

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** Review of the impact and effectiveness of Alternate Weekly Bin Collections

**DATE:** 14 December 2017

**RECIPIENT:** Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

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## THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

### SUMMARY:

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide information about how Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC) are working across the city since the change to collections took place on 5 June 2017. These changes meant general waste is now collected one week and recycling and glass the next week. This paper will also review impact on recycling and general waste rates, provide feedback from residents and also explain how else the service is improving what and how residents can recycle.
2. AWC was implemented with properties that have wheeled bins and at the same time, residents also had a change to their collection day. Properties with wheeled bins are mainly houses, houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and low rise housing blocks, including pensioner's blocks. Properties that have large communal bins (usually larger blocks of flats) in the main retained weekly collections.
3. Changes to bin collections has reduced collection costs and by encouraging residents to recycle is reducing disposal costs, it will increase income from recyclable materials and reducing further landfill and the incineration of waste 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'.

### BACKGROUND AND BRIEFING DETAILS:

#### 4. What has been the impact of AWC?

The implementation of AWC has overall gone well and after six months of changes to collections, residents are managing their collections and not experiencing any issues. The following points are considered positive achievements and that AWC has been effective:

- The Revised Medium Term Financial Strategy report to Council on 15 February 2017 reduced the one-off General Fund saving to £180,000 to reflect the part year effect of introducing the change in service from 5 June 2017 and to allow for some investment in support of the introduction of AWC. In addition, there was a proposal for a further investment of £250,000 in 2017/18 and £225,000 ongoing in a dedicated team to support waste collection and street cleaning following the introduction of AWC. This saving has been achieved and will be surpassed in this financial year.
- From 2018/19 onwards cost reductions are anticipated to be achieved in order to replace the £800,000 contribution from the WCSS funding.
- There has been a 5% reduction in the amount of general waste generated and a 2% increase in the amount of materials recycled. When metal is added from incinerator bottom ash at

the end of the financial year, this is expected to add a further 1 – 1.5% to the recycling rate. The table below outlines this:

Recycling rate	2016/17	29%
Recycling rate	Apr – May 2017*	30%
Recycling rate	June – Oct 2017 *	32%
General waste	Apr – May 2017 *	0.2% reduction in waste in comparison to Apr – May 2016
General waste	June – Oct 2017 *	5% reduction in waste in comparison to 2016/17

\* Data is not confirmed until waste data flow is validated March 2018.

Bournemouth and Plymouth Councils went live with AWC in April/May prior to Southampton's go live in June 2017. Currently there is only tonnage data available in waste data flow for these authorities for quarter one (April – June). Plymouth is indicating a 4.5% reduction in waste and Bournemouth a 9% reduction. Bournemouth also provide a food waste collection. They are both also exhibiting a similar increase in recycling rates. Coventry only went live in September and there is no data available at this point in time.

We now have similar collection methods to the majority of other authorities across the country and within Hampshire and 77% of APSE members have implemented AWC.

- The majority of residents have got to grips with changes to collections. Targeted work has been undertaken where residents have found it harder to adjust and officers have been working with resident groups to change behaviours. Whilst there is still work to do, it must be recognised that when there was weekly general waste collections, there were parts of the city that struggled to manage their waste. These include areas where there are high number of HMOs and students and where there is population churn.
- The Council must not rest on its laurels and there is more work to be done to improve the quantity and quality of recyclates and further reduce our waste.
- A key priority remains to get residents to not put glass, textiles and aerosols in their general waste bins and this is a key communications message.
- Mixed plastic banks will be put in place at a number of bring sites across the city at the end of January 2018. This will enable all residents to be able to recycle pots, tubs, cartons and tetrapaks until the material recovery facilities are able to take them.

## 5. What did we set out to achieve?

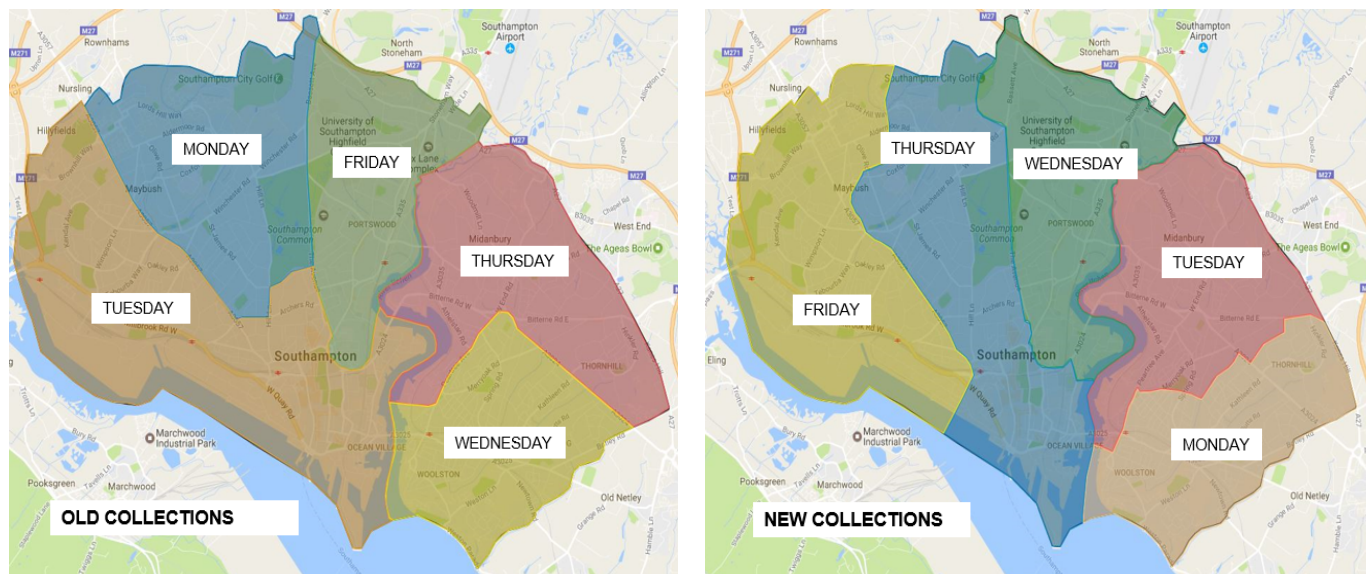
- **To implement fortnightly collection of general waste for properties on mainly wheeled bin collections, which included low rise and pensioner housing blocks.**

The maps on the next page show old collection days and new collection days which came into effect from 5 June 2017.

