

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Waste and Recycling Round Reconfiguration

**Meeting/Date:** Overview & Scrutiny (Communities and Environment) Panel,  
4 July 2017

**Executive Portfolio:** Councillor Jim White – Executive Councillor for Environment,  
Street Scene and Operations

**Report by:** Neil Sloper – Head of Operations

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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**Executive Summary:**

1. The reconfiguration of our rounds aims to maximise efficiencies and reduce fuel usage whilst meeting waste collection needs and delivering good customer service.
2. This report provides a summary of the implementation and lessons learned.
3. The revised rounds are implemented and following a settling down period collections are now consistent.
4. Further operational work is now required to performance manage the service to deliver optimal performance and drive the savings targets where possible.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet are asked to note the implementation report and lessons learned, making any recommendations to Cabinet.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report presents a summary of the implementation of the Waste Service round reconfiguration project and lessons learned.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Waste collection rounds were last reviewed in 2011.
- 2.2 There was a need to reconfigure our rounds to:
- balance workloads due to positive changes in recycling habits
  - balance workloads due to housing growth
  - reduce fuel usage through optimised routing
- 2.3 The Council additionally set a cost reduction target of £276,000 within the waste service in its Zero Based Budgeting process.
- 2.4 The project started in May 2016 with an original implementation date of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016. This was re-profiled to the 27<sup>th</sup> February to enable preparations to be completed and additional communication with residents regarding the go live date.
- 2.5 The last update report on 10<sup>th</sup> January to Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Environment) confirmed that the project was on track to the re-profiled implementation date. The full project progress report and highlight report were presented and endorsed.
- 2.6 It was reported on 10<sup>th</sup> January that given the growth of recycling by residents and the Council's positive policy of offering a second free recycling bin and accepting side waste for recycling; the volume and weight of recycling required the number of collection rounds for recycling to remain at 7. The rounds would still change to balance workloads and optimise fuel efficiency.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

### **3.1 Project Plan**

- 3.1.1 Appendix 1 to this report contains the formal report schedule for the project and all elements of the pre-implementation were completed on time for the re-profiled go-live date.

### **3.2 Communication Plan**

- 3.2.1 A success of the project was the communication plan before the go-live date with customer services praising the pre-launch awareness. The Customer Service team felt that the plan was significantly better than the last re-configuration and that the volume of calls before go live was much lower as a result. The communication plan in Appendix 2 was achieved.
- 3.2.2 This is demonstrated by the contact report from Customer Services in Appendix 3. Calls regarding the quality of information increased the week of the go-live but only to 56 for that week and then fell indicating the information given was largely understood. Signposting to the collection calendar peaked at 199 calls in the go-live week but then tailed off quickly. The website statistics showed that traffic was successfully driven to the site in January, peaking in February and then reducing back to the level of views before implementation.

### **3.3 Go-Live**

- 3.3.1 Following the last update report to Overview and Scrutiny, the Waste Service experienced a major road traffic incident. A vehicle was written off and three waste team members were hospitalised, one with life-changing injuries. No other vehicles were involved in the incident and the outcome of the police investigation is still outstanding.
- 3.3.2 This had a very serious impact on the whole team as post incident recovery took place whilst providing continued continuity of waste collection across the district. This event had a direct impact on the engagement and preparations for go live in February with the crews. However, the teams and managers still achieved a go live date as planned of 27<sup>th</sup> February.

### **3.4 Missed Bins**

- 3.4.1 Additional resources were put in place for the first 4 weeks of the new rounds. This was in recognition that all crews had new rounds and that all drivers had new routes to follow in areas with which they were unfamiliar. Previously drivers and crew had been doing the same rounds since 2011 and therefore had an exceptionally high level of automatic knowledge regarding special arrangements such as assisted collections.
- 3.4.2 Missed bins grew as a result of the changes (see Appendix 4). Daily missed bins grew from a pre-implementation average of 20 per day (0.002% of collections) to a peak in March of an average of 80 per day (0.1% of collections). This then fell in April to an average of 60 per day (0.008% of collections) and then back to pre-implementation levels in May.
- 3.4.3 Despite being a low overall number of missed bins given the magnitude of the changes made, the impact of these were high as a large number of these were consistently missed in the same locations. These were predominantly due to the complexity of the changes to establish a rural only collection round. Additional procedures were put in place in mid-April to address this including the swapping of crews.
- 3.4.4 From June onwards the service has been achieving collections to the new scheduled days, with a similar level of missed bins recorded pre-implementation. The additional resources deployed are now under review, to be withdrawn in a staged way, to start the delivery of savings.
- 3.4.5 Additional resources were also deployed to address service failure following the increase in missed bins in March. The service was then able to collect any missed bin the next day if passed to Operations before 4:00pm. The resources deployed to achieve this are now reduced as the volume of missed bins has fallen. The service is seeking to maintain this level of responsiveness.

