

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

To: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: ALTERNATE WEEKLY COLLECTIONS
From: HEAD OF LAND SERVICES		
Date: 22 AUGUST 2007	Ref: KW/WB/SK	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval, in principle, to the introduction of an alternate weekly collection (AWC) system for residual refuse collection.

2. BACKGROUND

Like all other Local Authorities in Scotland, North Lanarkshire is under extreme pressure to:

- increase its level of recycling,
- minimise the volume of biodegradable waste that it sends to landfill, and
- minimise landfill tax costs and reduce financial penalties arising from non-compliance with landfill allowance targets

3. RECYCLING

- 3.1 In 2004 North Lanarkshire Council received an award of £52.204m from the Strategic Waste Fund to introduce recycling initiatives to increase its recycling level of 1.3% (2000/01) to 28.1% (2005/06).
- 3.2 The Scottish Executive has repeatedly stated its aspirational target for North Lanarkshire as being 52% by the year 2020.
- 3.3 Following extensive modelling by Technical and Financial consultants, it is generally agreed that this target is, at best, very challenging and is, at worst, unlikely to be achieved.
- 3.4 However, to demonstrate its commitment to this target, North Lanarkshire has prepared a further bid to the Scottish Executive seeking additional Strategic Waste Funding of £30 million.
- 3.5 The Scottish Executive issued guidelines to all Local Authorities that strongly suggest that it is of the opinion that the introduction of an AWC system is the most appropriate means by which the aspirational targets can be achieved. The guidelines also strongly suggest

that an AWC system may be a pre-requisite to obtaining additional Strategic Waste Funding.

4. MINIMISING BIODEGRADABLE WASTE TO LANDFILL

- 4.1 In terms of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS), Local Authorities are allocated an allowance for the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) that it can send to landfill in any one year without a financial penalty being incurred.
- 4.2 A separate paper will be submitted that outlines fully the problems that North Lanarkshire faces with regards to potential penalties for exceeding its limits. In summary, the projected penalty for 2007/08 is £600,000 and £1.67 million for 2008/09.
- 4.3 The Council's Technical and Financial consultants predict that it is only when the pan-Lanarkshire waste disposal facility becomes operational that the risk of exceeding the LATS allowance will be fully removed.

5. ALTERNATE WEEKLY COLLECTION

- 5.1 Given ready access to additional Strategic Waste Funding, without condition, and given exemption from the risk of potential penalty, in terms of LATS, there would be no pressing need to debate the merits or de-merits of alternate weekly collections.
- 5.2 However, for North Lanarkshire to progress any plans to increase its level of recycling or to minimise the potential for a penalty under LATS, the Council's policy on AWC must be determined.
- 5.3 Like North Lanarkshire, Clackmannanshire Council were, only a few years ago, one of the poorest performing recycling authorities in Scotland. However, although North Lanarkshire has made considerable improvement in its performance, Clackmannanshire have risen to be Scotland's top performing recycling Council. Their return of 41.3% for the year to June 2006 places them ahead of every other Local Authority in Scotland.
- 5.4 Clackmannanshire achieved this turn-around by introducing AWC. This merely confirmed the findings of a report by Remade Scotland in February 2007, which stated that schemes (for recovering high rates of dry recycle) integrated with fortnightly residual waste collection recover 65% more than those associated with a weekly residual collection.
- 5.5 AWC systems are not a new concept, with many English Authorities having introduced them up to ten years ago and many more having done so in recent years. Within Scotland, 14 of the 32 local authorities currently provide collected residual waste on an alternate weekly basis, although 1 of the 14 have the service under review, that being East Dunbartonshire, please see appendix 1.
- 5.6 It is accepted, from the experience of Authorities that have AWC, that complaints rise immediately following the introduction of AWC. Indeed, at the time that Clackmannanshire rose to the top of the recycling league, they also rose to the top of the complaints league. However, through perseverance and commitment to the task, the number of complaints related to AWC is now minimal.
- 5.7 The introduction of AWC needs to be properly managed with adequate publicity and communication with the public, so that there is a clear understanding of what common-sense measures need to be taken.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. As stated at paragraph 3.4 above, North Lanarkshire is seeking additional Strategic Waste Funding of £30 million. It has been suggested that approval of this bid may be dependent on the Council committing to AWC.
- 6.2. As stated at paragraph 4.2 above, the projected LATS penalty for 2007/08 is £600,000 and £1.67 million for 2008/09. If action is not taken to divert more materials away from landfill sites, these penalties are likely to continue until around 2014.
- 6.3. These expenditure associated with the LATS penalties will derive no benefit to North Lanarkshire at a time when budgetary pressures exist.
- 6.4. If AWC were to be introduced, the amount of waste that would ultimately end up being deposited at the pan-Lanarkshire waste disposal facility would be reduced. This would possibly allow for a facility of lesser capacity and, therefore, of less cost. This would positively reflect on the Council's affordability gap in relation to this project.
- 6.5. If AWC were to be introduced, there would also be a reduction in the Landfill Tax paid to the Exchequer. However, based on current experience, any such saving is balanced with the cost of gate fees for diverting the waste to a recycling processor.