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

Issuing a collection calendar to residents before go live paid dividends and residents are putting the right bin out on the right week.

The implementation was successfully achieved.



- **To ensure glass collections take place on the same day as recycling collections every 2 weeks.** This was important to retain as residents were used to having these collections on the same day.
- **To change collection days so they started in the east of the city and finished in the west of the city.** This has worked well and there have been no issues at disposal sites. These changes have also enabled more effective team working between crews.
- **To make no changes to garden waste collections.** No changes have been made to rounds, although rounds are being optimised and rebalanced for when residents renew their subscription next year.
- **To reduce collection and disposal costs.** As already indicated in section 4, costs are being reduced.
- **To ensure households that had a genuine need for extra general waste capacity, were provided with additional space.** This included educational support from Recycling & Compliance Officers. Section 6 provides further information about this.
- **To establish a reactive vehicle and crew to support the collection of side waste and contaminated bins** – In order to react to issues during this change, three reactive vehicles and crews were used at the start of AWC, with a key focus to help keep streets clean and tidy. With the reduction in issues, this has now reduced down to one, which was planned and budgeted for.
- **To produce a new Managing the Local Environment Policy.** The policy is agreed and on the website.
- **To establish an enforcement team, to support side waste and bins on pavements** – the team is in place, and they are working with residents.
- **To provide communications materials, including a collection calendar to residents** – two direct mail communications were issued to residents with the latter providing a collection calendar. Calendars can be downloaded from the Council's website, which residents were used to doing prior to AWC.

- **To promote team working ethos with crews** – crew training, tool box talks and the need to work together have been important pieces of work. Crews have all had new rounds to get used to.
- **To keep streets clean and tidy** – there is no evidence to indicate that streets are less tidy and clean as a result of AWC.

With any major change, it is important to learn and strive to improve how services are delivered. It is useful to note that:

- Whilst there have been issues with some residents taking longer to change their behaviours around side waste/contaminated bins – these have tended to be in the areas we anticipated e.g. Polygon, Portswood, Bevois, Newtown/Nicholstown and also Millbrook. Work has been undertaken with residents and resident/community groups to improve how streets look and this work will continue.
- It has also identified problem roads that have too many containers or containers are kept continually on the pavement – the service is working to deal with these issues, reduce or change the number of containers.
- We are engaging better with residents through face to face contact and provision of information e.g. tags on bins – there haven't been significant numbers of complaints and most have been around extra capacity.
- There has been improved joined up working with housing colleagues along with more communication with Councillors.
- The return of students worked well in September/October, however the end of year arrangements generated significant extra waste (more than usual) just as we were getting to grips with AWC. Plans for next year need to include both universities taking responsibility for the impact their students have on communities.

## 6. What is the data telling us?

As part of AWC implementation, data has been kept on a range of issues in order to assess the impact and effectiveness of AWC. This has included monitoring:

- Bins not out
- Extra capacity requests
- Additional bins issued
- Service requests
- Complaints
- Side waste
- Contamination of recycling bins
- Enforcement interventions
- Waste and recycling tonnages

A selection of these are provided in graphical format below:

### Extra capacity requests

After initial spike around the time of implementation the general trend for extra capacity requests is reducing to pre-implementation levels. Extra capacity requests are processed as follows:

- Requests received from Actionline

- Requests held on spreadsheet coordinated by Business Support and using criteria set out below the following is actioned:
  - Request accepted
  - Request refused
  - Referred for visit by Recycling and Compliance Officer and then accepted/refused after assessing situation on site

As a starting point, the criteria used for accepting or refusing requests is as follows:

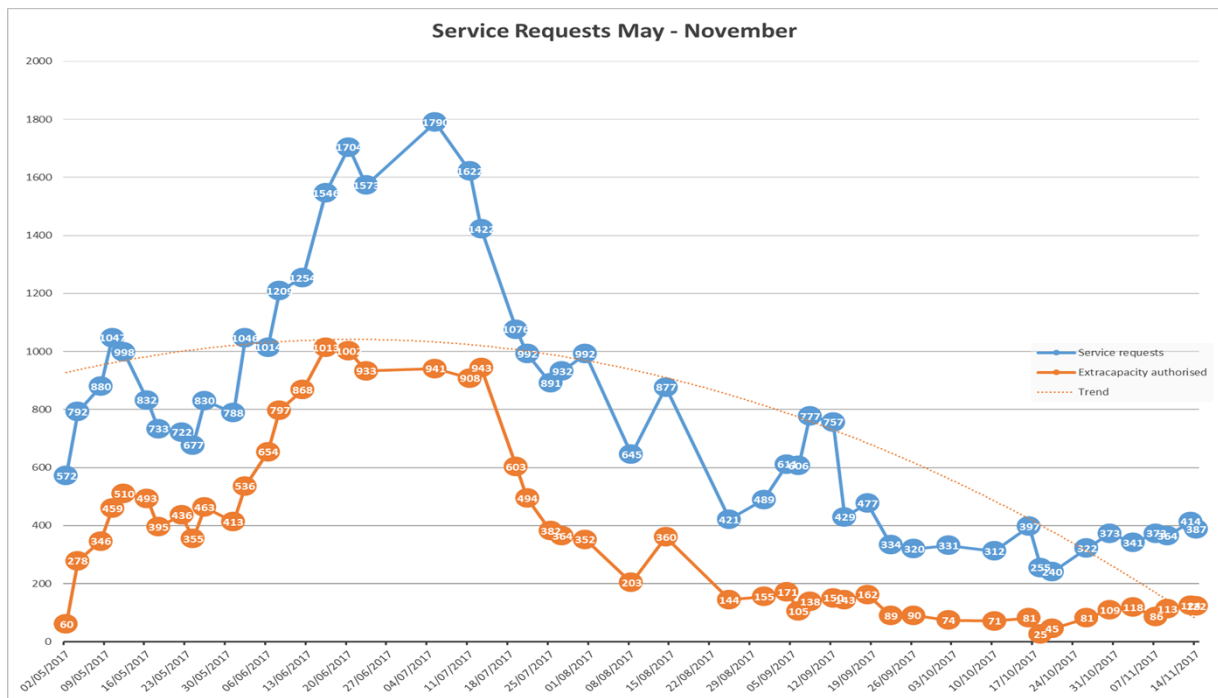
YES	VISIT	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 or more residents</li> <li>• 2 or more infants in nappies</li> <li>• Excess medical waste detailed</li> <li>• 140&gt;240 litre bin</li> <li>• Larger recycling bin*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-6 residents (including an infant in nappies)</li> <li>• Medical waste but no detail</li> <li>• Bins are stated as overflowing</li> <li>• No detail to assess properly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 or less people</li> <li>• 1 infant in nappies</li> <li>• Resident states that they will not cope but does not provide any detail</li> </ul>
<p><i>*Extra recycling capacity can be agreed if resident has a good recycling record and space to store a larger bin</i></p>		

