

REPORT TO:	i) Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee ii) Cabinet
DATE OF MEETINGS:	i) 20 th November 2017 ii) 5 th December 2017
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr. Don Milne - Cabinet Member for Environment, Roads and Facilities
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SUBJECT:	Savings from refuse collection and increased recycling
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	ALL

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report describes the findings of the Improved Recycling Task & Finish Group following the 4 weekly refuse collection trial, providing information for Members to make an informed decision to recommend a sustainable long term solution for waste collection to help residents waste less, recycle more, and increase savings

2. SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- 2.1. Conwy has statutory obligations to manage waste responsibly based upon the principles of sustainability. Our aim is to deliver a sustainable recycling and waste collection model to benefit the environment for current and future generations, helps residents do the right thing by wasting less and recycling more, and is economically viable.
- 2.2. A trial of 4 weekly refuse collections was implemented during Sept/Oct 2016, involving 10,900 properties throughout the county, over a twelve month period. At the same time, 3 weekly collections were introduced as standard for all other households.
- 2.3. The move from fortnightly refuse collections to less frequent collections has increased recycling and reduced refuse in Conwy.
- 2.4. In 3 weekly areas recycling increased by 5% in comparison to an increase of 14% in the 4 weekly areas. The households in 4 weekly areas reduced the amount of refuse placed in their wheelie bins by 31% in comparison to 20% in the 3 weekly areas.
- 2.5. Since collection changes were implemented, there is evidence to support that in addition to householders embracing recycling and wasting less, there have been no significant issues with regards to side waste or fly-tipping, and there has not been an increase in the requirement for additional refuse bins or requests for assisted collection services.
- 2.6. An independent householder survey found that attitudes to the service change have become more positive since implementation, with the proportion of householders saying they were negative towards the change decreasing from 41% pre-change to 26% now.
- 2.7. In addition to the significant environmental benefits, the financial difference between operating 3 weekly (17 collections per year) and 4 weekly (13 collections per year) is £390,000 per year.
- 2.8. The Improved Recycling Task & Finish Group considered all the evidence of the trial, including tonnage data, the independent householder research, financial models (and savings) and feedback from individual members from their wards. Based on the results, they recommend 4 weekly refuse collections be implemented throughout the County as an opportunity to provide a sustainable long term solution to recycle more, waste less and increase savings.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. Scrutiny accepts the findings and recommendation of the Improved Recycling Task & Finish Group and recommends to Cabinet that 4 weekly collections are the most sustainable long term solution to recycle more and waste less, accompanied by a comprehensive programme of education and engagement with the people of Conwy.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1. Year upon year, Conwy continues to recycle more than ever. However, upon realisation that over half the contents of residual wheelie bins (black bag waste) in Conwy still contained recyclable materials that could have been recycled at the kerbside (losing Conwy £1.6m per year) a major change project was initiated to increase recycling and identify savings from refuse collection.
- 4.1.2. The Council has a duty to responsibly manage waste to meet its statutory recycling obligations. A key objective is to deliver a sustainable recycling and waste collection service that benefits the environment, helps our residents do the right thing by recycling more, and is economically viable.
- 4.1.3. A 4 weekly refuse collection service was recommended by the Improved Recycling Task & Finish Group (27th January 2016) and the Customers Overview and Scrutiny (8th February 2016).
- 4.1.4. Cabinet recommended that refuse collection frequency be changed to every 3 weeks for non-recyclable waste (23rd February 2016).
- 4.1.5. A significant trial of 4 weekly refuse collections was also approved to be planned and implemented alongside the 3 weekly collection roll-out. Officers recommended that a trial should be over at least 12 months to allow adequate adjustment to change and understand any seasonal variation.
- 4.1.6. Recycling and food waste would still be collected weekly; textiles, small electrical items and green garden waste would still be collected fortnightly. This would be complemented with a new weekly collection of nappies.
- 4.1.7. Over 6 months, officers planned collection service changes for nearly 57,000 households. This involved reconfiguration of all refuse and recycling rounds for two different operational configurations which required two separate communications campaigns.

