

**Report of Director of Environment & Housing**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)**

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

<b>Core City</b>	<b>Number of free collections</b>	<b>Chargeable collections</b>
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>
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 documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.