



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Summer Service Weekly Collection of Domestic Waste

Date: 4th December 2008

Author: The Scrutiny Officer

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform Cabinet Members on the findings and conclusions drawn from a scrutiny working group review in to the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste.

2. Background

A Policy Scrutiny Committee working group was convened in January 2008 to review the rationale, costs, benefits and disadvantages of providing a summer service weekly bin collection of domestic waste. A final report and a minority report were drafted in November 2008.

The majority of the Committee agreed a final report. A minority report has also been submitted for consideration.

3. Proposal

That Cabinet members consider the attached reports and their recommendations. (Please see these two reports attached at Appendices 1 & 2).

4. Recommendations

That Members note the recommendations and

- 1) determine the response to the review
- 2) request that the Direct Services and Property Portfolio Holder respond to the recommendations within the reports



Report to Policy Review Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Summer Service Weekly Collection of Domestic Waste

Date: 25th November 2008

Author: The Chair of the Working Group

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update members on the progress of the scrutiny working group's review into the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 This working group comprises of Councillors S. Prew-Smith (Chair), C. Pratt, P. Feeney, J. Creamer, J. Collin, P. Andrews, T. Barton and Officers T. Lack (Scrutiny Officer), D. Parton (Head of Direct Services).

3.0 The Scope of the Review

- 3.1 This working group was convened to consider the rationale, costs, benefits and disadvantages of providing a summer service weekly collection of domestic waste. The working group's scope is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Council introduced a weekly collection of domestic waste for a period of twelve weeks throughout the summer period and funding was made available in the sum of £151,500 following a decision made at full Council in May 2007.

4.0 Information Gathering

- 4.1 The working group gathered various information in relation to the issues associated with the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste. This included exploring the operational issues associated with

the summer service and various data relating to waste collection. The group also gave consideration to any alternative schemes. The working group scrutinised:

- 4.2 Gedling Borough Council Recycling Statistics – 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08.
- 4.3 Overview on the operational effect of the Summer Service Collection of Domestic Waste on other frontline services
- 4.4 Data reflecting the reaction of the public/stakeholders to the provision of the Summer Service Weekly Collection of Domestic Waste (2007):
Satisfaction Tracker Survey -Report to Cabinet 3rd April 2008
Correspondence
Verbal Communications
Media
- 4.5 Options for funding the Summer Service Weekly Collection of Domestic Waste in future years.
- 4.6 Question and answer session with M. Allen M. Allen- Head of Waste Management and H. Lester- Service Manager for Strategy and Development, Communities Department, Nottinghamshire County Council. (Appendix 2).
- 4.7 Nottingham Evening Post: Food waste collection's recycling drive- 16th June 2008
- 4.8 Nottingham Evening Post: How you can change those wasteful ways- July 11th 2008
- 4.9 Presentation by Mr A. Greener- Waste Strategy and Development Manager, Environmental Services Department Nottingham City Council (Appendix 3)
- 4.10 Letter to the Burgermeister of Rotenburg in Germany. (Appendix 3)
- 4.11 Waste Reduction Schemes: is bin tax the answer? LGIU good practice seminar- 1st July 2008
- 4.12 Question and answer session with D. Archer- Personnel Manager, Customer Service and Organisational Development Department, Gedling Borough Council
- 4.13 Data reflecting-
 - The Governments benchmarking and dataflow records relating to waste recycling and contamination calculations
 - Veolia Environmental's contamination survey data
 - The take up i.e. increase/decrease, in brown garden waste bins over the summer months 2008.

- 4.14 Gedling Borough Council's Waste Management Strategy 1st January 2009 – 31st December 2011 (draft)
- 4.15 The cost of running and providing the additional summer service collections of domestic waste
- 4.16 Data on the impact of the summer service collection of domestic waste on Gedling Borough Council's recycling and composting rates
- 4.17 Information from Mid Suffolk and Chichester District Councils
- 4.18 Information from the 'Smells Away' Charcoal filter pad trial

5.0 Findings

- 5.1 Having reviewed Gedling Borough Council's Recycling Statistics (2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08) which reflect the impact of composting and recycling, the working group understand that the data for the end of year 2007/08 shows that the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste has not adversely affected recycling rates.
- 5.2 The working group are aware of the operational effects of the summer service collection of domestic waste on other frontline services. These include the Direct Services Department having had to move staff (a driver) from 'street cleansing' onto 'refuse collection' resulting in a skills deficit in the street cleansing section. In addition, two other LGV drivers from other services were also temporarily transferred to 'refuse' which resulted in bin deliveries and repairs having to be carried out at weekends. Similarly, the Garden Waste Scheme bins and Kerbside boxes also needed to be delivered. Other operational effects include the daily Bulky Household Waste Service also having to be cancelled on occasions to prioritise enough drivers to enable the summer service collections, in this way, the Bulky Household Waste Service had to be operated on Saturdays. The working group understand that any payments made to staff carrying out duties at weekends were assigned to the summer service collection of domestic waste budget.