### **3.5 Customer Contact**

- 3.5.1 The graphs in Appendix 3 (Customer Contact Report) show that customer contact increased significantly in March following the implementation of the round changes, peaked in April and then returned back to pre-implementation volumes in May/June. This reflects the picture of missed bins and the customer contact received to get these resolved. The same is true of complaints.
- 3.5.2 Whilst service failure is not acceptable and in particular the repeated issues in the same locations, it is important to note that on a monthly basis the Waste

service collects 160,000 bins in a month. The peak call volume in March peaked at 10,373 calls to switchboard and 2,607 calls for Operations. Complaints peaked at 170 in April.

- 3.5.3 A particular issue that must be highlighted is that due to the persistence of missed bins in some locations the average length of call became extended, impacting call handling capacity and extended call waiting times to an average of 5 minutes in March and almost 8 minutes in April compared to between 1.5 and 2 minutes pre-reconfiguration. These calls were also harder to manage as resolution became more challenging.

### **3.6 Performance**

- 3.6.1 The old rounds were well known by crews and as a result the speed with which these were completed could have been considered as excessive. Part of the requirement for the new rounds is that the crews work safely, without running, and complete more of their paid for hours.
- 3.6.2 Due to a system of task and finish, crews were self-incentivised to have high work rates as they could finish as soon as their round was complete. However, as the rounds became unbalanced this led to unfairness between crews. In order to achieve the reduction of a round on garden and residual waste the work is effectively distributed amongst the remaining rounds. This impacted the incentive of task and finish requiring a new performance management framework to be implemented to monitor work rates and accuracy. This has had a positive impact in addressing performance issues, with some crews recognised as delivering greater productivity than others.
- 3.6.3 The performance management framework will now be used to optimise the work rates of all crews such that we can phase the withdrawal of additional round support without impacting the quality of service that has been recovered.

### **3.7 Round Status**

- 3.7.1 The current volume of garden recycling is at a peak meaning that we do not intend to reduce the rounds at this time. A seasonal model of service will be developed whereby fewer but longer rounds are implemented in the winter to reduce the fuel and cost of the service on a seasonal basis.
- 3.7.2 An additional resource is being used to support the completion of residual waste on the scheduled collections dates. A detailed data gathering exercise and detailed de-briefing has been undertaken in June to look where rounds may need to be adjusted. Analysis in July will inform a staged series of amendments. Performance monitoring data will also be used, to ensure that logistical issues are driving these adjustments.
- 3.7.3 The new rural round has been improved by establishing a dedicated team who complete both residual and recycling due to the complexity of the special arrangements in place which include remote locations.

### **3.8 Driver Resources**

- 3.8.1 A key issue impacting round re-configuration has been a shortage of drivers. This has required members of the waste management team to be regularly called upon to undertake collections. This was acute over the Easter period. This has been particularly challenging as agency drivers seek to complete as many hours as they can to maximise their earnings. The Waste service is

unable to do this due to the hours of operation being constrained by tip opening times and sensible morning start times that do not disturb residents before 6:30am. This means as soon as other job offers come up we lose staff we have trained. The attractiveness of our vacancies has also been impacted by this, currently there is also a high demand for HGV drivers due to the A14 Highways work.

- 3.8.2 This has an impact on the effective handling of escalated complaints as the managers were out of the office driving. An additional temporary acting up arrangement was established to support the management team whilst links with multiple driver agencies have been established. The withdrawal of additional resources to support the new rounds will reduce the pressure, holiday quotas have been shortened and in-house driver training has also commenced to assist.

