

Subject: Waste Collection and Recycling

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 17th November 2010.

Report of: Director of Customers and Communities

Portfolio

Holder: Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform members of work being undertaken in relation to waste collection and recycling.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Our Borough Clean and Green;
- Encouraging Healthy and Respectful Communities;
- Delivering Services to our Customers; and
- Providing Value for Money Services.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Waste collection and recycling services are of high importance to residents. Failure to adequately communicate and engage with residents could lead to dissatisfaction with any resultant service change. This will be mitigated by early and ongoing engagement with locally elected members and residents.

3.2 Continuing to use damaged bins, which may be difficult to manoeuvre and load onto bin wagons, poses a safety risk to both members of the public using those bins and staff employed to empty the bins. The proposed bin amnesty will assist with replacing these bins at limited direct cost to the public.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 Current Arrangements

4.1.1 Rossendale currently has 12 refuse collection rounds serving 31,077 properties. They consist of four vehicles for residual waste, two vehicles for dry recyclate (glass, cans and plastics), two vehicles for paper and card, two vehicles for garden waste, and two vehicles for farms and hard to reach properties. Each vehicle, with the exception of farms and hard to reach properties operates on a fortnightly cycle of residual waste one week and recycling the next.

4.1.2 As part of the waste reduction agenda, Lancashire County Council (LCC) and partner districts discussed and agreed a waste reduction strategy for Lancashire. All districts adopted this strategy, which involves the Property Based Cost Sharing Mechanism (Cost Share) which required districts to agreed to the following:-

- Fortnightly collections, with residual waste and recycling collected on the same day but alternate weeks
- The non collection of side waste, with a minimum 240lts of residual waste for each property,
- The separate collection of Dry Recyclate, (glass cans and plastics), with a fee for collecting co-mingled.
- The separate collection of Paper and Card. (no co-mingle option)
- The collection of Textiles.
- The collection of Garden waste.
- The collection of food waste, within 12 months of a suitable facility being online.

4.1.3 As part of the agreement, the districts receive an income for every property that benefits from these types of collection. Rossendale during fiscal year 2009/10, received a payment of £17.03 per property, which totalled approximately £500,000 in revenue income to subsidise such collections. The sum per property in 2010/11 is £17.29.

4.2 Fortnightly Collections – waste and recycling alternate weeks

4.2.1 Out of the 31,077 total properties serviced in the Borough, 29,706 have a fortnightly waste/recycling collection and 1371 (approximately 4%) remain on a weekly residual waste collection. The main reason for these properties still being on a weekly residual waste collection is in relation to accessibility of the areas for refuse vehicles, for example one area is reached over a bridge with a weight limit which precludes the use of a regular bin wagon, and in some areas the streets and lanes are too narrow for the main vehicles. However with some adjustments in some areas, and minimal changes in others, many of these properties could be incorporated into the mainstream rounds.

4.2.2 This would enable residents to have their recycling collected from where they live, rather than them having to take it to a recycling facility, and would assist with the Council achieving its aim of increasing recycling and generating

income, and thus reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill at unnecessary cost to the taxpayer. In addition, on average the cost of collecting residual waste on a weekly basis is 200% more expensive than the fortnightly waste/recycling collections, due to the specialist vehicles that have to be used. Moving these properties onto the standard collection rounds would therefore also save money and support the achievement of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4.2.3 There are slightly different issues for the different properties, and out of the 1371 properties, approximately 700 can be added to the front line collection service with the least amount of service change experienced by the residents. Changes would include some changes to the location of existing collection points, and the creation of some collection points.

4.2.4 Locally, elected members have been briefed on the proposals and will continue to be involved in engagement and communication around the service changes. Support will be available for residents and will include advice on recycling and physical assistance where necessary in accordance with our assisted bins policy.

4.3 Collections from Farm Properties

4.3.1 For the 668 farm properties in the Borough, the Council offers a weekly doorstep residual waste collection for, regardless of location or remoteness and no doorstep recycling service is offered, although some properties recycle via collection points. This is not in line with the service offered in neighbouring authorities.

4.3.2 This service is undertaken by one of two vehicles with significantly less capacity than a standard refuse vehicle; the smallest collecting on average only 73 bins per day against 950 per day for the residents on regular rounds.

4.3.3 The cost associated with providing such a service for a relatively small percentage of bins is significantly higher than for the majority of properties and needs benchmarking and analysis to ensure that this represents best value in the current economic climate.

4.3.4 Once completed, this exercise will seek to inform future thinking and a further report will be submitted to members.

4.4 Collections of Garden Waste

4.4.1 The Council currently collects garden waste throughout the year. Again, this is not in line with the service provided in neighbouring areas, many of which collect garden waste routinely throughout the growing season, and either not at all, or on request during the winter months.

4.4.2 Providing this service throughout the year, but collecting significantly fewer bins in the winter months is unlikely to be cost effective. Again, this service needs to be benchmarked against good value and effective practice in other areas.