<b>Number of requests</b>	<b>5,044</b>
<b>Number requests approved</b>	<b>4,507</b>
<b>Number of larger bins delivered</b>	<b>3,341 - 1,821 general waste - 1,520 recycling</b>
<b>Approximate number of larger bins issued to residents initially rejected</b>	<b>70 - 80</b>

### Service Requests and Extra Capacity Requests

Extra capacity requests (and service requests in general) steadily increased in the lead up to implementation on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Numbers peaked shortly after implementation at the end of June and thereafter has reduced to business as usual levels. The trend line graphically shows this decrease over time.

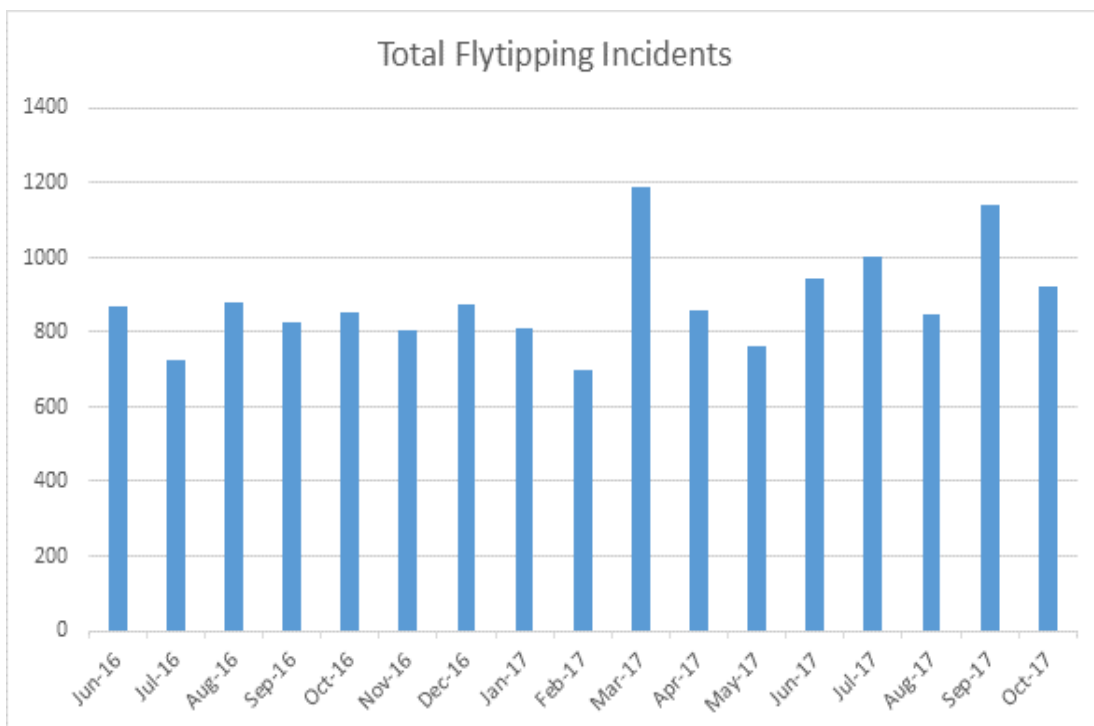
The increase in requests was expected as other authorities' experienced similar numbers while implementing AWC. Contingency measures such as additional dedicated staff in Capita Call Centre, AWC-specific web pages, focused service resource and prioritising site visits all contributed to meeting increased demand in a seamless, professional manner.



