

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Waste and Emergency Planning
2.	Date:	30th July 2012
3.	Title:	Schedules and frequencies for emptying litter and dog waste bins
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report outlines changes made to street cleansing schedules as a result of Cabinet approved budget savings and the impact that this has had on the Service's capacity to achieve the standards identified in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet Member considers the options for improving the service of emptying litter and dog waste bins.

7. Proposals and Details

Background

The street cleansing function is part of the Leisure and Community Services Team within the Streetpride. It carries out scheduled litter picking and emptying of litter and dog waste and, in addition a Miscellaneous Cleansing Team Based at Hellaby Depot carries out mechanical sweeping, graffiti removal, fly tip removal, weed killing, leaf removal, and response to other cleansing issues (e.g. road traffic accidents). There is also a specific cleansing team based and dedicated to Rotherham town centre.

The service is divided into two delivery teams.

- Eastern Team: working from Barbers Avenue Depot, Kiveton Park Depot and Hellaby Depot.
- Western Team: working from Oaks Lane Depot and Ulley Country Park.

There are approximately 1,900 litter and dog waste bins across the borough, most of which are emptied at least once a week.

Impact of recent budget savings

The reduction in the street cleansing budget means that there are now 10 less staff working on litter picking and dog / litter bin emptying and there are 3 less vehicles available to the team for this work. As a result of the reductions in staff and vehicles the schedules have had to be revised as follows:

- Areas previously scheduled for work 2 or 3 times per week have been reduced to once 1 per week, with the exception of parks which remain the same
- Areas previously scheduled for work once every 3 weeks are now done monthly
- Areas previously scheduled for work every 9 weeks are now done every 10 weeks.

The changes to the schedules have resulted in an increased number of customer contacts from residents and Ward Members, and the reduced frequency of emptying bins directly contributes to an increase in the amount of litter on the streets..

Legislation

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes duties under section 89 (1) and (2) on certain landowners / occupiers (duty bodies) to keep specified land clear of litter and refuse, and on Local Authorities and the Secretary of State to keep clean public highways for which they are responsible.

The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse states:

'It is expected that managers of land should, through monitoring and the appropriate use of resources, keep their land clear of litter and refuse so that it does not fall below a grade B and is cleansed to an A on a regular basis.'

Grade A: No litter or refuse

Grade B: Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items

Site inspections and contacts from residents and Ward Members suggest that standards in some areas are not being achieved. To date the following areas have been identified as having one or more hot spots.

Eastern Area	Western Area
Bramley	Herringthorpe
Wath	Clifton
Swinton	Kimberworth
Sunnyside	Blackburn
Rawmarsh	Kimberworth Park
North Anston	Wingfield
Maltby	Greasbrough
	Whiston
	Broom
	Canklow
	Brinsworth
	Treeton
	Aston

In respect of the changes made to the street cleansing schedules an action plan (Appendix A) has already been established and a full review of the service will take place early in the new year, this will support decision making on the deployment of resources for the remainder of the year and into the financial year 2013/14 and beyond. However it is apparent that in order to achieve the necessary standards within these identified areas an additional resource is required.

Options for improving the service

1 – selective removal of bins

While many bins are filled up before the scheduled emptying day, there are also a number which do not become full; selective removal of such bins would be fairly low risk, and could release capacity to increase frequencies elsewhere.

2 – using refuse collection service to support street cleansing

Most litter bins are on scheduled refuse collection routes and could therefore be emptied by the (black bin) refuse collection crews. This is however an alternative weekly service and would not fully resolve the problem caused by the reduction in frequencies; this change would also mean a minor change in working practices for refuse crews.

3 – installation of compaction bins in selected locations

Solar-powered compaction bins are now available on the market and these can significantly reduce the frequency of emptying by a factor of up to 10 times. These bins also provide alerts when the bins are (nearly) full so resources can be directed to them when necessary. These bins are however expensive, and would either require a capital investment or revenue funding from outside the service budget to be identified.

4 – reinstatement of resources into emptying of litter and dog waste bins

To reinstate collections from litter and dog waste bins in identified hotspots would require the deployment of a full-time member of staff and vehicle, however as there are no 'spare' resources within Street Cleansing, this could only be done by reducing

resources on other parts of the service; there are no obvious areas where this could be done without having a similar detrimental effect elsewhere.

5 – increased enforcement

There is a strong suspicion that many of the litter bins adjacent to local shopping areas especially are being used by businesses to dispose of commercial waste. The Council has powers under the Environmental Protection Act (delegated to officers in NAS) to inspect Duty of Care notices and require businesses to make appropriate arrangements for the disposal of their waste. Setting this as an enforcement priority would drain resources from other areas of work.

8. Finance

Options 1 and 2 above are likely to be cost-neutral. Capital costs for compaction bins (option 3) are being assessed, and the cost of deploying additional resources (option 4) would be approximately £20k this financial year.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The areas above have been identified by reference to recent inspections and contacts from residents and Ward Members. As the current schedules have only just been introduced it is possible that the list may change as other areas are identified.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Standards in some areas are not meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse

Contact Name : David Burton, Director of Streetpride, ext 22918,

David-Streetpride.Burton@rotherham.gov.uk