
REPORT TO:	DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	27 SEPTEMBER 2001	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	JOHN HANSED EXT 5770	DOC: s:\cent_serv\committee reports\development services\27 sept 2001\levels of service for refuse collection.doc
SUBJECT:	LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR REFUSE COLLECTION	REF: JRH/LJW
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: DS14

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members' views are sought on maintaining the current service levels and, in particular, whether they would wish to amend Bank Holiday collection arrangements.
- 1.2 Members are asked to endorse the current arrangement whereby the Technical Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair, can waive the 360 litre refuse bin issue policy on occasions of exceptional need.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To consider the current levels of service relating to the Refuse Collection Services in the light of the level of public comment and complaint.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 In July 1998 the Housing and Environment Committee considered the service levels for Refuse Collection as part of the process for retendering this service later that year. The levels agreed by Committee are set out in Annexe A (an extract of the information contained in the Baseline Assessment for the Cleansing the Environment Review - see previous report).
- 3.2 These service levels still apply with the following changes caused by the financial crises of 2000 and as approved by Urgency Sub Committee in February 2000.
 - Introduction of a charge for the collection of bulky refuse.
 - Withdrawal of the Saturday Civic Amenity Service, unless funded by parish councils.

3.3 Starting in 1997 records have been kept of the complaints received about these service levels as follows:-

- No side refuse taken (general) (from January 1997)
- Christmas refuse service (from January 1997)
- 360 litre bin issue policy (from January 1997)
- Bank Holiday arrangements (from May 1999)
- Restricted side refuse (compost rounds) (from July 1999)
- Bulky refuse charge (from March 2001)

The level of complaint recorded is shown in Annexe B.

- 3.4 It will be seen that levels of complaint are low bearing in mind there are over 34,000 properties in the district. It will be seen that the most common complaint refers to the policy of restricting the size of a standard wheeled bin to 240 litres unless there are six or more living in a family. Even so, the level of complaint is less than 0.1% of the total number of properties.
- 3.5 A somewhat smaller number of complaints are received concerning the policy of not normally taking side refuse. The only times side refuse is taken is at Christmas (unlimited) and on the compost rounds (maximum one bag).
- 3.6 An unusually large number of complaints have been received this year about the bank holiday collection service including representations from a parish council. Some 18 complaints have been received in six months. Bearing in mind this service only affects about one in five residents, this level of complaint equates to over 0.5% per annum of affected households. The service level at present is to collect bins on the Saturday before bank holiday Mondays. Complaints are being received to the effect that residents then have to wait nine days before refuse is again collected, rather than the usual seven, putting pressure on containing refuse in the bin without the facility of side refuse.
- 3.7 On very rare occasions, situations are brought to officers' attention where unusual medical circumstances apply whereby the householder is generating more domestic waste than usual. Examples so far encountered include a patient with renal failure who regularly receives medical materials and needs to dispose of the numerous boxes used as packaging. Another example was a child of six who is incontinent and still in nappies.
- 3.8 In these cases the Technical Services Manager has consulted the Committee Chair (Housing and Environment Committee) to agree the waiver of the normal bin size policy, subject to an officer visit to confirm the situation. Members are asked to endorse the continuation of this approach.
- 3.9 Whenever any householder is granted a larger 360 litre bin, for whatever reason, they are asked to complete a form confirming the reasons. The form explains the policy, how it relates to the Council's commitment to waste minimization, and asks them to advise the Council if their household circumstances change. A copy of the form is enclosed at Annexe C.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 With regard to the complaints relating to bank holidays, it would be feasible to collect side refuse on the Monday after the bank holiday. It is estimated this would cost an additional £4,000 per annum. As an alternative the service level could be amended to remove the alternative Saturday service and simply collecting side refuse on the following Monday (this was the previous arrangement prior to introducing the alternative Saturday service). This alternative would save the Council £8,000 per annum. Many residents would see this as a reduction of service and Members may wish for consultation to be undertaken first, to obtain residents' views, prior to considering the matter further.

5.0 Agenda 21 Implications

- 5.1 Waste arisings are growing nationally at about 3% per annum. Inevitably this is putting greater pressure on residents to contain their refuse in a bin of fixed size.
- 5.2 The Council's policies on bin size and side refuse require residents to contain their waste within a standard 240 litre bin, subject to a relaxation for larger families or those in the compost scheme. This policy is based on the Council's commitment to minimize waste and to encourage greater levels of recycling.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Levels of complaint on service levels are low in comparison to the number of households in the district.
- 6.2 There has been a rise in complaints this year regarding bank holiday arrangements but levels are, nevertheless, comparatively low. Provision of a side refuse service, three times a year, would remove this source of complaint but at a cost.

