

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MEETING:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2<sup>ND</sup> December 2015

**SUBJECT:** THE IMPACT OF INTRODUCING 3 WEEKLY REFUSE COLLECTION IN OCTOBER 2014

**REPORT FROM:** Councillor Tony Isherwood, Cabinet Member for Environment

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Glenn Stuart, Head of Waste Management

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In July 2014 Bury made the decision that it was to become the first Council in England to introduce a 3 weekly residual waste collection service to households, in response to the need to improve recycling performance and make subsequent savings in avoided waste disposal costs of more than £800,000. This change was implemented in October 2014. At the same time the collection frequency of the blue and green dry recycling bins was increased from 4 weekly to 3 weekly. That meant that from October last year grey, blue and green bins were all emptied on a 3 weekly cycle, whilst the brown garden and food waste bins continued to be collected every 2 weeks.
- 1.2 The objective of the changes was to encourage a behavioural change amongst residents, which would result in an increase in household waste being diverted from the grey bin into the 3 recycling bins. Residents were still being provided with 360 litres of bin capacity per week, as before. There was simply a shift of emphasis from residual (grey bin) waste capacity to recycling, taking into account that 75% of household collected waste can be recycled if residents put the 'right stuff in the right bin.'
- 1.3 The Council published its 'Zero Waste Strategy' in July 2014, which was developed to provide a framework to increase recycling rates and manage waste to achieve a more resource efficient society. It also supports the aims and objectives of the GMWDA Municipal Waste Management Strategy jointly agreed by its 9 constituent Waste Collection Authorities. The strategy contains a number of aims:
- To recycle 60% of collected bin waste by March 2016
  - To reduce disposal costs by cutting the amount of waste going to landfill and
  - To support the GM strategy on reducing carbon emissions.

## **2.0 RESULTS**

- 2.1 Appendix A shows the tonnages collected for each bin type, month by month from October to September, comparing 2013/14 with 2014/15 i.e. the 12 month period pre and post the introduction of 3 weekly collections in October 2014. It can be seen from the figures that the tonnages of recycling collected have increased and the tonnages of residual waste have decreased significantly since 3 weekly collections were introduced in October 2014.
- 2.2 A total of 5252 tonnes less residual waste has been collected over the 12 month period following implementation of the new service. This reduction is greater than the increases in recycling tonnages collected in the blue, green and brown bins. This is not untypical when such a change is implemented. The same happened when 2 weekly refuse collections were introduced in 2011. This could be accounted for by residents generally thinking more about what they buy especially in the case of food. There has been a genuine reduction in overall waste collected.
- 2.3 Appendix B shows fly tipping tonnages over the same period as at 2.1 above. There is very little variance in the fly tipping tonnages. There will be seasonal variations in fly tipping and the majority of fly tipping relates to waste such as builders rubble, furniture, commercial waste, house renovation waste and some white goods.
- 2.4 Appendix C shows the collected bin waste recycling rate month to month, from October – September, comparing 2013/14 with 2014/15 i.e. the 12 month period pre and post the introduction of 3 weekly collections in October 2014.
- 2.5 Information relating to tonnages of waste delivered to Viridor operated HWRCs (Household Waste Recycling Centres) in the borough for the 12 months pre and post the introduction of 3 weekly collections has been requested from the GMWDA but at the time of writing is not available. This is due to a major and ongoing ICT issue which has prevented access to the data. This information will be tabled at the meeting if it becomes available in the meantime.
- 2.6 When the 3 weekly collection service went live last October a new initiative was launched whereby residents could sign up to receive bin alert e-mails to remind them of their collection days and by the end of September 2015 approximately 11,500 had subscribed.
- 2.7 A decision was taken in July 2014 that any household of any size should be given the opportunity to apply for additional grey bin capacity if they thought they had a genuine need. Every application would be subject to a home visit and a waste audit. 464 applications have been received and processed since October 2014 and 285 have been approved.
- 2.8 The table below shows the number of recycling bins that have been requested by residents via the Customer Contact Centre and Councils Web Site since 01 July 2014, when the proposal to move to 3 weekly collections first became public. If these figures are accepted at face value then one has to assume that the vast majority are from residents making a conscious effort to begin recycling who didn't do so previously. This is precisely the behavioural change in residents which was hoped for.

<b>BLUE</b>	<b>3567</b>
<b>BROWN (INCLUDING 23L CADDY)</b>	<b>6121</b>
<b>KITCHEN CADDY</b>	<b>5724</b>
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>3068</b>

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

The move to 3 weekly residual waste collections has been successful, in that recycling performance has improved and the hoped for savings in avoided waste disposal costs have been achieved.

However, the Council is not resting on its laurels and is determined to forge ahead and push recycling even higher by introducing enforcement and more effective targeted communication activity. It is recognised however that, following the step change in performance associated with the reduction in residual bin capacity, any further improvement will be incremental and much more difficult to achieve.

Due to this success there is a huge amount of interest being shown by other Councils across the country in what Bury has achieved. The Head of Waste Management has spoken at a number of events in recent weeks including the LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) National Conference in Nottingham, the APSE (Association in Public Service Excellence) Environmental Services National Seminar in Warwickshire and the Recycling and Waste Management Exhibition at Birmingham NEC.

A number of other Councils have visited or are due to visit Bury in the near future to learn about our experiences and there have been a considerable number of telephone and e-mail enquiries and requests for information.

Rochdale has followed Bury's lead in recent weeks and Salford has just announced that it is considering a similar move to 3 weekly collections in 2016. Other GM authorities may follow suit too and within a matter of a couple of years or so 3 weekly residual waste collections could well be quite common.

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#### **List of Background Papers:-**

#### **Contact Details:-**

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