

**9. REFUSE – RECYCLABLE COLLECTION:  
RATIONALISATION OF ROUNDS**

RR 8264

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Corporate Plan Output: Solid Waste	

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the rationalisation of the refuse/recycling collection routes which will result in changes to collection days for approximately 50% of Christchurch households.

**BACKGROUND**

The sequence of events leading to the current refuse collection situation is summarised as follows:

- (a) Post amalgamation (1991) the whole city was tendered for refuse collection.
- (b) The city was let as three contracts, and in addition, so that representative areas of the city could be used for the kerbside recycling trial, some areas were specified as having to be collected on certain days.
- (c) This resulted in somewhat haphazard collection areas, which however operated reasonably well at the start of that contract.
- (d) During the six year term it became more unwieldy due to significant growth occurring in certain areas of the city. Mondays and Fridays in particular are much heavier days than other week days, leading to problems of late collection, dumped bags and complaints.
- (e) The new contract has been let with one contractor for the whole of the city including kerbside recycling. Due to the anticipated teething problems during the introduction of kerbside recycling the contractor elected to keep all the existing collection areas the same.

However the contractor has now come to the Council with a proposal for a rationalisation of the collection days across the city. It is expected that this would cause the problems mentioned in (d) above to significantly reduce.

**THE PROPOSAL**

Refer to three Collection Zone Maps (attached):

- Map A Current collection days
- Map B Proposed new collection days
- Map C Map showing the areas affected with a collection day change.

Note that in accordance with the contract both refuse and recyclables will continue to be collected on the same day in any given area.

## **MANAGING THE CHANGE**

A short but intensive advertising campaign would be carried out targeting every householder in Christchurch. This would comprise principally of a letter box drop to all households with notice of their new (or retained) collection day. This would be supplemented by major advertisements in newspapers, and local radio stations. A briefing of all front-line Service Centre Staff would be required to coordinate the telephone responses to the anticipated enquiries and complaints. The advertising would also provide the reason why the changes are being instigated.

It is expected that there would be a period of at least two weeks with a high frequency of telephone calls into the Council. The temporary Waste Management Unit Call Centre put in place for the introduction of kerbside recycling would be reactivated to cope with this temporary increased load. Onyx would provide some staff for this period to the Call Centre. The frequency of calls for missed collections is expected to drop off after the first two weeks and it is expected that by the end of one month the anticipated gains would become apparent in the enhanced collection regime. With the introduction of kerbside recycling the contractor now has some experience in a high level of calls and feels that they could now react more effectively to such a situation again.

Note that potential overloading of Refuse Stations has been considered in the proposed new system and will be overcome by the contractor delivering to a minimum of two refuse stations on any day.

## **TIMING**

From a public perception point of view, it is felt that the sooner the collection is rationalised the better, as the benefits of the change should soon become apparent. It is proposed that the change be instituted in the first week of September beginning Monday 31 August.

## **COSTS**

The cost estimate for the collection round rationalisation is \$15,000. This is for all necessary advertising and letter box drop plus the cost of reactivating the Civic Offices Call Centre for a two-three week period. There is a small (hidden) cost to the Council Service Centres for the extra work which would be involved in servicing the increased call load, but this can be kept to a minimum by use of the Call Centre.

All the costs of the change (except the extra Service Centre work) would be borne by the contractor, as it is their proposal, and any approval given to the contractor would be subject to this condition. This would include the contractor responding to all calls for uncollected bags/recyclables due to the change, at their cost.

Note that the new system will have long term benefits to Service Centres due to lower levels of public complaints.

## **BENEFITS**

***Advantages:***

1. Collections completed earlier
2. Fewer dumped bags
3. Fewer complaints and customers better serviced
4. Administration easier

***Disadvantages:***

1. Some short term disruption  
(for about 4 weeks)

**SUMMARY**

The current refuse bag and recyclables collection days and routes which are the legacy of previous contracts and city growth, result in uneven loading, late collection finish times on Monday and Friday, complaints and dumped bags.

It is proposed to rationalise collection rounds which is expected to improve the situation. An extensive advertising public relations campaign will be carried out and the costs associated with the change will be borne by Onyx.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council approve the rationalisation of the refuse/recycling collection days in line with the proposal from the contractor.
  2. That the Waste Management Unit ensure that an adequate level of advertising is provided.
  3. That this change occur during the first week of September 1998.