Scrutiny Briefing Note

Refuse and Recycling Collections – Missed Bins

Responsibility

North East Derbyshire, as the Waste Collection Authority (WCA), is responsible under the Environmental Protection Act for organising the weekly collection of waste from all 49,520 households across the district.

Derbyshire County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA), is responsible for the disposal of municipal waste and directs the relevant district councils to their designated waste transfer stations.

How the Arrangement Works

The Council currently operates an alternating bin collection programme based on the northern and southern areas of the district.

Every resident receives a weekly waste collection:

• Week 1 – Domestic waste bins (black)

• Week 2 – Recyclable waste: green waste and dry recycling bins (green and burgundy)

The service operates pre-programmed zoned collection routes to collect and transfer waste to the designated WDA tipping points:

• Domestic waste (black bin): Chesterfield (Sheepbridge) and Alfreton (Clover Nook)

• Green waste: Chesterfield (Arkwright)

Dry recycling waste is managed through a contracted arrangement with HW Martins, who receive and process recycling at Alfreton (Clover Nook).

In total, the service empties an average of 74,280 bins per week, equating to 3,614,960 bins per annum. These figures assume each household has one bin per waste stream.

The service operates with a fleet of 16 dedicated refuse collection vehicles for domestic properties, operating from two centres: Eckington and Bolsover DC depot at Doe Lea.

The Council also provides separate services for:

•   Commercial waste (food, dry recycling, general waste)

•   Medical waste collections

•   Bulky chargeable household waste

Number of Reported Missed Bins

The service currently uses a vehicle tracking system. Each vehicle is equipped with a rear-mounted display screen and function buttons that allow crews to report bins not collected due to various reasons (e.g. contamination, not presented, excessive side waste). These reports are sent to the Customer Service team at the end of the working day.

Reports must be manually generated by Streetscene from the tracker portal and stored in a designated file location for Customer Services to access. ICT then reads the data to feed into the self-service scripts.

This data is used to prevent customers from submitting missed bin reports via self-service if an infringement (e.g. contamination) has already been recorded.

Missed Collection Statistics

The number of reported missed bins is shown below.

		April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
2022-2023	Black	116	138	132	224	137	154	170	209	195	252	151	171	2049
	Green	145	127	137	117	118	79	111	99	2			102	1037
	Burgundy	83	198	153	137	150	147	148	190	150	249	165	208	1978
2023-2024	Black	327	272	250	193	140	192	182	149	221	236	245	227	2634
	Green	165	222	275	105	111	168	101	134	22			98	1401
	Burgundy	223	172	144	95	115	174	111	133	160	180	146	149	1802
2024-2025	Black	256	231	332	247	211	207	224	293	177	309	188	248	2923
	Green	141	193	160	140	120	130	102	273	13			194	1466
	Burgundy	158	125	138	127	137	150	153	161	88	223	100	122	1682
2025-2026	Black	254	330	161	196									941
	Green	127	174	140	82									523
	Burgundy	121	155	408	209									893

The annual number of missed collections for 2024/25 represents 0.08% of total collections undertaken.

While some missed collections are genuine, it is not uncommon for residents to refill their bins after servicing and then report that the bin was not emptied. A common example is when side waste is not collected, and the resident refills the bin post-service.

Other missed collections, not individually accounted for in the table, may affect entire roads. These are typically due to:

• Severe weather

• Parked vehicles obstructing access

• Operational issues

In such cases, the service communicates with Customer Services, and a collection team returns the following day or by the end of the week.

Future Proposals

With the introduction of Simpler Recycling and the requirement for weekly food waste collections, the number of waste collections will increase—raising the risk of further missed collection reports.

To improve communication between collection teams, management, and Customer Services, the service is considering investing in cab technology to provide live data on the progress of refuse collection routes.

This system would allow teams to:

• Sign off work in real time

• Report bins not presented, side waste, contamination, and operational issues (e.g. access problems, breakdowns)

• Upload photographs of any service issues

Live data would feed directly into Customer Services, enabling efficient communication with residents and providing visual evidence of contamination or other problems.

It would also prevent customers from submitting self-service requests if their property has been flagged, helping to identify and resolve issues more effectively.

This would reduce interactions with Customer Services and Streetscene back-office staff and help lower the number of missed collection reports.

A business case is currently being formulated to assess the cost implications and potential savings of implementing a fully digitised system.