

REFUSE & RECYCLING OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with proposals for amending certain procedures and policies in relation to refuse collection and recycling.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The waste management industry is currently subject to a number of new pieces of legislation and recycling initiatives, with these coming from both Government and the E.U. Local Authorities are also subject to Government set standards, in relation to the percentage of household waste that is recycled.
- 2.2 Whilst unknown at this time, these targets are very likely to become more stretching in the future, in whatever form they are set. Within the Essex Waste Strategy and procurement process that Rochford is formally part of, there will be the necessity to maximise all opportunities in relation to recycling and employing effective methods of general refuse collection.
- 2.3 As Members may already be aware, in January 2006 the Council will be subject to a Best Value Review by the Audit Commission Inspectorate that will be aimed at Environmental Services, especially in connection with waste and recycling, and therefore in preparation for this inspection, a review of our current policies and methods is essential.
- 2.4 In order to assist in achieving targets, meeting the legislation and adopting a pro-active approach to waste management and minimisation, detailed below are the specific areas for consideration over the next two meetings of this Sub-Committee (second meeting to be arranged reasonably soon after 11 October).
1. Receptacles for recycling paper collection
 2. Bag collections
 3. Second bin collections
 4. Green garden waste (as part of general refuse)
 5. Furniture items in communal bin areas
 6. Chargeable bulky goods collection

It is suggested that at the next meeting of this Sub-Committee, discussions are also commenced on proposals for how best to spend next year's waste performance and efficiency grant (WPEG), believed to be approximately £65,000.

- 2.5 Detailed in the next section of this report are the areas to be discussed at this meeting, i.e. items 1, 2 and 4 of section 2.4.

3 OPERATIONAL PROPOSALS

Recycling Paper Collection

- 3.1 At the last meeting of this Sub-Committee, the subject of what receptacle to be used for the paper collection was discussed and as a result it was decided that for the forthcoming expansion in January, those properties new on to the scheme would receive the same red bag that has already been used.
- 3.2 On reflection, when looking into the administration and practicalities of the situation, concerns came to light over possible confusion. This would be due to the fact that we are telling those already on the scheme that they cannot have a replacement red bag. However, at the same time we would be giving out red bags to the properties new to the scheme and as we found with the initial implementation of this scheme in November 2004, a number of properties “lost” their red bag very quickly and these properties would expect a replacement. This could not be administered effectively, as those already on the scheme are being refused a replacement bag as stock is no longer available.
- 3.3 Recent public consultation also demonstrated a favourable level of support for the use of carrier bags for paper collections, in addition to the fact that this is what many residents are already using.
- 3.4 Therefore, the proposal would be to encourage residents new to the scheme to make use of carrier bags for their paper collections and therefore again have a consistency of service across the District and a system that will be simpler to administer.

Bag Collections

- 3.5 The majority of properties in the District have a 240 litre wheeled bin for their refuse collection, although there is a small proportion of the District (approximately 8%) that are on a bag collection, usually due to the nature of their property. These properties are, at the current time, not on the recycling scheme, albeit they will be part of the next expansion due to commence in January 2006.
- 3.6 Whilst we only take the contents of the wheeled bin on each refuse collection and do not therefore take side waste, this equates roughly to 4 bags of refuse. Those properties on a bag collection do not have a limit placed on the number of bags they can present for collection and so, in theory, have a slightly different service to those with a wheeled bin.
- 3.7 In continuing to “do our bit” towards waste minimisation and also to assist with our recycling rates, the proposal is to place a limit of 4 sacks per household,

per collection, for those properties that are currently on the bag collection service. This would then make comparable quantities across the District, regardless of what receptacle households receive. This would also prevent occurrences where households may have a major clear-out, with a large quantity of bags placed out for collection, rather than perhaps making use of the Civic Amenity & Recycling sites.

- 3.8 If this proposal was agreed, it is suggested that it comes into place once all the properties have become part of the kerbside recycling scheme, therefore giving them the same alternative means of waste collection.

Green Garden Waste

- 3.9 The current refuse collection contract states that small amounts of garden waste can be put in the grey bin. However, this is very difficult to control and would contribute to increasing our total tonnage of household waste and therefore making it more difficult to reach our recycling targets. It is often the cause for bins being reported as half emptied, due to the fact that grass, etc, has stuck in the bottom of the bin and become compacted.
- 3.10 The proposal is to change the Council's policy to one of "no green garden waste to be placed in your wheeled bin" in order to address the issues mentioned above. It is felt that there are now a number of other options available to residents for the disposal of their waste, ie, taken to the Civic Amenity Recycling sites, buying into the new private green waste collection scheme or purchasing compost bins at the special low rate of £3 (including delivery).
- 3.11 Officers have made enquiries with a number of other Local Authorities with regard to their policy on this issue, with the following Authorities all not accepting garden waste as part of people's general refuse:
- Southend, Thurrock, Havering, Braintree, Uttlesford, Maldon, Brentwood, Castle Point.
 - There are also a number of these Authorities that provide a green waste collection service but only on a paid for basis, similar to this Council's own green garden waste scheme.
- 3.12 If this proposal was accepted, there are a number of potential positive impacts, including raising our recycling rate and encouraging a greater number of residents to enrol on the private scheme, that the Council subsidises and supports. The policy change would be promoted via *Rochford District Matters* and on the annual Bank Holiday refuse card.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Reputational Risk

A number of the proposals detailed above could have a positive impact on the efficiency and consistency of the refuse and recycling collection service and the Council's recycling performance and therefore maintain a good reputation, within the local community.

At the same time, there is the potential for a negative impact on the Council's reputation by residents, if any changes are not managed appropriately.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A pro-active approach to improving our waste management service and, in particular, our approach to waste minimisation and recycling, will have a positive impact on the environmental standards achieved by the Council.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The use of carrier bags for paper collections on the kerbside recycling scheme would reduce the overall cost of the scheme to the Council, due to there being no necessity to purchase additional bags.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

- (1) That residents be asked to use carrier bags for their paper collection on the forthcoming expansion of the kerbside recycling scheme.
- (2) That a limit of four sacks per household, per collection, be placed on those properties on the bag collection service.
- (3) That a policy of no green garden waste to be placed in the wheeled bin or black bag collections be adopted.

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (F&ES)

Background Papers:-

None

For further information please contact Jeremy Bourne on:-

Tel:- 01702 318163

E-Mail:- Jeremy.bourne@rochford.gov.uk