4.4.3 As above, once this exercise has been completed, a further report will be submitted to members for their consideration.

4.5 Damaged Bins and Replacement Bin Policy

4.5.1 Currently, and for the past 8 years, the Council policy with regards to replacing bins is that all green bins (for the collection of residual waste) are replaced at a cost of £22.00 to the resident (this represents cost price plus delivery; there is no profit to the Council).

4.5.2 All recycling containers are provided and replaced free of charge with a view to encouraging recycling and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

4.5.3 Residents frequently ask if the cost of bins is included in their Council Tax payments, but unfortunately it is not. Only the cost of collection is included.

4.5.4 Damaged bins need to be replaced for a number of reasons, for example:

- Bins can be difficult and sometimes dangerous to manoeuvre if the handles are damaged and/or the wheels are missing;
- They often don't engage properly with the lifting mechanism on the back of the bin wagon, particularly if there is damage to the lip or main body of the bin, and as such are either not useable or have the potential to fall back on to the operative or into the vehicle; and
- If lids are missing, waste and unpleasant odours can escape and the bins can fill up with rainwater, making them very heavy.

4.5.5 All of these issues post a safety risk to residents and staff and make the bin rounds less efficient.

4.5.6 Since 2006 Rossendale have repaired or replaced approximately 800 green containers and delivered approximately 1100 containers to new properties. At current costs this represents an expenditure on green bins alone of £23,100 excluding delivery fees.

4.5.7 Most of the bins in Rossendale are approximately 13 years old and were given to residents free of charge as part of the roll out of wheelie bin collections. However, because of their age, which means that the plastic the bins are made of is less resilient, and because of use over an extended length of time, the refuse collection staff are now reporting an increase in the number of damaged bins across the Borough.

4.5.8 Clearly, the Council takes the safety of its residents and staff, and the quality of its services very seriously and it is important that we can support our residents to alleviate this growing problem.

4.5.9 We are therefore proposing that for a limited time, from October 2010, to the end of March 2011, we will suspend the policy of residents paying for replacement green bins, where that bin is damaged or broken. This means that residents with damaged or broken bins will either have their damaged bin fixed

(where possible) or will have the broken one removed and disposed of and a new one provided free of charge, as a gesture of goodwill.

4.5.10 The cost of replacing these bins, based at a 5% failure rate for residual containers will be approximately £26,000, excluding any delivery expenditure. For every 1% increase above that the cost will increase by approximately £5,000. As this process is time limited it can be financed from the 2009/10 capital program. Any expenditure above this allocation, within reason, can for this year only, be met from the 2009/10 Operations Department revenue projected under spend which has been generated through staff vacancies.

4.5.11 To promote this initiative, an article has been published in the latest Rossendale Alive newsletter, which is delivered to every household in the Borough. This advert provides details on the common locations for damage and what to look for, along with details on how to contact the Operations Team to arrange a repair or replacement.

4.5.12 The existing policy, where residents will be required to purchase replacement green bins but will receive recycling bins for free, will continue from April 2011, pending the wider review of waste and recycling policies as set out below.

4.6 Other Waste and Recycling Policies

4.6.1 In addition to the proposals set out above, it is further proposed that associated waste and recycling policies and procedures are reviewed and refreshed with a view to encouraging recycling and working more efficiently. These include, for example policies to deal with fly tipping and procedures around the most effective collection routes.

4.6.2 It is proposed that this work takes place over the coming 12 months and updates are provided to members at the appropriate times.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

5.1 The saving associated with the transfer of 703 properties to the front line collections service have been estimated at £40k per annum, being a mix of additional cost share income and operational cost efficiencies.

5.2 With regard to options for the replacement of damaged green bins, financial implications for both revenue and capital financing, are noted in the report. One should note that the cost of capital expenditure is a cost burden on the council tax payer in a similar manner as net revenue budget costs.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 No comments

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

7.1 No comments.

8. CONCLUSION.

8.1 The report considers the need to explore the ways in which Rossendale provides its waste and recycling services to its residents. Where it makes sense to modify these in the short term to represent more effective and efficient methods of operation, these should be implemented as a matter of course. Where a longer term approach is needed the council should seek to have a series of policies and procedure that reflect both best practice and a sustainable approach.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 That members agree to providing an alternate weekly recycling and waste collection service for the 700 households who still remain on weekly residual waste collections and do not currently benefit from recycling collections.

9.2 That members agree to consider results of reviews of the farm collection and garden waste collection services to ensure they represent best value and remain fit for purpose.

9.4 That members note the work in relation to the bin health checks and agree to amend The Borough's existing bin replacement policy to provide a free of charge bin exchange service, subject to reasonable usage, for all damaged and broken bins until the 31st March 2011.

9.5 That members approve a wider review of refuse and recycling policies, to be carried out over the next 12 months.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Engagement with ward members in relation to point 9.1.

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required **No**

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached **No**

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required **No**

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached **No**

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