

Public Document Pack

Supplementary Information for Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities) – 13th January 2014

Item 9 - Bulky Waste Collection Service Policy - requested information from Scrutiny

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Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board

Date: 13th January 2014

Subject: Bulky Waste Collection Service Policy - requested information from Scrutiny

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Purpose of this report

1. Last month, the Scrutiny Board received a report from the Director of Environment and Housing setting out proposals for changes to the policy for bulky waste collection across the city. The Scrutiny Board was invited to comment on the proposals prior to the Executive Board considering and formalising the Council's commitment to Leeds residents for the kerbside collection of household waste and recyclables and bulky waste.
2. However, in consideration of this report (see appendix 1), the Scrutiny Board had requested additional information to substantiate the following points that were raised during the Board's discussion:
 - That only a small minority of Leeds' households use the bulky waste collection service (around 8%) and there are no emerging patterns relating to service users (see appendix 2)
 - That work undertaken with other core cities around bulky waste collection services has not led to specific concerns about the impact of the proposals on increased fly-tipping (see appendix 3)
 - That many items collected by the Council could be collected for reuse by other organisations through the existing network of third sector organisations, with particular work being undertaken to support the network of voluntary sector furniture reuse organisations (see appendix 4).

Recommendations

3. Members are asked to note the additional information attached to this report as part of its consideration of the proposals for changes to the policy for bulky waste collection across the city.

Background papers¹

4. None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Report of Director of Environment & Housing

Report to Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)

Date: 9th December 2013

Subject: Bulky Waste Collection Service Policy

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The purpose of this report is to give Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities) the opportunity to comment on proposals for changes to the policy for bulky waste collection across the city. It also provides a response to Recommendation 4 of the Scrutiny Board's consideration of the initial budget proposals for 2012/13 agreed on 14th January 2013.
2. The Council's commitment to Leeds residents for the kerbside collection of waste and recyclables is being developed based on the principles of a social contract whereby the Council sets out clearly its service standards, but with an expectation of residents working in partnership to assume responsibilities and ensure that services can be provided effectively and efficiently, and that the associated benefits to the City are realised.
3. The report describes a series of proposals for changes to the current bulky waste policy which support the above, and that also support the Council's refuse collection policies, and describes the reasons for these changes.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities) note and comment on this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities) the opportunity to comment on proposals for changes to the policy for bulky waste collection across the city.
- 1.2 The report also provides a response to Recommendation 4 of the Scrutiny Board's consideration of the initial budget proposals for 2012/13 agreed on 14th January 2013. The recommendation was that *"...in line with the proposals for the disposal of commercial waste and the collection of bulky household waste, the Scrutiny Board recommends that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that the monitoring and enforcement of fly-tipping remains adequately resourced."*

2 Background information

- 2.1 An Executive Board Report is currently being drafted to formalise the Council's commitment to Leeds residents for the kerbside collection of household waste and recyclables and bulky waste. This is scheduled for Executive Board in January 2014.
- 2.2 The report seeks Executive Board approval to the formal adoption of the following operational kerbside collection policies:
 1. Residual waste collection service;
 2. SORT recycling collection service;
 3. Garden waste collection service;
 4. Bulky waste collection service.
- 2.3 These service commitments have been developed based on the principles of a social contract whereby the Council sets out clearly its service standards, but with an expectation of residents working in partnership in assuming responsibilities to ensure that services can be provided effectively and efficiently, that excessive waste is not encouraged and is recycled or disposed of through the appropriate routes provided, and that the associated financial and environmental benefits to the City are therefore realised.
- 2.4 Furthermore, in order to provide the most efficient and economically sustainable service possible, the council needs to focus on the areas of greatest need and to make sure that the service is provided to support residents who have no other options, rather than to supplement residents who could use other mechanisms, such as household waste sites or furniture reuse organisations, to manage their waste.
- 2.5 Leeds City Council currently offers a bulky waste collection service to residents for large items that cannot be collected through the normal kerbside collection services. The service is free for all and can be used up to 12 times per year. At each of these 12 collections, residents can currently book up to 4 large items or 10 bags of waste (excluding food waste). Collections are

booked in advance and, whilst the Council advises that waiting times can be up to eight weeks, the current waiting time is three to four weeks.

- 2.6 Since April 2013 the citywide Bulky Waste Collection service has been managed within Environmental Action Services through the South and Outer East Locality Team, rather than through the Waste Management Service as has historically been the case. Further work to fully integrate this service with the rest of Locality Team services is ongoing (see sections 3.6-3.8).

