

REVIEW OF REFUSE COLLECTION POLICIES RELATING TO BAG COLLECTIONS AND LARGER HOUSEHOLDS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views in respect of possible changes to refuse collection policies.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has a policy of waste minimisation and recycling in order to maintain the life of current landfill sites and to reduce the possibility of waste incineration becoming reality.
- 2.2 A policy relating to collection of one 240 litre wheelie bin per household was recommended at CCT Panel of 26 November 1998 and resolved at Council on 8 December 1998. This policy removed the ability for a household to purchase a second wheelie bin from the Council and pay for both the wheelie bin and its collection for a 10 year period. It also changed the former policy whereby a household with six or more residents received an additional bin free of charge.
- 2.3 The present method of working the policy is that no additional refuse is collected except during holiday periods. No limit on the amount of refuse collected from properties not on the wheeled bin system was ever imposed.
- 2.4 In amending the policy, those properties that, at the time, had two bins, would retain them.
- 2.5 In providing services the Council strives to ensure that the service, where possible, meets the requirements of residents. This report brings to Members' attention those areas where there is a perception that there is inconsistency of service.
- 2.6 This report, therefore, seeks to address the issues which have emerged and improve public perception that the Council is providing a consistent level of service across the District.

3 CURRENT INCONSISTENCIES

3.1 Bag Collections

- 3.1.1 Approximately 8% of households within the District have their refuse collected by means of a bag collection. This relates mainly to properties where there are no facilities to store a wheelie bin or where a wheelie bin cannot be put in a safe location on the boundary of the property from where it is collected. Currently there are no restrictions on the number of bags that can be put out for collection and a small number of householders are putting out far more bags than one could reasonably expect to be collected. There are instances of householders who regularly put out up to 12 bags of refuse for collection.

3.2 Larger Households

- 3.2.1 The current policy does not take into consideration the needs of larger households, where one wheelie bin clearly does not provide sufficient capacity for refuse disposal. As mentioned in 2.2 above there was agreement before the current policy set in 1998 for householders with more than 6 people living in the property to have an additional wheelie bin but the current policy has removed this option. There have been a number of requests from households containing up to 12 people, to have an additional wheelie bin but this has been refused in line with the policy.
- 3.2.2 The problem of large households disposing of their own refuse has been exacerbated by the introduction of height barriers at Civic Amenity Sites (apparently many large families have larger vehicles that do not go under the height barriers). In addition the Civic Amenity Site at Stock Road operated by Southend Borough Council charges £3 per visit to all non residents of the Southend Borough. It is accepted that Essex County Council will refund these charges but there is nevertheless an element of inconvenience to some of our residents.

4 POLICY AMENDMENT SUGGESTIONS

- 4.1 In order to provide a more consistent level of service that takes into account the needs of both the householder and of the Council's policy of waste minimisation, the following suggestions are put forward for Members consideration.
- 4.2 For households who currently have bag collection, it is considered reasonable that the number of bags be restricted to a number that matches the capacity of one wheelie bin per household. This is likely to be in the order of 5 bags.
- 4.3 For households in excess of 6 people, it is suggested that an additional 120 litre wheelie bin be allowed where requested. For those

households on a bag collection it is suggested they be provided with 2 extra bags. This will provide additional capacity without discouraging waste minimisation.

- 4.4 Where households currently have two 240 litre wheelie bins purchased under the previous policy before 1998, it is suggested this practice should be discontinued at the end of the 10 year period under the purchase agreement. Where it can be demonstrated that the householder meets the requirements of para.3.2.1, the Council will exchange the additional 240 litre wheelie bin for a 120 litre wheelie bin free of charge.
- 4.5 Monitoring of households who have additional bins will have to be carried out to check that circumstances under which the additional bin was supplied are still valid.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a policy of waste minimisation and recycling. The revisions being suggested are consistent with this policy but take into account the varying needs of householders within the District. It is not anticipated that the suggestions would increase the overall level of refuse collected.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be an additional cost to the Council of approximately £26 per year for an additional 120 litre bin to be collected. There would also be a capital cost of £10 to purchase each bin. The numbers involved are fairly minimal and additional costs can be met from within the current budgets.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has an obligation to collect what it considers to be a reasonable amount of household refuse under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The suggested review of policy is consistent with the Council's policy of one wheelie bin per property being the reasonable amount per household, but providing a small degree of flexibility.

8 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that Members consider the proposed changes outlined above and agree the amendments to current practice to be put forward to Environmental Services Policy Committee for approval.

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Background Papers:

None

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