### Somerset Waste Board
16 December 2016
Report for decision

**Item No. 8**

**Recycle More – Recycling and Refuse Collections**  
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| **Summary:** | The report provides an update on the environmental and financial benefits of moving to new Recycle More collection services, which will increase recycling and meet public aspirations to recycle more materials, including plastic pots, tubs and trays.  
Feedback from consultation with partners will be reported verbally at the meeting.  
The report is intended to allow a final decision to be taken on the new collections and give approval for negotiations to be finalised with SWP’s collection contractor, Kier MG CIC.  
If approved, Recycle More services would be rolled out in phases to all district areas in Somerset from Autumn 2017. |
| **Recommendations:** | **That the Somerset Waste Board:**  
1. Agrees the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat Appendix A in confidence, as it contains commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.  
2. Subject to the approval of recommendation (1) above, agrees to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the consideration of Appendix A where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding exempt or confidential information.  
3. Notes feedback from partner authorities reported verbally at the meeting and, if needed, decides whether any changes should be made to service arrangements proposed in this report. |
4. Approves the adoption of Recycle More for recycling and refuse collections, with service arrangements as detailed in 2.1 and 2.3, and, subject to the order and delivery of vehicles, a phased roll-out to all district areas from Autumn 2017 to Autumn 2018.

5. Authorises the Managing Director to conclude negotiations with Kier MG CIC and agree a variation to the current collection contract and to service payments as described in this report.

Reasons for recommendations:

To allow Somerset Waste Board to take a final decision on a new service model to be adopted for collections in all Somerset districts, with the intention of ordering vehicles and plant early in 2017 for service roll out to commence in Autumn 2017.

The new Recycle More collections proposed will increase recycling of all materials, allow more materials to be recycled and reduce waste sent for costly waste disposal.

Increased recycling will free up refuse bin space to and allow less frequent refuse collections, and this will also serve to encourage more recycling. Important savings will be made from reducing the operational costs of refuse collections, but the greatest savings will arise from recycling more and reducing waste sent for disposal.

Links to SWP Priorities and Impact on Annual Business Plan:

This decision relates to one of the partnership’s three priority areas established in the 2015-2020 Business Plan: New Service Model for changes to future kerbside collection services. Action 2.1 in SWP’s Business Plan 2016-2021 is for ‘implementation of service changes resulting from decisions taken following collection service review’.

Financial, Legal and HR Implications:

The new Recycle More services are estimated to deliver combined total collection and disposal savings of approximately £1.7m per annum, before initial roll out costs are taken into consideration. Estimated savings for each partner are set out in confidential Appendix A.

Initial roll out and support costs for Kier and SWP combined, including extra containers, are estimated at approximately £2.2m, which should be fully covered from savings achieved by Summer 2019, so that partners benefit from 85% of the full-year savings in 2019/20 and from 100% of the savings from 2020/21.

Arrangements are already in place to provide funding for new recycling collection vehicles in exchange for a contract discount to the net advantage of the partners.
The revised agreement with Kier can be covered by a service change notification and contract variation within the original terms of the contract (let to ECT Recycling) in October 2007. The agreement does not involve a further extension to the contract beyond the end date of 1st October 2021. This remains an option for future negotiation.

Additional temporary staff resources will be required by SWP and possibly by customer services to support the change process. These costs are included in the communication plan outlined in the report.

**Equalities Implications:**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and an updated version, reflecting proposals in this report, is attached as Appendix B.

**Risk Assessment:**

Somerset Waste Partnership has a record of innovation and effective risk management. It is an aspiration of the SWP that we continue to add value through innovation, effective analysis of opportunities and well managed risk.

A Risk Management Policy was agreed by the Somerset Waste Board in December 2015 and this sets out our general approach to risk/opportunities and risk management.

Specific risks and opportunities associated with this project are set out in section 5 of the main report with additional confidential risks in Appendix A.

1. **Background**

1.1. Most Somerset households recycle but many do not separate all materials and there is potential to still recycle a lot more. Recycling achieves big energy savings and allows resources to be used again. It is also the most effective method for reducing the high costs of waste disposal, so achieving savings for the County Council, which are shared with District partners through Recycling Credits.

1.2. When Sort It services, with weekly recycling and food waste and fortnightly refuse collections, were rolled out throughout Somerset from 2004-2011, this had the effect of doubling recycling and halving refuse put out for disposal. It also had a welcome impact of reducing total waste arisings, especially for food waste. Both collection frequency changes (for recycling and refuse) were key contributors to the level of recycling performance achieved, as they made recycling more convenient than refuse disposal. The weekly collection of food waste also allowed the frequency of refuse collections to be reduced to every fortnight.

1.3. A study on the composition of Somerset’s refuse in November 2012 found that half (50%) could be recycled through current kerbside services, with recyclable food waste being the largest material in refuse at 29%. Another 9% could be recycled at Recycling Centres and a further 13% were materials with potential for future recycling. These findings reflect earlier studies and those in other areas.
1.4. Enquiries and customer surveys show that the most requested additional materials to recycle are plastic pots, tubs and trays, followed, to a lesser extent, by cartons, such as Tetra Pak. It is also worth noting that the composition of our waste materials has been changing, most notably paper continues an on-going downward trend and cardboard has been increasing.

1.5. The fleet of recycling vehicles used in Somerset will start coming to the end of their design life and need replacing from 2017. This gives an opportunity to introduce new collection vehicles able to accommodate additional materials as well as changes in material volumes, notably less paper and more cardboard. Changes to collection depot facilities for storing materials and for sorting additional plastics from cans will also be required.

1.6. A series of trials, called Recycle More, were undertaken in 2014 to test changes to collection services, with findings reported to Somerset Waste Board in June 2015. The trials covered 5,213 households in Taunton Deane and tested the recycling of additional materials, including plastic pots, tubs and trays, some container options and different frequencies for both recycling and refuse collections.

1.7. Further work was then undertaken by independent consultants, Eunomia, who were commissioned to assess future collection options, including different systems, such as comingled and twin stream collections with wheeled bins, and their costs, performance and any health and safety implications.