3. Main issues

Bulky Waste Policy Proposals

- 3.1 Some of the agreed and approved changes to refuse collection policies (particularly associated with fortnightly collections and other initiatives to increase recycling) mean that elements of the bulky waste collection service policy are not now compatible and need to be amended accordingly. For example the collection of general waste (i.e. that can be disposed of through the normal residual waste/black bin collection service) through the bulky waste service undermines the alternate weekly collection policies agreed by Executive Board in October 2013.
- 3.2 Many items collected by the Council could be collected for reuse by other organisations through the existing network of third sector organisations or via websites such as Freecycle or eBay. The Council has been actively working with and supporting the Furniture Reuse Network in Leeds in order to build skills and capacity within this sector. The current process for the Council to make referrals to these organisations could be improved and work is ongoing, including support in procuring ICT systems and work towards a single point of contact for all Leeds based furniture reuse organisations. This would be expected to increase the proportion of bulky items such as furniture which are reused (thus also contributing to the Council's own Waste Strategy priority in this regard), and to provide a faster and more bespoke service to customers (most furniture reuse organisations collect within 48 hours and from inside your home), thus also reducing the level of collections which need to be provided by the Council.
- 3.3 In 2012/13, 34,500 bulky collections were requested (around 660 per week). Only a small minority of Leeds' households use the bulky waste collection service (around 8%), with 97% of users using the service three times or less a year. The 3% of households who used the service more than three times in 2012/13 equate to 673 households; around 0.2% of households in Leeds.
- 3.4 Of the other seven core cities only one, Nottingham City Council, operates an unrestricted and free service. All of the others either restrict the number of collections, or charge for collection. The table below summarises the current policy in each of the eight core cities.

Core City	Number of free collections	Chargeable collections
Leeds	12	0
Birmingham	1	£25 per collection
Bristol	0	£15 per collection Limited to three per year.
Liverpool	5	0
Manchester	1	£27 per collection
Nottingham	Weekly	0
Newcastle	0	£15 per collection
Sheffield	0	Ordinary rate: 3 at £18 rising to 10-12 at £54 per collection. Concessionary rates: 3 at £10 rising to 10-12 at £35 per collection.

3.5 The Council is therefore proposing four main changes to the Bulky Waste Collection policy:

- Proposal 1 – Households should be restricted to three collections per year. This restriction will enable the Service to manage and deploy this resource more effectively and will encourage heavy users of the Service to manage their waste more effectively and use the other, preferred opportunities for waste minimisation, re-use and recycling available to them.
- Proposal 2 – Restricting the number of items collected to four, regardless of waste type. This will allow us to better plan the service, release capacity in the service, and again encourage heavy users to manage their waste more effectively.
- Proposal 3 – Residual waste which can be disposed of through the standard black bin collection service will not be collected by the bulky waste collection service since adequate capacity is already provided through the normal service. The residual waste policy specifically provides for exceptions, e.g. large families, so it should not be necessary to use the bulky waste service for general waste if household are managing their waste effectively. This change also supports the agreed policies associated with alternate weekly collection (see 3.1).
- Proposal 4 – Where households do not receive a separate brown bin garden waste collection service, the allowance of four items may be used for four bags of garden waste. Where households are provided with a brown bin collection service, garden waste will not be collected through the bulky waste collection service. The brown bin garden waste collection service is intended primarily to divert waste from black bins, not to increase overall levels of waste being collected. As stated

earlier, these households will be advised to compost their excess garden waste at home, or to take it to their nearest household waste recycling site.

Response to Scrutiny Board Recommendation 4

- 3.6 Work is ongoing with Housing Leeds colleagues to develop models of integrated environmental working. As part of the move of council housing services back into the council the decision has been made to transfer many of the environmental activities currently undertaken by Housing Leeds over to Locality Teams. In addition to this, since April 2013, the council's bulky waste collection service has also been under the responsibility of Locality Teams.
- 3.7 The Locality Teams are therefore developing new structures for 'one environmental service' in Locality areas which take on these new responsibilities, but also seek to improve the current service and make it even more locally accountable. This will involve a move to more zonally based resources and a more flexible workforce.
- 3.8 This move to one service providing all elements of environmental management, including the delivery of the bulky waste service and the enforcement and removal of fly-tipping, will not just deliver efficiency of resource use and management, but also greater accountability in terms of the delivery of these services. In this way the monitoring and enforcement of fly-tipping and any links between this, and the bulky waste collection service, will be enhanced and lead to a more flexible and effective service in future.
- 3.9 In addition the Council continues discussions with colleagues within Safer Leeds and the Police about the role of PCSOs in environmental enforcement to contribute to investigatory & enforcement work in relation to flytipping.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.2 The Executive Board Member for Environmental Services has reviewed the policies and supports the proposal to formally adopt them.
- 4.3 Area Committee Environmental Sub Groups are also being consulted on these proposals.