### **3.9 Lessons Learned**

- 3.9.1 Whilst the project was managed using the Council's project methodology it is considered that due to the magnitude of the risk and impact on residents such a project in the future should have a formal project board consisting of the key stakeholders in the organisation to keep them briefed and ensure the project plan is as robust as possible.
- 3.9.2 When planning the project there was no estimate or business case made for transitional resources to achieve the change or to recognise that to achieve a step change there would be a requirement to invest to save. This would have assisted in the formative stages with a project board to ensure such a significant change was resourced from the outset.
- 3.9.3 Handling a greater volume of customer contact through such a significant change should have been part of the project plan both within Customer Services and Operations at an earlier stage to ensure clear escalation paths, consistent responses and to eliminate potential confusions. Considering capacity to handle this volume increase would also have been advantageous rather than adopting the use of existing resources, supplemented by overtime.
- 3.9.4 When planning and delivering such a significant savings project a sensitivity and risk analysis should form part of the initiating business case so that the project is approved on the basis of worst case scenario.

## **4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 4.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to further update reports to the Cabinet.

## **5. KEY IMPACTS & RISKS**

- 5.1 Driver capacity still impacts the management team's capacity to focus on detailed performance management as they are the final cover to ensure the service is delivered.
- 5.2 The manual nature of route information, special collection arrangements and recording contaminated bins continues to impact service efficiency. The project to implement a waste management IT system for the first time is being progressed with South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire City Council's. Procurement is about to start with an anticipated implementation date in 6 months.

## **6. LINKS TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 The round reconfiguration will ensure that the Waste Service meets the strategic priority of becoming more efficient and effective, and delivers efficiency savings for the Council whilst continuing to meet waste collection needs.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation has been conducted with the collection crews to ensure viable collection services.
- 7.2 Customer Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Part of the project included round risk assessments is to ensure that the reconfigured rounds full comply with health and safety legislation.
- 8.2 Part of the project included a review of assisted collections to ensure that the reconfigured rounds full comply with Health the Equalities Act.

## **9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The additional cost of delivering the round reconfiguration is £28,090 for a dedicated Project Officer and this is being met from the agency staffing budget for the Waste Service.
- 9.2 Based on the requirements of fulfilling the recycling collections from Huntingdonshire's residents a saving of £180,000 was reported as being achieved through the round re-configuration project out of the £270,000 target. It is anticipated that only half of this saving will be delivered in 2017/18 due to the need for transitional resources to support the significant change.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 10.1 The round reconfiguration is essential to rebalancing the current collection rounds to take account of existing housing growth and planned future housing growth; and to deliver £180,000 in savings.

## **11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1: Waste and Recycling Reconfiguration Project Milestones

Appendix 2: Communications Plan

Appendix 3: Customer Services Contact Report

Appendix 4: Missed Bins by Month

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## Appendix 1: Waste and Recycling Reconfiguration Project Milestones

<b>Performance against key project milestones</b>			
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Planned Completion Date</b>	<b>Actual Completion Date</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>
Project Kick off meeting	25/05/16	25/05/16	
Project Kick off meeting	25/05/16	25/05/16	
Update to Overview & Scrutiny	12/07/16	12/07/16	
Data Collection	31/08/2016	30/10/2016	
Completion of "As Is" Model	31/08/2016	30/10/2016	
Scenario modelling	30/09/2016	31/10/2016	
Update to Overview & Scrutiny	06/09/2016	06/09/2016	
Agreement on preferred solution	30/09/2016	31/10/2016	
Update to Overview & Scrutiny	04/10/2016	4/10/2016	
Update to Overview & Scrutiny	06/12/2016	06/12/2016	
Pre-implementation data update	31/10/2016	31/12/2016	
Delivery of communication plan	30/10/2016	31/01/2016	
Implementation	21/11/2016	06/02/2017	
Post implementation review	28/02/2017	April 2017	
Project Closure	31/03/2017	May 2017	
Post Project Review	30/04/2017	June 2017	

## Appendix 2: Communications Plan

### Key Messages

- New day of waste collections
- Why we have reschedule the waste rounds
- What goes in which bin – Recycling and Refuse Guide to be reissued
- Bins need to be out by 6.30am for collection
- No excess waste will be taken
- No black sacks will be collected