1.8. Following a report on the further assessments in December 2015, Somerset Waste Board confirmed the preferred option for future collections was to add further materials, including plastic, pots, tubs and trays, to recycling collections using the kerbside sort system, to continue weekly food waste collections and to change the frequency for refuse to every three weeks.

1.9. This new service model was one of the service package options tested during the Recycle More trials in 2014. This covered 1,231 households on two rounds in the small town of Wiveliscombe and surrounding rural area, which has a range of housing types and social characteristics representative of Somerset.

1.10. Before this trial started, residents welcomed the collection of additional plastics but some were concerned that they may not be able to manage with refuse collections every three weeks. Once underway, this trial proved the most effective of all the options tested in increasing the amount of food waste and dry materials recycled and in achieving a corresponding reduction in refuse put out for disposal.

1.11. Recycling plastic pots, tubs and trays, together with extra recycling of other materials, greatly reduced the amount of refuse, so that the volume remaining for collection every three weeks was less than most households previously put out every fortnight. This meant that no change was needed to the capacity of refuse containers used.

1.12. All households on the trials were invited to complete a survey to provide feedback on the arrangements. The response rate for the Wiveliscombe trial was twice as high as for the other trial areas and over three-quarters (81%) of respondents said the trial arrangements were better than the previous collections. Only 6% said they were worse and 13% said they were neither better nor worse.
1.13. 86% of survey respondents on the Wiveliscombe trial said they would prefer for the three weekly collections of refuse to continue with additional plastics recycled, rather than to go back to fortnightly refuse without the extra plastics recycled.

1.14. A common comment was that people were surprised by how little refuse was left for collection due to the additional recycling. A few were concerned about nappy waste being collected every three weeks, but others with children in nappies did not report difficulties. Extra refuse capacity was provided on request where households needed it for nappies or absorbent hygiene products.

1.15. A number of people, who had expressed concern to SWP about refuse being collected every three weeks before the trial started, provided a different view during or at the end of the trial, when they said that their concerns had not been realised and it had worked better than they had initially expected.

1.16. Before the trial, recycling performance on the Wiveliscombe rounds was slightly above the Somerset average. During the trial, the recycling of dry materials increased by 28%, food waste recycling increased by 45% and refuse reduced by 27%. The biggest contributors to the increase in dry recycling was more paper, glass, card, plastic bottles and cans being recycled, which all dry materials increased by at least 22%. The tonnage contribution from the extra plastics recycled was much smaller but this had a big effect in reducing the volume of waste remaining for disposal.

1.17. There were a few authorities proposing enhanced recycling and 3-weekly refuse collections when SWP first proposed the Recycle More trials, but none had rolled out this service model at that time. Falkirk was the first from May 2014, with Bury and Gwynedd following in October 2014. Now at least 14 local authorities have successfully introduced 3-weekly refuse collections in their areas and more are planning to make this change. East Devon undertook a trial in 2015 and awarded a new contract to roll it out in 2017. North Devon will be undertaking a trial in 2017. Councils who have established these services report they are going well and delivering increased recycling and savings.

2. New services and costs

2.1. Service arrangements proposed for Recycle More household collections are:

- Continued weekly food waste collections.
- Continued weekly recycling collections using the kerbside sort method with the following added to materials accepted: plastic pots, tubs and trays, small electrical appliances and batteries.
- An additional reusable bag with cover provided for plastics and cans.
- Refuse collected every three weeks.
- Current collection guidelines for refuse capacity will be applied and, where requested, additional sack or bin capacity will be provided for nappies and adult absorbent hygiene products. Details of capacity guidelines and service rules for Recycle More are given in Appendix C.
- Recycling and refuse collections on the same day of the week, wherever possible, but garden waste mostly on different days.
2.2. The photo below shows recycling containers proposed for Recycle More collections. Boxes can also be stacked and the reusable bag can be placed partially in or top of a box. The bag has a weighted base to avoid it being blown away after collection. As detailed in 1.12-1.17, the proposed service arrangements achieved big increases in recycling when trialled in Somerset in 2014 and where introduced in other parts of the UK.

2.3. Service arrangements proposed for Recycle More communal collections from blocks of flats are:

- Continued recycling collections using shared bins with cardboard and plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays added to materials accepted.
- Shared refuse bins emptied so that no more than 80% of the refuse capacity on each site has been filled and all bins are emptied at least every fortnight, except where sites require a more frequent collection or a different frequency has been agreed by SWP’s Contract Manager.
- Small blocks or groups of flats will be offered the household collection service where this offers improved service and operational arrangements. Where switching from communal collections, the new arrangements will need to be taken up by all residents and existing communal containers removed.

2.4. The new services are estimated to deliver total combined collection and disposal savings, across all SWP partners, of approximately £1.7m per annum, before initial roll out costs are taken into consideration. Estimated savings for each partner are set out in confidential Appendix A.

2.5. It is proposed to roll out Recycle More services throughout Somerset in three phases in Autumn 2017, early Summer 2018 and Autumn 2018. On-going savings will increase as the service roll out expands.

2.6. The change in service operations is likely to require collection day changes for many households. To avoid refuse, recycling and garden waste collections falling on the same day every six weeks, garden waste collections will mostly be on different days to recycling and refuse. This will allow more efficiency in the planning of garden waste collection rounds and possibly a further small saving.
2.7. One-off roll out costs will be incurred for new containers, Kier’s transition and roll-out costs, and SWP communications and roll-out support, which are estimated at approximately £2.2m. Further details on roll out costs are given in confidential Appendix A.

2.8. A communications plan was endorsed by the Board on 21 October 2016. This includes advance notification packs, local roadshows, a guide to the new services delivered with new and replacement collection containers, a smartphone app and calendars to provide reminders for collection days, and improved full service information available online via the partnership’s and partners’ websites.

2.9. A set of financial principles for Recycle More was agreed by the Board on 18 December 2015, which include:

- District collection partners should not be penalised or rewarded for when they roll out within the programme.
- Sharing of the additional costs of roll out will be based on household numbers unless there is a District-specific cost.
- SWP will hold a central earmarked reserve for Recycle More and any balance (positive or negative) on the roll out process at year end to be kept centrally by the SWP to be used or recovered in future years.
- SWP will retain one-off income received from Kier for extended use of SWP vehicles and the sale proceeds of the old fleet as initial pump-priming for Recycle More.