4.4 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.4.1 An equality impact screening report has been completed for the proposed policies as part of the report for Executive Board.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 Delivery of kerbside collection services that are safe, efficient and reliable and meet the needs of residents are key to Leeds realising its target to meet 55% by 2016 and exceed 60% recycling in the longer term. These targets support

wider aspirations for Leeds set out in the new Leeds Vision, City Priority Plans, Directorate Priorities and Cross Council Priorities.

4.3.2 The proposed policies are in support of the Best Council Plan objective of dealing effectively with the city's waste: minimising waste in a growing city, with a focus on:

- ensuring a safe, efficient and reliable waste collection service
- providing a long-term solution for disposing of our waste
- increasing recycling
- reducing landfill tax costs.

4.3.3 The five new City Priority Plans developed by the Partnerships Boards cover the period 2011-2015 with the most relevant in relation to the policies being:

- Safer and Stronger Communities- including city-wide cleanliness
- Sustainable Economy- including low carbon economy

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 Adoption of formal operational policies will ensure services are consistent and efficient, and will support the realisation of the substantial savings anticipated to arise from the implementation of alternate week collections. More generally, implementation of these collection policies will ensure that collection services are more targeted and efficient, and will encourage residents to utilise these services more effectively, thus driving up participation in recycling and diverting more materials from landfill or other disposal.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The main risks associated with a failure to establish clear waste collection policies relate to the resulting significant potential for uneconomical deployment of resources, greater levels of resident dissatisfaction with services and the environmental impact of not maximising the opportunity to minimise waste and maximise recycling.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Having reviewed the Bulky Waste Collection Service it is clear that several changes are necessary to ensure that the service is efficient and sustainable (both financially and operationally) and supports the Council's refuse collection policies.

5.2. Adoption of these policies will provide all stakeholders with a clear understanding of the services that the Council offers and ensure that

consistency in its approach to requests for any deviation from the standard service.

- 5.3 In keeping with the principles of a social contract, residents can be clear about the service they can expect to receive and, in return, what the Council expects of them so as to ensure the provision of an efficient service that supports the city's objectives in terms of sustainable waste management.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities) note and comment on this report.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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Appendix 2 – Analysis of Bulky Waste Survey Usage across Leeds

In 2012/13, 34,500 bulky collections were requested (around 660 per week). Only a small minority of Leeds' households use the bulky waste collection service (around 8%), with 97% of users using the service three times or less a year. The 3% of households who used the service more than three times in 2012/13 equate to 673 households; around 0.2% of households in Leeds.

The number of households using the service in each ward varied widely in 2012/13, from 1,042 households in Morley North ward (10.4% of households in the ward) to only 255 in Headingley ward (4.1% of households in the ward). Chart 1 opposite shows the numbers of households using the service by ward.

In order to check that any changes to the service will not unduly affect any particular groups of residents we have undertaken significant analysis. Whilst we do not have detailed data about the people who have used the service, we can look at whether service use is linked to any other factors in the population, e.g. if the service was used more by older people, we would expect those wards with greater proportions of older people in them to have proportionally more residents using the service.

Chart 2 shows the proportion of residents in each ward who used the service in 2012/13 compared to the number of residents aged 60 or over. A "correlation coefficient" describes the statistical correlation between two sets of data. The closer this value is to 1 the stronger the correlation. The correlation coefficient between the proportion of households in the ward using the service and the number of residents aged 60 or above is 0.27. There is therefore no correlation between the proportion of households using the service in the each ward and the number of residents aged 60 years or above.

Chart 3 shows the proportion of residents in each ward who used the service in 2012/13 compared to the Economic Deprivation Index 2009 for each ward. The correlation coefficient between these two sets of data is 0.24. There is therefore no correlation between the proportion of households using the service and the level of deprivation in each ward.

Finally, Chart 4 shows the proportion of residents in each ward who used the service in 2012/13, compared to the percentage of job seekers allowance claimants in April-Jun 2013. The correlation coefficient between these two sets of data is 0.23. There is therefore no correlation between the proportion of households using the service and the proportion of residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance.

This analysis therefore strongly suggests that there is no link between the usage of the bulky waste collection service and vulnerable groups, such as the elderly or people on low incomes. The restriction of the service should not therefore have a more significant effect on any of these vulnerable groups.