- 4.1.8. The 4 weekly trial area was determined by the Improved Recycling Task & Finish Group (9th May 2016). Due to operational and communications considerations, a whole collection day required to be selected as a trial area (as opposed to identifying areas throughout the week). Members considered each of the five collection days (which had been anonymised) to select a collection day for the trial based upon factors such as operational service configuration, housing types, geography, communications and recent recycling participation and performance.
- 4.1.9. The 4-weekly trial area selected was the **Monday** collection area. This was over 10,900 households throughout the county when collection rounds were finalised. A map/list of areas on the trial is included as Appendix 1.
- 4.1.10. A communications campaign was undertaken from July 2016. All households received an information pack and a copy of their new collection schedules during August 2016 and new recycling collection rounds commenced behind the scenes to cope with the anticipated increase in recycling participation. The refuse collection changes commenced from September 2016 and were phased in over a 5 week period.

4.2. **FINDINGS**

- 4.2.1. The introduction of 3 weekly and 4 weekly refuse collection systems at the same time is unprecedented. Conwy is in the unique position of having data and findings to compare the outputs of both arrangements in contrast to fortnightly collections.
- 4.2.2. The introduction of restricted residual waste capacity by changing the frequency of refuse collection has had a direct impact on increased recycling and a reduction of waste to landfill and these are detailed within the report.
- 4.2.3. To benchmark against historical data, comparisons of collections rounds are undertaken which revolve on 12 week cycles. The trial data is centred on 48 weeks of collection data to provide the most reliable information for benchmarking purposes. Collections data is included within *Appendix 2*.

4.3. **GENERAL IMPACT ON RECYCLING AND REFUSE COLLECTION FOLLOWING COUNTYWIDE REFUSE COLLECTION CHANGES**

- 4.3.1. There has been a general reduction in the amount of waste placed out for collection in refuse wheelie bins and an increase in material recycled at the kerbside, compared to the same collection period the previous year (fortnightly refuse collections).
- 4.3.2. An additional 994 tonnes of material was collected at the kerbside to be recycled (+7.5% increase).
- 4.3.3. There was a reduction of 3,800 tonnes of waste collected from refuse wheelie bins that would have been collected and disposed of to landfill over the same period the year prior (-22% decrease).
- 4.3.4. The gap between recycling increase and refuse decrease is due to a number of factors. 600 tonnes is due to nappies being collected separately. A recycling solution is being trialled for nappies, but up to now these have not been included in the recycling figures. Some waste is being diverted to Household Recycling Centres and some being recycled properly as garden waste instead of being placed in wheelie bins. There has been no significant increase in additional litter/fly-tipping tonnage (see 4.12.3). Reduction in total waste (recycling plus landfill) is an outcome common in other Authorities who have implemented reduced frequency or reduced volume bin collections – people throw away and waste less.

4.4. 3 WEEKLY AND 4 WEEKLY REFUSE COLLECTION IMPACTS

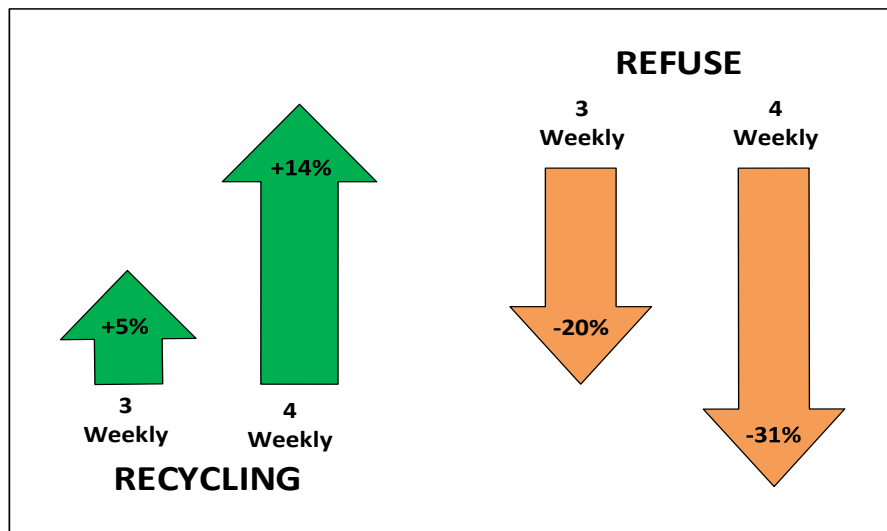
- 4.4.1. In order to fairly compare the impact of 3 and 4 weekly collections, tonnage based data can be used to determine Kilograms of material, per household per week.