Actions	Start Date	To involve	Responsible Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Information Hangers – Christmas collection arrangements and info about possible new collection days from 6 February</b> To be placed on grey bins starting w/c 5 December. Info will also be attached to sacks which are to be delivered in December</li> </ul>	5 December 2016		HF/JK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Councillors' Brief</b> – sent out weekly by Corporate Office</li> <li>• <b>Parish Brief</b> – sent out monthly by Corporate Office</li> </ul>	November and December 2016	Corporate Office	HF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HDC Website notifications</b></li> <li>• <b>Calendar updates</b></li> </ul>	December 16	IMD	HF/Joe Beddingfield/Will Wilton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RECAP website notifications</b></li> </ul>	December 16		HF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Letters to households affected and also including bank holiday arrangements for 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make available in other languages</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Meeting with the doc centre scheduled for 1 December</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Up to 80k letters to be sent</li> <li>○ Inclusion of the Recycling and Refuse Guide – Include Frozen bins &amp; smaller bins update info</li> <li>○ Clear plastic envelope</li> <li>○ Ordering</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	W/C 16 January 2017	Doc Centre	HF/Doc Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agrippa signs – ‘your waste collection days will be changing from 6 February. Download your collection calendar at <a href="http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins">www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins</a>’</b></li> </ul>	7 January 17		Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Councillors and parish council pack which includes a copy of the letter and any other material.</b> Could also include list of affected streets/villages with new collection</li> </ul>	w/c 16 January 2017	Corporate Office	HF/AC



<b>days and particular areas which may have changed weeks for the collection of a certain waste type</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Call Centre:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ E-mail signature notifications</li> <li>○ Advisors to speak to callers at the end of each call reminding of the possible changes to collection days</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	7 January 2017	Call centre	AE/SK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social Media:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recycle with Huntingdonshire and Huntingdonshire District Council Facebook and twitter feeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post &amp; tweets to be scheduled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes happening and your information is on its way (Jan 2016)</li> <li>• You should now have received your new collection day (Jan 2016)</li> <li>• The online bin calendar has now been updated with your new collection dates (end Jan 2016)</li> <li>• Don't forget you waste collections are changing (w/c 6 February)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	w/c 16 January 2017	Social Media Group	HF/AC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>E-newsletter – Huntingdonshire Online – scheduled for Dec:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Possibly a special edition could be created</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	16 January 2017		HF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green News page with in the Hunts Post – scheduled for Dec:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Possibly include the page within January edition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reminder to look out for your letters, take note of the changes to your waste collection days</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	11 January 2017 Hunts Post edition		HF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Press releases:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local newspapers</li> <li>○ Parish publications, social media feeds and websites</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Early January 2017	Corporate Office	HF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key Issues and intranet</b></li> </ul>	January 2017	Corporate Office	HF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Info cards for crew (waste, streets and grounds) that they can give to residents who ask about the changes</b></li> </ul>	7 January 2017		HF/AC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Posters for One Leisure Sites, Customers service centres, Libraries and the Q-Matic screens</b></li> </ul>	7 January 2017	Doc Centre	HF/Peter Archer

### Appendix 3: Customer Services Contact Report

#### Avoidable Contact Report – Quality of Information

This is how the team would log where customers are saying they haven't received their packs or are confused by the information provided

W/C 30 <sup>th</sup> Jan (week prior to any round change communication)	W/C 27 <sup>th</sup> Feb	W/C 6 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 13 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 20 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 27 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	W/C 8 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 15 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 22 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 29 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 5 <sup>th</sup> June
15	56	34	15	18	12	13	7	11	3	6	8