### Fly tipping

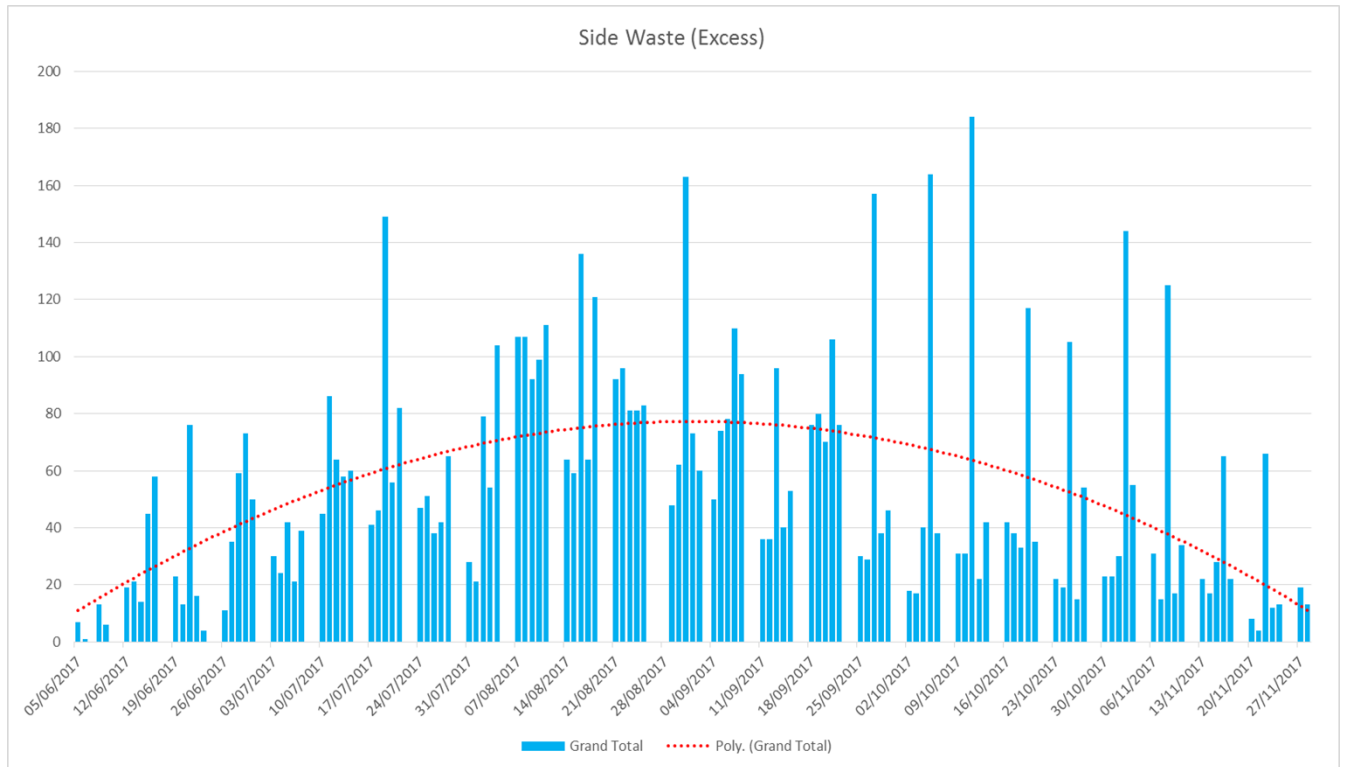
A comparison of the main fly tipping statistics from June 2016 to October 2017 gauging the impact of AWC indicates the following:

- Since the implementation of AWC the number of incidents of single black bags being fly tipped has increased as indicated below by approximately 100 bags per month. These have been picked up as part of the routine work undertaken by the current street sweeping crews and additional resources made available to assist the implementation of AWC.
- It is also noted that during the same period the number of large fly tips in Southampton have significantly reduced and with the majority of these being separately collected has led to cost savings for collection and disposal.