Table 4.1 – Refuse and recycling comparison pre/post collection changes

Before Refuse Collection Changes			After Refuse Collection Changes		
	Monday (Fortnightly)	Tues-Friday (Fortnightly)		Monday (4 Weekly)	Tues-Friday (3 Weekly)
Recycling	4.90 kg/hh/wk	4.93 kg/hh/wk	Recycling	5.60 kg/hh/wk +14%	5.17 kg/hh/wk +5%
Refuse	6.60 kg/hh/wk	6.33 kg/hh/wk	Refuse	4.53 kg/hh/wk -31%	5.05 kg/hh/wk -20%

- 4.4.2. The 3 weekly areas increased their recycling by **5%**
- 4.4.3. The 4 weekly areas increased their recycling by **14%**
- 4.4.4. The 3 weekly areas reduced the amount of refuse they placed in wheelie bins by **-20%**
- 4.4.5. The 4 weekly areas reduced the amount of refuse they placed in wheelie bins by **-31%**

Chart 4.1 – Recycling increase and refuse reduction pre/post collection changes



- 4.4.6. The outputs from 3 weekly and 4 weekly collections based on trial findings can be used to determine the difference between implementing 3 weekly refuse collections throughout the county and implementing 4 weekly refuse collections.

Table 4.2: 3 weekly Vs 4 weekly county wide refuse and recycling collection projections

	3 Weekly County Wide Projection	4 Weekly County Wide Projection
<i>Refuse Collection</i>	14,978 tonnes per year collected for disposal	13,001 tonnes per year collected for disposal
<i>Recycling Collection</i>	15,330 tonnes recycling per year	16,608 tonnes recycling per year

- 4.4.7. A 3 weekly collection schedule throughout the county would have a significant environmental impact in terms of an additional 1,977 tonnes of waste being collected for disposal per year and 1, 270 tonnes less material being captured for recycling at the kerbside(in comparison to 4 weekly collections).

4.5. **TRENDS**

- 4.5.1. Based upon the first 6 months (week 1-24, Sept-Feb) and second 6 months (week 25-48, Mar-Aug), the reduction in refuse collected from wheelie bins remained fairly consistent with the 48 week results. The 3 weekly areas averaged a -21% decrease over the first half of the year and -20% during the second half, while the 4 weekly areas averaged a -31% decrease throughout the period.

In terms of recycling increase, the 3 weekly areas increased recycling by an average of 18% during the first half of the year, though this fell to a 3% increase over the second half of the year. The 4 weekly area displayed a similar downward trend, with a recycling increase of 15% recorded during the first half of the year and a 10% increase during the second half of the year.

4.6. **NAPPY COLLECTION SERVICE**

- 4.6.1. The provision of a separate weekly nappy collection service has been introduced (as part of the Cabinet recommendation) to assist families with the reduction in refuse containment capacity.

- 4.6.2. The service presented a logistical challenge during implementation, as the number of households that would register and their location were uncertain. Collection rounds were required to be planned and amended on a daily basis during the first 5-6 weeks of operations before settling down.
- 4.6.3. The service has been very popular with almost 2,800 households (5%) initially registering for the service. This has settled to the current total of 2,500 households following some households finding that they can cope with using the refuse wheelie bin capacity available to them.
- 4.6.4. The take-up of the nappy service has been evenly distributed throughout the county on across all collection days. There has not been more households registering in the 4 weekly refuse areas in comparison to the 3 weekly areas, therefore it is not anticipated that there would be a significant difference in registrations if the whole county was to be in receipt of 4 weekly refuse collections. This is highlighted below:

Table 4.3: Houses per collection day registered for nappy collection service

Refuse Collection Day	Houses registered for nappy service
Monday	517
Tuesday	522
Wednesday	507
Thursday	533
Friday	453

- 4.6.5. The nappy service was originally anticipated to be incorporated within the historical clinical waste collection service that operated using one collection vehicle, however the business case for less frequent refuse collection did factor an additional vehicle and operator as a contingency. Based upon the popularity of the service, the clinical & nappy collection service does necessitate two vehicles based on a weekly service provision.
- 4.6.6. The Recycling Team established that some households initially requested a separate nappy service prior to knowing whether they could cope with the residual waste volume available to them. Some residents returned the container preferring to use the refuse wheelie bin rather than have an additional container.
- 4.6.7. If a nappy collection bin is not placed out for three weeks running, we will contact the household to establish if the service is still required. This task was undertaken throughout the year and almost 300 households confirmed they did not use or require the service.