#### Signposting – Check Collection Calendar

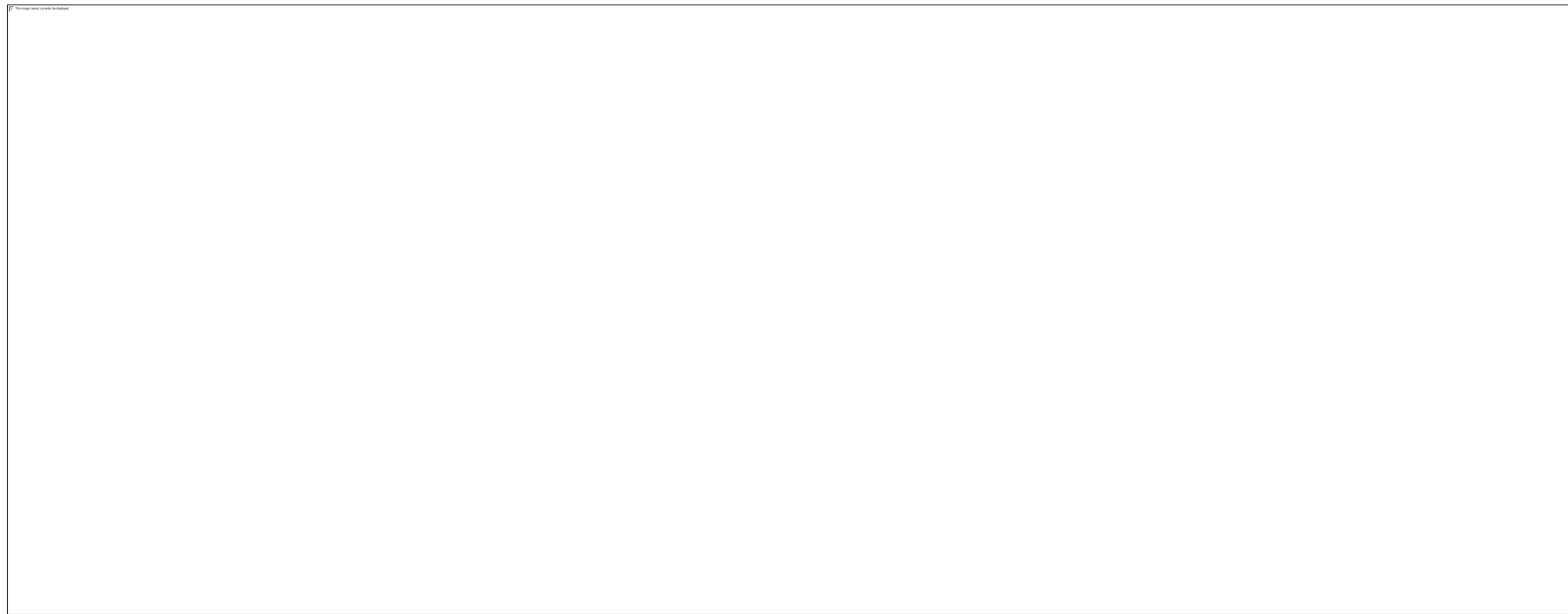
This is where we are supporting customers to find the information

W/C 30 <sup>th</sup> Jan (week prior to any round change communication)	W/C 27 <sup>th</sup> Feb	W/C 6 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 13 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 20 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 27 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	W/C 8 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 15 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 22 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 29 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 5 <sup>th</sup> June
6	199	66	38	36	31	35	16	8	12	12	11

