



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 10th June 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Restructure of Waste Collection Rounds

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

This report outlines the planned restructure of the waste collection rounds. The current rounds are inefficient, and the proposed changes will improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the service without reducing the current levels of service provided.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the contents of the report**

Decision Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? | No |
| What are the relevant corporate priorities? | Sustainable South Kesteven Effective council |
| Which wards are impacted? | All Wards |

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The proposed restructure has the potential to reduce the resource requirement by two vehicles and crews; this is a saving of around £250,000 per vehicle (capital costs) and £100,000 per crew (revenue costs). However, with the upcoming weekly food waste roll out due in April 2026, it is anticipated that these resources will be redirected to help deliver this service.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no legal or governance implications arising from the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.3 The proposed changes would improve the efficiency of the rounds and reduce the vehicles required to deliver the service by two. This would have a positive impact on the fuel consumption and associated carbon emission totals for this service area.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. In 2022 a full review of the waste services at South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) was undertaken and it was highlighted that a route review had not been undertaken in recent years. As a result, the rounds were unbalanced, and collections were geographically sporadic. This made the rounds inefficient, at risk of failing to complete regularly and meant that returning for missed bins / additional work could not be organised in the most efficient way.
- 2.2. In waste collection it is good practice to rebalance the collection rounds annually; usually it is a small project with minimal impact. The rebalance looks at new developments, problem areas and the weight balance across the week with the aim of ensuring work is spread equally across the week and resources. Unfortunately, SKDC has not undertaken a round review since 2012 and therefore many issues have been identified within the current operational set up.
- 2.3. Based on this review, Webaspx were commissioned by SKDC in August 2022 to undertake a full review of the current waste collection rounds. Webaspx are a specialist in providing route review services and software to Local Authorities.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. When restructuring rounds there are several considerations to make. These include work zoning, work balancing and any unique local issues. This section contains information on each of these areas of consideration; these are the issues which have been taken into account to support the selection of the preferred scenario for change.

Zoning of Work

- 3.2. Collection rounds are typically organised into zones (geographical areas which are close together), each day of collections has its own zone and the work for the day is located together within the zone. This means that resources are deployed to a specific area on each day, they work closely with each other so if there is an issue (e.g. a vehicle breakdown, or an accident) the other vehicles can use their spare capacity to pick up the work.
- 3.3. The zoning of the work also minimises the issues that come with a 'task and finish' approach to waste collection. Crews work together to complete the work within the zone and are incentivised to work together to complete the day's work. They are no longer incentivised to complete their own work as quickly as possible so they can leave.
- 3.4. A further benefit of zoning is that the work is collected with the depot and tipping points considered; most authorities choose one of two possible options:
 1. Collect from properties furthest away from the depot at the start of the week and finish close to the depot on the final day,

2. Collect from properties closest to the depot at the start of the week and finish the week at the furthest point.
- 3.5. The option chosen usually depends on where the tipping points are located but both options facilitate the efficient collection of missed bins as it means operatives aren't having to travel to a random spread of bins across an entire district to pick them up when they are missed.

Balancing of Work

- 3.6. Collection rounds are usually set up to spread the weight evenly across the week. This ensures that the teams do not have a round which is disproportionately bigger than others. The benefit of this is resilience, when new developments are constructed, a balanced operation should be able to absorb them within the current set-up. If rounds are not balanced, new developments will have to be absorbed by whichever round has the capacity and this can mean utilising resources which are in another part of the district. This reduces efficiency and increases the risk of round failure.
- 3.7. Ideally, re-balancing of rounds should take place annually or bi-annually (at most) to 'tweak' the rounds and ensure the workload remains spread across the rounds equally.

Local Issues

- 3.8. Alongside the general reasons for rebalancing and restructuring rounds, there are also the following reasons which are specific to SKDC:
 - South Kesteven's rurality, the prevalence of villages and rural collections,
 - Growth in the urban conurbations, notably in Bourne,
 - The garden waste rounds have no geographical logic,
 - The current set up makes picking up missed bins from different waste streams difficult, and
 - Collections are organised sporadically meaning that crews must travel large distances between collection locations at times, wasting time on travel which can result in missed bins if there are delays e.g. bad traffic.
- 3.9. Due to the sporadic nature of the current rounds and high resource requirement to collect the bins, the 2022 waste review suggested that a round restructure was the best way forward.

Options Considered

- 3.10. When considering the best way forward for SKDC, all the outlined areas were considered and discussed in-depth with Webapsx. The section outlines the options which were considered and explains why the preferred scenario has been selected.

3.11. Webaspx were given the following requirements:

- Rebalance the refuse and garden waste collections,
- Split the recycling into Mixed Dry Recycling (MDR) and paper/card collections,
- Day changes are to be considered,
- Refuse and recycling rounds to be exact mirrors, and
- Garden waste does not need to be the same collection day as refuse and recycling.

3.12. Based on these requirements, Webaspx suggested the following scenarios (Appendix 1):

1. **Scenario 1** – a general optimisation of the ‘as is’ rounds, collection days would not change, and this scenario did not include a separate paper/card collection.
2. **Scenario 2** – general optimisation but with no restriction on day changes, this option included the separate paper/card collections.

3.13. Scenario 1 was ruled out because it would require the same number of rounds. Although it did optimise the collections and reduce the working time within the rounds, because the collection days weren’t changed there were no efficiencies to be made. This also meant that the spread of work between days remained unbalanced and the areas where development was taking place (notably Bourne) were at risk of reaching capacity.

3.14. Scenario 2 was the best scenario because it met most of the requirements. This scenario reduced the number of rounds (vehicle + crew) required by 1 per service e.g. in Scenario 1 16 vehicles were required to complete each day’s work, in Scenario 2 only 15 were required. This scenario rebalanced the rounds for all the waste streams, meaning that work was more evenly distributed across collection days, and it created capacity for expansion in key areas due to the geographical zoning of the work. Based on this, Scenario 2 has been selected.

3.15. Appendix 1 contains an in-depth breakdown of the key statistics for each scenario separated by waste stream.

Timelines

3.16. Currently, it is anticipated that the roll out of the new collection schedules will take place in September 2025. The proposed high-level key dates for the roll out are:

- August 2025 – Communications campaign through social media to inform residents of the round restructure taking place and what the benefits are. This includes a web page dedicated to the round restructure including FAQs available on SKDC website, tied into social media comms.

- WC 18th August – letters to all residents confirming their new collection schedules, including a calendar and a Right Thing Right Bin leaflet. Letters to be delivered in batches of 5,000, South to North.
- New collections begin WC 15th September 2025.

Summary

- 3.17. This report provides an overview of the round restructure project and information on why it was decided that changing collection days was the best option for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the collection rounds.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. As outlined in paragraph 3.12. there were two scenarios considered. Scenario 1 involved a general optimisation of the rounds within the current collection days. This option was rejected because it didn't address the multiple issues outlined in Section 3 of this report. A full restructure is required to improve the service and achieve the savings outlined in Appendix 1.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report; this report provides an overview of the proposed restructure of the waste collection service and explains why a full overhaul of the current system is required.
- 5.2. If the round restructure does not allow for changes to collection days, the savings would be minimal and there would be very limited capacity built in for future proofing the service against growth.

6. Appendices

- 6.1. Appendix 1: Key statistics for each scenario by waste stream