7. SUMMARY

- 7.1 There are many formats of AWC systems, depending on the range of waste materials that are intended for recycling. The underlying principle of AWC systems is that residual domestic waste is uplifted one week and materials for recycling are uplifted the following week.
- 7.2 There is no set format proposed at this stage. The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's agreement, in principle, to the introduction of an AWC system.
- 7.3 This agreement will allow a strategy to be prepared that will enable the submission of the revised Strategic Waste Fund bid to the Scottish Executive to progress and aid the Council's Business Case for the creation of the pan-Lanarkshire disposal facility.
- 7.4 For North Lanarkshire to progress any plans to increase its level of recycling or to minimise the potential for a penalty under LATS, the Council's policy on AWC must be determined.
- 7.5 However, Committee should note that there is no intention to introduce AWC until April 2008 or until all possible alternative options are investigated. The outcome of a number of these options may well remove the need to introduce AWC. However, as stated in 7.3 and 7.4, NLC needs to identify its stance in relation to AWC in order for the revised reprofiled strategic waste bid to be taken forward and forecasts in relation to LATS penalties to be identified.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That approval is given, in principle, to the introduction of an alternate weekly collection system for residual refuse, that is, the grey bin collection, in order to address the policy and fiscal drivers outlined in section 2 of this report.
- 8.2 That, assuming approval is given in principle, a further report is submitted outlining in detail the proposed format of AWC system to be introduced, together with the proposed timetable for introduction.



Kenneth Wilson
Head of Land Services

Members seeking further information on this report, please contact Kenneth Wilson, Head of Land Services (0141 304 1846).

Appendix 1

Council	Audit Scotland Family Group	Residual Frequency	
Aberdeenshire	Rural	Fortnightly	
Angus	Mixed	Fortnightly	
Clackmannanshire	Mixed	Fortnightly	
East Ayrshire	Mixed	Fortnightly	
East Dunbartonshire*	Urban	Fortnightly	*under review
Falkirk	Urban	Fortnightly	
Inverclyde	Mixed	Fortnightly	
Midlothian	Mixed	Fortnightly	
Moray	Mixed	Fortnightly	
Perth & Kinross	Rural	Fortnightly	
South Ayrshire	Mixed	Fortnightly	
South Lanarkshire	Mixed	Fortnightly	
Stirling	Mixed	Fortnightly	
West Lothian	Mixed	Fortnightly	
Aberdeen City	Urban	Weekly	
Argyll & Bute	Rural	Weekly	
City of Edinburgh	Urban	Weekly	
Dumfries & Galloway	Rural	Weekly	
Dundee City	Urban	Weekly	
East Lothian	Mixed	Weekly	
East Renfrewshire	Mixed	Weekly	
Fife	Mixed	Weekly	
Glasgow City	Urban	Weekly	
Highland	Mixed	Weekly	
North Ayrshire	Mixed	Weekly	
North Lanarkshire	Urban	Weekly	
Orkney Islands	Rural	Weekly	
Renfrewshire	Urban	Weekly	
Scottish Borders	Rural	Weekly	
Shetland Island	Rural	Weekly	
West Dunbartonshire	Urban	Weekly	
Eilean Siar	Rural	Not known	