The group also note that WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Act requires that the Council dispose of electrical equipment in accordance with new regulations. This necessitated a separate collection of these goods and their disposal at a different site for treatment. The WEEE Act therefore, increased the overall workload for the refuse department in addition to the summer service.

The working group recognise that in the main it was the need for LGV drivers that caused operational problems for other frontline services. Whilst the group acknowledge that there is a national shortage of LGV drivers, this problem was exacerbated in Direct Services due to two

drivers being absent due to long-term sickness.

- 5.3 The working group reviewed various waste collection data including the reaction of the public/stakeholders to the provision of the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste. In respect of the Satisfaction Tracker Survey the group note that in relation to household waste collection 79% of the public are very or fairly satisfied with the service, against 13% who are very or fairly unsatisfied.

When looking at the summer service waste collection in particular, 90% of the public reported they were satisfied, whilst 4% indicated they were dissatisfied. Survey data relating to recycling facilities, demonstrated that 72% of the public reported they were satisfied with this service, 22% suggest that they are neither satisfied or dissatisfied whilst 6% report they are dissatisfied.

With recycling collection 89% of the public report satisfaction, against 5% expressing dissatisfaction. The working group acknowledge that the Satisfaction Tracker Survey demonstrates that the public appear in the majority to satisfied or very satisfied with waste collection and disposal facilities and that notably, 90% of the public are satisfied with the summer service collection.

The working group note the divergent content of the small number of letters and emails received by the Council in relation to the summer service collection of domestic waste. They appreciate that some correspondence has been complimentary, whilst some has been from complainants i.e. that the scheme is a waste of money etc. The group recognise however, there has been a significant reduction overall in the number of complaints relating to health issues (i.e. maggots and malodours).

The working group understand that some positive comments were made by the public in relation to the summer service of domestic waste at the Gedling Show and in addition there have been some endorsements of the service noted in telephone calls made to the Council.

The working group are aware of the positive reporting in the media (Daily Mail and Daily Telegraph) regarding Gedling Borough Council's summer service collection of domestic waste scheme. In reviewing the various data sources, the working group acknowledge the positive responses received from the public overall in respect of the summer service collection of domestic waste.

- 5.4 The working group recognise the different options available to the Council in order to fund the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste in future years. These include continuing using existing funding (i.e. Council Tax), charging residents per collection, reducing other services to fund summer services and raising additional funding.

When considering the merits of each option the working group believe that the Council should continue to fund the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste from existing funding, should this become a permanent policy decision.

- 5.5 The working group acknowledge the information provided by M. Allen (Head of Waste Management) and H. Lester (Service Manager for Strategy and Development) from the Communities Department at Nottinghamshire County Council (Appendix 2).

The working group note that Gedling Borough Council's additional summer service bin collection (2007) cost Nottinghamshire County Council an extra £62,475 in Landfill Tax. The summer service also cost Gedling Borough Council an extra £152,300 (2007) which equates to £128 per tonne of residual waste collected. Whilst the working group appreciate that the six extra collections did not attract a higher disposal rate, they accept that the Landfill Tax rate will nonetheless increase over 2008/9. The working group are aware that the majority of the summer service waste collections went to landfill sites, as the Eastcroft Incinerator facility closes during the summer period for its annual maintenance.

The working group recognise that there was a 20% increase in (black bin) residual waste with the additional summer service bin collection. It was understood that if all the Nottinghamshire district councils instigated an additional twelve-week summer service bin collection (averaging a 20% increase) then this would cost Nottinghamshire County Council an extra £2.5m.

The working group are aware that the Gedling Borough Council additional summer service bin collection adversely affects Nottinghamshire County Council's recycling figures and is also detrimental in terms of its statutory Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme allocations.

When considering waste minimisation initiatives to encourage the public to recycle more, the working group recognise the financial incentive scheme offered by Nottinghamshire County Council to encourage parents to use reusable Nappies. The group appreciate that the County are working with Veolia and other district Councils to increase the number of products that can be accepted in the recyclable waste stream. It was noted that this is contingent on there being an identified outlet for a particular product to be recycled/reused.

The working group are aware that the national Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP) are working with manufacturers and retailers and many Local Authorities (including Nottinghamshire County Council) to develop and promote various waste minimisation initiatives.

The working group recognise that despite Gedling Borough Council having the highest dry recycling rate in the East Midlands, it needs to increase its composting performance in order to meet the National

Waste Strategy targets of 40% for 2010 and 45% 2020. The group acknowledge that Nottinghamshire County Council is working in conjunction with all the Nottinghamshire district councils on a countywide publicity campaign to maximise recycling etc. The working group understand that the Gedling Borough Council additional summer service collection mitigates against its good recycling rate. It was noted that the £150,000 cost of the summer service could be utilised to support a free borough wide garden waste collection which would allow Gedling to increase its recycling/composting rate.

The working group understand that a reduction in household food waste is desirable in terms of waste minimisation and to this end the County Council are running a trial involving subsidised 'Green Cone food digesters' which 200 householders are using in their gardens.

