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| **Partner Authority Member and Officer Briefing**  2 April 2020 |  |

**Coronavirus – Recycle More roll-out paused**

**Summary**

* **The current Coronavirus emergency is unavoidably affecting our ability to deliver the Recycle More service in the planned timescales.**
* **The roll-out was due to start in Mendip at the end of June this year and a decision is due to be taken next week that will formally pause the roll-out of the new service.**
* **SWP will develop a revised plan with a view to this being discussed by the Somerset Waste Board in June, subject to any continuing Coronavirus disruption.**
* **In the meantime, considerable work is ongoing, at SWP and notably our contractor’s crews on the ground, to maintain the best service possible in the current unprecedented circumstances.**

**Background**

Recycle More will transform recycling in Somerset, allowing a far wider range of materials to be recycled weekly from the kerbside including plastic pots, tubs and trays, food and drink cartons (e.g. TetraPaks), small electrical equipment and household batteries

It will be rolled-out on phases, with each phase preceded by a major communications and engagement campaign and upgrades to SWP’s five depots to handle the extra recycling.

The current timetable is for the new service to start in Mendip at the end of June this year, to be followed by South Somerset in September and the rest of the county by spring 2022.

This week saw the start of the new contract with SUEZ for recycling and waste collection, and with it the fleet of new vehicles that will make Recycle More possible are now in use.

**Impact of Coronavirus**

The Coronavirus emergency is affecting various aspects of preparation for the roll-out. These are set out in full in a Key Decision paper that can be found here <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=7086&PlanId=216> In summary:

* Delay to the depot upgrade at Evercreech due to staffing and supply chain issues. The upgrading is required for the depot to handle the extra recycling.
* Delay in the delivery of new recycling containers that are essential for roll-out. An initial consignment of the ‘big blue bags’ has arrived in the UK, but not enough to cover the first phase. A second consignment has been delayed by a shut-down of a port in India.
* Inability to carry out large scale public engagement and communications. This is a key element for the success of Recycle More, encouraging behaviour change to support use of the new service. Face-to-face public engagement, which was being planned for May and June, now seems unlikely at best. Uncertainty over a start date means the production of key communications materials cannot start when needed.
* The SWP capacity to prepare for Recycle More has been reduced as staff are redeployed and focussed on managing service disruption caused by Coronavirus.
* Day to day services need to be stable before the new service is rolled-out. Current service disruption includes suspension of garden waste collection, new bin/box deliveries, and closure of Recycling Centres. There will be a significant backlog of actions to work through once life returns to normal.

**Decision to pause Recycle More roll-out**

A formal decision to pause the project is due to be taken on 9 April and the report that supports this can be found using the link above.

This is very disappointing for SWP and for the public, but we hope you understand that it is unavoidable in the current circumstances.

SWP will develop a revised plan with a view to this being discussed by the Somerset Waste Board in June, subject to any continuing Coronavirus disruption. Clearly, we will work hard to get services back to normal and introduce this exciting new service as soon as is practicable.

The overall expected savings from Recycle More are in excess of £2m a year. With the existing timetable we expected to see these being achieved from 2022/23 once roll-out is complete and costs paid back.

Delaying Recycle More will delay the break-even point. It’s not possible to accurately quantify the financial implications until a new timetable is agreed. A delay of one month would cost under £100k, incurred as a result of running the current more expensive service for longer. Pushing all phases back (i.e. deliver phase 1 when we were planning on launching phase 2) would have an estimated impact of around £900k – in this scenario break-even point would still be reached during the 2022/23 financial year as planned. Further delays would see the financial impact increase. All options to minimise impacts will be fully explored, and these costs are being captured as part of Council-wide processes to monitor the financial impact of Coronavirus.

**How can you help?**

Many constituents will have an interest in the arrival of Recycle More, it would be helpful if you could use your own routes and community contacts to make them aware of the delay. We would encourage you to use the message below which covers the key points.

