

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 JULY 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE CHANGES AND CHARGEABLE GREEN WASTE COLLECTION		
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1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the introduction of the revised waste collection service standard, the rescheduled collection rounds and the introduction of the chargeable green waste service.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Members note the report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 One of the service priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 2016 -2019 is 'Keeping the town, clean, safe, green and active', to ensure we retain and attract residents and businesses and remain an attractive place to live, work and visit'. One means of delivering this priority is to reduce the volume of waste sent to landfill and improve recycling rates through implementation of the service efficiencies and the Waste Minimisation Strategy.
- 3.2 The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008 sets a recycling and re-use target of 50% for certain waste materials from households to be achieved by 2020.
- 3.3 On 15th March 2015 HNL Committee adopted the Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015 -2020, which set out an approach for working with residents, stakeholders and partners to improve the way waste is managed with a

growing population and limited resources. The strategy was subject to a four week web based consultation.

3.4 The re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board adopted its strategy in May 2016.

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 In response to the current Central Government austerity programme and the need to make savings a review of the domestic waste collection service standard, collection round efficiency and the free green waste collection service was carried out in 2016. The review concluded that the following changes were required:

- Application of the existing service standard
- Rescheduling of collection rounds
- Introduction of a green waste collection charge.

#### 4.2 Service Standards

The collection service standard has remained unchanged since its introduction but it has not been applied with any rigour for the last 10 years. Crews were collecting side waste, emptying overfilled bins and many properties had too many bins for the number of residents in the property.

The Council has in effect provided residents with domestic waste capacity in excess of the 240l per fortnight and paid for its collection and disposal. Residents have become used to putting out excess waste and have had little incentive or encouragement to manage their waste more carefully.

4.2.1 Collection of contaminated recycling bins has meant that full loads of otherwise good recyclable material has been rejected at the HWRC. The material has then been landfilled rather than being recycled, increasing costs, adversely impacting on recycling rates and revenue from saleable materials. Many residents were unsure what materials could be recycled and it was clear that more information had to be made available.

4.2.2 The revised waste collection service standards were re-introduced on Monday 13th February at the same time as a revised collection round structure. All residents received information outlining the reason for the changes in advance, a revised collection calendar, information about how to recycle better and details of the new chargeable green waste service through the post in early January 2017. Information has been available on the website and via a social media campaign since before Christmas 2016.

4.2.3 The revised rounds have bedded in well since February after a few minor problems and collection crews and staff are enforcing the new service standards. Side waste is no longer collected and is stickered to inform residents that it will no longer be collected. Overflowing waste is removed from bins prior to emptying and contaminated recycling bins have are left with a bin hanger with information about recycling.

In the first weeks of the changes the average number of contaminated recycling bins which were left by crews per round was 7.5% but this has now fallen to 1.5% as residents become more familiar with the new regime. The

number of enquiries and complaints about waste collections has also fallen from a peak in late February and is now lower than before the changes were introduced.

- 4.2.4 Despite the success of the revised regime there are issues with excess domestic waste being fly-tipped, notably at bring bank sites and in areas with bagged collections such as the Oxford Road. The 2 new Environmental Enforcement Officers, brought in to support the waste changes are sorting through fly-tipped bags to find evidence of ownership and have issued 102 Community Protection Notices (CPN's) since February 2017 compared to a total of 12 in 2016/17.

The effects of the changes on collection tonnages, recycling and contamination rates since the introduction of the changes will be reported when the data is available and reported to a future meeting.

#### 4.3 Round rescheduling

Round scheduling software rather than the old paper system was used to reschedule the rounds, allowing one to be removed saving £110,000 and the rounds were made more equal in size and more efficient.

#### 4.4 Green Waste

The chargeable green waste collection service was announced in January 2017 and the service started on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. Prior to the charge being introduced 16,700 residents took advantage of the free green waste collection and based on the experience of other authorities who introduced a charge a drop-out rate of between 25 and 50% was anticipated. The number of subscribers at the end of June was 14,000 with new enquiries coming in at a rate of 50 per week. Revenue for the green collection service to date is £700,000.

### 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The revised service standard, new round structure and chargeable green waste service contribute to the council's Corporate Plan 2016 -2019 objective of 'Keeping the Town Clean, Safe, Green and Active'.

### 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The revised service standard, round changes and green waste service were publicised via a direct mail shot to every household in Reading, by press releases and on social media.

### 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has duties under various UK and EU legislation to deliver waste collection and disposal services, principally the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the revised EU waste framework directive 2008.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 An equality impact assessment is not required.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The revised service standard and round rationalisation generated a saving of £110,000 and green waste revenue is currently £700,000.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 RBC Corporate Plan.
- 10.2 HNL Committee November 2016
- 10.3 HNL Committee July 2016
- 10.4 HNL Committee March 2015
- 10.5 HNL Committee November 2013