- 5.6 The working group are aware of the trial being piloted across 2,500 households in Nottingham City (Nottingham Evening Post: Food waste collection's recycling drive) and acknowledge that this new scheme to collect food waste and dry recyclables will help boost Nottingham City Council's recycling and composting rates. The group recognise that nearly a third of an average family's waste constitutes food waste and that this new scheme with its specific waste receptacles will encourage a more environmentally friendly way of disposing of waste. The working group note that when the (biodegradable) food waste is collected from householders it will be taken to a compost site as opposed to being incinerated or going to landfill.
- 5.7 The working group recognise that the 'green cone food digester' scheme profiled in Nottingham Evening Post (How you can change those wasteful ways) is the same initiative previously referred to in 5.5. (final paragraph). The working group are aware that the 'green cone food digesters' currently being trialed by Nottinghamshire County Council is again another environmentally friendly way of disposing of food waste and in particular food waste that would not normally be able to be composted. The group acknowledge that the green cone scheme when utilised means that householders need no longer have to dispose of edible rubbish through a household waste bin collection.
- 5.8 The working group acknowledge the presentation and information given by Mr A. Greener (Waste Strategy and Development Manager) from the Environmental Services Department at Nottingham City Council.

The working group note that Nottingham City Council's household waste and recycling programme also encompasses the food waste scheme profiled in the Nottingham Evening Post (4.7) and discussed in 5.6. The group recognise that because of the many different types of housing across Nottingham city, Nottingham City Council have varying schemes for collecting domestic waste to accord with the particular types of housing and the householders ability to store waste receptacles. The working group are familiar with Nottingham City

Councils' various kerbside waste disposal and collection apparatus (i.e. split body refuse freighters) as delineated in the presentation. The group note that in relation to the food waste receptacle/s and the composting of food waste, Nottingham City Council hopes to commission its own 'in vessel' composting facility to dispose of its food waste. The working group understand that this will be contingent on Nottingham City Council successfully rolling out its piloted food waste receptacle scheme across the wider city area. The group acknowledge the significant consultation and education undertaken by Nottingham City Council with its householders in order to introduce this scheme and make it a success; the group believe this to be a progressive and more environmentally friendly food waste disposal scheme. Whilst the working group appreciate the benefits of the 'Green Cone food digester' (discussed at 5.5 and 5.7) anecdotal information would suggest that its particular technology does not work very successfully in some types of soils i.e. clay. Moreover, the group recognise that the 'Green Cone food digester' can only seem to be utilised by householders with a garden or ground plot comprising the right conditions i.e. free draining soil and sufficient sunlight.

- 5.9 The working group appreciate the reply sent by the Burgermeister of Rotenburg in Germany (2nd July 2008) in response to the letter the Chair of the working group wrote to him (Appendix 3). The working group understand that Rotenburg town collects residential and organic waste separately and that both types of waste are collected in separate bins, every two weeks. The group also understand that paper, glass, and packaging materials are collected separately.
- 5.10 The working group acknowledge the attendance of one of their members at the LGIU good practice seminar- Waste Reduction Schemes: is bin tax the answer? The working group understand that feedback from this seminar highlighted that the 'Climate Change Bill' currently going through the House of Commons will give local authorities the opportunity to pilot charge for waste by weight. The group recognise that whilst the introduction of charging by weight can incentivise the public to reduce their waste; the bin tax concept (i.e. selective paid for bins) is also proving to be contentious with many householders. In this way, the working group believe that charging by weight could precipitate an increase in fly tipping and encourage some unscrupulous members of the public to dispose of their waste in other householders bins. The working group recognise that the public comply with the waste recycling agenda as they see this as a positive exercise, whilst many perceive the concept of charging by weight to be negative and see this as an extra charge on top of Council Tax. The working group understand that the LGIU seminar considered various models of waste collection (each with particular advantages and disadvantages) and that ultimately much will depend on the Climate Change Bill and the results of pilots to be run by five local authorities.
- 5.11 The working group acknowledge the information provided by Mr D.

Archer-, Personnel Manager at Gedling Borough Council.

The working group understand that it has not been difficult for the Council to recruit to the posts of temporary refuse loaders and drivers for the summer service weekly bin collection. The group are aware that in the two years that the summer service has been operating the Council have been able to employ staff through the use of both internal and external vacancy advertisements and through the use of agency staff. The group note that in 2008, there were over a hundred applications for the post of twelve refuse loaders. The working group acknowledge that the three driver posts were covered from internal resources and that in total, the 2008 summer service refuse crew involved fifteen personnel.

The working group recognise that Gedling Borough Council offers in-house training for its refuse staff and that recently two former refuse loaders (from the full time permanent establishment) have completed their Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) training. The working group are satisfied that the in-house training offered by Gedling Borough Council is good and that the temporary summer service HGV drivers are brought into the Council's depot 3-4 days before the refuse loaders (and when the summer service is due to begin) for full training in terms of the refuse fleet's operation. The group understand that any costs for the summer service personnel's training is met internally through the Direct Services department's training budget. Similarly, the working group appreciate that induction training is also provided 'on the job'. The group are aware that a permanent member of staff is always on the refuse crew vehicle to oversee and supervise the temporary summer service staff and for this responsibility they are paid a modest honorarium.

