

REFUSE & RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Agenda Item 1c

Contact Details:- Ian Haines
Designation:- Environmental Policy Manager
Ext. No:- 2207
E Mail Address:- ian.haines@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:- [Refuse & Recycling Task and Finish Group Report Feb 08](#)
Financial Implications:- See report, detail contained in separate business efficiency report
Equalities Implications:- Extension of alternate weekly collections will provide same level of service to all areas of the District.
Legal Implications:- None
Options: See report and detail in separate business efficiency report
Risks: None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Refuse & Recycling Task and Finish Group was set up in 2007 to review the Council's arrangements for refuse and recycling. This included an operational review of the current working practices and procedures, with the aim of identifying service improvements. The Group's final report was presented to Council in February 2008 and set out 5 recommendations which are listed within the attached report.

The content of the Group's report is pertinent to the Council's business efficiency review of Waste Management as there is a correlation between some of the issues highlighted by the Group and those identified by Alexander Consulting. This reinforced the need to seek efficiencies in the way the service is currently operated and to consider how future service requirements should be met.

The recommendations made have been considered in some detail and will help inform the proposals put forward as part of the business efficiency review.

DECISION

To confirm that the recommendations will be taken into consideration in forthcoming decisions relating to the efficiency of the service.

REFUSE & RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Background

The Task & Finish Group was set up to review the alternate weekly refuse and recycling collections and address two key questions:

1. How is the system working, and in particular do all residents receive the same level of service and what customer feedback has been received?
2. Can it be improved, do any authorities do alternate weekly collection better, what pilot schemes have been run and are they successful and what is best practice?

The work included:

- A benchmarking / fact finding visit to St Edmundsbury Borough Council who have rolled out a similar alternate weekly scheme to the entire District and is one of the top performing waste collection authorities in the country.
- A study of food waste collections in the WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) pilot local authorities.
- Interviews with key officers.

Findings

The Task and Finish Group made five clear recommendations:

1. The Council should collect data showing the reasons why some customers are dissatisfied with certain areas of refuse / recycling.
2. A ban on side waste should be extended through lobbying for the opening of a new recycling centre for household waste in Braintree and for a further facility in the North of the District.
3. Fortnightly waste collections should be rolled out into the whole of the Braintree District as soon as practicable. The replacement of the waste collection fleet in 2008/09 would be an ideal opportunity to purchase vehicles to facilitate multimaterial collection in both sacks and bins.
4. The potential benefits of the following should be investigated when resources allow:
 - evaluation of the WRAP food waste trials;
 - problems experienced by households with limited external storage;
 - a cost benefit analysis and comparison with other authorities should be carried out once alternate weekly collections are rolled out to the whole district.
5. The Council should recommend that the education authority includes food storage as part of the curriculum relating to cookery in schools with the aim of minimising waste.

Response

1. We fully endorse the findings of the Group and further work will be undertaken to explore the underlying causes of dissatisfaction.
2. It is recognised that the continued need to collect waste presented outside of the wheeled bin is inefficient and reduces overall recycling performance. This impact is addressed in the business efficiency review. The Group's suggestion that the planned opening of a Household Waste Recycling Centre in Braintree for 2009/10 would help manage public acceptance of a ban is noted and the Council will continue to press for the opening of additional ECC Recycling Centres elsewhere in the District.
3. The roll out of alternate weekly collections to the remainder of the District and the use of more flexible vehicles capable of loading bins or sacks is addressed by the business efficiency review. It is recognised that operating a single service to the whole of the District is more equitable and cost effective.
4. The WRAP report on food waste trials is expected later in the summer and will be considered in relation to BDC services. Current work on business efficiency suggests that the weekly collections trialled by WRAP are too expensive to be a realistic option in the short term. It is recognised that households with restricted external storage find it difficult to participate fully in the alternate weekly service and bids will be made for externally funded research into the problems faced by these customers. Performance benchmarking with other authorities is good management practice and will continue, although it is accepted that this will be more meaningful with a district wide implementation of alternate weekly collections.
5. Food storage and spoilage is taught as part of the GCSE Food Technology Syllabus. Since the group reported, a major national "Love Food Hate Waste" communications campaign has been launched by WRAP and BDC have been active in promoting the campaign locally. There are plans to incorporate this message into our own environmental education work in 2009/10.

Conclusion

The Task and Finish Group's report is pertinent to the business efficiency review of Waste Management and many of the recommendations will form part of this review in relation to how we deliver improvements and efficiencies to the service in the future.