

## **COLLECTION OF APPLIANCES (WHITE GOODS)**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks confirmation of Members' agreement to the action of officers regarding the message on the answerphone service relating to the above.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Following the Serviceteam Update report to Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 18 March 2004 (Minute 137 refers) a number of issues were raised by Members, one of which sought a change in the current procedure for the collection of fridges and freezers.
- 2.2 Within the body of the minutes, it was noted that "the answerphone service for residents to book a collection date should provide an instruction that, for reasons of health and safety, fridge and freezer doors should be removed prior to leaving them outside."

### **3 OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 Unfortunately a delay occurred in implementing the change. Essex County Council (ECC) were consulted for their views, as the disposal authority.
- 3.2 They raised the question as to why the doors should be removed, bearing in mind that fridges and freezers have not had locking mechanisms fitted for many years. Removal of the door could cause problems with the components, shelves, trays etc. contained within the fridge. The answerphone service does request these items to be removed prior to removal but very few comply with this request.
- 3.3 ECC also have concerns relating to the potential escape of chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's), should untrained people inadvertently cause damage to the unit whilst removing the doors, as the body, including the doors, contain foaming agents that need to be disposed of as specified with the European Union Directive.
- 3.4 It is felt that the message could cause concern to those residents with disabilities, older people and those without DIY skills or equipment.
- 3.5 Recycling of white goods needs to be encouraged to reduce the possibility of fly tipping and therefore any actions taken by the Council should be seen to be positive.

- 3.6 A survey of Districts in Essex has been undertaken to ascertain how they collect fridges or freezers, the results of which are shown in Appendix A of this report.

#### **4 ACTION TAKEN BY OFFICERS**

- 4.1 In order to address Members' concerns, it was decided that a possible way forward was to ask residents to tape or tie the doors of their appliances for collection.
- 4.2 The answerphone message has therefore been amended to include the wording "in the interests of child safety, please ensure that the doors on appliances are tied or taped."

#### **5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Resource Risk**

If the service requirement was issued as per instruction, it would give the perception of a restrictive service which could lead to more fly tipping or calls for a door removal service.

ECC have indicated that should fridges and freezers be damaged whilst having doors removed, they will not collect the component parts, which will have to be disposed of by the District Council.

##### **5.2 Operational Risk**

Operational risks are identified in section 3.

##### **5.3 Regulatory Risk**

Disposal of appliances which contain CFC's have to be disposed of in accordance with the EU directive.

##### **5.4 Third Party Risk**

When residents request collection of appliances, they are given the date of collection and instructions not to put the goods out until the night before collection. The risk to children under these circumstances is considered to be minimal. However, in the event that residents put the appliances out earlier or the collection is missed, the taping or tying of the doors should minimise any further risk.

#### **6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A perception of the service imposing difficult obligations could potentially lead to an increase in white goods being fly tipped.

**7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no resource implications, should the amended message remain in place.

**8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That Members note the revised wording within the answerphone message.

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**Background Papers:**

None

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**APPENDIX A**

**WHITE GOODS COLLECTIONS – SUMMARY**

**What do other Essex Authorities do with regards to white good collections?  
Eight local authorities replied to questions asked, including the two unitary  
Council's.**

**Q. Do you offer a white goods collection service?**

A. All LA's confirmed yes.

**Q. Is it free to users?**

A. Only one LA offers a free collection service for white goods (Basildon). All other LA's charge either directly or indirectly, if contracted out.

**Q. If a direct charge is made. How much is it?**

Varying charging policy operates across local authorities.

Thurrock	=	£10 per item
Epping Forest	=	£22 1-3 items
Castle Point	=	£20 (free to pensioners)
Maldon	=	£18-24
Tendring	=	£20
Southend	=	N/A
Braintree	=	£23.50 (50% reduction if receiving benefits)
Basildon	=	Free

**Q. Do you request that white goods are presented to the nearest point to the public highway?**

A. All LA's do.

**Q. Do you enter properties on request, to remove white goods from disabled, infirm or elderly residents?**

A. Most LA's provide this service if disabled, elderly or infirm.

**Q. If so, do you request a verbal or written disclaimer?**

A. Varying response to this. The majority of LA's require disclaimer to enter property. However, one authority operates the service without a disclaimer and one authority levies a charge.

**Q. Do you ask for doors to be taped, tied or removed?**

A. All LA's stated no.