The working group understand that the recognised Trade Unions at Gedling Borough Council have not sought to become involved in the recruitment of summer service staff and therefore their employment conditions (i.e. temporary contractual) can be perceived as being unproblematic. It was noted that some of the summer service staff from 2007 have returned to work at the Council again in 2008 and have brought their previous expertise with them. The working group acknowledge that there would not appear to be any major problems or issues associated with short-term recruitment and training of the summer service refuse staff.

- 5.12 The working group have examined benchmarking and dataflow records relating to waste recycling and contamination calculations. The group understand that this involves black bin, green bin, glass, garden waste and bring sites etc. When looking at the years 2006/2007/2008 they note that for this year (2008), there have been 400 tonnes less of black bin waste collected and 60 tonnes less of green (residual) waste collected respectively. In exploring the data the working group also recognised that Gedling Borough residents appear to throw away more

waste in the first few weeks of the summer service collection than in its latter weeks. The group acknowledge that the recycling rate for the Council for the period April- August has gone up 1% compared to last year (2007).

The group are satisfied that the Direct Services Department takes various steps to prevent contamination and in addition to training and visual checks, contact is made with householders when this becomes apparent and publicity campaigns are planned for early 2009 to help educate householders and to address the issue. The working group appreciate that there is no conclusive evidence that contamination is worse during the summer service period.

The working group explored information reflecting the take up, that is the increase or decrease in householders requesting (paid for) brown garden waste bins over the summer months for 2008. It was noted that during the twelve-week period that the summer service operates there were 188 new members for the brown bin scheme this year, therefore residents have still continued to join the scheme during the summer collection period.

- 5.13 The working group acknowledge Gedling Borough Council's draft Waste Management Strategy (1st January 2009 – 31st December 2011) document which reflects policy statements; service plans and future initiatives in terms of refuse collection and recycling. In terms of waste minimisation, the group understand that the Council has a range of proposals and plans to help reduce the quantity of black bin waste. These include promoting the DEFRA 'Love Food, Hate Waste' campaign (on the side of refuse loaders) and putting 'stickers' on black bins reminding householders that their waste is destined for landfill or incineration and encouraging alternative recycling and composting. The working group understand that alongside educating the public, if the cost of the garden waste service was frozen again (for 2009-10 as it was for 2008-09), then the take-up and continuance of the service should remain unaffected.

The working group note that the Council (along with other local authorities) has a national recycling target of 40% and in order to try and meet this by 2010/11 it has other waste minimisation schemes planned which include the collection of commercial waste from the Council's Community and Leisure Centres and possibly from the Police and Fire Services too. The group are also aware that the Council is now collecting recycled waste from schools in the Gedling Borough area.

The working group understand that the Council is looking to maximise its kerb side collection of glass through synchronizing this with its green bin collection to maximise householder compliance. Similarly, the Council is looking to reduce waste contamination through putting public education 'stickers' on its green recycling bins also.

Other waste minimisation schemes include an upgrade of the Councils recycling sites to enable householders to dispose of a wider range of waste i.e. tetra packs. The group acknowledge that this will help reduce the amount of the rubbish in the domestic waste stream. Similarly the Council has plans (in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council) to promote and improve the disposal of DIY and building waste at the Household Waste and Recycling Centres (Arnold Lane and Calverton), to help reduce fly tipping. Additional waste minimisation plans include advising the public that bulky household waste items such as furniture can often be collected and utilised (recycled) by charity organisations.

The working group are satisfied that Gedling Borough Council's (draft) Waste Management Strategy comprises a broad range of waste minimisation initiatives which the group considered alongside the schemes highlighted by Nottinghamshire County and City Councils respectively.

- 5.14 The working group understand that the cost of running and providing the additional summer service collection of domestic waste for this year (2008) will be approximately £155,000. The group are aware that the Direct Services Department has allocated £160,000 within its overall budget to run this service.
- 5.15 The working group acknowledge that the impact of the summer service collection of domestic waste on Gedling Borough Council's recycling rate has not proven to be overly significant and that currently, the Council has a 37% (dry and composting) recycling rate. The group recognise that the Council is striving to meet a national recycling target of 40% by 2010/11 (5.13).
- 5.16 The working group understand that the Council's composting rates remain the same as the Council still has the same customer base. The working group are aware that Mid Suffolk and Chichester District Councils are the two best performing Authorities for collecting dry recyclates in England. The group understand that this is attributable to them both having learnt from best practice in that they only introduced wheelie bins after waiting and looking at all the issues involved. Both these Councils took the decision to introduce smaller wheelie bins as part of their waste minimisation initiatives. The working group appreciate that both Mid Suffolk and Chichester District Councils have restricted the amount of domestic waste that can be disposed of due to their bins limited capacity. The group also understand that due to the finite capacity of these wheelie bins, both authorities have arrangements for a separate collection of garden waste.

The working group are aware that Gedling Borough Council are issuing smaller capacity black bins 'as and when' existing householder bins wear out. The group recognise that it will take some time for all of the Borough's black bins to be replaced by these smaller bins and therefore derive the same benefit of having a restricted amount of residual waste.

