

Member Information Sheet



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For use by Democratic Services only

From:	Michael Cowdell, Head of Waste Services
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Relevant ELT & SLT Director/s:	Mickey Green, Executive Director, Climate and Place
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Date:	2 April, 2024
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To:	All Members
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Changes to recycling and rubbish collection days in the East of the county

Recycling and rubbish collection days will be changing for many households in the former Mendip and South Somerset areas from the 17 June 2024.

Members are asked to highlight the forthcoming change with their communities. You will be invited to an online meeting on Thursday 18 April as an opportunity to find out more and ask questions if needed.

Background

Since March 2020, Somerset Council's kerbside waste collections have been delivered by Suez UK. It provides collections for more than 260,000 households, working closely with the Council's Waste Services team.

Suez inherited collection routes that had evolved as new homes were built. These were outdated and inefficient and Suez is in the process of changing the routes to reduce mileage. This 'rerouting' will make collections more efficient, less carbon-intensive, more cost-effective, and more manageable and reliable – benefitting residents, Somerset Council, and Suez.

The change to routes means changes to collection days for many residents.

The 'rerouting' has been split into two phases. Phase One is complete and Phase Two starts in June.

The costs associated with the reroute, including all postal communications, are being covered by Suez and come at no additional cost to the Council.

Update on Phase One

Started in February and covered the West of the county - the former Sedgemoor, Taunton and West Somerset areas, along with a small part of South Somerset.

Around 85% of the 144,000 households have had a change to their collection day.

As you would expect with a change on this scale, there was an initial dip in service reliability as crews got used to new routes. As the routes bedded-in, things have improved. The waste team has followed-up any recurring issues we now believe the new arrangements are working well.

Phase Two

Involves the former Mendip and South Somerset area.

Around 80% of the 120,000 of the households will see a change to their collection day.

The change in days will start in the week beginning Monday 17 June and apply to weekly recycling collections and three-weekly rubbish collections.

Fortnightly Garden Waste collections, clinical and bulky waste collections will not change.

Interim refuse collections

As well as changes to weekly recycling collection days, many residents will also see a change to the week in which their three-weekly rubbish collection happens.

Some (but not all) of the households having a change to the rubbish collection will also have a one-off, interim collection. This is needed to make sure no one goes too long between rubbish collections when crews move to the new collection days.

The interim collections will take place on a Saturday and anyone having one will have this clearly highlighted in communications.

Communicating with residents

We are replicating the successful approach used for the introduction of Recycle More, with households being written to twice if their collection day is changing. Writing twice increases the likelihood of everyone, including residents who are not online, getting the information they need and not missing a collection if their day changes.

- **Warm up letter six weeks before new routes start:** highlighting the change, asking householders to look out for a Service Guide/Collection Day Calendar, and flagging up an interim collection date where this applies.
- **Service Guide/Collection Calendar three weeks before new routes start:** an introduction to Somerset's waste collection services which includes a simple calendar showing collection days for the next 12 months, specific to the property. Interim collections will be included on the calendar where this applies.

Households whose collections days are not changing will not receive the warm-up letter but will receive the Service Guide and Calendar.

Customer Service support

In Phase One the vast majority of residents understood the change and presented waste on the correct day. Our Customer Service Team will continue to work closely with Waste Services to manage any contact generated by the change.

Suez will also have extra staff on the ground to check the new collection day and the old collection day for non-presentation and wrong presentation respectively.

- Where recycling is presented on the wrong day, residents would be expected to hold on to it and present it the following week.
- Where rubbish is presented on the wrong day SUEZ will return it to the property and post a postcard with the correct collection day on.

Please note: Crews will not be able return for rubbish presented on the incorrect day.

We will use media and social media to raise awareness of the forthcoming changes, and in the run-up to the rerouting the Council website will include:

- A Frequently Asked Question page www.somerset.gov.uk/reroute
- A form for residents to get in touch with questions about the reroute
- A post-code look-up and downloadable copy of the service guide

Further questions?

We will be holding an online Teams meeting at 4pm on Thursday, 18 April. This will be an opportunity to ask questions and find out more.

The invite will be sent by Democratic Services. Although all councillors will be invited, the meeting will of course be most useful for the councillors in the Phase Two area (the former Mendip and South Somerset areas).

For more information contact:

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