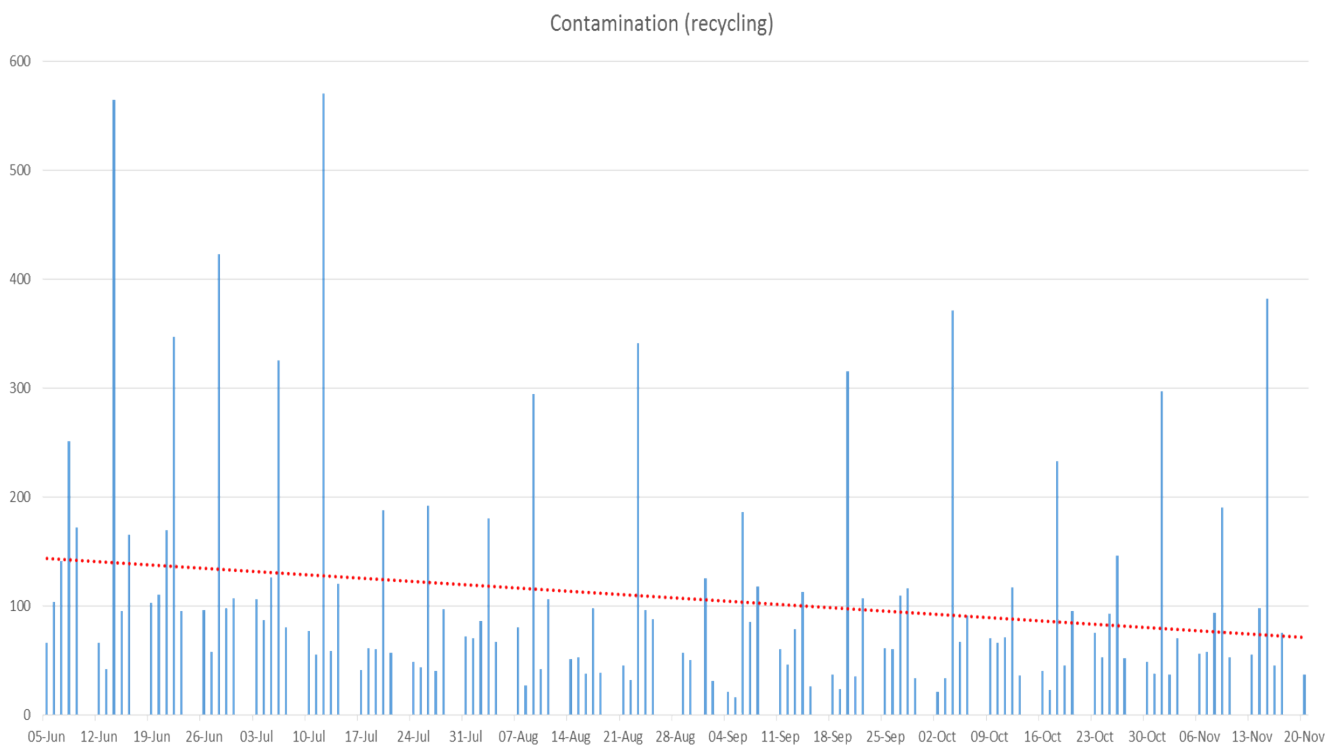


## Side waste and red events

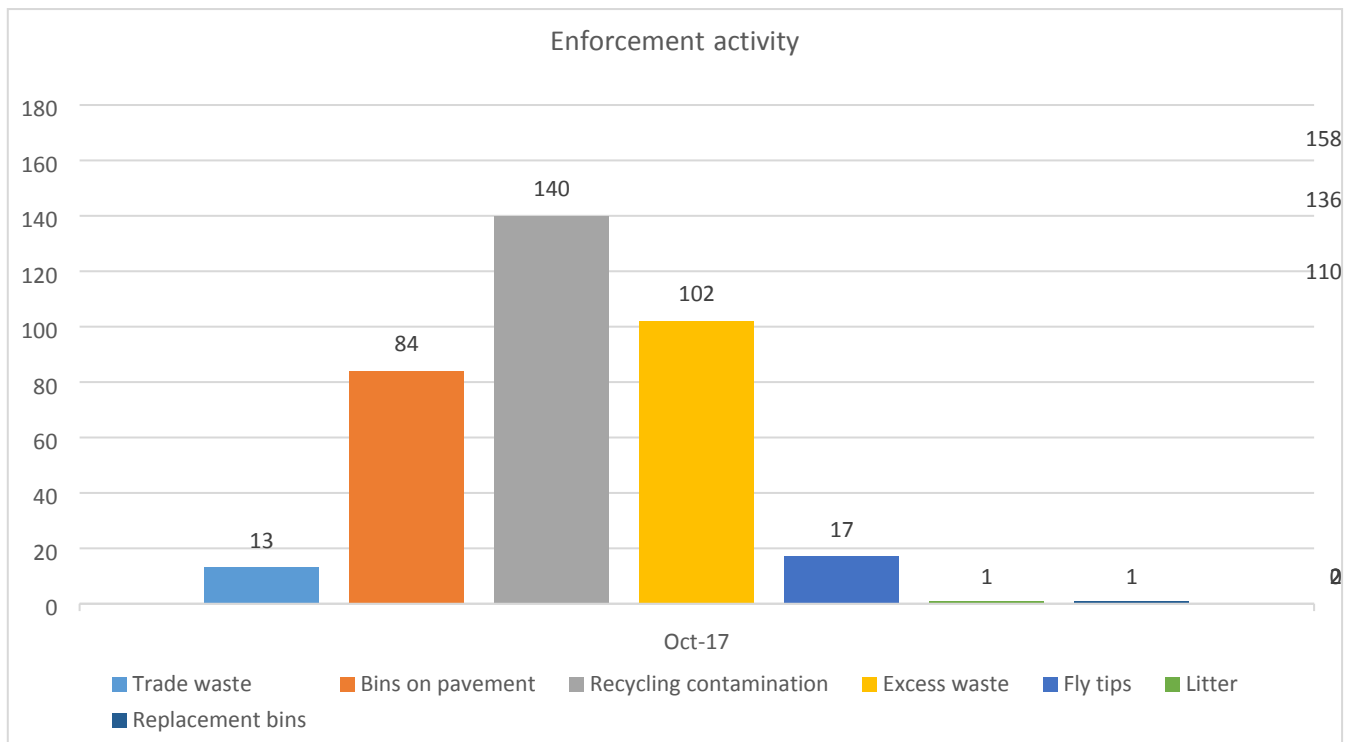
Side waste and recycling contamination incidents have been decreasing (side waste increased initially after implementation) over time since AWC implementation as shown by the red trend lines. The peaks on the graph correspond to collections in challenging areas such as Polygon/Portswood/Bevois but note that these are decreasing as a result of planned education and reactive enforcement activity which is ongoing.



## Recycling contamination (red events)



## Enforcement and compliance interventions (Oct-Nov)



The current enforcement process is:

### Side Waste

- Crews record excess waste and how much and then tag if first offence
- Reactive crew and enforcement officer collect the day after and engage with residents where possible

### Contamination

- Crews tag bins that are contaminated and log a red event on the in cab computer
- Reactive crew and enforcement officer collect these the day after collection and engage with residents on the doorstep where possible - providing education, waste minimisation and recycling advice.
- Recycling and Compliance officers engage with face to face or written advice and provide additional support where appropriate.

### Bins on Pavements

From the New Year when the Section 46 is in place, this is an area we will be focussing on.

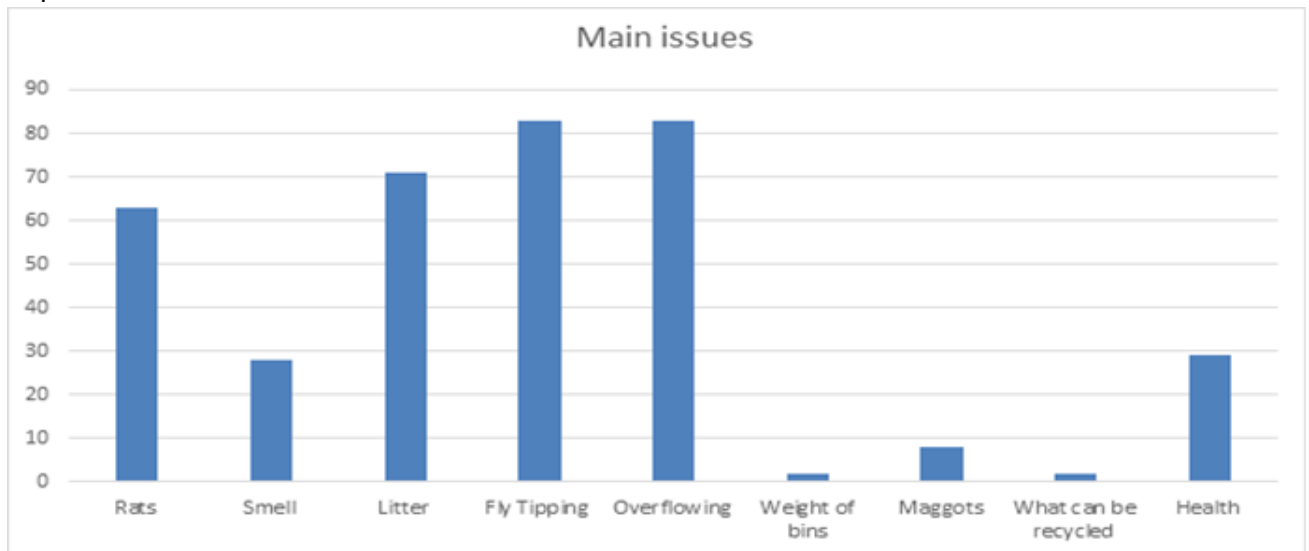
- Currently the enforcement team target areas the day after scheduled collection day, engage with residents and tidy the streets.
- Enforcement team reactively respond to individual complaints
- All are logged to monitor success rates and target repeat offenders