Chart 1: Households Using the Bulky Waste Collection Service by Ward, 2012/13

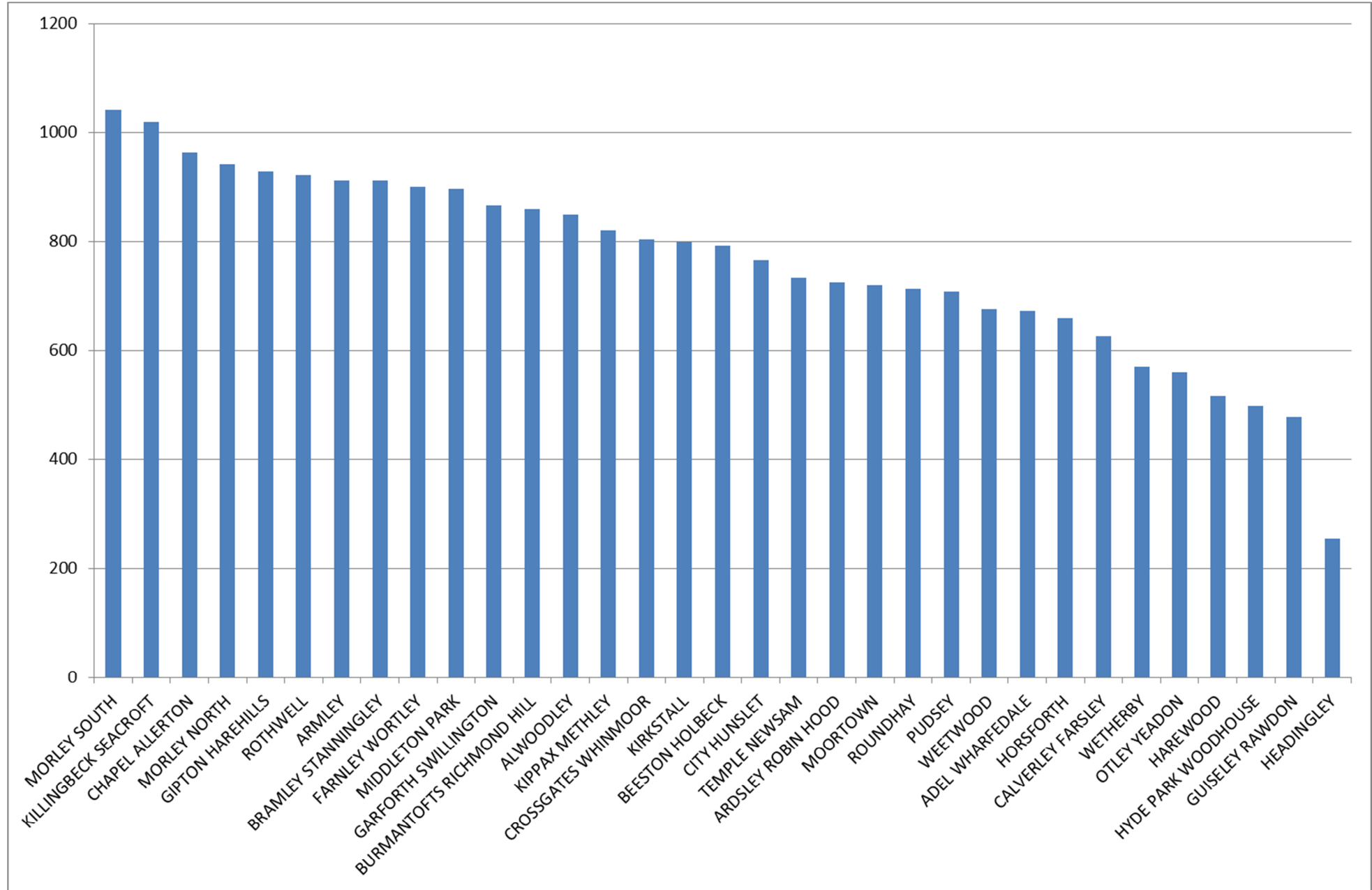


Chart 2: Proportion of households using the service in each ward 2012/13, compared to the number of residents aged 60+ (census 2011).

