collections day change?

Yes. We will be re-designing our collection rounds meaning a change to your collection day. We will write to you in May to tell you what your new collection day is and which bin to put out on that day.

Do I need to do anything to prepare for the change to my bin collections?

Look out for your new calendar when we write to you in May. It'll tell you if your first collection will be general waste or glass and recycling. Also make sure you are recycling everything that you possibly can to help maximise the space in your general waste bin, for a guide on what you can recycle visit our recycling page.

Why are these changes being made?

With ongoing cuts to funding from central government we need to streamline services in order to make them sustainable. Introducing a fortnightly general waste collection service will make the collection of the city's waste more affordable. More than seven out of ten Local Authorities in England already operate the same system of collecting bins every other week, and Southampton has now also made the decision to change to this more efficient system.

The move to fortnightly general waste collections will encourage people in the city to recycle wherever possible in order to maximise the space available in general waste bins. Our recycling rates in Southampton are currently lower than the national average. Recycling is good for the environment.

Council tax – why has my tax gone up while you are reducing services?

Reduced financial contributions from Central Government and increasing operational costs together with increased demand from service users has resulted in the need to increase Council Tax. Non-essential services have been streamlined, or are no longer provided, to ensure that essential services such as social care are maintained whilst enabling Southampton City Council to balance their budget.

The savings made by changing the way waste is collected will be used to protect other essential Council services. There will continue to be an efficient waste and recycling collection service in the city that meets the needs of residents.

What will happen if I refuse to pay the Council Tax?

You are legally obliged to pay the Council Tax. If payments are not made, the Council will issue a single reminder. If this does not prompt a payment, then the Council will issue a Court summons, which will add additional costs and could lead to further action to collect the debt, including the attachment of earnings or the attachment of certain benefits or the use of Bailiffs. Residents will not receive a reduction in council tax. Any savings made will be used to help balance our budget and ensure that the council can continue to provide vital services to residents.

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Will the changes apply to residents living in flats?

Some low-rise flats will also move over to having fortnightly general waste collections. If you live in one of these properties then you will receive a letter and new calendar as part of our mailing in May.

The first phase of changes to bin collections will focus on properties that have wheeled bins, so mainly houses. If you live in one of these properties then you will receive a letter and new calendar as part of our mailing in May, or you can use the online postcode checker to find out if your property is affected.

Once the implementation of alternate weekly collections is introduced to residents who have wheeled bins, a phased implementation will then commence with flats. This will be undertaken on a gradual basis only where it is appropriate.

What happens if I have excess waste that won't fit in my bin? Can I have an additional one?

Depending on your needs, such as the number of people in your household, number of children in nappies in the household or households with occupants that have medical conditions that generate more waste, some households may qualify for extra general waste capacity. Let us know about your needs and we can assess if your household meets our criteria.

As you will have less room in your bin for your rubbish, it is important to think more about what you are wasting and recycle as much as you can now. We will not take excess waste placed on top of, next to, or overflowing from your general waste bin. If you have extra waste left over after all recyclables have been separated out then you can dispose of any additional waste at the local Household Waste and Recycling Centre.

If I do not qualify for a free larger capacity general waste bin, can I purchase one?

Unfortunately it is not possible to buy a larger capacity bin. Only bins with a Southampton City Council logo on them will be collected and emptied and the amount of containers you should have is decided by the council. You are not able to buy bins from a third party as they may not be compatible with the bin lifting equipment on the waste collection vehicles and would pose a risk to our collection crews.

I'm concerned about possible health issues relating to waste being in bins for two weeks, rather than one.

Over 230 other Local Authorities have already made the change to alternate weekly bin collections. None of them have reported any associated health issues with changing to fortnightly general waste collections. Bag your general waste properly, especially food waste, and ensure that your bin lid remains closed and this will minimise odours, vermin and flies. Any additional waste bags should be taken to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre.

The bins we currently have are designed to remain closed if they are not over-filled. This should contain any odours and reduce the risk of pests getting to the contents.

My bin will be full of nappies, what can I do?

You may be interested in using washable nappies for your new-born child and you can find further details from the Southampton Real Nappy Network. There is a 'Southampton Real

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Nappy Network' closed Facebook Group which can help with advice and promotes events and where you can also buy and sell nappies.

The network is run by a voluntary group of parents and they can answer any questions you may have on the various types of nappies on offer. Washable nappies come in all shapes and sizes, and can be bottom-shaped and use Velcro, poppers or clips instead of pins. They are environmentally friendly, easy to use, easy to wash and don't take up space in your general waste bin.

You can also use a nappy laundering service if you find the idea of washing nappies a bit daunting.

Food waste collection – other Local Authorities offer this, why doesn't Southampton?

Southampton City Council has considered introducing food waste collections in the past but has decided against it, at this point in time, due to operational difficulties resulting from the diverse nature of properties in Southampton and the high cost of delivering the service. We would encourage residents where possible to compost food waste to make an inexpensive fertiliser for gardens. Find out about our composters special offer.

Is the council concerned these changes will see an increase in fly-tipping?

Other councils that have already changed over to collecting general waste every other week have not seen an increase in the level of fly-tipping.

We are keen to work with residents to address concerns and provide additional capacity where there is a genuine need, so we should not see an increase in fly-tipping as a result of these collection changes.

We do carefully monitor reports of fly-tipping locally, taking speedy action to clear and investigate reported fly-tipping incidents. We will take enforcement action where we have evidence seeking prosecutions where possible. Please report any fly-tipping you see, providing as much information as you can and we will take the appropriate action.

I have an assisted bin collection, how will this affect me?

Only the frequency of your general waste collection will change to fortnightly, with glass and recycling collected on the alternate weeks. Should you still have any concerns then please contact us on 023 8083 3005.

Why are the bins being collected on alternate weeks? Why can't both of my bins be emptied on the same day, each fortnight?

With the new collection rounds that have been introduced, collecting both bins on the same day would cause unmanageable disposal issues at the local shared waste facilities.

My general waste bin is often full of my business waste

Businesses have a Duty of Care under the EPA 1990 to manage their waste responsibly. If you are running a business from home you should not be disposing of the waste your business generates in your general waste bin. Southampton City Council provides a trade waste service that businesses can use for a fee to dispose of their waste.

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Why can't pots, tubs and trays be recycled?

Recycling collected from households in Southampton is sent to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) where the different materials (paper, card, plastic bottles and cans) are sorted before being sent for recycling. At present, the MRF only has the capability to separate plastic bottles, not other types of plastic such as pots, tubs and trays.

Similarly the MRF cannot sort drinks cartons (such as tetra paks) which are a mix of cardboard, plastic and foil. However, this is currently being reviewed by Southampton in partnership with all Hampshire councils, to see if it is financially viable to upgrade the MRF. This could mean that more materials, such as plastic pots, tubs and trays, and drinks cartons, can be collected for recycling.

Residents should await further information from the council before attempting to recycle anything other than paper, card, directories, cans, tins, aerosols and plastic bottles.