

# HOUSEHOLD WASTE SERVICES

## STORY SO FAR

Plymouth's household waste and recycling services serve over 120,000 households, providing an alternate weekly kerbside collection of household and recyclable waste, a seasonal garden waste collection service (about 45% of households participating), operation of two recycling centres, servicing of 21 bring recycling sites (e.g. bottle banks), and a bulky waste collection service.

A state of the art Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), which sorts the dry recyclables ready to be sent to recycling re-processors, was built in 2015 and is operated under contract by Viridor.

The kerbside dry recycle scheme (green bin/bag scheme) collects paper, card, glass bottles and jars, food and drinks cans, and plastic bottles and containers, including black plastic trays. Virtually all of the recycle is recycled in the UK, with the exception of certain plastic polymers. Viridor have invested in a plastic recycling plant in the UK and from next year, all of the council's dry recycle will be recycled in the UK.

South West Devon Waste Partnership delivered the Energy from Waste (EFW) Facility, which opened in 2015 and generates energy in the form of electricity and steam from the treatment of the city's residual waste. The energy then supplies the Devonport Naval Base and any surplus is fed into the National Grid. Since opening, the amount of the city's household waste that goes to landfill has reduced from circa 62% to less than 2% per year.

Alternate weekly collection was introduced in 2017, with a resulting increase in recycling of circa 3,500 tonnes. Recycling Officers provide front line education and support on effective recycling and handling of waste for residents, including targeted work with non-compliant individual households, promotional roadshows and talks, work with housing associations and student accommodation providers, and support for enforcement by Public Protection.

New in-cab technology was installed in collection vehicles in winter 2018 and is improving understanding and supporting the trend of reduced missed bin reports, providing real-time information for customer processes and increasing intelligence of on the ground issues, such as contaminated recycling and access issues. Data from the Street Services Information Management System (SSIMS) is being reported back to crews via regular newsletters and is being used by recycling officers to bring about improvements. The data is also supporting the message back to residents and councillors that a good level of service is being provided.

## KEY FACTS

The service has 106 FTE staff overall, with seasonal changes in demands meaning that there is often cross working between teams. Therefore, the breakdown below is indicative as follows:

### ASSETS

- 28 x 26 tonne refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) and 4 x 12 tonne RCVs operating 23 collection rounds, five garden waste rounds and one missed bin collection round
- 21 glass bottle banks, 13 paper, and 13 cans/plastics banks
- 2 recycling centres – Weston Mill and Chelson Meadow
- 1 articulated bulker vehicle
- 1 bin delivery vehicle

### PEOPLE

- 100+ FTE staff assigned to household waste kerbside collections (not including team leaders and assistant team leaders)
- Up to 15 FTE Pertemps agency staff assigned to garden waste collections
- 6,048 customers receive an assisted collection service
- 1 bulky waste crew (2 FTE)
- 29 FTE staff assigned to recycling centres (not including team leaders or other staff based at Chelson office)
- 4 FTE Recycling Officers
- 1 FTE for bin delivery vehicle

## FINANCES

The total amount of the budget attributed to household waste and recycling services is £7.965 million in 2019/20. The budgets for staff costs and vehicles for household waste services are broken down as follows, with the actuals for 2018/19 and the budget for 2019/20:

	2018/19 ACTUALS	2019/20 BUDGET
Total staff costs – Basic, NI, Super, pension, overtime, and temporary agency staff	£3.91m	£4.017m
Vehicle maintenance costs	£493K	£417K
Vehicle hire costs	£1.15m	£608K

## KEY STATS – PERFORMANCE

### Tonnages – 2018/19

- 101,819 tonnes of household waste
- 36.9% of household waste recycled – an increase of 2.8 percentage points (which is an increase of 8.3%) since the implementation of the alternate weekly collection
  - This is below the England 2017/18 recycling rate of 45.2% (latest available data)
- 20,000 tonnes of dry recyclables sorted by the MRF
- Over 37,000 tonnes handled collectively by the two recycling centres
- Less than 2% of household waste sent to landfill (EFW) (decrease from 62% since the EFW opened)
- Green (garden/organic) waste:
  - 4,254 tonnes of household garden waste collected kerbside
  - 3,487 tonnes handled by the household waste recycling centres
  - Total green or garden waste arisings from all sources (including commercial sources and parks) = 8,680 tonnes, all of which was sent for composting. The material is composted to a high standard locally and used for agricultural purposes.