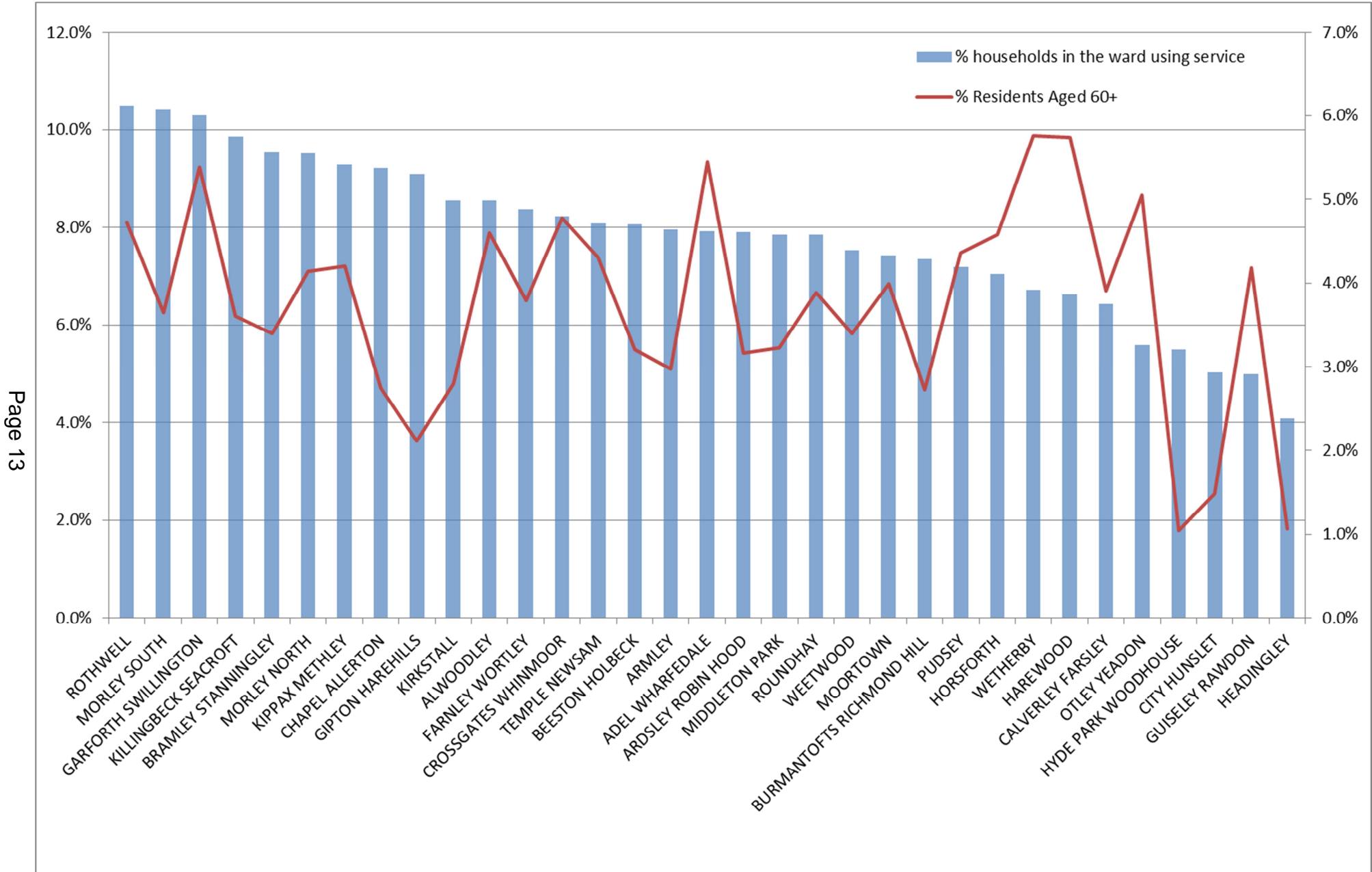


Chart 3: Proportion of households using the service in each ward 2012/13, compared to Economic Deprivation Index Score 2009.