- 5.17 The working group acknowledge that the comparative data that they hoped to obtain from Epping Forest District and Lincoln City Councils has not been made available due to politically restricted reasons. Both these Councils having chose to collect domestic refuse on a weekly basis (during a period in the summer months) and dry recyclates on a fortnightly basis. The group had wanted to explore both Epping Forest and Lincoln Councils experience of providing a summer service and any associated public perceptions and customer satisfaction levels. The working group also understand that the Gedling Climate Control Group did not have any particular views on Gedling Borough Council's summer service collection of domestic waste and was currently involved with other environmental agendas.
- 5.18 The working group are familiar with the 'Smells Away' Charcoal filter pad resource. This activated carbon fibre pad, approximately 3mm thick is designed to adhere to the underside of any bin lid. The group understand that the technology associated with this product is that the activated carbon is highly porous and has the ability to filter odours even in hot weather. Having undertaken a small-scale trial (August 2008) comprising of seven Members and two Officers, the working group could not discern any tangible benefits in using this product. The group trialed the product according to manufacturer instructions i.e. activating the charcoal pad in sunlight and only electing to have their black bin emptied alternate weeks during the summer period to replicate the right conditions to test its efficacy. Whilst the working group acknowledge that their small-scale trial could not be construed as scientifically robust, their experiences of using this product did not lead them to believe that this would be of benefit to the Borough's householders in ameliorating the malodours associated with food waste.

6.0 Summary Findings

- 6.1 Having reviewed all the information gathering to-date, the working group recognise that if the issues associated with food are taken away (i.e. malodours and maggots) then the rationale for the summer service collection of domestic waste is not viable. In this way, the group understand that the problems reported by householders relating to the summer months and black bin hygiene can often be largely remedied by educating householders how to correctly dispose of food waste. Whilst the group acknowledge that the Council has provided the public with educative information, they understand that not all people dispose of food waste properly. Similarly the group recognise that the summer hot weather conditions seen to be attributable to food malodours etc have not materialised in the two years that the summer service has operated 2007 - 2008. Therefore it is hard to discern if the reduction in householder complaints regarding food waste and the black bin collection are due to (the perceived benefits of) a weekly service or whether in fact the current summer weather climate does not precipitate

the issues of malodours and maggots.

- 6.2 Having reviewed the waste minimisation initiatives outlined by Nottinghamshire County and City Councils (whilst acknowledging the relative merits of these), the working group believe that these would prove to be impractical to householders without gardens (5.5) and costly to implement across the board in the Gedling Borough area (5.6/5.8). The group nonetheless appreciate that both the County and City Council schemes of the green cone food digester and separate food waste receptacle respectively, are in fact more environmentally friendly alternatives to that of sending residual waste to landfill or incineration. The working group also acknowledge and endorse the range of waste minimisation initiatives detailed in Gedling Borough Councils (draft) Waste Management Strategy, but do not believe that any of these smaller schemes provide a realistic alternative to the summer service collection of domestic waste scheme.
- 6.3 When considering whether the working group should recommend that the summer service continue in future years, the group are polarised in their views. The main issues underpinning these divergent viewpoints include financial cost, the Councils' carbon footprint and lack of proven benefits of a summer service against the high customer satisfaction levels from which the Council benefits (5.3). However, the majority of the working group acknowledge that in the current economic climate a service cut could prove unacceptable to the public and that what householders pay in Council tax and the services they receive from the Council are more likely to be more important to them. Allied to this the group also acknowledge that as the summer service has been running for two years, there could be an expectation on behalf of the public that this service would be ongoing.

In summary, the working group all agree with recommendations 7.1 - 7.5. However, four members of the working group believe "that without a viable alternative (to deal with the problems associated with smells and maggots in the summer) they do not feel that they can rescind a high profile service that has been promised to the Borough's residents" and therefore endorse recommendation 7.6. Three members of the working group are unable to support this recommendation and have indicated that they will submit a minority report.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Chair of the summer service collection of domestic waste review presents the findings and recommendations from this review to Gedling Borough Council Cabinet.
- 7.2 That the Portfolio Holder writes to the Environmental Portfolio Holder at Nottinghamshire County Council encouraging them to allocate more of their budget towards financing educational resources relating to waste minimisation and recycling. That such resources / publicity should be

aimed at the general public and schools.

- 7.3 That Gedling Borough Council Direct Services Department allocate more resources towards educating the public on how to dispose of food waste in order to prevent problems such as malodours and maggots.
- 7.4 That a cost benefit exercise be carried out by the Direct Services Department so that should funding become available through DEFRA then a bid prepared for a food waste collection scheme. (This would be contingent on there being sufficient funding for the scheme to operate in future years).
- 7.5 That the working group reconvene in 18-24 months time to consider the ongoing need for the summer service collection of domestic waste (should this service continue) and to consider if any new or alternative waste minimisation initiatives are available.
- 7.6 That the Council continues to operate the twelve-week summer service collection of waste.

