

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 23 MAY 2012
 title: REFUSE & RECYCLING SERVICE – UPDATE
 submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Committee on the current issues and directions within the Council's Recycling Refuse & Collection service.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
- **Council Ambitions** – To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.
 - **Community Objectives** – To increase the recycling of waste material.
 - **Corporate Priorities** - To be a well-managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs.
 - **Other Considerations** – None.

2 BACKGROUND

This report gives information on the recent changes introduced and initiatives being pursued in relation to the Council's recycling and refuse collection services.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 **Inclusion of Selected Food Wastes into the Garden Waste Collections**
 Ribble Valley Borough Council, as a Waste Collection Authority, is responsible for the collections of waste and recyclable materials from 24,929 properties in the borough. Non-gardened properties are provided with a burgundy wheeled bin for residual waste and a blue bin for the co-mingled glass and plastic. Gardened properties are provided with an additional bin (green) for garden waste.

The content of the wheeled bins is forwarded to Lancashire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority for the area. From the 1st April the County Council will accept food waste in the treatment process for the waste collected in the green bins.

Householders in the borough can now therefore deposit their suitable food waste into their green bin (where provided) instead of adding it to the residual waste stream in their burgundy bin. As this green waste bin is emptied on alternate weeks rather than weekly, householders are recommended to restrict their additions to the green waste stream to raw vegetables, egg shells tea bags and coffee grounds, and not to add any cooked foods, meats or bones.

The opportunity to add these selected food wastes to the green bin was included on the Recycling and Refuse calendar that was delivered to every household in the Borough in March 2012.

Note that some residents, generally those with large gardens, have reported that their 140ltr bins have insufficient capacity to accommodate all their green garden waste. Hence such households may, for the time being, be unable to participate in this initiative to divert waste from the residual collection to the recycled green waste collection. This matter is considered further in section 3.2 below, "Weekly Collection Support Bid".

3.2 **Weekly Collection Support Bid**

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has launched a scheme potentially offering financial support to local authorities seeking to introduce, retain, or reinstate a weekly collection of residual waste. Councils seeking to introduce a separate food waste collection may also be eligible for financial support. A fund totalling £250m over three years is to be made available and Councils have been invited to bid in competition against each other for funding from this provision.

Despite the Council operating an effective and highly efficient kerb-side integrated alternate weekly recycling and weekly residual waste collection system, that is recognised as being amongst the top (lowest) cost quartile in the country, it has still been possible to submit an initial qualifying bid.

The bid, which seeks funding of £750k is to support the continued provision of the weekly collection and to develop the food waste collection referred to above in 3.1. A more detailed bid is to be submitted in August 2012 and a decision on the award of funding is to be given by the DCLG in October 2012.

The bid is basically in two parts, funding for the provision of:-

- (a) two specialised refuse collection vehicles with bodies specifically designed to accommodate the highly aggressive co-mingled glass and plastic recyclate. These vehicles would replace the existing vehicles that do not have the modified bodies and are hence wearing fast.
- (b) a number of 240ltr wheel bins to replace the existing 140ltr green waste containers, therefore providing additional capacity to accommodate the selected food waste. In practice, householders requesting additional green waste capacity would be given the choice of accommodating either a new 240ltr bin to replace their existing 140ltr container, or an additional refurbished 140ltr bin that had been recovered from a property. Properties without gardens wishing to participate in the waste food collection would be offered a refurbished 140ltr bin. These larger capacities would be phased in over period of 2 years.

The submitted bid also includes funding to adequately promote the initiative in order to generate the participation rates.

A successful bid would lead to a significant increase in the tonnage of the green waste collected, leading to an increase in income derived from the recycling credit claimed at the rate of £49.69 / tonne (2012/13 figures). If funding is awarded it is estimated that once the scheme was fully implemented the additional income generated as a result of the diverted food waste alone will be in the region of £35,000pa.

3.3. **Collection of Paper and Cardboard Recyclate**

Discussions with the County Council on the future arrangements for the collection of the paper and cardboard recyclate as raised at the previous meeting of this committee are continuing.

The contract with the existing contractor that provides the service has been extended in order to maintain the service whilst the future direction is determined. A joint initiative between the contractor and RVBC staff to increase the participation rates and hence the tonnage of paper collected is on going.

3.4 **Special or Bulky Item Collection Service**

A minimum charge of £12 is now made to householders for the collection of up to 4 large or bulky items of refuse that cannot be physically accommodated in the normal kerbside weekly refuse collection service. The charge for this service, effective from the 1st April 2012, was introduced as part of the Service Review measures approved by the November 2011 meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee. Prior to this date the service was largely free, with commercial and building type wastes being chargeable.

The new charge has been introduced without significant adverse comment. In the first month of operation 234 enquiries in relation to the service were received and 111 continued to request the paid service. The remainder said they would make alternative arrangements for the disposal of their items.

It is too early to make long term predictions for the levels of demand for the service based upon the actual level of collections now being made. However, the current 66% reduction in the numbers of collections from householders is close to the level as originally predicted. The income being generated is therefore in line with the prediction. Officers are also continuing to explore opportunities to reuse or recycle materials collected through the bulky collection service.

The introduction of the charge is likely to have some impact on the numbers of fly-tipping incidents reported. This situation will be closely monitored and reported to this committee once some meaningful figures have been recorded.

A further effect of the reduction of the reduced number of collections is that the numbers of temporary or agency staff needed to operate the overall service is correspondingly reduced.

4 **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources**
The initiatives seek to protect or enhance the resources of the Council.
- **Technical, Environmental and Legal**
There are no specific technical or legal issues arising directly out of the report at this stage. The Environmental issues are positive in that all the initiatives in some way seek to reduce the amount of residual waste generated.
- **Political**
There are no specific political issues arising out of this report.

- **Reputation**

The overall recycling and refuse collection service is highly regarded by the public. Whilst the introduction of charges for the collection of special or bulky items cannot be universally welcome, all the measures and initiatives do seek to further develop the extent and sustainability of these valued services and hence support the positive reputation of the Council.

5 **CONCLUSION**

Members are requested to note this report

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For further information, please ask for Terry Longden 01200 414523

Ref: CSC / Refuse & Recycling Service Update / TL / May 2012

Background papers:

Report to Community Services Committee of 13 March 2012 "Waste Paper and Cardboard Collection Arrangements", Minute number 773

Report to Policy & Finance Committee of 22 November 2011 "Review of Fees and Charges", Minute number 509

Bid to DCLG "Weekly Collection Support Bid" May 2012