2.10. Following these principles, roll out costs will be fully covered from savings achieved by Summer 2019, so that partners will benefit from 85% of the full-year savings in 2019/20 and from 100% of the savings from 2020/21.

2.11. SWP’s extended contract with Kier MG CIC currently runs to October 2021. The capital costs of new collection vehicles will be financed over 7 years and the capital cost of depot building and equipment for material storage and sorting will be financed over 10 years. SWP will own and finance these assets at the end of the current contract. Whether the option is taken to further extend the existing contract, procure a new contract, or operate the service via an arm’s length company /DSO from October 2021, these assets will continue to be used.

3. Options considered and reasons for rejecting them

3.1. Alternative recycling collection arrangements, including comingled and twin stream collections with wheeled bins, were considered as part of earlier options appraisal and independent assessments undertaken, as noted in 1.7 - 1.8.

3.2. Comingled collection options had higher costs due to the need to provide separate arrangements for food waste, the provision of new wheeled bins and due to the costs incurred in sorting mixed materials after collection. Comingled materials also have lower market values due to the quality for recycling being lower than achieved by kerbside sort collections.

3.3. The best recycling performance and lowest costs were offered by the Recycle More option preferred by Somerset Waste Board and described in this report.
3.4. Potentially, costs could be further reduced by collecting refuse every four weeks, but the 180 litre standard size for refuse bins in Somerset was thought to be too small, whereas analysis showed it was the right size for most households on 3-weekly collections if more plastics were recycled. Experience of 4-weekly collections is also limited. It has been rolled out in Falkirk from October 2016 and trials are underway in Conwy and Fife.

3.5. It was hoped, following the Recycle More trials, to include cartons in additional materials recycled, but this is not proposed, as the cost from Kier was too high for the benefit to be gained. This will continue to be kept under review to see if an affordable option to include cartons can be found for future adoption.

3.6. Alternative collection arrangements for nappies and adult absorbent hygiene products (AHP) have been considered, as described in Appendix D. These would incur additional costs and the availability of additional refuse capacity, as proposed in 2.1 and detailed in Appendix C, should be sufficient.

4. Risks

4.1. SWP maintains and updates a risk register which covers broader financial, political, operational, health and safety and reputational risks. This project is proposed within the overall risk appetite of the partnership:

“We will be confident with risk, identifying risk and managing risk in order to optimise opportunities to achieve corporate objectives, value and service excellence.”

SWP generally seeks out opportunities to be innovative in approach to improving recycling and waste diversion and the Recycle More project is very much in line with that ethos.

4.2. As detailed in this report, Recycle More collections offer a number of positive opportunities. Plastic pots, tubs and trays would be added to materials collected for recycling, which is the most requested service improvement by residents. The new service would significantly increase recycling and divert waste from costly disposal and it would achieve a high level of savings on overall collection costs.

4.3. One of the principal risks around this project is reputational – ensuring the majority of residents understand and are appropriately encouraged to get behind the reasons for the change. This will be in large part influenced by the effective management of the change process. These risks are potentially amplified by undertaking the roll out in large phases. The principal means of mitigating these risks are through meticulous project planning for operational change and the delivery of a robust communications plan.

4.4. Although there has been unanimous agreement by all partners at Somerset Waste Board and some have indicated they are very keen to make the change as soon as possible, there is risk that not all partners will agree to implement the service change to Recycle More at this time. On the basis of feedback from all partners so far (at the time of finalising this report on 8th December the Executives/Cabinets of four partners have backed the scheme without any votes against recorded) this risk seems low. The final outcome from all six partners will be reported at the meeting. Other options for savings on collection services have been considered and Recycle More is the most effective means of achieving
savings on collection services needed by partners, while also offering improved recycling. The savings shown are dependent on all partners adopting Recycle More collections and some existing savings could be lost if partners opt for different service arrangements. The best financial outcome for the partnership is for all partners to adopt the same service model.

4.5. There is a potentially significant financial risk that the Recycle More initiative does not perform as well as predicted in terms of capture of recyclable material, thereby eroding the forecast savings from waste diversion and improved recycling credit income to district partners. Based on available evidence, a reasonable and prudent estimate has been made, which is lower than achieved on the Wiveliscombe trial, and it is possible that the new collections may over-perform, especially in reducing waste for disposal. Additional tonnage diverted for recycling will further improve the financial outcome for all partners.

4.6. The risk on changes in material values and quantity of material to end-use markets will continue to rest, contractually, with Kier. This provides an incentive for the contractor to work towards the same objectives as SWP in terms of maximising capture of quality material.

4.7. The market for post-consumer plastic pots tubs and trays (PTT) is still immature and currently the main outlet for these materials from the UK is export to the Far East. The proposed collection and sorting methodology will help to ensure Somerset materials are among the highest quality available but it cannot be guaranteed that all the PTT will secure an end-use for materials recycling. SWP can however be confident that the fall-back route will be energy recovery and therefore value will still be obtained and landfill avoided. The demand for plastic bottles remains good and they should continue to be sent for material recycling.

4.8. There is a risk of a small amount of additional fly-tipping following the roll-out of Recycle More and budget provision has been made for district partners to cover this, as noted in Appendix A. However, fly-tipping has not been reported as a significant problem by other authorities who have already rolled out 3-weekly refuse collections and no elevation in instances were observed during the 2014 trial in Wiveliscombe. SWP and partner officers work together to deter fly-tipping, which is closely monitored and will be kept under review.

4.9. There are no significant adverse environmental, safety and health implications of the scheme. The new scheme will reduce the total number of collection vehicles on the road by around 18, although the new style recycling vehicle will be larger to accommodate the new materials and the online shopping driven growth in cardboard in recent years. The ‘footprint’ of the new recycling vehicles will be similar to a standard sized refuse collection vehicle, but there will be some smaller vehicles in service for narrow access rounds. The reduction in vehicles required will reduce risks around recruiting and retaining HGV drivers. The total number of loaders will increase slightly as more recycling vehicles will operate with two loaders. The extra loaders should help reduce the time taken to make collections. Kier will continue to use smaller vehicles where access is restricted.

