
WASTE COLLECTION CALENDARS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council collects Waste from approximately 48,000 households, distributed over 6,909 square kilometres. There is great variety of collection route conditions including remoteness and ease of access, this variance presents a substantial logistical challenge for route planning.
- 1.2 There are four different Waste Streams collected across Argyll and Bute. General Waste is collected once every three weeks and materials for recycling are collected every two weeks. In Helensburgh and Lomond there are also domestic food waste and glass collections. Glass collections are also in place on Mull and Tiree. All of these collections are planned and scheduled by the area Amenity Technical Officers.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to seek the endorsement of the ED&I committee for the transition of Waste Collection Calendar publication to an online only format. Historically calendars have been published and hard copy calendars have been distributed to all of the households within Argyll and Bute.
- 1.4 Waste Disposal Services has undergone significant service redesign to drive efficiencies and increase cost savings. In 2016 we adopted a 3 weekly collection model for General Waste across the entirety of the Councils area. A co-mingled recycling collection with alternate weekly collections was introduced in 2014/15 for the majority of the PPP area. When combined both of these changes have generated savings of around £640k. In addition to savings achieved the changes have enhanced the quality service that householders receive, whilst ensuring that the service is compliant with regulations. These changes and their resultant savings reflect the proactive approach taken by Roads and Amenity Services (RAS) in evaluating, streamlining and ultimately improving services. This approach ensures that RAS deliver for the people of Argyll and Bute both in quality of service and value.
- 1.5 There is an annual budget of £26k to cover the development, design and distribution of the calendars. Previously we have used an external graphic design consultancy to design, print and distribute the calendars at a cost of £24k. The contract with the external graphic design consultancy comes to an end in 2019.

- 1.6 To generate further savings from 2019 onwards it is proposed that the Council utilise its internal IT resources to provide the design element of the calendars creation. The Council's IT developers working together in collaboration with RAS have created a piece of software which generates calendars based on route information once data has been input as source. The software was designed in-house and has no further cost associated to it in terms of licensing. Once generated the calendars will be uploaded to the Council's website. It is noteworthy to advise that this approach already takes place with the externally designed calendars.
- 1.7 Safeguards for users that have barriers to internet access have been included within section 4 of this report. There are three options that could be put into place to guarantee a high standard of service whilst not increasing costs. This report recommends an option which is considered to be the most pragmatic and inclusive option available whilst also enabling savings to be made.
- 1.8 This report recommends that Members approve that:
- The 2018 calendars will state this is the last year for printed calendars to be issued, the savings proposals being put forward are part of the budget process in February 2019.
 - Alternative arrangements for households with no internet access would be put in place with individuals being able to request colour paper copies of the calendar for their address.

WASTE COLLECTION CALENDARS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Every Local Authority in Scotland currently publishes detailed calendars of Waste collection routes broken down by postcode. Argyll and Bute Council has since 2004 sent out printed colour calendars to households across the Councils area. There are around 48,000 households in Argyll and Bute; a budget figure of around £26k is budgeted for the printing and distribution of a calendar to each household.
- 2.2 This report lays out plans for endorsement by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure committee for a cessation in the printing and distribution of Waste Collection calendars. Moving instead to an online system for the publication of the collection calendars.
- 2.3 An increasing number of Scottish Local Authorities (12 with a further 3 starting in this financial year out of a total of 32) no longer issue hard copy waste and recycling collection calendars to the public. After a period of transition online only publication is now their standard operating model, supporting both their digital and spending/cost saving objectives. Councils that have made the change have reported that they did experience increased demand for printed Calendars initially but that this subsided within the first year of having made the transition to online only calendars. The majority of Councils that have made the change also reported that they would only consider a return to printed calendars in support of major changes in their waste collection operation i.e. switching to a four weekly collection for General Waste.
- 2.4 The move to online calendars is in line with the Council's commitment to finding greener ways of working, whilst responding to public demand relating to unnecessary waste. Stopping the distribution of printed calendars would also generate saving of around £24k. This is approximately equivalent to employing one full time member of Council staff at Grade 4. Currently the Council already publishes all of the calendars online in addition to sending out hard copies. It is proposed that the next issue of calendars for September onwards includes a message that there will be no further paper copies issued to all households and the main source of information will be via the Council's website.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That Members approve that:

- The 2018 calendars will state this is the last year for printed calendars to be issued, the savings proposals being put forward are part of the budget process in February 2019.
- Alternative arrangements for households with no internet access would be put in place with individuals being able to request colour paper copies of the calendar for their address.