- 4.6.8. Nappy waste has been disposed of using landfill to date, however as part of a new collaborative arrangement with Gwynedd Council, nappy waste will (as at Autumn 2017) will be sent as part of a trial to be recycled (creating a chip-board like product from the plastic nappy material).

4.7. **SIDE WASTE / RAISED LIDS**

- 4.7.1. A public concern prior to the change was whether households would cope with the capacity available to them for household waste due to less frequent collections. Only non-recyclable waste is collected less frequently. Householders are provided a comprehensive weekly recycling service and following the changes they have demonstrated that there is enough room in refuse wheelie bins if recyclable materials are placed in the correct containers.
- 4.7.2. Officers visited collection rounds in the 4 weekly refuse collection day areas, noting down occurrences where excess residual waste had been presented outside of the wheelie bin (referred to as side waste) and/or where the bin lid was open and raised.

Table: 4.4 – survey of raised lid and side waste issues in 4 weekly collection areas

	No. of Properties	Presented for collection	Raised Lid	Side waste	Raised Lid & Side waste (at same time)
Towyn	690	653	10		1
Penmaenmawr	855	762	12	1	1
Llanfairfechan	1252	1099	40	2	2
Kinmel Bay	2668	2475	42	12	0
Eglwysbach	439	407	8		2
Dwygyfylchi	483	419	14		
Penmachno/Cwm Penmachno/Betws Garmon)	331	295	14	1	
Conwy Morfa	516	470	8		

Table: 4.5 – summary results; survey of raised lid and side waste issues in 4 weekly collection areas

4 Weekly Households presenting side waste	0.2%
4 Weekly Households with a raised lid	2.2%
4 Weekly Households presenting side waste and raised lid (at same time)	0.1%

4.7.3. It was apparent, based on visual appearance of areas and the quantitative data collected, that the vast majority of residents were recycling and not experiencing issues.

4.7.4. Where there have been issues, this has enabled recycling officers to visit and resolve issues via education, recycling assistance, provision of additional recycling containers, collection services or wheelie bins (where eligible) etc. Based upon experience, most issues have been attributable to residents refusing to recycle and placing food waste in refuse bins.

4.8. **ADDITIONAL REFUSE WHEELIE BIN TAKE-UP**

4.8.1. A public concern prior to the change was whether large families would cope with the residual waste capacity available to them.

4.8.2. The council will provide an additional wheelie bin to families of 6 or more permanent residents (on the condition they recycle).

4.8.3. The uptake of additional bins has remained similar (July 2016: 401 households had an additional wheelie bin, and in September 2017, 395 households had an additional bin). This suggests that larger households can cope if they recycle, given that most waste is recyclable.

4.9. **ASSISTED COLLECTION SERVICE**

4.9.1. A concern prior to the change was if residual wheelie bins would be heavier to manoeuvre due to being collected less frequently.

4.9.2. The Assisted Collection Service remains available for residents to request, where they have nobody else residing at (or regularly visiting) the address to place containers out for collection and are unable to do so themselves due to disability or infirmity.

4.9.3. Following the changes, the assisted collection service has actually experienced a 1% reduction in the amount of households registered for help with the refuse wheelie bins, however the number of households receiving an assisted collection service for recycling containers has increased by 15%.

- 4.9.4. This suggests that households are recycling the heavy recyclable materials such as food waste and glass, as opposed to putting these materials into refuse wheelie bins. More residents that had previously only registered for assisted refuse collection services are also requesting assistance to recycle.