4.10. Additional risks are described in confidential Appendix A.
5. Consultations undertaken

5.1. Consultation on the new service model was undertaken with all SWP partners as part of the consultation on SWP’s Business Plan 2016-2021 and also at a series of other meetings with committees of all partners in late 2015.

5.2. Reports (see section 7) and updates on Recycle More and other collection options have previously been considered by the Somerset Waste Board and the present Recycle More proposal unanimously confirmed as the preferred option in December 2015 and in October 2016.

5.3. Following the Board’s October 2016 meeting, consultation has been held with all partners, including reports and presentations to the following:

- Mendip District Council – Scrutiny Board, 28 November 2016; Cabinet, 5 December 2016. Cabinet were in favour of proceeding with the scheme.
- Sedgemoor District Council - Scrutiny, 7 December 2016; Executive, 7 December 2016; Executive were in favour of proceeding with the scheme.
- Somerset County Council – Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee, 13 December 2016; Cabinet, 14 December 2016 (outcome will be reported at the meeting)
- South Somerset District Council - Scrutiny Committee, 29 November 2016; District Executive, 1 December 2016. District Executive were in favour of proceeding with the scheme.
- Taunton Deane Borough Council – Community Scrutiny Committee, 28 November 2016; Executive, 30 November 2016. Executive were in favour of proceeding with the scheme.
- West Somerset Council – Scrutiny Committee, 24 November 2016; Full Council, 14 December 2016 (outcome will be reported at the meeting).

Feedback from meetings after 8th December will be reported verbally to the Board on 16 December 2016.

5.4. Consultation was undertaken with all households on the Recycle More trials, including the two collection rounds in Wiveliscombe. The feedback from most people was positive and the new collections were preferred to current pre-trial arrangements.

5.5. As part of the planning for the Recycle More trials, a focus group of service users was held to discuss collection containers and frequency and new materials that could be added to recycling collections. Findings from this were followed in designing the Recycle More trial arrangements, with reusable bags provided as a third recycling container as many users said they would prefer this to using another box.

5.6. SWP regularly receives feedback and comments from residents on improvements that could be made to collection services. The biggest request by far is to collect more plastics for recycling.

5.7. In 2015 a representative survey was undertaken in all five Somerset districts to measure service satisfaction and ask about improvements and changes to SWP
services. The findings were reported to Somerset Waste Board in February 2016. The most suggested improvements for recycling and refuse collections were to recycle more plastics and cartons.

6. Background papers

6.1. All of the following reports to Somerset Waste Board are available online via a link to board papers at: [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/about/board](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/about/board/)

6.2. Report to Somerset Waste Board on 22 February 2013: Somerset Waste Composition Study (Agenda Item 5, Appendix B)


6.4. Report to Somerset Waste Board on 19 June 2015: Towards a New Service Model for Collections


6.7. Report to Somerset Waste Board on 18 December 2015: Adoption of an Enforcement Policy


6.9. Report to Somerset Waste Board on 26 February 2016: Customer Survey Results

APPENDIX A – Confidential
APPENDIX B – Equalities Impact Assessment Form and Action Table

"I shall try to explain what "due regard" means and how the courts interpret it. The courts have made it clear that having due regard is more than having a cursory glance at a document before arriving at a preconceived conclusion. Due regard requires public authorities, in formulating a policy, to give equality considerations the weight which is proportionate in the circumstances, given the potential impact of the policy on equality. It is not a question of box-ticking; it requires the equality impact to be considered rigorously and with an open mind."

Baroness Thornton, March 2010

Why are you completing the Impact Assessment?

Change to Policy or Service

| What are you completing the Impact Assessment on (which policy, service, MTFP reference, cluster etc)? | Recycle More - new arrangements for recycling and refuse collections, mainly applying to all receiving kerbside collection services. |

Section 1 – Description of what is being impact assessed

Currently, weekly kerbside recycling collections are provided for food, paper, card, glass bottles and jars, cans and aerosols, foil, plastic bottles, textiles and shoes, alongside fortnightly collections for refuse (residual waste left over after recycling) and garden waste (optional service with a fee).

It is proposed to introduce new Recycle More services with some changes to collection arrangements. Weekly recycling collections will continue with plastic pots, tubs and trays, small electrical appliances and batteries added to materials accepted. Two boxes for recycling collections will continue to be used and an additional reusable sack (40-60 litres) will be provided for plastics and cans. Refuse collections will change to being every three weeks with the same container provision as currently (180 litres refuse bin as standard with options to use smaller or larger bins or sacks where necessary). Up to three refuse sacks will be taken each collection where these are used instead of wheeled bins. Garden waste collections will continue fortnightly with the same containers as currently.

Currently, blocks of flats receive a communal service with shared bins for paper, glass bottles and jars, cans and aerosols and refuse.

It is proposed to add plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, foil and cardboard to materials collected from shared bins at blocks of flats. For small blocks of flats with suitable space, SWP will review collection arrangements and provide the kerbside recycling and refuse service where all occupiers agree to this change.

Communal collection frequencies will continue to match current requirements for emptying at least every fortnight and so that no more than 80% of refuse containers on each site are full at any time (some require weekly and more frequent emptying, which will continue where needed). Different communal refuse frequencies may be agreed with SWP’s Contract Manager where an acceptable service would be maintained, which could involve three-weekly collections in some cases.
It is planned to roll-out these changes throughout Somerset in three phases from Autumn 2017 to Autumn 2018.

As currently, additional refuse capacity will be provided on request to larger households (where 5 or more people in household) and for the collection of nappies and adult absorbent hygiene products (AHP). Additional arrangements will be made to communicate kerbside collection days to residents.

When the new services are rolled out, advance notification packs and service guides will be delivered to households, with an order form to allow replacements for current collection containers to be ordered. These communications will let residents know that they should contact customer services for advice and support if they have any difficulties with their collections. Most households will not require additional refuse capacity or assistance, but it will be provided where needed.

Section 2A – People or communities that are targeted or could be affected (for Equalities - taking particular note of the Protected Characteristic listed in action table)

All households in all five Somerset districts (approximately 250,000). This will include people of all ages, families with children, people with disabilities and some people who live in town centres or over shops.

