

<b>Officer responsible</b> Waste Manager	<b>Author</b> Simon Collin
Corporate Plan Output: Solid Waste	

The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors of the outcome of a recent survey into Refuse Station opening times. It also sets out a proposal to meet the various needs of the stakeholders involved in changing station hours.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Council's three refuse stations are open from 7.30 am – 4.00 pm daily throughout the year excepting 25 and 26 December, 1 January, ANZAC Day and Good Friday. This year as a service improvement, the stations also opened on 2 January.

Occasional requests from refuse operators for a variation in the station hours led to a report to the Council in February 1998 which resulted in the 2 January opening and recommended that a user survey be conducted at the refuse stations for the purpose of gauging customer satisfaction to hours and days of opening. This survey was carried out in mid-1998.

From this survey a number of options with costs were developed and a further survey questionnaire sent to refuse station account customers in early December. The options were costed on the basis of user pay for the additional times of station opening. An option based on existing hours was also included.

### **SURVEY RESPONSE**

The response to this second survey was low at only a 20% return of the questionnaires, but the replies were representative of a broad cross section of customers including refuse operators, general engineering firms, construction companies, social services, landscape gardeners etc.

Written comments to the survey were also received from Waste Management NZ Ltd, the Engineering and Design Services Section of the Selwyn District Council, Independent Bin Operators collective, and Mr Steve Ross of Drumbeat Rubbish Disposal who also signed the letter from the Operators Collective.

### **RESULTS**

#### **General**

A clear general response to the survey, was that while some customers were prepared to pay extra costs per tonne necessary to fund the additional costs of opening for longer, the majority were not.

## **Specific Responses**

From the specific replies received Waste Management objected strongly (as the biggest single account customer) to any suggestion of having to pay anything extra and reiterated their previous requests for the opening of the stations half an hour earlier in the summer, with the closing time unchanged at 4.00 pm. We know from previous contact with the other main contractors (Waste Care and Envirowaste) that this view is shared by them. These contractors by the nature of their commercially based collection prefer to collect at times early in the morning which avoids the morning rush hour traffic.

By contrast the Independent Bin Operators Collective response advocated their wish to have the stations open later. They have domestic based collections and consequently start their work much later in the day than the bigger contractors.

Selwyn District Council wished to have Parkhouse opened earlier and closed later to avoid the current constraint imposed on the Selwyn Refuse Collection Service.

## **PROPOSAL SOLUTION**

It will be difficult to completely satisfy the wishes of all the stakeholders involved, particularly as there is not a willingness to pay more for the service. However it should be possible to move in a direction which will improve the level of service at little extra cost.

### **Earlier Summer Opening Weekdays**

As some key staff are already on site from just before 7.00 am each morning it should be possible to open stations (perhaps Metro and Parkhouse only) to the main contractors from this time. An electronic card entry system may be helpful in reducing operating costs for this option to a minimum.

### **Later Closing**

A later closing time would not be as easy to implement as an earlier start. Apart from any cost associated with an extension of time, the logistics of refuse trucks carting to the Landfill later in the day would be compounded by early evening peak hour traffic. However if the electronic card system proves economic at the beginning of the day it may be possible to keep only a skeleton staff on until say 8.00 am or 8.30 am and utilise the wages saved, at the end of the day.

### **Weekends**

The previous survey indicated a preference for extended summer hours. The demand is likely to be for later in the day, so the opportunity exists to simply shift the hours so that the stations open later and close later (thus not affecting the operational costs).

## **SUMMARY**

A second survey of refuse station account customers has been carried out which has shown that customers do not wish to pay for the extension of hours at the refuse stations. However it seems likely that increased flexibility of station hours may still be possible at minimum extra cost and it is proposed that these options be discussed in detail with the key stakeholders, IBOC, Waste Management Ltd, and Works Operation's staff.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the information be received.
  2. That Waste Management Unit staff discuss in detail with IBOC, Waste Management Ltd , Waste Care, Envirowaste, and Works Operation's staff and Union representatives options for providing more flexibility in station opening hours and report back to this Committee in April.

### **Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.