

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste
Link Officer/s:	Dale Rowbotham
Action Plan Agreed:	April 2024

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

Recommendation 1:	That the Council adopt a fortnightly refuse collection service.
Responsibility:	Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	April 2026
Agreed Action:	A move from the current weekly refuse collection service to a fortnightly waste collection service. Consideration to be given to some properties in the borough, such as farm and back lane properties.
Agreed Success Measure:	Successful implementation of a fortnightly waste collection service
Evidence of Progress (November 2024):	The waste and recycling changes, now being developed through the transformation process was approved by cabinet on the 17 th October 2024 and details of the changes to the service have been communicated with residents. Residents are able to access a dedicated Council webpage which outlines the changes. Officers have considered the frequency of back-alley collections, and the Council will remain collecting back alley residual waste on a weekly basis due to issues with fly tipping, collection frequencies will be considered again in the future. Officers are currently undertaking a piece of work to assess how collections will take place from farms properties to include recycling and food waste collections from these properties.
Assessment of Progress (November 2024): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (November 2024):	Details regarding changes to the frequency of residual waste collections have been communicated to residents on social media, the My Council Newsletter and on the dedicated webpage. The changes to collection frequency impacts wider recycling changes as per recommendation 2 of the Place Select Committee. Once introduced the Council expects to see a decline in residual waste tonnages and increase in the amount of recyclable material collected from the kerbside.

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

Evidence of Progress (May 2025):	The Council are progressing with implementation of the fortnightly refuse collection service and the introduction of weekly recycling and food waste collections. Procurement of the new blue bags, food waste caddies, liners and additional white bags along with the food waste disposal contract are underway and are nearing completion. The Council is working alongside the other Tees Valley Councils on the procurement of food waste caddies and liners and the food waste disposal contract. Procurement of the new recycling vehicles is complete, and the Council are awaiting delivery of these in late 2025. Operationally, the Council have begun the re-routing of the current refuse and recycling rounds in preparation for April 2025. Recruitment of drivers and loaders is due to begin in October in preparation for training and the service launch. The Council are in the process of organising and preparing for the delivery of the new receptacles (blue bag, food waste caddies and liners) to all residents.
Assessment of Progress (May 2025): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (May 2025):	Media and communications are continuing to communicate the changes to resident to ensure they are well informed and prepared for service launch but also informing residents of what they can do now in order to increase our recycling rates. The Council have seen an increase in the number of recycling receptacles handed out from the customer service centres and also taken from the resident engagement team during their visits.
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	Work is progressing well on the waste and recycling changes, including: New collection rounds are being developed with most days now complete, residents will be notified of any changes in the coming months in line with communication plan First collection of new service is being planned for 31st March 2026. This date has been chosen due to Easter holidays in early April. A members briefing session is being planned for the meeting on 27th January 2026, discussions are ongoing with democratic services to arrange this.
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	Resident engagement team and communications continue to highlight the changes to residents in preparation for waste and recycling changes from 31 st March 2026.
Evidence of Progress (July 2026):	On 31 st March 2026 fortnightly waste collections (green wheeled bin) were rolled out for all households. These changes were implemented in line with the new recycling service which saw a new food waste collection service and a move to weekly collections of dry recycling.
Assessment of Progress (July 2026): (include explanation if required)	1 (Fully Achieved)

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

Evidence of Impact (July 2026):	Against a number of challenges, the waste and recycling service changes rolled out to all residents in the borough on Tuesday 31st March 2026. April 2026 figures show a significant reduction in kerbside refuse tonnages, falling from 5,078 tonnes in April 2025 to 3,281 tonnes in April 2026, indicating that more waste is being diverted into recycling and food waste collections. This drop in tonnage shows a reduction of 35%. Collection crews are now using a digital in-cab system, which provides live tracking of vehicle locations and progress, while also allowing issues to be reported in real time. Crews have adapted well to the new technology and are using it effectively. Resident Engagement Officers have supported refuse collection operations by addressing issues relating to the incorrect presentation of refuse bins and issues on dedicated back alley collection rounds, helping to improve compliance and service efficiency. We continue to monitor tonnage data from May and June and initial information shows that waste continues to be tracking around 35% lower against the previous year.
------------------------------------	--