Section 2B – People who are delivering the policy or service

Staff of Somerset Waste Partnership and our collection contractor, Kier MG CIC, and Customer Services teams at partner District Councils and the County Council in Somerset.

Section 3 – Evidence and data used for the assessment (Attach documents where appropriate)

Trials of a series of collection options covering 5,200 households were undertaken in Taunton Deane in 2014, with 1,231 on two rounds having the proposed new collection arrangements, including three-weekly refuse.

Prior to these trials, a focus group, involving residents of Taunton Deane, was held in 2013 to discuss recycling collection container options for the collection of additional materials. Preferences expressed were taken into account in the design of the trial, especially for the use of a reusable bag rather than providing a third recycling box.

Planning for the 3-weekly refuse collection trial included an assessment of refuse capacity with increased recycling. The volume reduction for refuse by collecting a standard 180-litre refuse bin every fortnight (90 litres per week) to every three weeks (60 litres per week) is 30 litres per week. Increasing recycling yields should reduce average refuse volumes by 20 litres per week, with about half of the contribution made by plastic pots, tubs and trays. This average will cover a wide range of volumes, according to how much waste households produce, with those producing the most waste having the greater potential for refuse reductions from recycling more. Previous surveys have indicated that two-thirds of refuse bins are not full when put out for collection. Those that are full are more likely to have a greater volume that could be removed by recycling more. A 2012 study of the composition of Somerset’s refuse (www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/about/statistics/) found that half (by weight) could be recycled through current kerbside collection services.
At the end of the trials, all households were supplied with a survey form and invited to return this online or using a freepost address. There was a high 30% response rate (369 submissions) from the two rounds with the proposed new Recycle More collections, with 81% of these saying these trial arrangements were better than previous (current) services (13% did not know and 6% said they were worse). 86% said they would prefer for the trial arrangements (improved recycling and 3-weekly refuse) to continue rather than go back to the previous arrangements (fortnightly refuse without the extra recycling).

The survey returns from the trial area (Wiveliscombe) with the proposed Recycle More collections covered a wide range of people as follows:

- 5.1% were aged 16-34,
- 18.3% were aged 35-49,
- 33.8% were aged 50-64, and
- 42.8% were 65 or over.

- 77.2% had lived in the area for more than 4 years,
- 8.1% for 2-3 years,
- 8.9% for 1-2 years, and
- 5.8% for less than 1 year.

- 18.9% considered themselves to have a disability or long term health condition.

76% of these respondents said their refuse bins were the right size for the 3-weekly refuse collections and 14% said they were too big. 10% said they were too small and that they had extra sacks of refuse. Under 2% of households were observed to put out extra refuse sacks on refuse collections and these were rarely the same households each collection. These were contacted and advised that extra sacks alongside refuse bins were not collected, as well as being given details of recycling services and informed that SWP could be contacted for advice or assistance. Some acknowledged that they could recycle more and in a few cases additional recycling and refuse containers were provided, which, in most cases, were for properties split into flats.

7.6% of survey respondents on 3-weekly refuse rounds said they had taken refuse to a Recycling Centre, which was nearly the same as the number on trial rounds with fortnightly refuse collections.

A report on the trials with full survey results was presented to Somerset Waste Board in June 2015 (item 11 at: www1.somerset.gov.uk/council/meetings/reports.asp?item=1180).

Bury, Falkirk and Gwynedd Councils, which were the first three to introduce 3-weekly refuse collections in 2014, have been contacted to gain lessons on their experience and service arrangements. Overall, these councils reported that some residents had initial concerns before the new collections started, especially with regard to a 3-weekly refuse service, but once the services were in place, complaints reduced and most people found their concerns were not realised in practice.

Other Councils adopting 3-weekly refuse collections have also been contacted, including Powys, which, like Somerset, provides standard 180-litre refuse bins. Powys reported that their new services, which were rolled out in October 2015, are working well, including their arrangements for providing additional capacity for nappy and AHP waste, which are similar to those proposed for Somerset.

Guidance will be followed from a report commissioned by Zero Waste Scotland on ‘The potential health impacts of extending the frequency of non-recyclable waste collections’ (July 2014), which reviewed impacts for a refuse collection service being provided every four weeks. This concluded...
that “the availability of simple precautions mean the risk for [householders] is little changed from that experienced with existing weekly and fortnightly collections.” These precautions include providing a separate, frequent food waste collection (already provided by SWP), increasing food waste capture (achieved previously by refuse bin stickers and which will be further boosted by Recycle More), and encouraging householders to adopt good practice for storage (refuse bins are provided to most households with suitable space and others are instructed to use refuse sacks), to bag refuse and to wash hands and work surfaces after handling waste. The report also recommended to:

- Undertake analysis to understand the biodegradable content of non-recyclable waste (analysis has been undertaken by SWP).
- Develop policies for missed collections to limit collection delays, particularly when the service is bedding in and residents may have difficulty remembering their collection schedule (SWP policy and arrangements are to pick up missed collections within two working days).
- Residents may wish to wash their wheeled bins to clean out residues and maintain good hygiene practices (advice to be provided on SWP website and occasionally in other publications, such as Your Somerset).

**Impacts and mitigations Action Table**

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<th>Identified issue drawn from your conclusions</th>
<th>Actions needed – can you mitigate the impacts? If you can how will you mitigate the impacts?</th>
<th>Who is responsible for the actions? When will the action be completed?</th>
<th>How will it be monitored? What is the expected outcome from the action?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> New issues or impacts should not arise as a result of these service changes, but, due to refuse being collected every three weeks (instead of every two weeks as currently), existing impacts may be increased for some older people, as a higher proportion may have extra medical or sanitary waste for disposal or have issues with independently managing their affairs.</td>
<td>Notification packs distributed before roll-outs will carry clear advice, following accessibility guidelines, to attend a roadshow (in accessible locations, such as village halls) or to contact Customer Services (by telephone or email) if there are concerns or likely to be issues with three-weekly collections of refuse, including the capacity provided. Somerset Waste Partnership will provide appropriate support for the resident, but would normally expect materials to be fully recycled. Weekly clinical waste collections will continue to be provided, meeting a statutory requirement. Hygiene AHP waste will continue to be accepted with refuse and additional capacity (stickers for sacks or a bigger bin) provided if</td>
<td>Somerset Waste Partnership</td>
<td>Monitored by ongoing recording and reporting of number and type of enquiries about waste services. Also questions to monitor can be included in SWP’s service tracker survey every three years. Outcome is expected to be that most residents, including those in older age groups, understand the service changes and special</td>
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</table>
potential impacts relate to the less frequent collection of refuse and especially nappies and adult absorbent hygiene products (AHP).

