

TO: ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
20 OCTOBER, 2004

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY OF REFUSE SERVICE (UPDATE ON MULTIMATERIAL
SERVICE)

FROM: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the key issues surrounding the Refuse Collection service and to suggest areas where Members may wish to carry out a further, more detailed scrutiny of the service.
- 1.2 To update Members on the implementation of the first phase of the Council's multi-material kerbside recycling service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee has decided that one of its major roles this year will be to carry out a detailed review of the Refuse Collection Service. The aim of this report is to give Members a summary of the main issues affecting the service, to suggest key areas for focus and to allow Members to decide on the scope of the scrutiny investigation.
- 2.2 As Members will be aware, the Refuse & Recycling Contract was split in March last year and a separate contract was let to cover the kerbside collection of dry recyclables and green waste. Under the old contract, both the refuse collection and, in particular, the recycling service suffered from inadequate resources, poor supervision and weak quality control. The creation of two contracts to cover both services was designed to address those failings.
- 2.3 Since April 2003 a new Contract Manager and Supervisor have been appointed on the Refuse Collection Contract by the operators, Serviceteam Ltd and over that period, the failings identified above have been tackled and improvements have been made. The working relationship between Client and Contractor has improved and the number of missed collections has fallen (from 81 per 100,000 in 02/03 to 49 in 03/04).
- 2.4 There are a number of aspects of the Refuse Collection services operated by Warwick District which Members may wish to examine in greater detail, including:

Alternate Weekly Collections: under the Waste Management Strategy, the Council aims to introduce an alternate weekly collection service for domestic refuse and green waste (subject to the results of trials and a comprehensive public consultation exercise) in April, 2008 as part of a new contract.

Back Door Collection Service: the Council currently operates a collection service from any point on the householder's property to which the Contractor can gain access. In practice, the majority of residents place their refuse at the front of their property or on the highway. Stratford District Council has recently moved from a back door service to a curtilage collection.

Clinical Waste: the Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide a service for the collection of domestic clinical waste. However, at present the Council does provide such a service, once a week, free of charge, to approximately eighty householders.

Container Provision: at present the Council does not provide, nor specify, any type of container for the collection of domestic refuse. Under the EPA 1990, the Council can make such a provision, or specify the type and size of the container to be used (in most cases the containers are either black sacks or wheeled bins). The Council can even charge for the provision of containers if it wishes.

Garden Waste: the Council continues to charge (£1.00 per bag) for the collection of garden waste along with normal domestic refuse through a pre-paid ticket system. This decision was taken in order to encourage the recycling of green waste through home composting, wood chipping and CA sites and to minimize the amount of green waste being sent to landfill.

Joint Working: the contracts for refuse collection, street cleansing and kerbside recycling are all due for renewal in 2008. The end dates of Stratford District Council's contracts for refuse collection and recycling are also in 2008. Officers from both authorities have been considering the options for a joint arrangement from 2008 and this is something which Members may wish to explore further.

New Properties: last year, 629 new properties were added to the collection rounds and there have been several thousand new properties built in the District over the last few years. New properties place a strain on existing collection capacity, but it is the numerous house conversions and the lack of suitable storage space in new properties which consistently cause problems. The Waste Management section is consulted on new developments and made aware of planning applications but has no tangible influence on ensuring adequate refuse storage arrangements are provided in new developments or flat conversions.

Performance & Problems: the Council's performance on refuse collection has improved over recent years from 81 missed collections per 100,000 in 2002/3 to only 49 in 2003/4. Over the first six months of this year, that figure has dropped again to 44 missed collections per 100,000. This figure is still quite poor when compared to national targets, but this has to be considered in the context of a back door collection service, where the number of missed collections is much higher than in areas which provide wheeled bins and operate curtilage collection services.

Public Perception: the Public's view of the refuse collection service is favourable, with satisfaction levels on the whole remaining good. Last year, 87% of residents questioned stated that they were satisfied with the refuse collection service. The figures for this year's survey are currently being collated, but an initial analysis shows that satisfaction levels remain high.

Special Collections: the Council currently operates a special collection service for bulky items of household waste such as white goods, furniture, carpets etc. This year, the collection charge is £5 for the first item and £2.50 for subsequent items up to a maximum of five items. A 20% discount is provided to households in receipt of state benefits or a pension. These charges are the lowest in the County and last year the Council provided the service to 3,245 households, collecting over 10,000 items. The service is subsidised but is still delivered at a net cost to the Council.

Special Waste: more and more waste is being designated as hazardous or special waste and is subject to specific legislation dealing with its collection, treatment and disposal. Legislation has already been introduced for fridges, and freezers, tyres and many common garden and household chemicals and is imminent for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE).

- 2.5 Members may also wish to consider how these various elements should best be investigated further. The available options include scrutiny of discrete aspects of the refuse collection services by individual Members or small groups, further detailed officer reports, public consultation exercises, presentations by Contractors (including Question and Answer sessions) and benchmarking and comparison with other authorities.
- 2.6 Phase 1 of the multimaterial kerbside collection service was rolled out in April this year to all those households in the District who had a red box but were not covered by the green waste service. In the first five months of the new service, there has been a 30% increase in the amount of material which has been collected in the red boxes. Newsletters publicising the service were sent out in September and further, intensive public awareness raising through a doorstep campaign is currently being coordinated by the County Council. It is hoped that the campaign will get underway later this year.

3. **POLICY AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 Refuse collection is closely linked to the Council's recycling services and waste minimisation which are key policy areas. Current and planned refuse collection services are within the present budgetary framework.

4. **OUTCOME REQUIRED**

- 4.1 It is RECOMMENDED that Members note the contents of this report and decide on a framework for the full scrutiny investigation of Refuse Collection services by this Committee.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS NONE

Areas in District Affected: ALL
Executive Portfolio Area and Holder: Environment – Councillor Mrs Begg.

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