Recommendation 2:	That scenario 3 (fortnightly refuse collection with a weekly ‘multi-stream collection of dry recycling and food waste) in the Place Select Committee report is adopted as the Council’s new waste and recycling collection service. That consideration is also given to timescales around national mandated services and local waste disposal arrangements.
Responsibility:	Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	April 2026
Agreed Action:	A move from the current fortnightly recycling collection service to a weekly recycling collection service, when rolling out mandatory separate weekly food waste collections. Consideration to be given to some properties in the borough, such as farm and back lane properties. Aim to future proof against upcoming legislative changes around small Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) and soft plastic material.
Agreed Success Measure:	Successful implementation of a weekly food waste and recycling service.

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

Evidence of Progress (November 2024):	The Council's Cabinet approved the waste and recycling changes, now being developed through the transformation process on the 17th October 2024. Changes to the recycling service have been communicated to residents on social media and on the new dedicated webpage. Officers are on track with the procurement of the new recycling vehicles. Residents will be receiving a new blue recycling bag for plastic and cans which will contain a heavier weight to respond to residents' issues regarding bags blowing away. The current white bag will be used for cardboard and paper within the paper pouch, the weight within this bag will also be increased from 500g to 1kg. Officers are working along other Tees Valley Councils to consider the feasibility of the joint procurement of internal and external food waste caddies alongside joint communications regarding the mandated weekly food waste collections to residents. Officers are currently undertaking research into how WEEE and textile collections will take place and offtaker for this material. As part of the procurement of the new recycling vehicle, the specification for the vehicle requires 1 compartment to be dedicated to WEEE and textiles. Back-alley properties will receive the same collection service as other households and will be collected from the front of properties. Officers are currently undertaking a piece of work to assess how collections will take place from farms properties to include recycling and food waste collections from these properties.
Assessment of Progress (November 2024): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (November 2024):	Details regarding changes to recycling collections have been communicated to residents on social media, the My Council Newsletter and on the dedicated webpage. Once introduced the Council expects to see a decline in residual waste tonnages and increase in the amount of recyclable material collected from the kerbside.
Evidence of Progress (May 2025):	The Council are progressing with implementation of the fortnightly refuse collection service and the introduction of weekly recycling and food waste collections. Procurement of the new blue bags, food waste caddies, liners and additional white bags along with the food waste disposal contract are underway and are nearing completion. The Council is working alongside the other Tees Valley Councils on the procurement of food waste caddies and liners and the food waste disposal contract. Procurement of the new recycling vehicles is complete, and the Council are awaiting delivery of these in late 2025. Operationally, the Council have begun the re-routing of the current refuse and recycling rounds in preparation for April 2025. Recruitment of drivers and loaders is due to begin in October in preparation for training and the service launch. The Council are in the process of organising and preparing for the delivery of the new receptacles (blue bag, food waste caddies and liners) to all residents.

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

Assessment of Progress (May 2025): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (May 2025):	Media and communications are continuing to communicate the changes to residents to ensure they are well informed and prepared for service launch but also informing residents of what they can do now in order to increase our recycling rates. The Council have seen an increase in the number of recycling receptacles handed out from the customer service centres and also taken from the resident engagement team during their visits.
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	Work is progressing well on the waste and recycling changes, including: New recycling containers are starting to be delivered to the distribution warehouse in preparation for delivery to households starting January 2026. New recycling vehicles expected on time with the first vehicle leaving the production line in November 2025. This vehicle will be used to assist with training and development of staff prior to accepting all vehicles in 2026. Modifications to the Waste Transfer Station alongside operator procurement and environmental permit are progressing well with a lot of work happening over the next few months New collection rounds are being developed with most days now complete, residents will be notified of any changes in the coming months in line with communication plan First collection of new service is being planned for 31st March 2026. This date has been chosen due to Easter holidays in early April. A members briefing session is being planned for the meeting on 27th January 2026, discussions are ongoing with democratic services to arrange this.
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	Resident engagement team and communications continue to highlight the changes to residents in preparation for waste and recycling changes from 31 st March 2026.
Evidence of Progress (July 2026):	On 31 st March 2026 weekly dry recycling and food waste collections were rolled out for all households. These changes were implemented in line with the wider waste collection service changes which saw new recycling service which saw a move to fortnightly collections of general waste (green wheeled bins).
Assessment of Progress (July 2026): (include explanation if required)	1 (Fully Achieved)
Evidence of Impact (July 2026):	The new waste and recycling service has delivered a significant increase in both recycling and food waste participation since its introduction on 31 March 2026. April 2026 data shows that dry recycling tonnages increased from 722