4.10. **FLATS & HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION**

- 4.10.1. Flats and multiple occupation properties make up approximately 14% of the housing stock in Conwy.
- 4.10.2. Multiple occupation properties mostly have communal containers for recycling and waste which are shared by residents. In most cases residents are not aware of collection days or collection frequencies.
- 4.10.3. Additional collections are made to flats and multiple occupation properties where necessary, particularly where space is limited for storage.
- 4.10.4. Residents of multiple occupation properties are not exempt from recycling and have also experienced a restriction in capacity for non-recyclable waste to increase their recycling participation.
- 4.10.5. Separate information packs and calendars were provided for communal properties as some require different operational configurations for the collection of waste and recycling dependent on storage areas and access restrictions. Recycling officers have worked with building and facility managers to promote the changes.

4.11. **OPERATIONS**

- 4.11.1. The refuse collection fleet has been challenging to co-ordinate logistically as operating two different collection frequency configurations (3 and 4 weekly) was not anticipated.
- 4.11.2. The original business case for change from fortnightly refuse collection anticipated a reduction of one refuse collection vehicle for 3 weekly collections and three less vehicles on a 4 weekly system. Following the changes, 3 weekly collections throughout the county can actually be operated on reducing the refuse fleet by the equivalent of 1.5 vehicles (i.e. in addition to the one vehicle that has been dropped following the change from fortnightly, one vehicle would only work part weeks) and the 4 weekly collection model would still reduce by 3 vehicles (in comparison to the historical fortnightly collection setup).

- 4.11.3. No employees are at risk as a number of vacant posts have been held open and filled by agency staff pending a final decision on the service configuration. There would be no redundancy situation as a consequence of reducing the refuse collection fleet requirements and it will enable recruitment of full time staff to any remaining vacant posts.

4.12. **LITTERING & FLY TIPPING**

- 4.12.1. Littering and fly tipping is often a common concern prior to any change associated with waste collection.
- 4.12.2. There was an increase of 107 general fly-tipping incidents over a 12 month period, however, fly-tipping is generally on the increase in the whole of the UK and when looking into the detail of the reports, approximately half of the incidents in Conwy were associated with non-standard bulky household waste such as mattresses, furniture and materials such as tyres. i.e. materials not collected in wheelie bins, therefore the increase is approximately 60 incidents over 12 months (i.e. 1 additional incident per week in total from 57,000 households).

***Table: 4.6 – Fly Tipping incidents 2015/16 Vs 2016/17
(Sorted by start date of collection changes)***

	2015/16	2016/17
Oct-Dec	228	269
Jan-Mar	225	266
Apr-June	262	264
July-Sep	271	294

- 4.12.3. During the 12 months prior to the county wide refuse collection changes, the tonnage of fly tipping, littering and litter bin waste collected was 1,219 tonnes versus 1,229 tonnes in the twelve months following the changes. A 10 tonne (0.8%) increase, however given that approximately half of this is material not collected in the wheelie bins in any case, combined with a national trend of increased fly-tipping, the increase is negligible.
- 4.12.4. The vast majority of roadside litter is fast food and drink cartons thrown out of car windows. This is not associated with household refuse collections.
- 4.12.5. The dumping of mattresses, TV's and furniture is not associated with household refuse collections.

4.12.6. An occurrence that has been noticed on a more frequent basis following the collection changes is residents retrieving their wheelie bins far more quickly following collection due to a perceived concern that other residents might use their wheelie bin capacity or that it might go missing. This has improved the visual impact of wheelie bins on the street as they are out less often and has resolved a number of historical issues.

4.12.7. There is no excuse for fly tipping, littering or abuse of street litter bins. Changes to refuse collections cannot be cited as a defence or justification for the actions of a small minority of irresponsible people who break the law; the refuse collection changes have affected 57,000 households. Any minor increase in fly-tipping incidents are the exception and not the rule. The authority will seek to identify any offenders and will take action as necessary.

4.13. **PET WASTE**

4.13.1. For households that choose to keep pets, a reduced refuse collection frequency was initially a concern.

4.13.2. It is not economically viable to provide a separate collection service for pet waste, however if residents make use of the comprehensive recycling services, there will be enough room in their refuse wheelie bins.