8.0 Acknowledgement

- 8.1 The working group wishes to thank everyone who made themselves available to provide information and support this review.



Scope

Scrutiny Committee: Policy Review

Working Group: Summer Service Weekly Collection of Domestic Waste

Chair of group: Councillor S. Prew-Smith

Working Group Members: Councillors P. Feeney, C. Pratt, J. Creamer, J. Collin, P. Andrews and T. Barton

Portfolio holder/s: Councillor R. Nicholson

(1) Scope

Why this review is being undertaken.

To review the rationale, costs, benefits and disadvantages of providing a summer service weekly bin collection of domestic waste (including environmental issues).

Aims

The specific issues to consider/examine are...

- The costs of the additional collections
- The impact on recycling and composting rates.
- The problems and issues associated with short-term recruitment and training.
- The operational effect on other frontline services
- The benefits to householders (perceived/actual)
- The reaction of the public/stakeholders to the provision of the service
- To consider whether the service be provided in future years

- To consider how the service would be paid for in future years.

(2) Timetable

The review will commence in: January 2008

Milestones: N/A

The review will report in: early November 2008

Committee dates: 29th January, 25th March, 20th May, 22nd July, 16th September, 25th November 2008

Frequency of meetings: monthly initially, more frequently over the summer months if necessary.

(3) Information gathering and consultees

The working group has requested the following information:

- Comparative data from other authorities that collect domestic refuse on a weekly basis and dry recyclates on a fortnightly basis.
- To review the public satisfaction survey data in relation to the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste
- The Governments benchmarking and dataflow records relating to waste recycling and contamination calculations.
- To explore Veolia Environmental's contamination survey data and make comparisons with regard to both seasonal variations and levels compared with neighbouring Authorities.
- The take up i.e. increase/decrease, in brown garden waste bins over the summer months 2008
- Feedback from Gedling Borough Council's Direct Services Department's findings following discussions with Mid Suffolk District Council and Chichester District Council, the two best performing Authorities for collecting dry recyclates in England.

What are the main questions to be asked and of what parties?

- What alternatives are there to the summer service weekly bin collection?
- What are the future initiatives that will be available to reduce the quantity of black bin waste? (Waste minimisation initiatives)
- What are the issues with selective (paid for) bins, such as garden waste bins, and what are the alternatives?

The working group may be inviting the following persons/organisations to one or more meetings to help with the review:

1. M. Allen- Head of Waste Management and H. Lester- Service Manager for Strategy and Development, Communities Department, Nottinghamshire County Council
2. A. Greener- Waste Strategy and Development Manager, Environmental Services Department, Nottingham City Council
3. Friends of the Earth
4. Gedling Climate Concern Group

Visits

The working group might need to consider a visit to:

The Henry Doubleday Association, Ryton, Warwickshire
Any suggestions made by Friends of the Earth.

(4) How the community will be consulted, informed and involved

The working group wishes to consult through:

The Gedling Borough Council Contacts magazine.

In the spring edition by: -

- The regular Scrutiny update column invite public interest and participation
- Via the Waste Management pages of the document assigned to the Direct Services Department

In the autumn edition by: -

- Through the regular Scrutiny update column highlighting progress on the review
- Through the Direct Services Department's waste management pages, invite public comment on the summer service weekly collection of domestic waste 2008.

(5) Resources

The working group is supported by:

Tracy Lack - Scrutiny Officer (For project management and administration)
David Parton - Head of Direct Services (For technical expertise)

(6) How the effectiveness of the review will be measured

After the initial review the working group will....

Make referrals to both the Policy Review Committee and the Council's Cabinet to consider all recommendations proposed by the Scrutiny working group.

Have the conclusions and recommendations addressed the outcomes of the scope?

Question and Answer session with:
M. Allen- Head of Waste Management and
H. Lester- Service Manager, Strategy and Development
Communities Department, Nottinghamshire County Council)

1. How much did Gedling Borough Council's decision to institute a weekly bin collection service in the 12-summer weeks (25th June to 14th September 2007) cost the County Council in Land Fill Tax?

From Gedling Borough Council's figures, an additional 1,190 tonnes of residual waste was collected during the twelve-week period at a landfill rate of £28.50 per tonne, plus £24 per tonne Landfill Tax (equating to £62,475). Note, waste that was sent to Eastcroft for disposal was more costly per tonne, but would not attract Landfill Tax. The service also cost Gedling Borough Council an additional £152,300, which equates to £128 per tonne of residual waste collected.

2. How much per ton does it cost to dispose of waste normally and what is the difference for Gedling Borough Council's six extra collections if any?

Disposal costs are as set out above and are subject to annual increases. Landfill Tax for 2008/9 has now increased to £32 per tonne and will increase by a further £8 per tonne for the next two years. The six extra collections do not attract a higher disposal rate.

3. Does Gedling Borough Council's extra collections adversely affect Nottinghamshire County Councils landfill figures or did the waste go to Eastcroft incinerator?

The summer collections coincided with the annual shutdown at Eastcroft so the majority of the waste was sent to landfill. The County Council also has a maximum allowance of 60,000 tonnes of waste per year into the Eastcroft facility.

