

Notice requesting to call in of Decision E3620 made by the Cabinet Member for Resources.

Business Waste Collection Changes in Central Bath.

The undersigned Councillors wish to call in decision E3620 taken on 4th July 2025.

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees that the following policy changes are implemented as a pilot from September 2025:

1. Collection Times: Alter the evening business waste collection window to 6pm – 8.30pm to balance business needs and public realm improvements.
2. Labelling: Make it mandatory for all businesses within central Bath to clearly mark or label their waste and recycling with their company name and address.
3. Reusable Rubbish Bags (RRBs): Enforce the use of RRBs to contain residual business waste where businesses can promptly return them to their premises.

Reasons for Call In:

While we support the need to enhance the city for residents and visitors:

This single member decision does not reflect the business and environmental impacts, businesses identified several significant problems with the proposed waste collection changes in central Bath, leading to widespread opposition.

The primary issues highlighted by businesses include:

Collection Times:

- A strong majority of businesses, **93% of respondents, did not support the proposed change** to the evening collection window from 5pm-8:45pm to a new time of **6pm-8pm**.

Staffing Issues and Costs:

- **43% of businesses currently close at 5pm and 33% close at 5:30pm**. This means no one would be available at their premises to present waste or promptly return containers during the new 6pm-8pm collection window. An analysis of Bath BID businesses showed that 20% close at or before 5:30pm, making morning collections not a viable alternative.
- **72% stated that the extra cost of paying staff to stay later** to deal with waste would be **unfair or unaffordable**.
- The council acknowledges that this change could **"detrimentally affect" already struggling small businesses**, with an estimated **additional cost of around £3,000 per year per business** for staffing, based on an extra hour per day.
- We believe the estimated £3,000 cost to businesses has been significantly underestimated. Many local businesses operate seven days a week, and refuse collections occur daily meaning the actual financial impact is likely much higher.
- In addition, many independent traders close around 4pm during winter months. Being required to stay open until 6pm means additional staffing costs that go beyond just hourly wages. Premises may also need to remain heated and lit, increasing energy bills.

- The figure quoted by B&NES—based on 253 hours at National Minimum Wage fails to account for National Insurance, PAYE tax, or pension contributions. This is a poor and misleading summary that suggests the decision was neither fully planned nor properly thought through.
- There is a **potential impact on employees living in rural areas** with poor availability of evening transport services back home from work.
- **Risk of waste being left out:** The consultation highlighted a risk that the policy change could "**undermine the progress made in improving the public realm**" if it results in business waste bags being left unattended for extended periods, particularly if businesses close before collections. This could increase the risk of missed collections and fines for businesses if they fail to complete collections within the new two-hour window.

Reusable Rubbish Bags (RRBs):

- **69% of businesses support the mandated use of Reusable Refuse Bags (RRBs) and see it as a positive step forward.** However, the current recommendation fails to address key related issues—namely, the use of food recycling containers, which many businesses have already adopted and which have contributed to the improvements seen in the area. Additionally, no solution has been proposed for the return of containers to premises after collection, a crucial factor in maintaining the visual appeal and cleanliness of the public realm.

Labelling:

- While **76% of businesses supported the requirement** for all waste and recycling to be labelled with the company name and address, **24% did not**. Their reasons included finding it unnecessary, concerns about the **extra cost for labels**, and the **additional time needed** to label bags.

Waste collection Vehicles:

- It has clearly been stated by the waste operators that they will need to increase the amount of vehicle movements to work within the restricted collection window. This is backed by B&NES own assessment that they will also struggle to meet the needs of the paying businesses for their service. There is a clear conflict with both our Journey to Net Zero strategy for Bath and CAZ objectives.
- More waste collection vehicles in the city centre could lead to an increase in road danger (including many of the city's low-traffic or pedestrianised areas), which goes against the council's Vision Zero strategy.
- This would also arguably result in a deterioration of the visual appeal, the public realm and the visitor experience, which directly contradicts the aim of this decision.

Signatories:

Colin Blackburn
Shaun Hughes
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June Player

Tim Warren
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Joanna Wright
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