Recycling and Compliance officers deal with all recycling contamination (red events) through face to face or written advice.

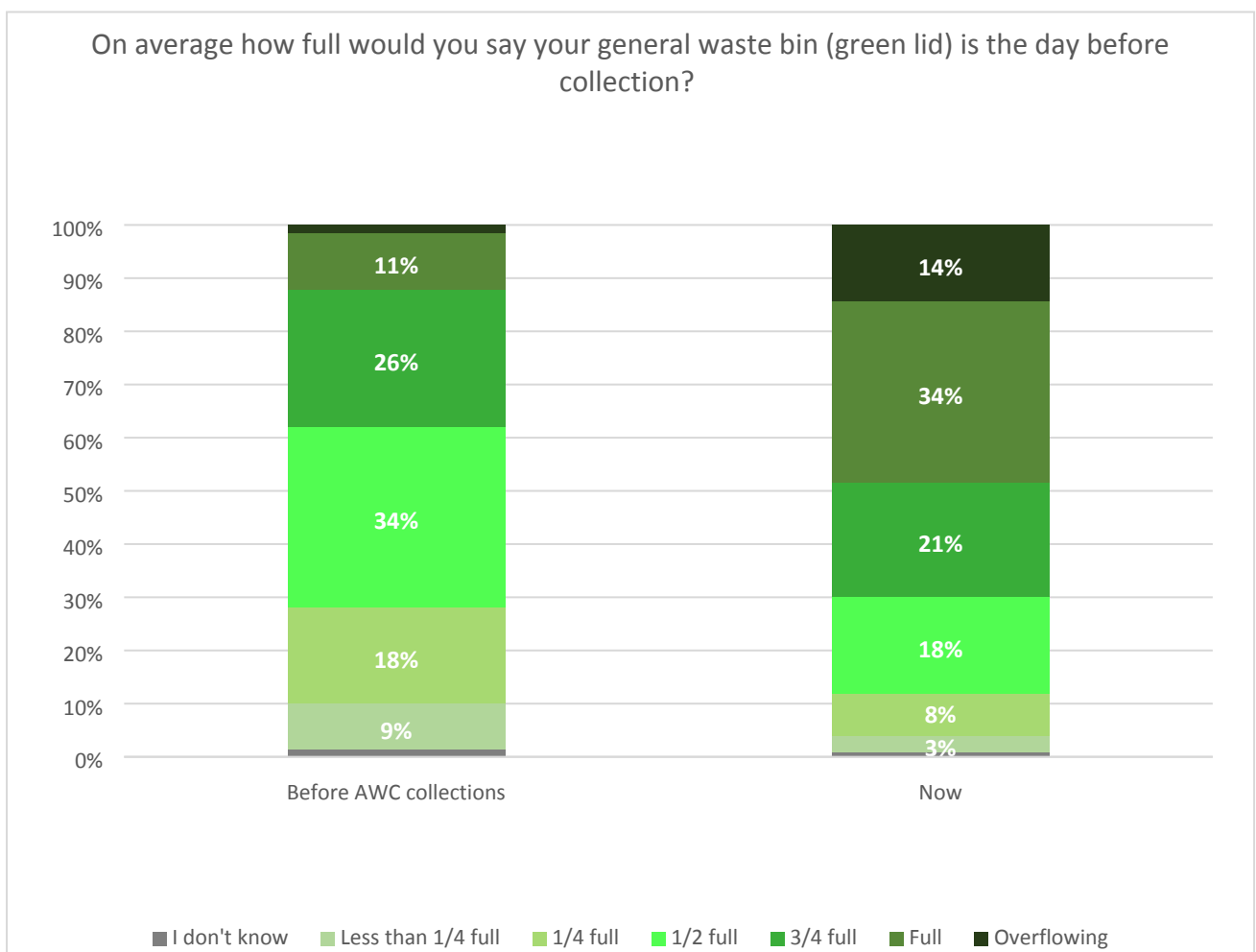


## 7. Consultation

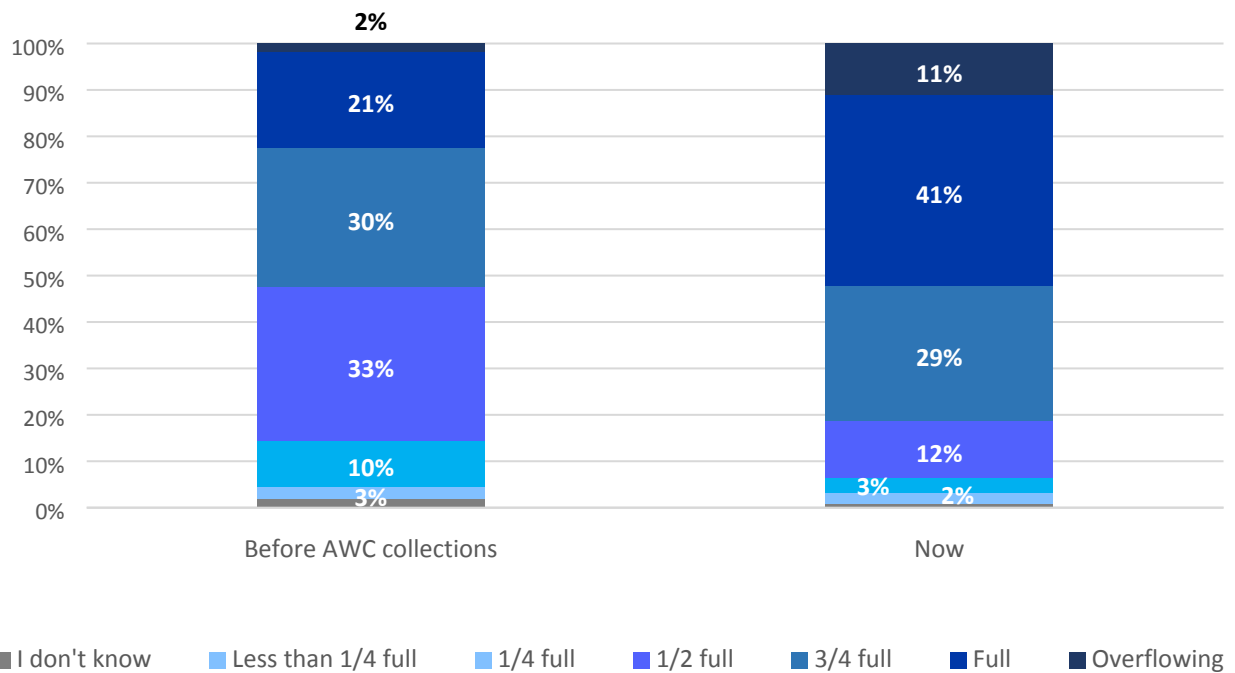
Public consultation about budget proposals was undertaken and took place from 16 November 2016 – 8 February 2017. The table below identifies the main issues of concern before implementation.



Further consultation was undertaken in November 2017 by the Council's Customer Insight Team and 688 responses have been received so far. In response to questions about how full bins were before AWC and after implementation the following results were found:



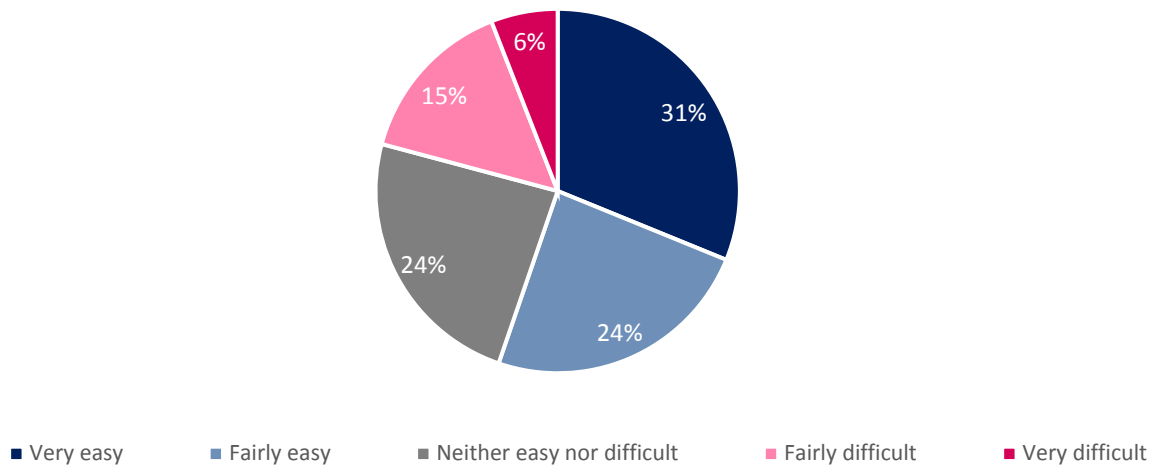
On average how full would you say your recycling bin (blue lid) is the day before collection?



Approximately half of all respondents say that after AWC implementation they still have capacity in their bins, 52% for general waste and 48% for recycling, the day before collection.

Coping with change

How have you found the change to alternate weekly collections?



55% of respondents found the transition to AWC “very/fairly easy” and 24% finding it neither easy nor difficult and only 6% finding the change “very difficult”. Focused communications to residents and wider community engagement contributed to this positive outcome.

### **Selected additional comments**

I welcomed the change to alternate week collections. It has not impacted the amount I recycle because I already recycled/reused as much as possible.
I would like to be able to actually recycle other recycle labelled plastic items, i.e. yogurt pots, margarine containers.
Just want to praise the waste team - we’ve forgotten to put or bin out a couple of times (which would be pretty bad now it’s moved to fortnightly) but they’ve collected our bin anyway! Thank you!
I have found the bin service excellent since the change of frequency of collection. A couple of years ago I was having to report broken glass on the roadside or pavement when I cycled to work (mostly along Portswood Road and up Kitchener Road) after collections by the kerbside glass recycling team but have found far fewer hazards from broken glass as a consequence of kerbside collection of glass in recent months.
Once again a very good poll I hope the council stay with the present collection, it's the people who complain that need to try and understand the reasons why we have fortnightly collections
I have real problem with the amount of plastic that I seem unable to avoid whist shopping that although it has a recycling logo on it I am not able to put in my recycle bin. Please, please can a way be found to increase this type of plastic recycling either through collection or local centres

A strong theme emerging from the comments is residents’ ability to recycle more types of plastic. This is currently being addressed in the short term by the introduction of 10 mixed plastic banks at 7 locations across the city and in the longer term by the development of the Materials Recovery Facility to be able to accept more types of plastic material. There is also more work to be undertaken in getting bins off the pavement and right items in the right bin.