4.0 DETAIL

Online System

- 4.1 The online publication system has been in place and has been for some years, and provides users with a static PDF of their collection calendar. Transitioning to an online only system would see no increase in costs. It is estimated that it would save around £24k through not having to print and distribute calendars.
- 4.2 A piece of Software has been developed jointly by the Councils IT Team and RAS to deliver an in house solution for the production and design of the calendars. The piece of software when fed with the routing information by the Amenity team will generate the calendars for each individual address. It is proposed that we test this software using 2018 data so that any issues can be worked out before we go live using it in 2019. The calendar creation software has been created and there are no further development or licensing costs associated with it.
- 4.3 The collection route planning process would continue as normal with all routes agreed between internal stakeholders and RAS by the end of July-19. Once agreed the route information would be entered in to the new software that would then generate the calendars.
- 4.4 By August-19 the calendars will have been completed and checked for any errors by the Amenity team, there are 200+ individual calendars to be checked. The amount of calendars reflects the scale and complexity of the waste collections service delivered by the council. The calendars would then be uploaded in batches to the website 4 weeks in advance of the previous calendars coming to an end to ensure that the calendars are not out of date.
- 4.5 The software used to generate the calendars can also be linked to a downloadable free app that will keep service users up to date with any changes in their service. This app requires further development and collaboration between the Digital Services team, IT development and RAS. It is planned that

this App will also have the option to create alerts to remind users that a specific collection is due.

Offline System

- 4.6 There will always be a requirement to provide support to users that can't access their collection calendar on-line. In order to ensure that users such as this have up-to-date information on the collection calendars hard copy calendars will be provided upon request.
- 4.7 For calendar enquiries received over the phone a logged request will be sent to the admin team, who in turn will print and send out the hard copy calendar to the user. Enquiries received directly at the service point will be dealt with there and then, the team will provide a printed colour calendar on paper using the website to find the relevant calendar. This is the process already in place for replacement calendars. We estimate that we will receive around 2,500 requests for printed calendars in the first year of having made the switch to online only publication.
- 4.8 A robust Communications plan about the transition to the online service would be developed. The Communications plan would highlight the benefits of the service and future apps. The Communications plan would guide users to where to access it on the website. A demonstration event allowing elected members to get hands on with the new system will be arranged to feature as part of the member's seminars or prior to the next EDI committee. This event will provide members the opportunity to experience the benefits of using the new system, which members can then share with their constituents.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report seeks the EDI committee's endorsement for the proposed for transition from paper Waste Collection Calendars that are currently manually printed and distributed, to an online only format. This change in how the Waste Calendar service is delivered generates a significant saving while simultaneously enhancing our capabilities. This change is in effect asking people to choose how to spend council budget on either obtaining their calendar online and making a saving or requesting a printed copy to be sent to them.
- 5.2 The change provides the framework to generate additional benefits to householders through future access to smarter technology such as Apps. The recommendations outlined in this report are in line with the Councils Digital Transformation objectives.
- 5.3 This report also details alternative arrangements to support householders that have significant barriers to accessing the Internet included in the transition.
- 5.4 To reduce the impact of the transition a Communications plan promoting the change and its benefits to householders and elected members will be developed and implemented.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1	Policy	As defined within the ICT and Digital Strategy 2017-20.
6.2	Financial	Savings of around £24k could be made if this approach is adopted for 2019. This saving is detailed further in Appendix 1
6.3	Legal	None
6.4	HR	No additional staffing resource is required to implement the proposed change.
6.5	Equalities	The proposed approach builds in safeguards to ensure that users with barriers to internet access will still receive Waste Calendars when requested.
6.6	Risk	The most serious Risk generated by the transition is the high likelihood of an increase in the volume of customer complaints and enquiries in the short term during the implementation phase of the transition.
6.7	Customer Service	The Customer service team have been consulted throughout the development of the proposed solution. There is no change in the processes that are being carried out currently.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Summary of service savings

Waste Calendar Costs			
Year	Annual Budget	Calendar Design/Distribution Costs	Saving
2017	£26,000	£26,000	£0
2018		£26,000	£0
2019		£2,000	£24,000
2020		£2,000	£24,000