4. If we assume a 10% increase every year, what will this increase cost the County Council in Land Fill Tax?

A 10% increase for 2008/9 would be 1309 tonnes, which if all sent to landfill would attract Landfill Tax of £41,888. Note, this doesn't include the contractor's gate fee of approximately £30 per tonne. It's also worth noting that the actual increase in black bin waste was 20% in 2007/8, rather than 10%.

H.L. 10% is high; it is usually a negligible increase. Last year GBC collected what amounted to a 20% increase in black bin residual waste with the summer bin collection. .

5. If every Borough and District in Nottinghamshire introduced a weekly bin collection service, what would the estimated increase in rubbish amount to (in tonnes)? What would this add to the Landfill Tax bill?

If we assumed all districts attracted a 20% increase in residual waste, as was experienced in Gedling, this amounts to approximately 40,000 additional tonnes at £32 per tonne Landfill Tax for 2008/9 plus approximately £30 per tonne gate fee, totalling almost £2.5m.

6. How does Nottinghamshire County Council monitor / assess the Landfill Tax?

The County Council and the district councils input all of their waste data into the Defra Waste DataFlow system, which is used to inform National performance indicators.

7. Does Gedling Borough Council's extra collections adversely affect Nottinghamshire County Council's recycling figures?

Yes. Additional residual waste reduces the percentage of waste recycled/composted. In addition, extra waste sent to landfill impacts negatively against the County Council's statutory Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme allocations.

8. How difficult is it to find suitable sites for landfill purposes in Nottinghamshire? What alternatives are being considered? When would they become on stream?

There are now only four long-term landfill sites remaining in Nottinghamshire. Through the PFI Contract with Veolia an additional 180,000 tonne per annum incinerator (Energy Recovery Facility) is proposed on the former Rufford Colliery site at Rainworth. This facility is due to be operational by 2012.

M.A. There are very few landfill sites compared to 10 years ago. There is a proposal for a new landfill site in Bentinck near Selston. M.A. highlighted the People Against Incineration Campaign which is opposed to the proposed ERF at Rufford.

9. Gedling has 4% of its waste consisting of used nappies, if a system was introduced into the borough to help parents use re-usable nappies (similar to projects currently operating in the London Boroughs) would we be able to get financial assistance from the County Council or other organisations?

Yes, the County Council currently reimburses parents using reusable nappies with £25 cash back on reusable nappy purchases over £50.

H.L. The Nottinghamshire County Council 'Notts Nappy' Project has been going for, approximately 10 years. H.L. reported that

uptake is relatively low despite the attempts of Nottinghamshire County Council to promote this to midwives etc. It was noted that there may not be the specialist laundries which cleansed the nappies in operation any more either.

10. What initiatives are being considered to further increase the volume of recyclable material by including all items bearing the recycling symbol?

Unfortunately not all items bearing the recycling symbol can be economically recycled at this moment in time. In order to maximise benefits to the council taxpayer, the County Council currently excludes such materials from the recyclable bin. Working with Veolia and the district councils, we will of course continue to increase the number of products accepted in the recyclable waste stream.

H.L. Plastics and tetra packs can throw up issues in terms of recycling. Also work is being done to raise public awareness around what can be recycled.

11. When and where will facilities be introduced for the recycling of plant pots, planters, containers and other garden plastics that proliferate in the spring/summer and currently have to go to landfill locally? (A mention was made on national television that it is now possible to recycle this material).

There are currently no plans to introduce plant pots, planters etc into the kerbside recycling collections. These could be introduced at the HWRCs if a potential outlet for their recycling/reuse could be identified.

H.L. Plastics can be recycled, however, there has to be a market for this. Nottingham City Council has started to recycle/reuse plant pots at their Lenton Lane site.

12. What local input is there into initiatives to encourage manufacturers and retailers to reduce the amount of unnecessary packaging and non-Recyclable carrier bags/ packaging (e.g. polystyrene) and encouraging retailers to promote the use of recyclable materials?

Work to reduce manufactures and retailers packaging is being led Nationally through WRAP (Waste Resource Action Programme), which the County Council supports through consumer promotions i.e. 2007 Green Santa Campaign.

H.L. This is led at a national level rather than a local level through WRAP. Nottinghamshire County Council worked with householders with the Green Santa Campaign to get householders to think about how they deal with Christmas waste i.e. wrapping paper, food bought not eaten and then throw away.

M.A. The National Waste Strategy 2007 does encourage Local Authorities to get more involved as Civic Leaders in reducing waste.

Nottinghamshire County Council works on a regional basis as well as within its own boundaries.

13. Apart from the ease of accounting, why is the disposal of waste based on weight when the limitations are related to the availability of space (volume). Typically, a bin full of recycling material weighs less than a Black/Grey bin (Gedling Borough Council's general household waste bin) with a third of the material. Now that consideration is being given to limiting the amount of waste per household, should there be a rethink on how we measure waste – could it increase our recycling rates overnight?