4.13.3. Residents are encouraged to responsibly bag and securely seal pet waste prior to placing it in their bin. Disposal facilities are also provided for residents at Household Recycling Centres and dog waste can be deposited in general litter bins and dog fouling bins when out on walks. Residents are also encouraged to consider 'off the shelf' home composting/wormery solutions from DIY specialists.

4.14. **SERVICE CHANGE AND COMMUNICATIONS HOUSEHOLDER RESEARCH**

4.14.1. *WRAP Cymru* (Waste & Resources Action Programme) conducted an independent telephone survey of over 1,000 residents during April 2017 with an equal number of samples in both three weekly and four weekly areas to find out about the changes. The results are attached as *Appendix 3*.

4.14.2. The survey results suggest that the service change has had a significant impact on recycling behaviour. One in three (33%) householders in Conwy say they are recycling more than 6 months ago (survey conducted April 2017), and at least 55% of this can be attributed to the service change. The materials/items most frequently

cited as recycling more of, were food waste, plastic pots, tubs and trays, plastic bottles, card/cardboard and paper.

- 4.14.3. The positive impact on recycling behaviour has been most noticeable on typically low performing groups such as younger householders aged 18-34 and those with lower recycling motivation. A greater proportion of larger households with 4+ people, and those with children aged 0-5 at home, also say they are now recycling more.
- 4.14.4. In addition to the impact upon behaviour, the service change appears to have had a pronounced impact on recycling motivation. The proportion of residents who say they have a low level (scoring 0-6) of recycling motivation has halved (from 20% to 10%) since the introduction of the reduced refuse collection frequency. The proportion of those saying they are highly motivated has increased from around half of householders to two in three.
- 4.14.5. Recall of the service change information leaflet and calendar was high - 76% unprompted, increasing to 86% with prompting, and almost three quarters (74%) of those who recalled the leaflet/calendar said it helped to make the change to the new system easier and was highly rated for explaining the timings and frequency of collections and for setting out which materials go in which container.
- 4.14.6. Overall, attitudes towards the service change have become more positive since implementation – with the proportion of householders saying they were positive towards the change increasing from 29% pre-change to 53% now; and the proportion of those negative decreasing from 41% to 26%.
- 4.14.7. There are no statistically significant differences between the 3 weekly and 4 weekly collection areas in terms of views towards the change – neither pre change nor post change.
- 4.14.8. The proportion of householders in the 3 weekly areas saying they were positive towards the change increasing from 29% pre-change to 54% now; and the proportion of those negative decreasing from 42% to 25%, while the proportion of householders in the 4 weekly areas saying they were positive towards the change increasing from 30% pre-change to 51% now; and the proportion of those negative decreasing from 41% to 30%.
- 4.14.9. There is also a strong association between attitudes and how many extra recycling services a householder says they have used, with those taking up extra services less likely to be negative. Given the strength of this association there is scope to increase awareness and take up of the additional services.

- 4.14.10. Turning to specific issues, the most frequently cited issue is running out of space for the general rubbish and/or recycling (cited by 25%) and litter and/or fly-tipping (15%). However, levels of reported problems are notably lower in reality than the problems expected by residents when they first heard about the change.

4.15. SAVINGS

- 4.15.1. Based upon the findings and performance of 3 weekly and 4 weekly collections, it has been possible to update cost projections to compare against the original business case for change.

TABLE 4.8 – Collection System Savings

	Business Case: 3 Weekly	Business Case: 4 Weekly	Removed from ERF Budget 2016/17	3-Weekly Projection	4-Weekly Projection
Domestic Disposal Saving	-218,000	-340,000		-448,583	-678,157
Collection Saving	-160,000	-370,000		-236,942	-395,374
Recycling Income	-50,000	-75,000		-25,904	-72,532
Nappies (Collection Cost)	75,000	75,000		71,430	71,430
Nappy Disposal Cost	0	0		76,626	84,288
Food Waste Treatment Cost	0	0		13,986	39,161
Recycling Collection Cost	118,000	118,000		120,112	120,112
HRC Disposal Cost	22,000	34,000		29,025	40,635
Net Collection System Total Saving	-£213,000	-£558,000	£500,000	-£400,250	-£790,437

- 4.15.2. £500,000 has already been removed from the ERF budget in relation to refuse collection changes (2016/17), therefore any savings must take this into account.
- 4.15.3. The projections for the original business case savings did not anticipate such a significant reduction in refuse collected for disposal which has been highlighted as a major success of the trial.
- 4.15.4. 3 Weekly Refuse Collection would provide Net collection system cost savings of £400k per year in comparison to the previous fortnightly collection system.