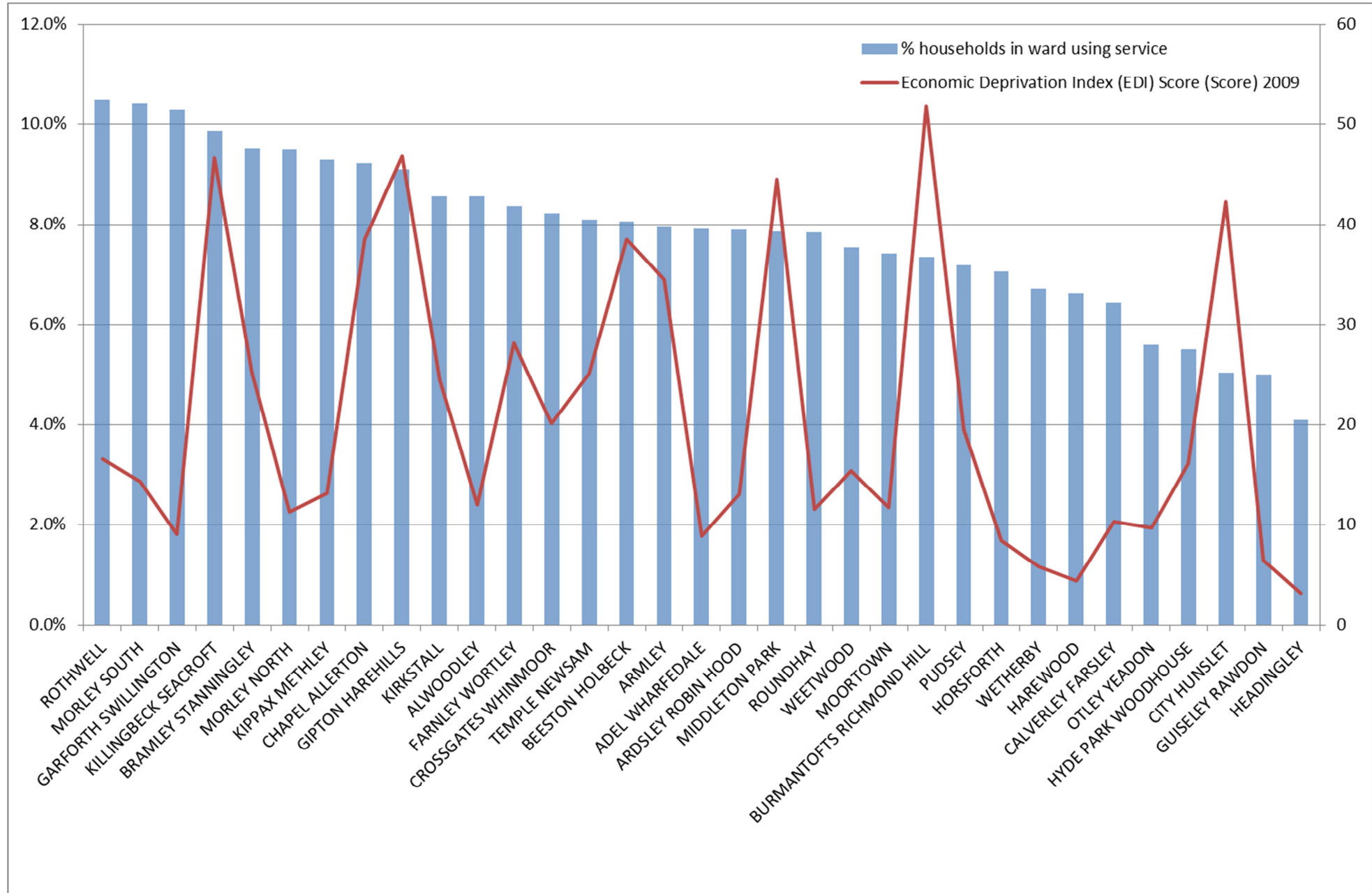
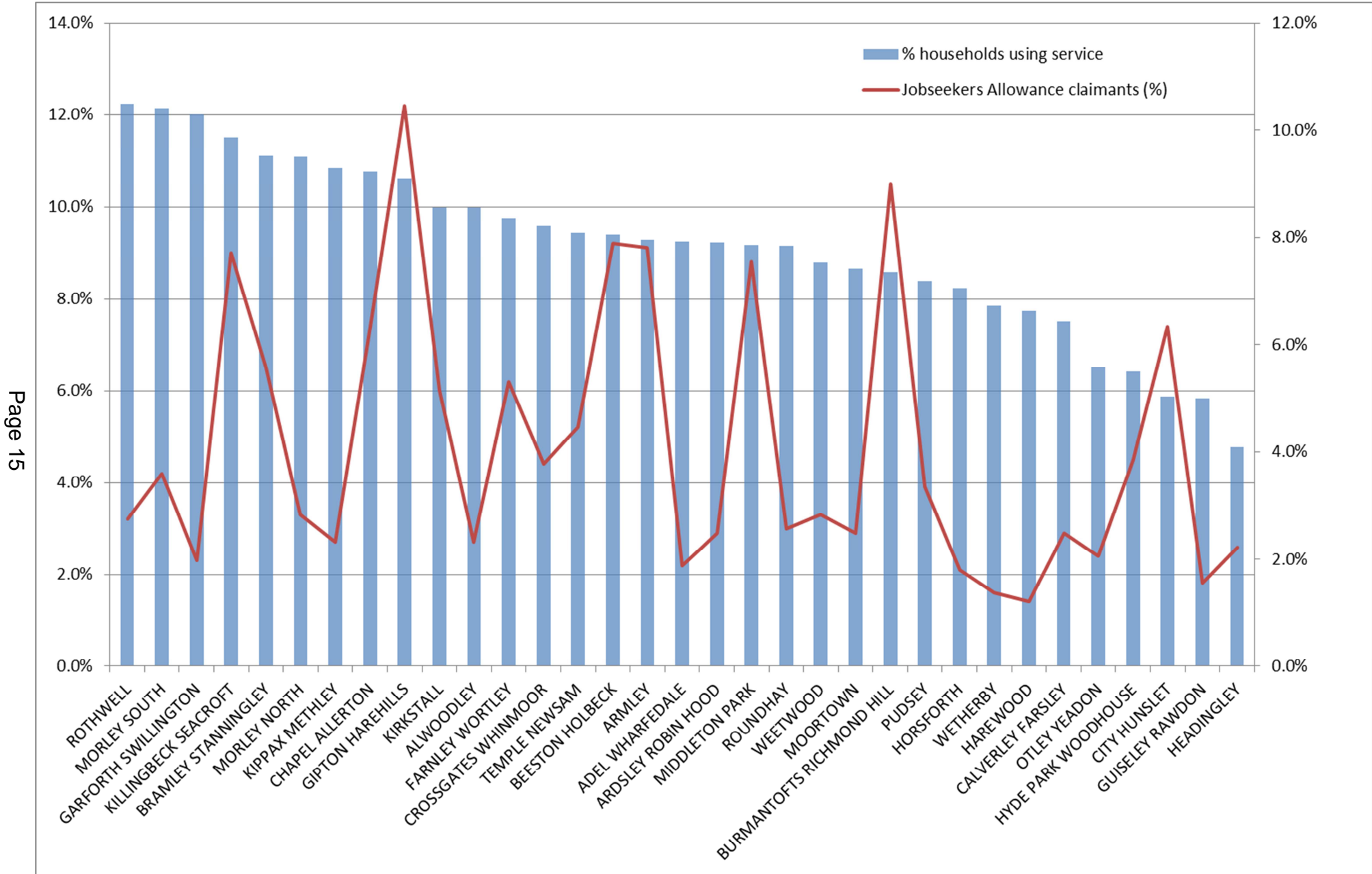