## **8. Recycling income**

Currently recycling income is remaining buoyant which is positive, however, it is a fluctuating and volatile global market. Whilst newspaper and magazine market price has remained high, there are issues with China’s input specification, which is likely to result in a reduction in market price. Card market price has started to decrease in price following achieving a recent premium price for export when compared to the domestic rates.

Aluminium cans market price continued to increase in quarter 2 in line with market trends and ferrous market price increased within the quarter, although this has recently reduced. There continues to be uncertainty in the market place for ferrous and scrap metal.

Plastic mixed bottle price marginally increased within the quarter with the price received being competitive for UK markets. However, there remains some uncertainty and caution within the markets, which is due to potential import issues in China.

The table below sets out price per tonne received for dry mixed recyclables by quarter which is compared to 2016/17 and Letsrecycle:

Quarter	2016-17	2017-18 *	Letsrecycle comparison
1	£45.62	£49.36	£45.29
2	£56.05	£63.76	£58.97
3	£46.71		
4	£57.10		
Total	£51.37		

## 9. Communications

The communications materials for AWC post implementation have been created in the style of the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) image library as the simplified images are easily recognisable, adaptable and used nationally.

The cards support staff to communicate information about recycling, waste disposal and promote clean and tidy streets. The simplified graphics are useful for residents when English is not their first language.

Bin tags have been effective in alerting residents to why their bin has not been collected and what they need to do next.

Communicating with students is particularly difficult, this year we attached the collection calendar to the front doors using Blu Tak and this appears to be quite effective. The bin tags are used in combination with visits from the Enforcement and Compliance team to keep the footpaths clear. Please see Appendix 1 for wording and examples.

## 10. Ongoing work and Next Steps

With any major change, it is important to continue the service improvement process and the following points are priorities:

- To continue to embed AWC in HMOs, low rise blocks and problem roads
- Provide clear messaging around Christmas, catch up Saturdays, Xmas trees and that side waste will be collected during the festive period
- Funding for the Council's reward scheme, Bin it To Win It will cease at Christmas and it will end with 12 rewards of Xmas. Please note this is external funding
- We are waiting for the outcome of the trialling of new communications materials, which has been commissioned by Hampshire County Council. The focus is about 'jolting' residents into new recycling behaviours and the intention is to use these materials as they become available
- It is apparent that a number of residents have multiple bins (more than two), which are likely not to have been issued to them by the service. There will be an ongoing piece of work to review the containers residents have and make sure capacity provided is appropriate for need

- Reducing contamination of recycling bins remains a key focus, along with the need to get glass/textiles out of the general waste and recycling bins
- Ongoing work with flats in order to improve recycling and waste management behaviours
- Sustaining communications – using council tax bill for positive messaging?
- Implementing east to west of city collections for garden waste and bring this in line with the collection pattern for general waste, recycling and glass collections
- Launch mixed plastic banks at a number of bring sites across the city at the end January 2018 in order to enable residents to recycle pots, cartons, tetrapaks and plastic tubs

## **RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **11. Resource**

Additional resources that were put in place for the implementation of AWC have now been stepped down.

### **12. Policy**

The new Managing your Local Environment Policy came into effect 5 June 2017.

### **13. Financial**

There are no further financial implications that need to be considered.

### **14. Legal**

There are no legal implications that need to be considered.

## **OPTIONS AND TIMESCALES**

### **15. Options**

Since AWC is implemented following a budget decision, this is not relevant.

### **16. Timescale**

As discussed in the paper there is work to be undertaken to further improve how residents manage their waste in parts of the city. However, the timescale in which to implement AWC is now completed. **Appendices/Supporting Information:**

Appendix 1 – Updated communications materials

Further Information Available From:

**Name: Gale Williams**

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**E-mail: [Gale.williams@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Gale.williams@southampton.gov.uk)**

# Appendix 1

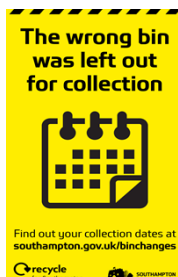
## A5 calling card and recycling information



## Recycling information A5 card, with graphic messages



## Bin tags



### Your bin contains items we cannot recycle

<b>Polystyrene</b> 	<b>Textiles</b> 
<b>Plastic bags and black sacks</b> 	<b>Pots, tubs, trays and cartons</b> 

Your waste is your responsibility, please get it right or you could be issued with a fixed penalty fine.

### ONLY RECYCLE

<b>Card and paper</b> 	<b>Aerosols, cans and tins</b> 	<b>Plastic bottles</b> 
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Please **DON'T** bag your recycling

Recycle glass bottles and jars in your grey container

Find out more at [southampton.gov.uk/recycle](http://southampton.gov.uk/recycle)

### We were not able to empty your bin because it is too heavy and unsafe

**recycle** for Southampton SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

### What happens now?

Keep your bin out for collection and lighten the weight. Please do not put overly heavy items in your bin.

If you need help with what to put in your bin please visit [southampton.gov.uk/recycle](http://southampton.gov.uk/recycle)

**recycle** for Southampton SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

## Collection day calendar and bins on pavements bin tags for student areas – Polygon/Portswood and Swaythling

### When do I put the bins out?

KEY: General Waste = Recycling Bin & Glass box =

SEPTEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Wrap food waste and keep the bin lid closed to prevent smells and pests

OCTOBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Glass bottles and jars only go in the grey box

If you don't look after your bins and manage your waste you could face legal action or a fixed penalty notice

NOVEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Be a good neighbour and pull your bins in off the pavement after collection

What goes in the bins? Please see overleaf

**recycle** for Southampton [southampton.gov.uk/bins-recycling](http://southampton.gov.uk/bins-recycling) SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

### Your bin must not be left on the footpath unless it is your scheduled collection day

Put it out and bring it back in

Find out more at [southampton.gov.uk/binchanges](http://southampton.gov.uk/binchanges)

**recycle** for Southampton SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

### If your bin remains on the footpath when it's not your collection day you could be issued with a fixed penalty notice or face legal action

To get help with your waste go to [southampton.gov.uk/recycle](http://southampton.gov.uk/recycle)

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