

Briefing note

Waste and Street Cleansing COVID-19 update April/May 2020

Background

The last six weeks have been an extremely challenging time for the service and I would like to take this opportunity to firstly thank you all for your support and help during this period.

At the end of March, we had less than 65 per cent of staff available to work as vulnerable staff shielded, schools closed and staff showing symptoms of the virus self-isolated.

We are now moving into a new phase - staff availability is back up (over 80 per cent), we have secured additional resource from other teams in Suez and have extra staff available to help out from StreetCare. At the same time, the expansion of testing to all frontline staff and their families has enabled staff to return from isolation when tests are negative.

The following briefing note provides an overview of forthcoming changes as we reinstate services as quickly as we can and help services return to normal.

Garden waste – kerbside

Kerbside garden waste collections restarted on Monday 27 April 2020 and renewals and new subscriptions can now be completed online or by calling the contact centre. Demand to the contact centre is high and so the easiest way to renew is online at www.southglos.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

Weekly recycling

Weekly recycling will recommence from Wednesday 13 May 2020 and residents are asked to put their recycling out on their normal collection day by 7am and take into account our crews may be working longer hours than usual. During the first week material volumes will be extremely high with 1.5 times the normal waste to be collected as we switch from fortnightly to weekly recycling. We will be working the weekends of 16-17 and 23-24 May to clear any backlog of material from the week before.

Sort It recycling centres

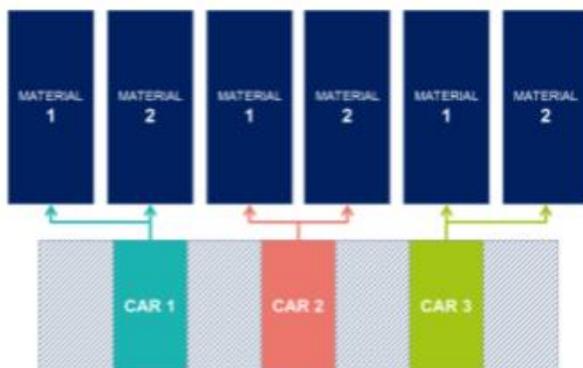
The reopening of the Sort It recycling centres presents an unprecedented challenge. Before we can reopen the sites we need to make sure:

- that opening is consistent with government advice of what is essential travel,
- that opening is supported by Avon and Somerset police,
- does not divert PPE from health and social care settings,
- that we have sufficient staff and
- we can support social distancing measures for both staff and public.

We are planning to reopen our sites where we can implement the necessary measures on Saturday 16 May. However, visiting will be a different experience and it is important that we reinforce travel to a Sort It recycling centre should only be when residents really need to visit in order to manage a build-up of waste or recycling at home that could cause a risk of injury, health or harm to the resident or other members of their household.

When the sites reopen social distancing measures will be in place - these measures can only be implemented at Mangotsfield, Thornbury and Yate. Little Stoke will remain shut for the foreseeable future. The social distancing will restrict movement to only two tipping points per vehicle, this will mean initially only two waste streams will be available:

1. non-recyclable black bin waste
2. large household items – furniture, wood, mattresses, soft furnishing, garden furniture etc



Demand will be exceptionally high, we are planning longer opening 6am-6pm, 7 days a week but realistically traffic will be hard to manage, and we can expect queues at all sites. Additional traffic management and onsite security is being arranged.

We are also working with our neighbouring authorities to coordinate reopening so to help reduce cross border issues.

Fly tipping

It is disappointing that we have seen a substantial increase in fly tipping, up over 100 per cent compared to the week before the current restrictions on movement were implemented, (70 incidents were reported w/c 20 April compared to 32 incidents w/c

23 March). The majority of waste being fly tipped is black bags and other household items. This data has helped us decide which waste streams to offer at the Sort It recycling centres. Extra resources have been allocated to clear fly tipping and we are asking people to please continue to report fly tipping. The enviro-crime team are still working and investigating to enforce our zero-tolerance approach. Last week 13 cases were passed to the team for further investigation.

Supporting vulnerable residents

We can offer a range of services to support anyone shielding or particularly vulnerable residents including the provision of extra capacity, one off collections to clear excess waste or bulky waste collections. Please get in touch with any concerns about residents and we will do our best to support them.

Communication

We will continue to communicate changes as quickly as we can, through radio, press, email, social media etc. Our assisted and extra capacity residents have been identified as those most likely to be digitally excluded and will also receive a letter about changes. Please do continue to share our messages where you can especially with residents who may not have access to the internet.

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Contact information

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