Chart 4: Proportion of households using the service in each ward 2012/13, compared to percentage of Job Seekers Allowance claimants



Appendix 3 –Changes to bulky waste collection policies and the prevalence of fly-tipping

There is no evidence that restricting usage of bulky waste services leads to an increase in fly-tipping. Each year local authorities have been required to report flytipping figures to DEFRA. Table 1 below shows the trend for the last seven years. The national picture is one of falling fly-tipping numbers. This is in a context over the same period of Local Authorities restricting usage of bulky waste collection services, and the introduction of other services such as fortnightly black bin collections. The latest data available suggests that at least 84% of Local Authorities now charge for bulky collections, but there has been no national increase in fly-tipping.

Table 1 – Flytipping incidents reported to DEFRA, all England LAs

Year	Total Incidents reported
2007/08	1,284,123
2008/09	1,165,003
2009/10	946,906
2010/11	819,571
2011/12	744,414
2012/13	711,493

Bulky waste collection services have been a topic of a great deal of discussion with the other Core Cities. Of the other seven core cities only one, Nottingham City Council, operates an unrestricted and free service. All of the others either restrict the number of collections, or charge for collection. Table 2 below summarises the current policy in each of the eight core cities.

Table 2 also describes the numbers of fly-tips reported to DEFRA each year since 2009/10 by the core cities. This table clearly shows that, for the core cities there is no relationship between the level of fly-tipping and the regime that is in place for the collection of bulky waste.

It should also be noted that Leeds is only proposing to restrict residents to three collections per year. We are not considering charging or restricting collections any further than this. As Appendix 2 set out only 3% of households used the service more than three times in 2012/13 which equates to 673 households (out of 350,000); around 0.2% of the households in Leeds.

Our conclusion is therefore that there is unlikely to be a link between restricting the numbers of bulky waste collections and any increase in fly-tipping and that the changes to policies proposed in Leeds, are highly unlikely to lead to any increase in fly-tipping.

Table 2: Core Cities Bulky Waste Collection Services and DEFRA fly-tipping returns 2009 to 2013.

Core City	Number of Free Collections	Chargeable Collections	Fly-Tip Incidents Reported to DEFRA			
			2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Birmingham City Council	1	£25 per collection	26,442	18,311	13,510	14,229
Nottingham City Council	52	No charges	419	7,050	4,872	6,933
Liverpool City Council	5	No charges	6,105	5,740	4,083	3,633
Sheffield City Council	0	Ordinary rate: 3 at £18 rising to 10-12 at £54 per collection Concessionary rate: 3 at £10 rising to 10-12 at £35 per collection	2,782	4,044	2,972	3,367
Bristol City Council	0	£15 per collection Limited to 3 per year	5,185	6,312	4,921	3,306
Leeds City Council	12	No charges	8,285	11,628	4,418	2,805
Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council	0	£15 per collection	3,847	2,562	2,102	2,804
Manchester City Council	1	£27 per collection	5,719	4,302	3,829	2,065

Appendix 4 – Levels of Reuse and work with the Voluntary Sector Furniture Reuse Organisations

Many items collected by the Council could be collected for reuse by other organisations through the existing network of third sector organisations or via websites such as Freecycle or eBay.

In December 2011 Leeds City Council received support from the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP). Consultants CO2 Sense were commissioned to undertake a study of how Leeds City Council manages bulky waste. This included a review of the voluntary sector furniture reuse organisations (FROs) in Leeds.