4.15.5. 3 Weekly Collection does not achieve the budget reduction of £500k that has already been reduced from the 2016/17 budget. There would be a revenue budget shortfall of £100k per year.

4.15.6. 4 Weekly Refuse Collections would provide Net Collection System Savings of £790k. (This would provide £290k cashable savings due to the £500k reduction in revenue budget for 2016/17).

4.16. **TIMETABLE**

4.16.1. The timetable for implementation of the recommendation is subject to democratic review and consideration by the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and final review/decision by Cabinet.

4.16.2. The Improved Recycling Task & Finish Group acknowledges the work of the Waste Team in communicating the service changes to residents and the engagement and problem-solving undertaken with individual residents and members. The Group felt that if their recommendation for 4 weekly collections is taken forward, a comprehensive communications programme is essential, particularly focussed on social media, in addition to the ongoing effective street level and doorstep campaign.

4.16.3. Any decision for a service delivery change will require a 4-6 month period to plan recycling and refuse collection round design, conduct staff training and coordinate of a comprehensive communications campaign to assist residents through a process of change.

5. **ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

5.1. The Recycle More Survey undertaken in Conwy during 2015 was completed by 11,200 households. 55.4% of respondents confirmed that they could manage with less frequent refuse collections if additional services such as separate nappy collections, additional recycling collections at Christmas and additional bins for larger families were provided.

5.2. The Improved Recycling Task & Finish Group has been actively involved in discussing and considering options for future waste collection services. The group recommended 4 weekly refuse collections of residual waste with the inclusion of a separate nappy collection service, additional recycling collections at peak periods and a policy for additional bins for large families on **27th January 2016**. The Customers Overview and Scrutiny supported this recommendation on **8th February 2016**. Cabinet recommended **23rd February 2016** that the council should implement 3 weekly refuse collections as standard and conduct a significant trial of 4 weekly refuse collections. The Task &

Finish Group was responsible for selected the 4 weekly trial area (10,600 households in Monday collection areas) **9th May 2016** and has acted as a sounding board to be updated on progress and to provide feedback to officers since the changes were phased in during September and October 2016. The Task & Finish Group considered the results and findings from the trial and on **31st October 2017** recommended that 4 weekly refuse collections be implemented as a sustainable way to recycle more, waste less and increase savings.

- 5.3. An independent telephone survey of over 1,000 residents was undertaken by *WRAP Cymru* (Waste & Resources Action Programme) during April 2017 with an equal number of samples in both three weekly and four weekly areas to find out if there are any differences in experience or recycling behaviour between those receiving three weekly and four weekly refuse collections.

- 5.4. Consultation has been carried out with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Roads and Facilities, whose observations are as follows:

Conwy has a reputation of being forward thinking when it comes to recycling. We have a duty to deliver a sustainable approach towards managing our resources and hence provide the right environment for Conwy residents.

We have statutory recycling targets that must be met and we can only expect that these targets will increase in future years, with the risk of financial penalties. However, we also have an obligation to think about the long term impact that waste will have on our families and communities.

Resources in our world are limited and we owe it to future generations to recycle as much of these precious resources as possible. The four weekly refuse collection trial has helped us understand how much waste we produce and how much of it can be recycled.

The findings in this report demonstrate that four weekly collections can work in Conwy and that they will help our residents to recycle more, waste less and achieve significant financial savings. These savings will make an invaluable contribution towards maintaining the required level of public services in our county.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. When considering the current financial situation and likely future settlement that Conwy County Borough Council faces, the financial savings (projected as a direct result of implementing four weekly refuse collections throughout the county) will be of significant value and benefit to the Council when planning future budgeting.
- 6.2. If a decision is undertaken to remain with **3 weekly refuse collections** as standard service provision (i.e. abandoning the trial and reverting to 3 weekly collections for the 10,900 households currently on the four weekly trial) there will be a requirement for **£100,000 revenue budget support per annum**, as the ERF Waste revenue budget has already been cut by £500,000 for 2016/17. This adverse financial implication is in addition to significant environmental costs.
- 6.3. An option to implement **four weekly refuse collections** throughout the county based upon the results of the trial presents a projected **cashable saving of £290,000 per annum** in addition to being a considerably more environmentally sustainable solution.
- 6.4. As stated in 4.11.3, no employees are at risk as a number of vacant posts have been held open and filled by agency staff pending a final decision on the service configuration. There would be no redundancy situation as a consequence of reducing the refuse collection fleet requirements and it will enable recruitment of full time staff to any remaining vacant posts.