Volume is variable based on how materials are stored and collected. However, the weight of material remains constant despite changes in volume i.e. dry recyclables compressed in a Refuse Collection Vehicle would weight the same despite taking up less volume.

M.A. Weight does not change no matter how much space it takes up.

14. Gedling Borough Council has the highest dry recycling rate in the East Midlands which is a position we are proud of. How would Nottinghamshire County Council see this fit for purpose and do they see this as a way forward? Does the County Council see any potential to expand this with other Councils to share costs etc?

Gedling's dry recycling performance is to be commended; however, without additional composting performance it is still unlikely that Gedling will be able to achieve the 2007 national Waste Strategy targets of 40% recycling/composting by 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020. The County Council is working with all of the Nottinghamshire district councils on a countywide publicity campaign to maximise recycling and reduce contamination.

H.L. The summer bin collection with its extra residual waste is in a sense compromising GBC's good recycling rate.

15. Apparently one third of food bought in this country is wasted. Would it be of any value to have a separate collection of waste food? Could food waste be dealt with in a way to make a separate collection cost-effective to keep it out of landfill?

Collecting food waste separately would significantly help recycling/composting rates and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. However, the cost of providing separate food waste collections is significant, as are the associated disposal costs. A full cost benefit analysis of the service would need to be undertaken prior to introduction. The cost effective of dealing with this waste is not to generate it in the first place and the County Council has supported this through WRAP's National 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign.

H.L. Nottinghamshire County Council has supplied 200 people/residents with subsidised Green Cone food waste digesters for their food waste. This is a one-year trial and is being followed up with monitoring questionnaires.

16. Are there any messages that Councils should be getting over to their residents that would help with waste minimisation?

Food waste is a good area to tackle on waste minimisation because it's a direct cost to the householder and accounts for a significant proportion of residual waste.

M.A. the message/issue is around 'housekeeping' and dealing with residual waste. More urban South East areas of the country have sacks and not bins due to their urban locality- and this is where smells have been apparent. He added that if local authorities are performing well with recycling then they are rewarded well by the government. From a Nottinghamshire County Council perspective alternate weekly collections have worked well and driven up recycling rates.

M.A./H.L. Food waste is heavy and it smells. H.L. highlighted WRAP and its recipe leaflets which are designed to help householders use waste food. H.L. also highlighted the Sainsburys website which is very useful as it can devise recipes that can utilise any identified waste foods.

MA was asked if the County Council thought that the money allocated for the summer collections could be better used to provide additional recycling or composting performance. MA advised that the £150,000 cost of the summer service could be used to support free borough wide garden waste collections, which with Gedling's high dry recycling rate would potentially allow Gedling Borough Council to rival Rushcliffe Borough Council's performance of over 50% recycling/composting.

Democratic and Community Services

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Please ask for Mrs Lack

Our Ref: TL/PMC
Your Ref:

Date: 14th April 2008

Dear Herr Fehr,

I am writing on behalf of Gedling Borough Council in Nottinghamshire England who has a twinning arrangement with you. Councillors at Gedling Borough Council have recently set up a working party to look at the disposal of residential household waste i.e. paper, glass and in particular, general household waste including food. Gedling Borough Council have recently decided to only collect its residents' general household/food waste every alternative week. As a consequence there have been some concerns from residents about hygiene issues i.e. malodours and maggots. Therefore, Gedling Borough Council has recently instituted an additional six waste collections of household/food waste during the warmer summer months to address these problems.

We wondering please if you could outline how you dispose of household waste in Rotenburg and in particular how you stream/separate out householder waste, dispose of it and the frequency of the collections. Gedling Borough Councillors are particularly interested in finding out how frequently food waste is collected from residents' homes if indeed it is collected and whether you collect this separately. Any information you could give us in relation to this would be much appreciated. Thank-you.

Yours Sincerely

T LACK
SCRUTINY OFFICER on behalf of COUNCILLOR SUZANNE PREW-SMITH
CHAIR OF THE SUMMER SERVICE COLLECTION OF DOMESTIC WASTE
REVIEW



Minority Report to the Policy Review Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Summer Service Weekly Collection of Domestic Waste

Date: 25th November 2008

Author: Councillors C. Pratt, P. Feeney and S. Creamer

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of the Policy Review Committee that whilst members of the working group endorse the factual content of the main report into the Summer Service Collection of Domestic Waste, they believe the evidence collected points to a different conclusion and recommendations.

2. Background

This working group was convened to consider the rationale, costs, benefits and disadvantages of providing a summer service weekly collection of domestic waste. Whilst the three Members accept much of the case made, they nonetheless feel that the significant costs and environmental issues associated with operating the summer service collection mitigate against the continuance of the summer service.

3. Proposals

That Committee Members read this report in conjunction with the main Summer Service Collection of Domestic Waste report and consider which final recommendation they wish to endorse.

4. Recommendations

That recommendation 7.6 of the main report is substituted with an alternative recommendation: - 'That the summer service collection of domestic waste be withdrawn on the grounds of its cost relative to the seasonal need, the approximate 40% take-up of the scheme by the general public, and its negative environmental impacts on the Councils carbon footprint.'