The Council works closely with the following Leeds-based FRO's:

- Emmaus Leeds
- Leeds & Moortown Furniture Store
- Revive Leeds
- St. Judes /St Vincent de Paul
- Safe Haven
- South Leeds Alternative Technology Enterprise (SLATE)
- Sydney Bridge

Most of the FROs collect reusable furniture from households and either make items available for free to referred clients from Council departments and social services agencies, or sell items in retail shops. The exception to this is Revive Leeds who does not provide a collection service. Their re-use shop is situated at the East Leeds Household Waste Sort Site (HWSS) and receives donations direct from the public as they visit the HWSS. Re-usable items are sold to the public.

It is estimated that the Leeds based FROs collect 600 tonnes of reusable furniture each year and undertake over 24,000 collections. FROs are currently supported by Leeds City Council through the provision of 'recycling credits'; payments per tonne of bulky items collected and reused and therefore diverted from landfill. The reuse credits paid are equivalent to the full cost of disposal to landfill i.e. landfill tax and gate fee. In 2012/13 Leeds City Council paid FROs £43,200 and 600 tonnes of furniture were reused.

The WRAP study estimated that the cost of collection to the council of its own bulky waste collection service was around £14 per collection, compared to a cost to the council of around £5 for a collection by an FRO (including payment of reuse credits). It is clear therefore that, even on purely financial grounds it makes sense to divert as many collections as possible to FROs. From a non-financial basis there are also other benefits such as the provision of usable furniture at low cost to vulnerable groups, the offer of a faster service, and the offer of a service from inside the property.

We estimate that in 2012/13 Leeds City Council collected over 1,300 tonnes of items through the 34,500 bulky waste collections undertaken. A WRAP report in 2012 estimated that around 24% of items collected through the bulky waste services in the UK were reusable and that a further 16% could be reusable with slight repair. Approximately a quarter of electrical and electronic items were assessed as being reusable.

The Council has been actively working with and supporting FROs in Leeds in order to build skills and capacity within this sector in the following areas:

Stock Control Systems and Capacity

FROs have struggled with systems to manage more efficiently the scale of furniture and other items they are collecting. Leeds City Council has supported the FROs with funding from the LCC Transition Fund to contribute towards the cost of stock control and collection/delivery scheduling systems. Working closely with six of the FROs, Waste Services managed the procurement of a stock control system and on-line booking calendar in line with council priorities to work with the community sector and develop partnership working.

The provision of the software will allow improved tracking of collections, donations. In addition, it will also help the groups to maintain and increase the social benefits to the residents of Leeds that they already provide; free and low cost furniture items for those in need, jobs, training, volunteering and apprentice opportunities.

The stock control system has been installed at all participating groups and is in the process of being commissioned.

Developing a Single Point of Contact for Leeds FROs.

A barrier to increasing the level of use of FROs in Leeds has been that there is no single point of contact for all the reuse organisations. We are now working with the FROs to develop an on-line booking calendar ICT system which will enable the development of more integrated working with the Council's in-house bulky waste collection service and help us to develop better systems for diverting more re-usable waste items arising in the LCC bulky waste service to the groups. This will contribute to our key priorities of reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill and increasing our recycling/re-use rate. The aim is that when residents contact the Council to request a bulky waste collection, any reusable items can be booked directly for collection by the nearest or most appropriate FRO using a shared live on-line booking calendar accessible to both the Council and the partner FROs.

As the FROs collect from within properties and are able to respond more quickly, items are likely to remain dry and reusable and this should allow the interception of a greater quantity of reusable furniture that would have otherwise been collected for disposal by the bulky waste service.

Sorting and Collection from LCC HWSS

Items collected by Leeds City Council are generally taken to one of the city's Household Waste Sorting Sites (HWSS). Crews sort items to be recycled.

At the Seacroft HWSS, householders are encouraged to drop off any reusable items directly at the Revive Leeds reuse shop. The shop continues to be very well supported by the public and in 2012-13 167.5 tonnes of furniture, household items, bric a brac etc. were reused. All other HWSS have reuse containers for the dry storage of reusable household items and furniture and the site teams encourage the public to put reusable items into the reuse containers. Each site is partnered with a specific FRO who regularly collects items from the reuse container. In 2012-13, 41.9 tonnes of furniture (2953 items) from the HWSS were reused via this partnership scheme.

Promotion of reuse

The Council website widely promotes the reuse of items as a first option for householders to consider when discarding items. This occurs on the webpages that refer to the bulky waste service where Freegle, Freecycle, the Revive Leeds reuse shop are all promoted and there are links to the websites of the FROs. The individual webpages for each HWSS reminds householders about the presence of the reuse container for reusable furniture, bikes, bric a brac etc. and the new A-Z feature follows the waste hierarchy by promoting reuse before recycling and disposal wherever possible.

The Council has supported the FROs to develop their “Too Good to Throw Away” leaflet which is widely distributed and copies have been provided to Leeds Housing to provide to new tenants and those giving notice so they are aware of the FRO as a source of low cost furniture and as a means of reusing unwanted items.