***Delay to Recycle More***

*Coronavirus is affecting the delivery of many key projects. Unfortunately, this includes the roll-out of the new Recycle More service which will eventually allow people to recycle more from their kerbside, notably considerably more plastic.*

*Regrettably, SWP has had to pause the introduction of Recycle More, which had been due to start in Mendip at the end of June (to be followed by South Somerset in September) because:*

* *Impacts on staffing and supply chains mean that essential depot upgrading is being delayed, as is the delivery of new recycling containers – the big blue bags - that will be used to collect much of the new material.*
* *The large-scale public engagement and communication that needs to take place in advance of Recycle More cannot happen because of the current uncertainty around timescales and the restrictions on non-essential travel and social isolation.*
* *SWP and contractor staff are focussed on maintaining essential services, which means they are unable to prepare for what is a big change to the way we work.*

*SWP will develop a new timetable and roll-out the new service out as soon as possible once the current crisis is over.*

*This is disappointing, but unavoidable and information about new timescales will be shared as soon as possible. The SWP asks for your understanding and patience, and asks for the public’s ongoing support in sorting all their recycling to make the important work of our hard-working collection crews more manageable in these challenging times.*

**Helping us manage service disruption**

SWP’s current services are being unavoidably disrupted by Coronavirus, as staffing numbers are reduced and advice on non-essential travel and safe distancing is followed.

Garden waste collections are suspended (existing 2020-21 subscribers will have their service extended for 12 months from the restart of collections), as is the collection of bulky materials and delivery of new bins/boxes. All Recycling Centres are also currently closed in line with government advice on non-essential travel.

Recycling and rubbish collections continue, but where recycling collections are missed we are unable to make return collections.

It would be helpful if you could help share the following guidance for householders during this difficult period.

* Please check [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus) and follow @somersetwaste on Twitter and Facebook for the latest service updates
* If you have coronavirus symptoms or are in a household with someone showing symptoms, government guidance on safely dealing with personal waste is available at [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus)
* If your recycling collection is missed, please take containers back in and put them back out again for the following week for collection.
* To help crews finish their rounds: rinse containers, squash all but aerosols and glass if safe to do so, flatten and tear up all cardboard, sort-segregate materials without using carrier bags, and put it all - including all food waste (in the food waste bin) - out by 7am.
* Leave garden waste in the garden, cut back on mowing, allow the garden to become more wildlife friendly with a corner for any woody materials, compost all other garden waste and suitable foods. More advice: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/home-composting/>
* Please store materials and items you would otherwise drop off at recycling sites and do not add them to your rubbish. In particular, do not take risks with electrical items, batteries and gas canisters as these can cause a fire risk in your bin or the rubbish trucks.
* Cut food waste, save money and reduce shopping trips with simple tips about meal planning, portion control, better storage and using up leftovers, here: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/tackling-food-waste/>
* Rubbish and clinical waste collections are not affected. If either of these are missed, report it to get a return collection with the pull-down My Waste Services menu at [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.somersetwaste.gov.uk%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR0iD_tHB5ZjQoU7_IYemCyn1wu1kPQayzWVSwkPoTSfsojMyRtaQChjGxA&h=AT25vKyiMcaGkSmZKYlnhBIkZSkWBmyTsV9PfcXmXGv-nEqVUSFuQiabCucHCSgYyIE_Bw79ZIuWogL-fskwNAAXYjpRCgmHRobphOs9jBI-jn06QUOjeYiv8TB6y_GArppyRTywLy49JERBiZHy2ayuyIF1_cXn8YcA7Lm3P7wr2FwLkC40dWHgWAQWhUAhZiuah21C455WNak3CZqX2cHS3s5rboRsaaiwdSzk9oJrNUHbZV1wUd8Gpaxytm3aTHBMnN5O5JI1uS0DNRpqQB0GBX20aMSZgUworCIv3tRzkLDwCfW7ib81CcM2_tVg2t8Pz4WJ7hpBT2Aj1SRyHYWqyhibO1_k6Ju9aih2YTYV7bPDYkaq6Iby2wvK16ZyLlTFy9IHstjZsAb6Gr3WKlURmGwrqa4xvxkZnz4QzwAcSRIBqu5o70t95onev81QHvtOXhtpFZfoVBvOVG-K1njuDAFOkuHyXq1mjjD-3AszQ0xNSIa7Wk7UHUuc3j8T-XgztCvH0jq_7fFrIf9IMK6EujkrH3jRz9xlfwWQfp140PgxrZqoyJHwsgyCn8i7n7j_vnEwWC0FcvJ4t8IdyoJDVWZyheSJr6ap4ie_l-PG2MltbrzsWOsGJS9nv2N-MWKzqTgsm8fiMEOZHRlVwrNmnR33o-zgd3tj) or via district council customer services: [https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/contact-us/](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/contact-us/?fbclid=IwAR0C9tuffnmM8SE2-bmRy67XjrNr2aLb7Jnvvo0DVSJIW9gqpuFtsQNo85Y)

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