Another set of impacts relate to understanding and recalling new service arrangements, including the three-weekly cycle for refuse collections and materials recycled.

needed, with a form included for this purpose in notification packs.

Acceptance of adult hygiene products on weekly clinical waste collections will also be considered on a case-by-case basis where needed to address specific issues.

Roadshows will be held before service roll-outs and promoted in notification packs, local press and through local posters and parish councils. Roadshows tend to be particularly welcomed and attended by older people, who have the opportunity to ask questions and raise any matters of concern, so these can be addressed, where possible.

Service leaflets will follow accessibility guidelines and provide a clear guide to new service arrangements. Guidance will include bagging all refuse, double bagging any refuse that may smell, washing hands and surfaces after handling waste. Contacts will be given for further advice and assistance.

To assist with awareness of collection days, collection calendars are to be provided and other aids, such as email alerts and a smartphone app.

To help identify and then directly contact households who may not have understood or be aware of the new collections, SWP will inspect collection rounds on the first time that a previous fortnightly refuse collection is moved that would have been made on previous fortnightly cycles for all rounds. They will also be undertaken on other collection days following the introduction of the new services, especially in any areas where it is understood difficulties with the new arrangements are being experienced.

arrangements are provided where needed.
Disability: Due to refuse being collected every three weeks (instead of every two weeks, as currently), existing impacts may be increased for some people with disabilities who have extra medical or sanitary waste arising.

The change in frequency may be harder to manage for people who have issues with independently managing their affairs.

There may be issues for people living independently with a learning disability on a path to independence, who may need accessible guidance or additional support in managing a more complex waste routine.

People with significant visual impairment will not be able to access printed leaflets.

Some issues identified for those with disabilities will be addressed by the actions proposed above (for age), including roadshows, round inspections, clear literature using images to communicate changes and provision of services to manage adult hygiene waste.

Options will be available on request to provide literature in large print, Braille, easy read and audio formats.

There may be an increased demand for assisted collections for people who cannot independently manage their affairs. Customer service staff should be briefed to accept and log requests for assisted collections if submitted on this basis.

Officer support will be available should we receive notification that a householder is struggling to understand the new collection frequencies. This would be in the form of on-request home visits. We expect the demand for this to be low.

SWP will identify disability groups and networks and seek feedback on the impact of proposed changes, and ensure that feedback is considered and built into communication.

Gender Reassignment: No specific impacts identified.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Somerset Waste Partnership</th>
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<tr>
<td>Actions will be undertaken as recorded above for age.</td>
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</table>

SWP will monitor demand for additional support and adjust resources to ensure adequate support is available through the course of the roll out.

Outcome is expected to be that most residents, including those with a disability, understand the service changes and special arrangements are provided where needed.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Race (including ethnicity or national origin, colour, nationality and Gypsies and Travellers):</strong> Some people may not sufficiently understand communication materials due to primarily using another language to English and not having sufficient ability to interpret communication materials, especially the notification pack and other language options.</th>
<th>Somerset Waste Partnership</th>
<th>Monitored by ongoing recording and reporting of number and type of enquiries about waste services. Outcome is expected to be that most families with children in nappies continue to be able to put these out in standard sized refuse bins provided. If additional refuse capacity is needed, then additional arrangements will be available to meet their needs.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Notification packs will include brief messages in other languages to allow those who need versions in other languages to request these. Advice will be sought on language options to offer, which it may be possible to vary by district. Details of the request will be recorded, so a suitable interpretation can also be provided for service leaflets.</td>
<td>Somerset Waste Partnership</td>
<td>Monitored by ongoing recording and reporting of number and type of enquiries about waste services. Outcome is expected to be that those unable to sufficiently interpret English are provided with guidance in their preferred language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>guidance provided in English.</td>
<td>service leaflet, will include the use of photos and images to help people understand new service arrangements, as far as possible.</td>
<td>language and so are able to understand new collection arrangements.</td>
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<td>Religion and Belief: No specific impacts identified.</td>
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<td>Sex: No specific impacts identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation: No specific impacts identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other - caring responsibilities: Due to refuse being collected every three weeks (instead of every two weeks, as currently), existing impacts may be increased for some people caring for those who have extra medical or sanitary waste arising for disposal or who have issues with independently managing their affairs.</td>
<td>In addition to above actions, SWP will contact carers through carers networks to identify additional concerns to address.</td>
<td>Somerset Waste Partnership Monitoring response to contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – flats above shops: Some households may not have sufficient space for a full set of recycling containers and to store their refuse between collections every three weeks. Flats above shops are expected to be the property type which may have this issue, but other property</td>
<td>Additional actions should not be needed, as it should be noted that providing a property has space to store and put out a full set of recycling containers (minimum of one box and food bin) and to store refuse between collections, then they should be OK to receive Recycle More services. Compared to current collections, Recycle More services will allow more materials to be recycled, including more plastics, so reducing the amount of refuse. This will result in a greater volume of waste materials being collected weekly, rather than less frequently with refuse, with Recycle More.</td>
<td>Somerset Waste Partnership These properties will be identified during round planning in advance of service roll-out. Notification packs will provide an opportunity for recycling containers to be ordered, where needed. Monitored by on-going recording and reporting of number and type of enquiries about waste services.</td>
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</table>
types with the same issue will also be similarly considered.

| Other (including, rurality, low income, Military Status etc): Possible impact on service personnel who are out of the country for the period of the roll out. | Additional arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis if a household is not able to manage satisfactorily with all aspects of Recycle More services. | SWP will ensure reserve copies of literature are available on demand for those who have missed the initial communications. | Somerset Waste Partnership | Store of literature retained for 12 months after roll out is completed. New service guides will continue to be available. |

**Section 4 – Conclusions drawn about the equalities impact of the proposed change or new service/policy (Please use prompt sheet in the guidance for help with what to consider):**

Potential equality impacts of the change in service may arise for some households due to the less frequent collection of refuse, especially for nappies and adult hygiene products.