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

	tonnes in April 2025 to 1,099 tonnes in April 2026, while the newly introduced food waste collection service captured 522 tonnes during the month. It was positive to see over 170 tonnes of food waste collected in the first week alone. These figures exceeded original expectations and modelling from WRAP and contributed to a substantial reduction in residual waste. Resident participation on recycling has increased significantly. Previous monitoring in 2023 by M.E.L research indicated recycling participation of around 30%, whereas early monitoring following service implementation suggests participation across all recycling streams has risen to almost 80%, with food waste participation is currently estimated at around 55% of households. Both figures are significantly higher than initial projections, which anticipated around 45% recycling participation and 40% food waste participation. Operationally, higher-than-expected participation levels have placed additional pressure on collection services which meant around 10,000 properties did not receive a recycling and food waste collection on the scheduled day, however it was a credit to the collection team that all missed containers were collected at the end of the scheduled week. Due to vehicle delivery delays, only 14 of the new 22 new recycling vehicles were received prior to service launch of 31st March 2026 despite constant assurances all vehicles would be delivered. All vehicles have now been delivered with 19 recycling rounds operating using the new vehicles, while other rounds continue to use older vehicles supported by smaller food waste collection vehicles. Initial challenges at the Yarm Road Waste Transfer Station were experienced during the first week of the new service, particularly around tipping arrangements and vehicle movements. These issues have since been addressed, and further site improvements, including revised cardboard tipping arrangements, have increased operational efficiency and improved vehicle turnaround times. Although the service has achieved strong recycling and food waste performance, higher participation levels than originally forecast are creating operational pressures and may require additional collection resources once a longer period of performance data has been analysed. Recycling income has also been adversely affected by market conditions despite increased recycling tonnages, creating a further financial challenge for the service. Based on initial data it is expected that the estimated recycling rate for 2026/2027 will be over 40%.
--	--

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

Recommendation 4:	That a comprehensive communications and community engagement plan on proposed changes is implemented to ensure residents are sufficiently informed prior to the enactment of any changes, and to help embed the changes, to the waste and recycling service.
Responsibility:	Service Manager – Community Services & Transport
Date:	October 2024
Agreed Action:	Ensure a full communications plan is in place to start approximately 18 months in advance of the April 2026 rollout.
Agreed Success Measure:	Communications plan agreed to disseminate information around waste collection changes for waste and recycling. Resident engagement programme drafted to support the communications plan in disseminating information to residents.
Evidence of Progress (November 2024):	The communication team have produced a detailed comms and action plan for both green waste changes from April 2025 and the waste and recycling changes from April 2026. Comms for both changes began in October 2024 via social media and on the dedicated council webpages. During the October Cabinet the employment of 3 FTE Resident Engagement Officers, or equivalent, was approved. The officers will be employed to communicate and engage with residents through drop in events, door knocking, attendance at leisure centres and supermarkets, ward surgeries and assemblies at schools and colleges. Officers will attend community partnership events and work in areas of known low participation to increase engagement and participation with recycling. Recruitment of officers will begin in early January 2025 and officers are scheduled to be in post for 1st April 2025 for an 18-month period.
Assessment of Progress (November 2024): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (November 2024):	Communication with residents began upon approval of the changes to the waste and recycling service and garden waste service at Cabinet. A detailed communications and engagement plan is in place alongside employment of resident engagement officers from April 2025. Comms are key to the success of the whole project, and we expect to see increased recycling participation resulting in decreased residual waste tonnages and an increase in kerbside recycling tonnage.
Evidence of Progress (May 2025):	The resident engagement team are in post and have been attending Council events, supermarkets, libraries and markets since April 2025 where the team have informed and engaged with a range of residents alongside handing out leaflets on the upcoming changes and the chargeable garden waste service. The communications team are continuing to implement their detailed and comprehensive communications plan. The Council is beginning to work on the comms that will be delivered to residents alongside their new recycling

