

**THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON FRIDAY 20 JULY 2007**

Present: Councillor C Patching (Chair)  
Councillors B Burn, R Burnip,  
Mrs AE Laing, Mrs S Mason,  
D Milsom, and T Unsworth

Also present: Councillor G Patterson – Executive Member for Liveability

**1. REVISION OF POLICIES FOR REFUSE COLLECTION**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Liveability on the revision of policies for refuse collection, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member. Members were also circulated with details of other local authority practice and feedback from a Waste Officers discussion forum.

The purpose of the report was to consider potential new policies for refuse collection services which were aimed at encouraging residents to produce less waste and recycle more.

Workshops held on 16 and 17 July 2007 had helped shape the policies contained within the report and a summary of those findings were attached as Appendix 1.

O Sherratt, Director of Community Services explained that when the wheeled bin system was first introduced in Easington, residents were informed that extra refuse outside the bin (side waste) would not be taken. However, refuse collectors continued to assist residents by removing it and this helpfulness had potentially contributed to the District having one of the highest satisfaction rates in the country. However this had also hindered performance and there was evidence to suggest a direct link between households not actively participating in recycling and the prevalence of side waste.

He added that in reviewing current waste policies, a further issue arose, namely localised problems where a minority of households left wheeled bins out on the street for long periods. This caused problems of street litter particularly when the bins fell over and problems with secondary fires/arson. Figures in the report illustrating the number of incidents highlighted this problem. By reducing the time frame for when wheeled bins could be left out may assist in reducing refuse container fires and go some way to assist in achieving reduction targets.

Members had expressed concerns previously about fortnightly collections and the proposed policies discounted this. 'Waste per head' figures set out in the report illustrated that if introduced it could have a more severe impact in Easington than it would to an area with much lower waste per head.

He continued that in addition to side waste, there was a need to consider the number of households in the District who had more than one refuse bin. This should be maintained for large households, however there was likely to be a lot of instances where having two bins was above needs, and may provide a disincentive for recycling.

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A third policy area for consideration related to special collections. Under the new proposals the majority of items would continue to be free of charge for collection with a charge for the collection of certain fixtures and fittings.

Section 4 in the report detailed the proposed policies for implementation on 1 October 2007.

K Parkinson, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager outlined the process for implementation of the proposed policies as detailed in Appendix 2, stating that the key to the success of this was to ensure that adequate publicity was given to the proposed Charter for the collection of household waste as detailed in appendix 3 to the report. This Charter asked residents to adhere to certain restrictions to improve performance without the Council having to enforce recycling or increase costs.

He advised that staff training would be provided and two weeks prior to implementation personal visits would be made to residents in the worst performing areas, to explain the changes to the policies and encourage more recycling.

In discussing the proposals, a Member asked if an increase in fly tipping was anticipated as a result of the new proposals. O. Sherratt reiterated that communication and planning was key to the success of this, allowing plenty of time to promote the new policies. He did not anticipate a marked increase in fly tipping and was confident that the situation could be kept under control, however, levels of fly tipping would continue to be monitored.

It was proposed to review the impact of these policies with the Executive Member for Liveability after six months of operation, and the Chair asked that a report be submitted to this Scrutiny Committee at that time, or sooner if necessary. Thereafter, the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager would report on progress as part of his scheduled position statement to the Committee.

A Member asked if the pilot for the recycling of plastic bottles would be extended across the District. O. Sherratt advised that feedback on the success of the initiative was expected in September 2007. This would include costs to extend the scheme District wide. He added that a further report was to be prepared later this year on options for the collection of plastics, cardboard and green waste.

Reference was made to consultation with the crews of the refuse collection vehicles who would have to deal with potential queries/complaints from residents. O. Sherratt advised that staff would be fully trained in all aspects of the proposals, and reiterated the importance of publicity to ensure that residents fully understood the policies which in turn should help crews to carry out their new duties.

The Chair noted that in the additional paper circulated, one Authority placed side waste in the bin once emptied. K. Parkinson responded that this practice did not encourage residents to recycle and therefore was not an option that had been considered.

The Chair referred to Section 2.2 in the report in relation to Trade Union consultation. He suggested that this should also state that on the ground

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support and guidance would be given to ensure a consistent and fair approach to the policies.

In Section 4.2 concerning the standards of refuse containers provided free of charge to residents, he asked that it be stated that a second 'kerb it' would be available free of charge to those residents who felt they needed one.

The Chair asked who would be authorised to make minor amendments to the policies and it was noted that authority would be granted to the Executive Member for Liveability in consultation with the Director of Community Services.

A Member referred to the recycling of green waste and concerns expressed by residents about cut grass being left on open spaces and footpaths. O. Sherratt advised that blowers were used and the Council tried to be as responsive as possible to requests to leave areas clear of grass cuttings. Officers had also looked into the possibility of composting as previously suggested by Members, however on examination it was found that the costs would be too high to make this feasible.

To conclude, the Chair commented on the workload of the Committee during the week which, in addition to the ordinary meeting had included two consultative events and this Special meeting. He expressed his appreciation to Members and Officers for their efforts during this period.

**RESOLVED** that the information contained within the report, be noted and subject to the amendments being made to the report as outlined, the Executive be recommended to:-

- (a) confirm its commitment to weekly collections for the foreseeable future;
- (b) approve the policies contained in the report relating to side waste, second bins and bins left for collection, to commence from 1 October 2007, including in appropriate circumstances a £40 annual charge to households requiring a second bin;
- (c) the Director of Community Services, in conjunction with the Executive Member for Liveability, be authorised to finalise the procedures and Charter set out in Appendices 2 and 3 of the report;
- (d) the proposals for sensitive application of any enforcement procedures only as a last resort, be noted and the powers as specified in recommendation 4 (i) – (iii) be authorised;
- (e) the majority of bulky household items continue to be collected free of charge with the exception of some fixtures and fittings, where the current charge would increase by £2.00.

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