

**TO: ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
15 DECEMBER 2005**

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY OF REFUSE SERVICE

FROM: SCRUTINY OF REFUSE WORKING PARTIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Update report from the Scrutiny of Refuse Working Parties on the work they have undertaken so far.

2. BACKGROUND

As part of its work programme for 2004/2005 this Committee agreed to undertake a review of refuse collection, including an update on the progress made with the introduction of the door to door multi material collection service.

At its meeting on 20 October 2004 the Committee agreed to investigate 3 areas of refuse collection over the next 12 months, Performance, Waste types and Amendments to the current Contract.

The Committee agreed to appoint three groups to focus on different aspects of the performance of the service, which would include missed collections, new properties, joint working and public perception, with an interim report to be submitted from the three working groups to the December meeting and a final report from these groups would be submitted to the February meeting of the Committee.

The Working groups were appointed as follows:

- (i) Missed collections & new properties: Councillors Copping; Davies and Gill;
- (ii) Joint Working: Councillors Mrs Blacklock, Hatfield and Smith; and
- (iii) Public perception: Councillors Mrs Compton; Sandhar and Short.

The interim reports from the workings groups are attached at appendix 1.

3. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

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 and this report proposes no amendments to the budget.

4. OUTCOME REQUIRED

The content of the appendices is noted and the Committee decide on the next steps they wish to take with this review.

*Graham Leach
Committee Services Officer*

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee agenda and minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2004.

Areas in District Affected: All
Executive Portfolio Area and Holder: Environmental Services –
Councillor Mrs M Begg.

For further information about this report please contact:

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Public Perception of the Service

Councillor Mrs Jose Compton interview Richard Dobbs on Wednesday 24 November 2004.

The refuse collection service is provided by Service Team and the recycling service is provided by ECT.

5,00 customer survey cards are sent out each year usually in the autumn and to a different area in the district comprising of an urban/rural mix to get a view of the service.

The results showed a 97% satisfaction result. The Citizens Panel gave an 87% percent rating with 73% for the recycling service. The Performance Indicator showed that out of 100,000 collections only 46 were missed.

If bins are missed and the department is notified before 2.00 p.m. this will be rectified the same day, if after 2.00 p.m. this will be the next working day.

Most adverse comments seem to refer to recycling mainly caused by customers not putting correct items in the red box although leaflets are sent to all Householders. Other comments include the desire for wheely bins or the provision of black bags.

Christmas collections appear to be well managed with information in the press, website and leaflet detailing any alterations over the Christmas/New Year period.

Missed Collections and New properties

Notes of Meeting between Mr Colin Hayes-James & Councillors Gill & Copping, on 23/11/04.

- WDC misses c 1/2000 collections each day. This figure is very low & is in the top quartile nationally, beating Boroughs with kerbside collections.
- There are 56.5K households in WDC & 11K collections each weekday.
- Cost is c £1.4M pa. = 39p per household each week.
- Most of the 620 tons per week goes to landfill at Bubbenhall, however a smaller quantity goes to the Coventry Incinerator (per instructions from WCC).
- New properties are paid for in batches as they reach 50 households.
- Shifts are "task & finish", starting at 7am each weekday.
- New properties: there is close liaison between our contract manager, Planning & Council Tax Business Units. Sometimes in Planning applications bin storage areas are an after thought & are located in smelly unsuitable locations.
- Missed collections reported before 2pm are specially collected on the same day. After 2pm they are collected on the next of the 5 working day week.
- Causes of missed collections are various: side gate not unlocked, refuse not available for 7am, householder's usual bin location moved, crew not familiar with "beat".

Joint Working

All contracts expire in 2008. It is not too early to be considering future options, as key decisions plus public consultation and drafting of contracts etc etc have to be completed before the launch of any new system on 1 April 2008.

Current arrangements: WDC has its own contract with Serviceteam - Cleanaway. Performance is satisfactory, there is no pressure to change either for reasons of missing targets, public dissatisfaction, or cost, but running several different contracts for different types of waste is difficult to justify.

Also:

1. Best Value means we must examine alternatives to current arrangements;
2. combining with neighbouring authorities may bring better all-round service;
3. current contractor may not wish to renew the contract.

Options:

1. To continue with own WDC contract but to combine separate types of collection under one contractor.
2. To bring all collections 'In-House' with direct labour.
3. To establish one or more contracts in partnership with one or more neighbouring district councils.
4. To establish a new direct-labour scheme managed with one or more other council/s.

- Advantages of Joint Working –

1. More economic ie economies of scale
2. Attract bigger/better contractor
3. Enable WDC to fit in with new WCC Waste Strategy

- Possible Disadvantages of Joint Working –

1. Management issues
2. Loss of operational control and flexibility

NB: WCC has produced draft proposals for new disposal system, WDC needs to review radically its collection system to comply with these proposals.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ We must regard Joint working with other councils as a genuine option
- ❖ We should make contact with Environmental Scrutiny councillors at Stratford District Council and discuss how to take this further
- ❖ Initially to talk to Stratford DC as the more obviously compatible authority with us, but to be prepared to talk with Rugby BC and North Warks councils later, all of them likely to be changing from 2008
- ❖ Invite representative from WCC to brief us on the draft Strategy