APPENDIX 1**PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste**

	receptacles. The resident engagement team are beginning to visit schools in May 2025 to educate children on recycling and how they can help protect our environment.
Assessment of Progress (May 2025): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (May 2025):	The engagement team have been in post since April 2025 and have attended a range of locations to communicate and educate residents on the upcoming changes to waste and recycling and how they can recycle effectively. The team have had visited a wide range of location across the Borough as well as attending visits on evenings and weekends. To date the team have visited almost 30 different locations reaching out to over an estimated 900 residents. So far, the team has received mostly positive comments on the changes and have been able to educate residents on why these changes are being implemented and their benefit for the environment as well supporting residents on signing up to the chargeable garden waste service. Residents have responded well to seeing the engagement team out in the community and it has been noted that residents are pleased that the Council are addressing the low recycling rates and also following suit with the Southern Councils on introducing a weekly food waste collection.
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	The Waste Engagement team have undertaken over 100 separate engagement events since April 2025, attending supermarkets, shopping areas, council markets and events (including SIRF, Festival of Thrift and Environment Fair). They also continue to work with schools, colleges and community groups. The team will shortly begin door to door canvassing as part of planned engagement and work with the distribution team when new recycling receptacles are being delivered. Communication plan continues to be delivered against A members briefing session is being planned for the meeting on 27th January 2026, discussions are ongoing with democratic services to arrange this
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	Resident engagement team and communications continue to highlight the changes to residents in preparation for waste and recycling changes from 31 st March 2026. Over 100 separate engagement events undertaken since April 2025.
Evidence of Progress (July 2026):	Resident engagement and communications continues to work with residents to highlight the changes from April 2026.
Assessment of Progress (July 2026): (include explanation if required)	2 (On-Track)

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling, and Green Waste

Evidence of Impact (July 2026):	Communications and resident engagement have been central to the successful implementation of the new waste and recycling service. Prior to the service launching on 31 March 2026, the Resident Engagement Team carried out an extensive awareness and education programme, engaging with more than 12,500 residents through community events, site visits and door-knocking activities. This early engagement helped prepare residents for the service changes and supported a smooth transition to the new collection arrangements. Since implementation, the team has continued to play a key role in supporting residents and addressing emerging issues. This has included working alongside libraries and customer service centres to ensure adequate supplies of recycling containers, particularly in response to increased demand for white recycling bags. This issue was something that was not foreseen by the team however is a direct link to the significant increase in resident participation in the recycling service. The team has also worked closely with operational staff to resolve issues relating to the presentation of refuse bins on dedicated back alley collection rounds and has provided ongoing support to Customer Services in responding to resident enquiries and resolving service-related concerns. A two-week recycling participation monitoring exercise undertaken by the team identified a significant increase in recycling participation across the borough, demonstrating the positive impact of the communications and engagement programme. The increase in participation levels has exceeded initial expectations and has contributed to higher recycling and food waste capture rates. Participation levels have reached almost 80% borough wide. Looking ahead, the Resident Engagement Team will continue to strengthen its presence within local communities through visits to supermarkets, markets and libraries, and providing advice and targeted support to residents. Door-knocking campaigns will remain a key element of the engagement strategy, with a particular focus on areas with lower participation rates and properties experiencing contamination issues, helping to maximise the effectiveness of the waste and recycling service.
---------------------------------	--

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved
----------------------------------	---------------------	---------------	--------------	-------------------