Some households, particularly those living in flats above shops with limited storage, may have problems in storing a full set of recycling containers for weekly collections and refuse for three weekly collections.

Another set of potential impacts relate to understanding and recalling new service arrangements, including the three-weekly cycle for refuse collections and the additional materials recycled.

As indicated above, some of the issues may be greater for some people, such as those who are older or have disabilities, than for others.

All these potential impacts can be mitigated by actions described in the table above.

**Section 5 – After consideration please state your final recommendations based on the findings from the impact assessment. Also include any examples of good practice and positive steps taken.**

Mitigation actions, as described in the table above, need to be planned and implemented as an integral part of the new service arrangements and change to Recycle More collections.

SWP’s Recycle More trials were an example of good practice, which included positive steps, such as advance notification, roadshows and inspection on collection days to identify and address any problems with the service changes.

Evaluation of the trials have helped to identify proportionate further steps which it is planned to include as part of the roll-out of the new services.
Section 6 - How will the assessment, consultation and outcomes be published and communicated? E.g. reflected in final strategy, published. What steps are in place to review the Impact Assessment

This impact assessment will be reported to members of Somerset Waste Board for decision as part of the report to confirm adoption of Recycle More collections. An earlier version was provided in reports to partner authorities for their decisions.

The report and assessment will be published on the internet via Somerset Waste Partnership and Somerset County Council’s websites.

This impact assessment will be reviewed within two-three months after the start of each phase for the roll-out of Recycle More collections. Also within six months after roll-out has been completed.

SWP will maintain this impact assessment as a live document and address new equality issues that are identified or arise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed by:</th>
<th>David Mansell and Mark Blaker</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>2 December 2016 (updated to version 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed off by:</td>
<td>Steve Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>2 December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance sign off Date</td>
<td>4 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</td>
<td>Mark Blaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>No later than three months after the start of each phase for the roll-out of Recycle More collections and within six months of completing the roll-out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>2 December 2016</td>
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APPENDIX C – Service rules and guidelines

1. Service rules and guidelines for Recycle More

1.1. Somerset Waste Partnership has service rules and guidelines, as part of the collection contract, which set out expectations for the delivery and use of household waste services. These are communicated by SWP to residents in service information and should be followed by Kier collection staff, who are trained to follow procedures for SWP’s services.

1.2. Only materials and items intended for each type of collection are normally accepted and there are limits to how much can be put out. Additional recycling is normally accepted but side waste alongside or on top of wheeled bins is not normally taken, except on collections after Christmas. Special collections can be arranged for bulky household waste or it can be taken to a Recycling Centre. Extra refuse capacity is not normally provided due to a party or moving house, but householders can take this to a local Recycling Centre.

1.3. Where service rules or guidelines are not followed, waste may not be collected and advice left for the householder in the form of a label or sticker attached to the collection container, which includes contact information. In most cases, this is sufficient to ensure service arrangements are understood and followed for future collections. If needed, SWP officers will follow-up continuing problems and the Board approved an enforcement policy on 18 December 2015.

1.4. With Recycle More it is proposed to operate the same service guidelines for 3-weekly refuse collections, as applied to fortnightly collections. The increase in recycling should allow the same capacity volumes to apply.

1.5. It is proposed to change the number of refuse sacks that can be put out where wheeled bins are not used, which mostly applies to smaller properties, especially terraces. Up to 4 sacks can currently be put out with fortnightly collections, although a small survey showed that for most households 3 or less sacks was sufficient. Refuse sacks typically provide 60 litres of capacity, so 4 refuse sacks (240 litres) give more capacity than the standard 180-litre refuse bin provided to most households. To match the capacity provided by standard refuse bins, it is proposed to allow 3 sacks of refuse to be put out each collection, which is equivalent to one full sack of refuse every week. A family that is fully recycling should produce less than this.

1.6. The service guidelines proposed for Recycle More are set out below. SWP officers will normally expect these to be followed, but would consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis if justified.

2. Wheeled bins for refuse collection

2.1. Guidelines for the number and sizes of refuse bin provided with Recycle More are:

- 140-litre bin recommended for 1-2 residents.
- 1 x 180 litre bin provided for up to 4 permanent residents in household.
- 1 x 240 litre bin allowed where 5 - 6 people in household.
• 2 x 180 litre bin allowed where 7 – 9 people in household.
• 2 x 240 litre bin allowed where 10 + people in household.

3. Sacks for refuse collection

3.1. Refuse sacks are used where a property is not suitable for a wheeled bin, with sacks supplied by the householder. SWP supplies special stickers to attach to sacks so that crews know where approval has been given to put out any extra ones. Guidelines for the number of sacks allowed with Recycle More are:

• Up to 3 sacks per collection for up to 4 permanent residents in household.
• 18 extra waste stickers per year allowed where 5 - 6 people in household.
• 36 extra waste stickers per year allowed where 7+ people in household.

4. Nappies and adult absorbent hygiene products (AHP)

4.1. For households using absorbent hygiene products (AHP) or with young children the following will be allowed to collect nappy and AHP waste on refuse collections:

• 18 extra waste stickers per year for each child in nappies, which allows one extra or side refuse sack per collection; or
• An increase to the next level of refuse capacity, as shown in 2) above, so allowing a 180 litre bin to be swapped for a 240 litre bin, a 240 litre for 2 x 180 litres, etc. This would ensure that households have at least an extra 60 litres of refuse capacity for each child in nappies.

Where wheeled bins are provided, these will be recorded and the request periodically reviewed to ensure the extra capacity is still required, with bins swapped back when the reason for extra allowance no longer applies.

5. Clinical waste collection

5.1. This weekly service is provided to households for sharps and healthcare or similar wastes which can cause disease or is contaminated with a biologically active medicine or dangerous substance, including human and animal tissue.