### Missed bins – April to August 2019

- 99.9% of bins collected on their specified collection day
- 989 customer missed bin reports on average per month (56.2 missed bin reports per collection day out of more than 30,000 scheduled collections – less than 0.15%)
- 77.8% of customers self-served online to report missed bins – this is increasing as a result of channel shift in July and was 96.8% in August

- 288 missed bin reports already had a non-collection event recorded against them by crew
- Non-collection events logged by crew included:
  - 2,869 bins unable to be accessed
  - 2,467 contaminated recycling bins (not collected)
  - 1,075 wrong bins presented
- 79.9% of requests relating to the key service standards for household waste services were completed within their respective timeframes in August.

### Complaints – April to August 2019

The categories which had the highest number of complaints upheld (represented a fault with the service delivered) between April and August were:

- Waste not collected (garden waste = 148; domestic brown waste = 91; bulky waste = 82; assisted waste collection = 70; recycling green waste = 52; repeatedly missed = 31; clinical waste = 16)
- Container not delivered or returned (domestic brown bag or bin = 56; recycling green bag or bin = 46)
- Container not returned (assisted collections = 40; garden waste bag = 22).

## CHALLENGES

- Target to increase domestic recycling rates to 50% by 2034, as set out in the Joint Local Plan.
- Implications of the Government Resources and Waste Strategy Review and proposed potential mandatory changes to services, including:
  - Kerbside weekly food waste collection to all households by 2023
  - Free kerbside garden waste collection to all households with a garden via a 240 litre container by 2023
  - Separate collection at source of dry recyclate to increase material quality, changing from a co-mingled collection service
  - National Deposit Return Scheme for beverage containers potentially may reduce the amount of material from dry recyclate collections, impacting on financial and operational viability
  - The review is not policy. We are awaiting direction from government, which makes it difficult to decide on appropriate options at present.
- Contaminated recycling (2,467 bins April to August 2019) – requiring double handling and transport.
- Levels of side waste (fly-tipping) presented, increasing spillages and disruption of best practice collection regime due to repetitive lifting and twisting.
- Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) exceeding container provision, especially when space is constrained for additional containers.
- Aging fleet – 4 x 12 tonne RCVs and 10 x 26 tonne RCVs 2012 registration; 14 RCVs 2015 registration; 4 x 26 tonne RCVs 2017 registration.
- Incidents and/or repeat collection issues resulting from physical challenges to access or urban design requiring extended pull outs and/or steps.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Review of services – potential to identify means of increasing recycling and service efficiencies.
- In-cab technology is increasingly providing useful intelligence for service challenges. This data is used for targeted frontline education activities for repeat contamination and non-presentation of recycling.
- Targeted education and enforcement activity programme for hot spots.
- Better use of council data sets to identify HMOs and systematically review collection systems.
- Phased fleet replacement programme business case.
- Review of locations with pull outs and/or steps to consider collection points and collection systems.
- Improved authorisation process and delivery charge for containers.
- Increase recycling rates to lower disposal costs for residual waste.

## DELIVERY AGAINST KEY PRIORITIES

Progress has been made this year in delivering against key priorities, included in both the Corporate Plan and a number of pledges. Progress against the three pledges relating to household waste services is given below:

### NO. PLEDGE

- 90 We will review the current policy of charging for bulky waste collections and re-introduce community skips where practical. We will increase the use of community bins to cut down the number of wheelie bins in some residential streets.
- 93 We will review all options, including trialling food waste collection and reintroducing home composting, to tackle the problems arising from the scrapping of weekly bin collections.
- 94 We will raise recycling rates and tackle fly-tipping through a combination of positive campaigning and enforcement.

### UPDATE

- Bulky waste charging remains a low cost service. A review of existing community bins, particularly the quality of recycling, will inform future plans. Following a successful trial to tackle contamination of recycling bulk bins, we will shortly be implementing a schedule to introduce new recycling bulk bins at communal locations.
- Home composting service launched on 23 September, 2019.
- Plymouth City Council have undertaken a study in conjunction with Cornwall County Council to review options for the implementation of separate food waste collections. This study includes operational methodologies, facilities to process food waste and forecasting future volumes if separate food waste collection is mandated, as suggested in Defra's Resources and Waste Strategy.
- An increase/introduction of on-street recycling facilities and at events (recycling on the go) is underway to increase the capture of recycling away from the home, in particular the capture of single use beverage items and plastics. This also supports the Plan for Plastics.
- Street Services enforcement videos have been produced to encourage more awareness of and reporting by residents of environmental crime, including fly-tipping, contamination of bins, recycling centres, and dog poo. These have had a large reach across the online community. As of September 2019, the combined videos had received:
- 45,560 video views (combined Facebook, YouTube and Twitter)
  - 991 Facebook shares, 'likes' and comments
  - 43,575 Twitter impressions, engagements and re-tweets.
- Recycling Officers have undertaken face-to-face education activities, targeting known areas and increasing the use of data from refuse crews and social media campaigns.