

Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee



22 January 2016

Rural and Isolated Bin Collections

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and Terry Collins, Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of the Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on proposals to harmonise the council's refuse and recycling collection policy relating to properties situated on private unadopted lanes and farm tracks across the county.

Background

2. The majority of households in County Durham have their bins collected at the kerbside adjacent to the public highway. There are around 4,000 farms and other isolated properties throughout the county served by unadopted private roads. Prior to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), refuse collection was a district council function. Each authority adopted its own policy to servicing these properties. In Teesdale and Weardale, the council would not in the majority of cases, travel down unadopted roads and established collection points at lane ends. In other areas of the county, the normal approach would be to collect from outside of the property.
3. These different policies were adopted at LGR and have remained in place. Around half the properties affected have a lane end collection. These are mainly in the west of the county. The remainder (2,000) receive a collection from outside of the property.
4. An initial assessment indicates that around 1,400 are considered suitable for a lane end collection.

Proposal

5. It is proposed that a new bin collection policy would bring into line all rural and isolated properties. This would involve those households who currently have their bins emptied from outside their properties to have their rubbish and recycling collected from the end of the lane close to the highway, unless it is not practical or safe to do so.
6. There are several reasons for this proposal:
 - a) The County Council is continually looking to make services more efficient.

- b) To bring the service received by rural and isolated properties in other parts of the county into line with the service used in Teesdale and Weardale, which has operated successfully for many years.
 - c) Reduce damage to refuse collection vehicles and damage caused to farm tracks and private roads.
 - d) Opportunities for affected properties to receive recycling collections that were previously excluded from recycling initiatives due to large recycling collection vehicles being unable to negotiate the farm tracks and private roads.
7. All residents affected by the proposals have received a letter and were invited to complete a survey. 42% of survey forms have been returned to date. A copy of the questions is enclosed in **Appendix 2**.
8. The Head of Direct Services will provide members with a PowerPoint presentation which will cover:
- Current position
 - The need for change
 - Benchmarking with other authorities
 - Headline consultation results from affected properties
 - Safeguards that would be built into the policy
 - Next steps

Recommendation

9. Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:
- a) Note the content of the report and the presentation
 - b) Comment on the proposals as a key consultee.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Opportunities for savings contributing to £185,000 MTFP savings

Staffing - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – Residents experiencing difficulties in putting out their rubbish due to age or disability may qualify for the council's assisted bin collection service

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – Safeguards need to be introduced to reduce potential fly tipping, vandalism and arson to bins

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues – See **Equality and Diversity** section above

Risk and Legal Implications – Mitigation of potential insurance claims for damage to private roads and repairs to vehicles

Appendix 2: Consultation on refuse collections from farms/isolated properties

Have your say

We understand that each property is different and we will need to carefully consider which option will be most suitable at your property. By answering the following questions, you will help us to understand your circumstances, views and any concerns you may have.

By providing your address below, it will help us assess the suitability of introducing a lane ends collection policy at your property. Your answers will be confidential and we will only use the information for this consultation.

Name

Address 1

Address 2

Postcode

Please tick all those that apply:

Q1 Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a standardised approach to the collection of bins from the edge of the highway where it is safe to do so?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Please explain your reasons:

Q2 Would you require additional assistance if a lane ends collection policy was introduced at your property? (Please note that our refuse and recycling collection policy states that additional assistance is available to residents who are unable to transport their refuse and recycling to their collection point because of ill health, infirmity or disability and without other occupants in the household able to assist them).

Yes

No

Not sure

If yes, please tell us why:

Q3 Please describe any reasons why you feel your property is not suitable for having a refuse and recycling collection point adjacent to the highway.

Q4 Considering the two options for lane end collections, please tell us which would be your preference if the changes are introduced.

Relocate and cluster existing bin(s) at the edge of the highway.
Replace existing individual bins with a large communal bin.

Please explain your reasons:

Q5 If the option chosen for your property was to relocate and cluster existing bin(s) at the edge of the highway, would you need our help to relocate your bins to your new storage position?

Yes

No

Not sure

If yes, please tell us why:

Q6 After the consultation period is complete, we can offer you a meeting at your property to agree a suitable location for your bin storage point or discuss the lane end collection proposal further. Would you like a meeting at your property?

Yes

No

Not sure

If yes, please tell us the issues you would like to discuss:

To help us to organise a meeting or to contact you about additional assistance, please provide your contact details here.

Telephone

Email

Q7 Please tell us any other comments relating to this proposal or provide suggestions on alternative solutions for us to make our savings.

About you

We have responsibilities to ensure that certain groups are protected by equality legislation. If you could answer a few questions about yourself it will help us to monitor our performance. These questions are entirely optional. Your answers will be confidential and we will only use the information for this consultation.

Q8 Are you?

Male

Female

Q9 What is your age?

Under 16

16-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75+

Prefer not to say

Q10 Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

(This may include any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which has a substantial effect on your day-to-day life. Long standing means it has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least a year).

Yes

No

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return by Monday, 11 January 2016.