7. CORPORATE PLAN OUTCOMES

- 7.1. Waste minimisation, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill and increasing recycling forms **Outcome 6 - People in Conwy live in a sustainable environment** within the Corporate Plan. Action A6.3 refers to supporting residents and businesses to recycle more and waste less and Action M33a commits to reusing, recycling or composting a high percentage of municipal waste, with 2017/18 target of 65%. There is a National Statutory Recycling Target of 70% by 2025.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 8.1. Increasing recycling and promoting waste minimisation will encourage less reliance on natural resources, protect the natural environment and support long term sustainability. Diversion of recyclable materials away from landfill, much of which is bio-degradable, will reduce emissions of harmful gases that can be utilised for energy using sustainable treatment technologies. Local preparation of material for recycling and sustainable treatment of organic green garden waste and food supports the local economy. Conwy has a legal commitment to doing what it does in a sustainable way under the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* which places an emphasis on the following five ways of working;
- 8.2. Long term: there is an importance to safeguard future generations through actively pursuing a collection system that has been trialled and demonstrates a more environmentally and financially sustainable approach to waste collection and recycling.
- 8.3. Prevention: by actively encouraging waste prevention and reduction, 4 weekly refuse collection will help Conwy to meet statutory and corporate recycling objectives.
- 8.4. Integration, Collaboration & Involvement: increasing recycling participation and raising awareness of waste minimisation within communities, including environmentally sustainable lifestyles, has a positive impact on this agenda. Collecting an increased amount of recyclable material provides potential for increased local employment opportunities preparing material for recycling.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. An initial equality and poverty impact screening assessment (EIA) was carried out prior to the refuse collection changes and did not identify any impact on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010, however it still acknowledged the following considerations; the Assisted Collection service remains available for residents to request – where those residents do not have anyone residing in the household to place containers out for collection and are unable to do so themselves due to disability or infirmity. Collections of separate clinical / hygiene waste and absorbent hygiene products are weekly.
- 9.2. Following refuse collection changes throughout the county (including the trial), there was a reduction in ‘assisted collection’ registrations for refuse bins (see 4.9.3). No issues were identified in terms of impact on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.

10. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 10.1. A change from 17 collections of non-recyclable waste per household per year, to 13 collections of non-recyclable waste per household per year (for households having their waste collections between Tuesday and Friday). There would be no change to recycling and food waste which would still be collected every week. The impact on the existing service outputs will be even more recyclable material being diverted away from refuse wheelie bins and into recycling and food waste containers.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Failure to deliver a sustainable future for the citizens of Conwy and risk of major reputational damage should an established system that has been trialled for over a year and is proven to significantly increase recycling, divert more waste from landfill and contribute substantial financial savings, be disregarded.
- 11.2. Failure to meet statutory recycling obligations. If Conwy fails to meet its statutory recycling targets it could incur fines of up to £200 for every tonne of waste landfilled (or treated as residual waste) which the Council cannot afford.
- 11.3. There is invariably resistance to change when any extensive operational service change is implemented. The trial has demonstrated that change is a process, not an event. Public concern will be mitigated via effective communications and recycling education and support based on the knowledge and experience gained as part of piloting a significant trial of four weekly collections throughout the county.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

*[to be included following meeting of the Economy and Place
Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 20.11.17]*

13. REPORT REVIEW GROUP (RRG) COMMENTS

- 13.1. RRG supported the recommendations within the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.
Savings from refuse collection and increased recycling: Cabinet Report 23 rd February 2016	Item 768	http://modgoveng.conwy.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=171&MId=4642&Ver=4