#### Website stats

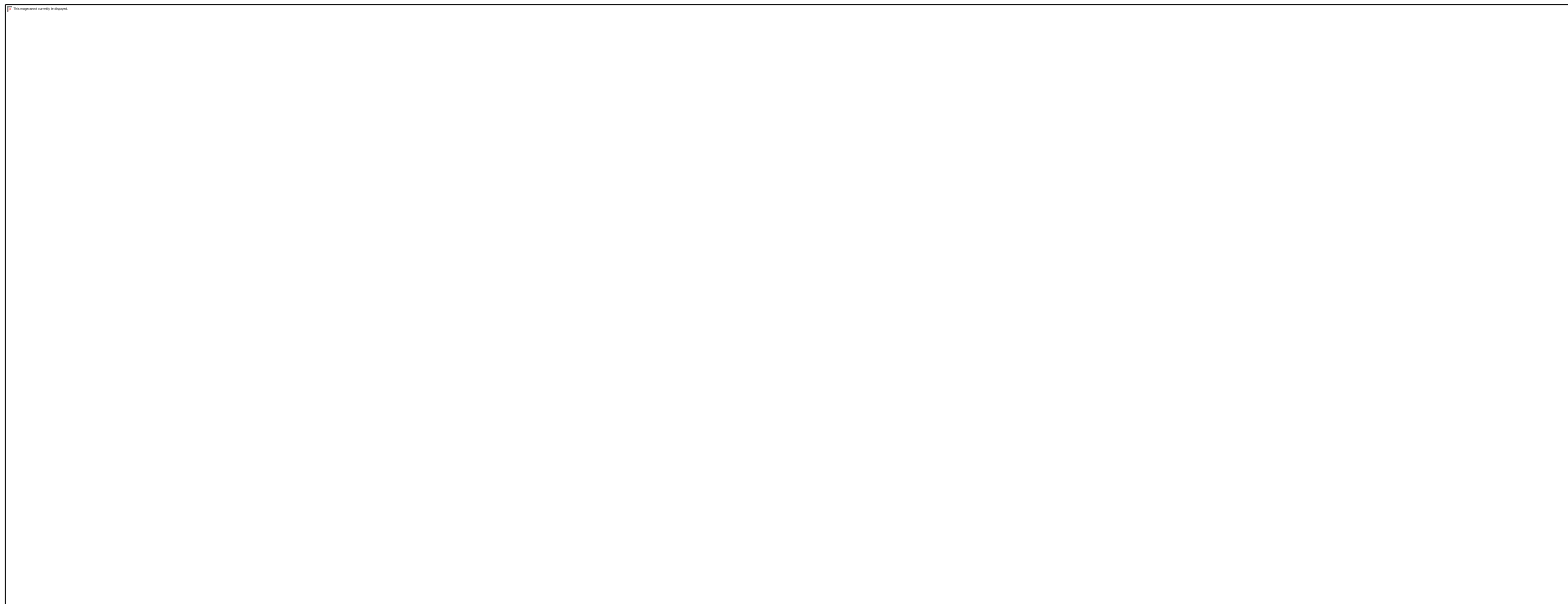
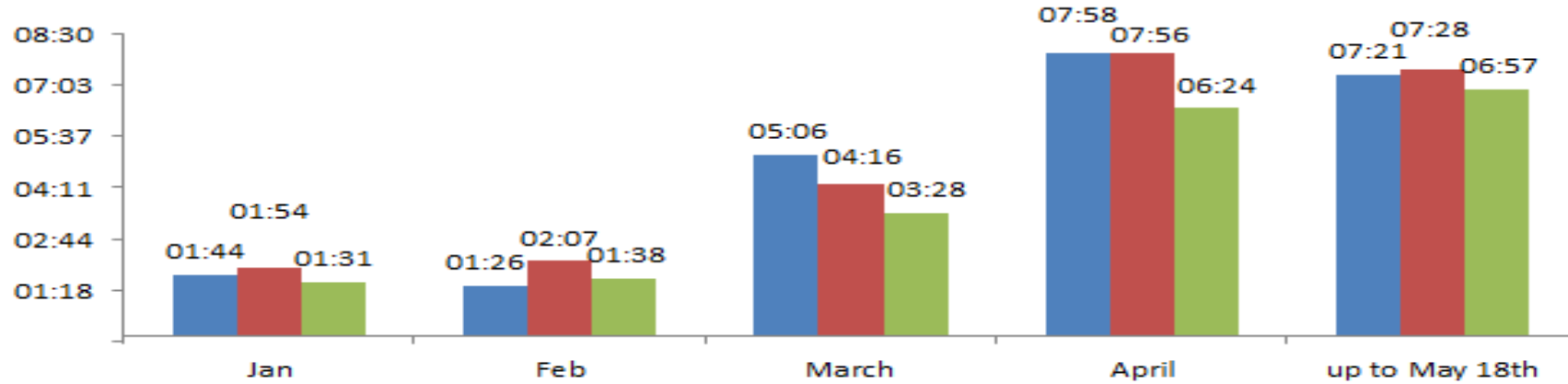
	W/C 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan week prior to any round change communication)	W/C 30 <sup>th</sup> Jan (notification on website calendar – FAQ's)	W/C 27 <sup>th</sup> Feb	W/C 6 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 13 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 20 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 27 <sup>th</sup> March	W/C 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	W/C 8 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 15 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 22 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 29 <sup>th</sup> May	W/C 5 <sup>th</sup> June
Bin Calendar	4,180	6,129	11,658	6,871	4,807	5,716	4,775	4,965	3,883	3,438	4,193	5,547	3,772
FAQ's	25	1,679	1,525	798	454	421	304	405	107	76	102	124	102

