



## **Appendix 1**

### **Adverse weather report for South Oxfordshire District Council**

**February 2010**

#### **Background**

Due to the unusually prolonged spell of cold weather from December 2009 into January a number of disruptions occurred to the refuse and recycling collections. This, coupled with the scheduled Christmas and new year collection changes meant further disruptions to collections, every effort was made to ensure these disruptions were kept to a minimum. This report sets out the actions that were taken including re-deployment of duties and communication with residents including future action points in the event of a re-occurrence of adverse weather.

#### **Verdant's inclement weather policy**

Verdant employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to get to work, adapting their means of travel if necessary. Verdant recognizes the need to safely maintain services during adverse weather conditions, whilst properly discharging it's duty of care to employees.

All employees are expected to present themselves for duty, this may mean, with management approval, alternative duties may be given where it is not safe to carry out normal duties.

#### **Adverse weather December 2009 – January 2010**

The initial spell of the adverse weather that affected collections in South Oxfordshire began on 21 December 2009. Collections were suspended on Tuesday 22 due to the unsafe conditions. When collections resumed on Wednesday 23 they were a day later than the scheduled Christmas calendar.

On the week commencing 4 January, the refuse and recycling service was suspended due to the snow from the 6 – 9 January.

This put the service exactly 5 working days behind the published Christmas schedule, which meant that everyone's collection was on their normal day, but collecting the alternative waste.



If the catch-up continued by the original plan, collecting on a Saturday to catch up one day per week, the collections would have been affected until at least mid February.

To complicate things further, Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January (the following week) was also suspended due to a further fall of snow. This day was caught up on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>.

During the week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> January, we re-commenced the service, but with limitations as there were still roads that were heavily iced and many paths were covered in snow still. The Verdant crews went out and completed as much as they could each day, but there were a small number of roads that were not collected due to inaccessibility of the road or the running out of drivers hours caused by the length of time needed to make collections in the conditions. It was again decided in conjunction with SODC that as these bins were to be collected again the following week, they would not be returned too but collected with all side waste the following week.

During w/c 11 January, the garden waste vehicles were placed as static vehicles that refuse could be taken too across the district.

### **Re-deployment of resources**

Where possible staff were deployed to help clear snow in the main town centres to make pavements and walkways safe. This also involved gritting/sanding the car parks.

This involved using Verdant's fleet of street cleansing vehicles, utilized to carry the equipment and grit/sand.

### **Collections return to calendar – w/c 18 January**

As mentioned above, a strategic decision was made, in conjunction with SODC, that a return to the scheduled calendar collections was needed as soon as possible to reduce confusion and prolonged disruption. This meant a return to the published schedule as of Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January. This would mean everyone receiving a collection of the same waste stream two weeks in a row.

A consequence to this was that half the residents of South Oxfordshire would not get a collection of recycling for three weeks (the more rural



properties). Verdant used the garden waste vehicles, totaling four, to go around where possible and collect recycling from those residents that were due to have their refuse collected, as long as they had presented them as requested. These crews stuck mainly to the main routes and towns to ensure the maximum coverage.

Week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> January, Verdant instructed crews to continue to pick up all side waste to ensure that anyone who did not receive two collections the previous week, has all their waste taken.

Garden waste collections returned to normal w/c 25 January.

### **Communications**

Prior to the first hit of bad weather in December Verdant delivered a bin hanger to all residents informing them of the Christmas collection dates. Other methods of communicating the collection days included a series of radio ad's, updated the website, informed all the parish/town councils and put out press releases.

During the 3 weeks of disruptions, the following communications were put out to ensure as many residents as possible were made aware of the waste collection arrangements:

- regular website updates
- weekly press releases
- parish and town council updates
- posters in main towns and villages
- council 'text' alerts
- radio updates (Heart FM)

To avoid confusion, it was asked that everyone put both recycling and refuse out and Verdant would collect the correct bin and any side waste over the coming weeks.



**Future action points**

In the event of a repeat of extreme weather conditions that affect refuse and recycling collections the following actions should be followed:

**Operations**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Verdant/Council</b>
Follow scenarios a,b,c below depending on scale of disruption.	Verdant
8am deadline for operational decisions to be made between council and Verdant.	Verdant/Council
Updates midday and late afternoon/early evening.	Verdant
Email council list of outstanding roads/areas by the end of the day.	Verdant
Use supervisor vans to deploy more staff and snow clearing equipment.	Verdant
Organise central working points close to where staff live.	Verdant
Swap the barrows for mobile gritting units in the four main town centres, prior to snow fall.	Verdant
Better utilization of the garden waste vehicles.	Verdant
Ensure adequate supply of salt/grit.	Council
Increase no. of grit bins in public areas i.e. council leisure centres etc.	Council
Purchase 6 mobile gritter units for Verdant staff and car park inspectors to use.	Council



**Operational scenarios:**

- a) 1 day disruption = collections will be one day late (ensure tips are open for Saturday catch up).
- b) 2 days disruption = collections will be two days late (except Fridays) and use following two Saturdays for catch up i.e. if snow occurs on Monday and Tuesday:

<b>Normal collection day</b>	<b>Revised collection day</b>
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday
Thursday	Saturday
Friday	Monday
Monday	Tuesday
Tuesday	Wednesday
Wednesday	Thursday
Thursday	Friday
Friday	Saturday

- c) 3 days or more = revert back calendar when collections resume and collect all excess waste and recycling for the next two weeks.

## **Communications**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Verdant/Council</b>
Provide operational updates – 8am, midday and afternoon. Evening email with what is outstanding.	Verdant
Script – for all staff both Verdant and Councils. Daily staff briefings to go through the script.	Verdant/Council
Posters/information – send to SODC /comms to send out to parishes/councilors and encourage doorstepping.	Verdant/Council
Look into diverting call centre number to a mobile phone held by the call centre manager.	Verdant
'Keep bins out message' to be clear on all communications.	Verdant/Council
Daily town/parish and councilor email	Councils
Text and email alert system – increase numbers on alert system (use list of 10,000 from PA database)	Councils
Regular website updates.	Verdant/Council
Phone system updates (recorded messages)	Verdant/Council
Radio updates	
Call newspapers – update their websites	Council
Disable postcode search	Council