5.2. Additional refuse capacity will normally be provided for nappies and AHP waste, but these may also be collected with clinical waste where agreed with SWP, due to difficulties that would arise.
APPENDIX D – Nappies and Absorbent Hygiene Products

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) currently offers additional refuse capacity on request for nappies and for adult absorbent hygiene products (AHP). It is proposed to continue the same arrangements with Recycle More, with stickers provided to allow an additional sack to be put out with refuse. There would be a larger refuse bin option, where appropriate too.

This appendix provides further information on nappies and AHP waste, including current services, proposed arrangements with Recycle More and other additional options Members may wish to consider with their costs.

1. Nappies and AHP Waste in Somerset

1.1. It is estimated there are 12,920 babies in nappies in Somerset, with up to 5-10% of these using real nappies. Waste composition analysis indicates Somerset’s refuse and clinical waste contains about 3,400 tonnes of baby disposable nappies and about 665 tonnes of adult absorbent hygiene products (AHP).

2. Current services

2.1. Most Somerset households with nappy and AHP waste put this out with other refuse in standard 180-litre bins collected fortnightly. If residents have problems with their collections, they are advised to contact customer services teams for assistance. On request, SWP provides excess waste stickers to allow families to put out an additional sack each collection for each child in nappies. These arrangements work well and, over a year, stickers for extra nappy waste are sent to 800-900 households, which is under 10% of households with children in nappies.

2.2. Some households with adult AHP waste put this out for weekly pick up on the clinical waste service. A review is planned as, in most cases, this hygiene waste could be put out with refuse. Clinical waste collections have higher costs and should be used for healthcare waste, including needles.

2.3. SWP promotes the use of real nappies, which allow savings in nappy costs of £200-500 per child for parents and waste disposal savings of £60-110 per child over 2 years. Currently, these are promoted through communications, including a leaflet and information on SWP’s website, and by working with community groups and suppliers, including Somerset and West Somerset Cloth Nappy Library, Natural Baby Accessories and Frome Happy Nappy Library.

3. Recycle More trial

3.1. The Recycle More trial with 3-weekly refuse collections ran from September to early December 2014 and covered 1,231 households with a range of housing types and family groups in Wiveliscombe, near Taunton.
3.2. There were a small number of enquiries about nappy collections with a 3-weekly refuse service and the usual additional refuse capacity was provided on request. Households were also advised that nappy and sanitary waste should be double-wrapped for storage and collection.

3.3. Nappies or AHP were not a significant concern mentioned by respondents to the end of trial survey, but were mentioned by a few people, including during the trial.

4. Lessons from other local authorities

4.1. There are at least fourteen Councils with 3-weekly refuse collections and more planning to make this service change, include one changing to a 4-weekly service and two with trials for this collection frequency.

4.2. In all areas with a 3-weekly refuse service, nappies and AHP are accepted in refuse bins and most of the Councils allow extra capacity on request, as proposed for Somerset. Most provide 240 litre refuse bins as standard, one provides 140 litre bins and one, Powys, provides 180 litre bins as in Somerset. Only 5 of the 14 Councils offer additional separate collection service for nappies.

4.3. Powys have provided their 3-weekly service since November 2015 and it is reported that their residents are coping well with the arrangements, with just a small number raising issues about nappies or AHP collection.

4.4. A charge can be made to collect nappies and AHP, but none of those with 3 or 4 weekly refuse collections do so. There are two Councils (St Albans and Three Rivers) who levy a small charge for nappy collections alongside a fortnightly refuse service.

4.5. Some authorities offer vouchers or cashback of £30-50 to help parents buy an initial supply of real nappies. Trial and starter packs are also offered and a few employ real nappy advisors. However, take-up is relatively low. For example, in Gloucestershire (population c100,000 higher than Somerset) about 200 vouchers giving £30 off the cost of real nappies are redeemed each year.

5. Recycle More proposals for Somerset

5.1. Residents will be advised in communication materials to double bag nappies or other potentially smelly waste in their refuse. They will also be advised to contact Customer Services teams if they have difficulties with Recycle More collections.

5.2. Households needing extra refuse capacity for nappies or AHP will be offered stickers to put out an additional sack for each child in nappies or the opportunity to swap to a larger refuse bin size, normally swapping a standard 180-litre bin for a 240-litre. Where extra bin capacity is provided, this would be subject to review and, when no longer needed, the refuse bin swapped back to the standard size. If additional assistance is needed in exceptional cases, this would also be considered. Further details are given in Appendix C.
5.3. Costs for these arrangements have been included within budgets presented for Recycle More and should be sufficient for the collection of nappies and AHP waste.

6. Other additional options

6.1. There are a number of other service options that could also be considered, which would incur additional costs, as follows:

a) Free fortnightly collections of nappies and AHP

This would allow nappies and AHP to be collected at the same frequency as currently, with special bags provided for separate nappy collections. Experience from other areas varies quite widely, but it should be expected that 3,000-7,000 households may sign-up. Kier have given a cost of £386,484 to provide this service per annum and there would be administration costs of up to £35,000 in addition. Administration and round planning would be complex because of ongoing changes in customers using the service.

b) Charged for weekly collection of nappies and AHP

A weekly nappy and AHP collection service could be offered for a charge, which should be simpler to administer than a free service. It would have a lower level of uptake and therefore special bags provided could be picked up on the clinical waste service. The cost, for collections by Kier and administration by SWP, would be £190-200 per customer per annum, although not all these costs would need to be passed on. It is expected that a maximum of 300-1,000 households may apply and to reduce the annual charge to £50 would cost £42-150,000 per annum.

c) Additional promotion of real nappies

Based on Gloucestershire costs, a scheme to fund real nappy vouchers and a nappy advisor (who would input into ante-natal and other gatherings of soon-to-be or new parents) would cost up to £30,000 per annum, including to cover the purchase of trial kits. A voucher scheme alone would cost £10,000 per annum. The Gloucestershire experience and elsewhere suggests take-up would be low but it may be seen as a positive incentive available to all, potentially with savings (through reduced disposal costs) arising for Somerset County Council. It is, however, likely that many parents who use the voucher scheme would have used re-usable nappies anyway.