	Jan	Feb	March	April	up to May 18th
Street scene Emails	857	649	1529	1272	560
Operations Complaints	18	16	86	170	59
Ops Refuse Avg Wait	01:44	01:26	05:06	07:58	07:21
Ops Refuse Call Volume	52	43	145	95	52
Ops General avg Wait	01:54	02:07	04:16	07:56	07:28
Ops General Call Volume	894	1387	2607	1543	806
Switchboard avg wait	01:31	01:38	03:28	06:24	06:57
Switchboard Call Volume	7551	7557	10373	8956	6119

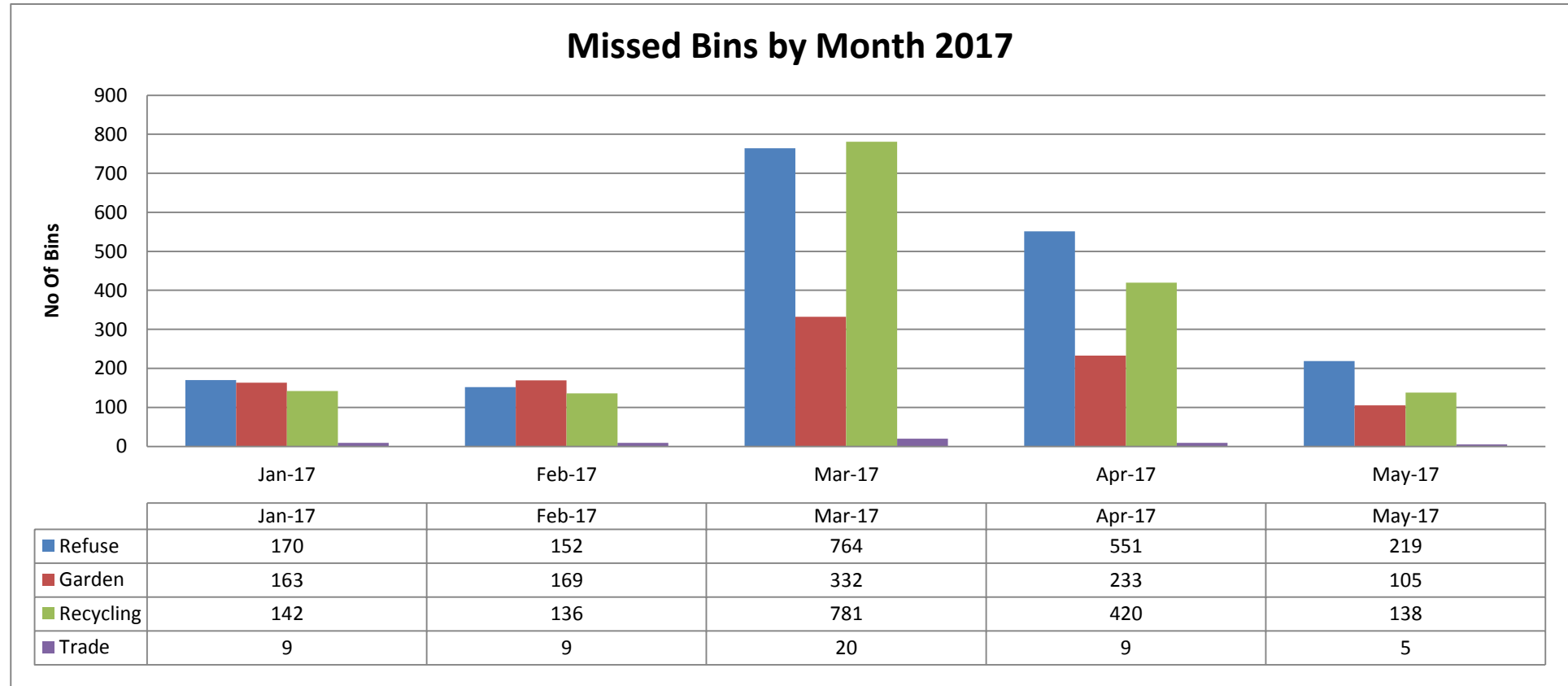


# Avg Call Wait times

■ Ops Refuse Avg Wait   ■ Ops General avg Wait   ■ Switchboard avg wait



**Appendix 4: Missed Bins by Month**



Note: 8,000 bins collected daily