

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **EXECUTIVE**

**DATE:**                   **27 MARCH 2012**

**REPORT BY:**           **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

**SUBJECT:**               **REVIEW OF NEW WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE**

**1.00**    **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01    To inform the Executive of the outcome of the review of the new Managed Weekly Collection Service.
- 1.02    To seek Executive approval of the proposed Improvement Action Plan in respect of the service.

**2.00**    **BACKGROUND**

2.01    In June 2010 the Council adopted its Municipal Waste Strategy. The Strategy contains a number of key actions which were needed to meet the challenging targets set out in the all Wales National Waste Strategy 'Towards Zero Waste'.

2.02    On the 15th March 2011, the Executive approved the Councils Household Waste Collection Policy - **Appendix 1** which introduced the new collection service consisting of the following elements:

- A weekly collection of recyclables
  - A weekly collection of food waste
  - A fortnightly collection of general domestic waste
- Alternating with:*
- A fortnightly collection of green/garden waste

The new collection service was designed to increase participation in recycling and reduce our reliance on landfill in order to meet the tough recycling targets set by Welsh Government.

2.03    The "rollout" of the new service was achieved by a series of pilot schemes and eventually by a County wide "rollout" which commenced on the 7th November 2011.

2.04    The approval process for the new collection scheme required that a review be undertaken to assess the success of the new service. This was planned to take place in March 2012 however, following a debate at full Council on 31st January 2012, the following resolution was carried which brought forward the review:-

*"The Council expresses serious concern about the managed weekly waste collection service. Many Flintshire residents have been left without their collection commitments which has created both confusion in our communities and rubbish strewn streets. We recognise the hard work of front-line workers but remain concerned about the manner with which the new waste collection arrangements have been introduced by this administration. Therefore this Council requests the relevant Scrutiny Committee to conduct an immediate inquiry into the adequacy of the new managed weekly collection service and to provide a report upon its findings to a Full County Council meeting"*

2.05 The timetable for the review is as follows :-

Executive approval of Terms of Reference	21 <sup>st</sup> February, 2012
Members Survey	1 <sup>st</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012
T&CC Survey	Jan – February, 2012
Customer Survey	9 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012
Employee Survey	9 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012
Member Workshop	23 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2012
Special Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	7 <sup>th</sup> March, 2012
Report to Executive	27 <sup>th</sup> March, 2012
Report to Full Council	27 <sup>th</sup> March, 2012

2.06 The Executive approved the Terms of Reference for the review at their meeting on 21st February 2012 as follows:-

1. To clarify the expected performance standards for a settled, high performing collection service;
2. To understand the current position against these expected performance standards;
3. To review the actions being taken to address current concerns to meet the expected performance standards, including any recommendations on any changes to service delivery that may be required, and to explore levels of confidence in these actions.

2.07 The review has been undertaken by service related officers in conjunction with officers from corporate services to ensure the process was objective and provided meaningful outcomes.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The Councils Household Waste Collection Policy which pre-empted the new service was introduced to ensure the Council achieved the following Welsh Government statutory recycling targets:

- 2012/13 = 52% of all waste produced should be recycled
- 2015/16 = 58%
- 2019/20 = 64%

- 2024/25 = 70%

3.02 Introducing the new full service on 7th November 2011 has had the following impact on waste collections:

- Reducing Landfill by 720 Tonnes per month – compared to the same period last year.
- Collecting 457 Tonnes of food waste per month.
- Collecting 212 Tonnes more recycling compared to the same period last year.
- There is an overall reduction in total waste arisings because the public is already thinking more carefully about what they buy and how they use it and in doing so are creating less waste.
- There has been a reduction in the Council's Landfill Tax cost, partially offset by the cost of treating the food waste collected.

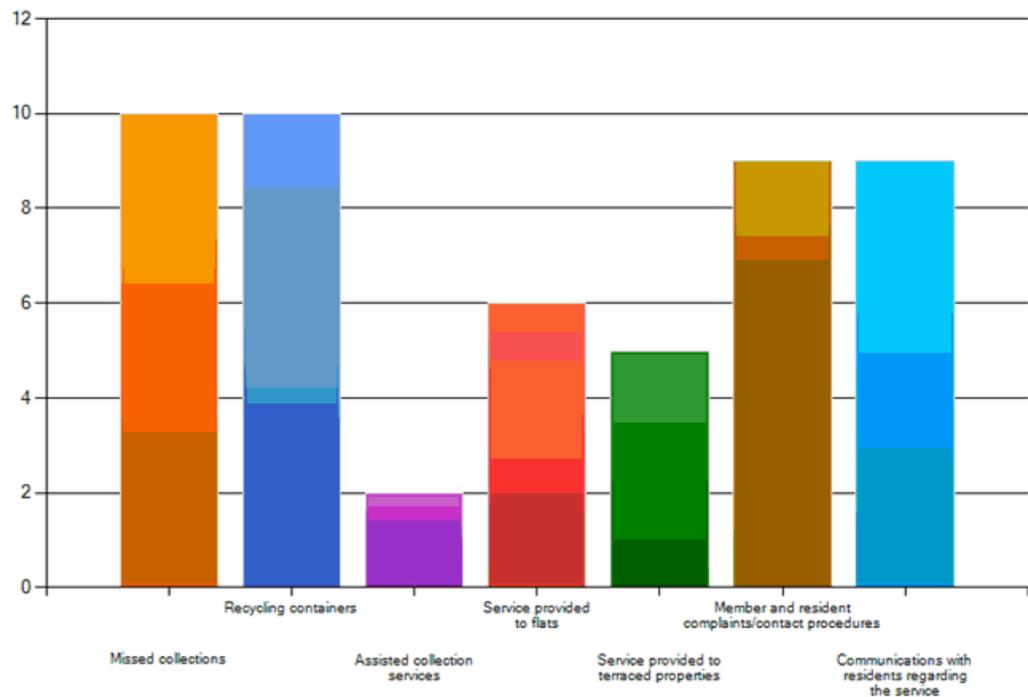
3.03 Calls to the Councils waste contact centre fell to pre-launch levels approximately 12 weeks after the rollout in November 2011 - **Appendix 2**.

3.04 The surveys have been carried out across a range of groups as follows:

- **Members** – Each Member was invited to submit their comments and concerns on the service – 29 responses were received.
- **Town & Community Council Survey** - The Chief Executive sought feedback on the new service during visits to Town and Community Councils from November and February 2012.
- **Customer survey** – Telephone calls were made to customers who contacted the contact centre during week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012 to gain feedback on their experience and satisfaction with the service. Staff also carried out face to face interviews at supermarkets across the County on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2012 – In total 190 responses were received from customers.
- **Employee survey** – All staff (operational and office based) were invited to submit comments on the new service. These were accepted anonymously if the employee so desired – 15 responses were received.

3.05 The Members survey produced the following chart which shows the key issues:-

If you ticked either 'significant concerns' or 'some concerns' in Q1 above please tell us what your concerns relate to? Please tick as many boxes as apply



3.06 The Town & Community Council feedback indicated the following key issues:

#### Workforce/Training

- Some new local teams do not have local knowledge and need to settle/not be changed.
- Need to have receptacles collected from within cartilage, and returned, on narrow rural lanes.
- Bag receptacles blowing away in high winds.

#### Policy

- Access to flats/collection methods.
- Inability of some in sheltered housing complexes to take receptacles to communal collection points.
- Medical waste collections not always reliable.

#### Plant/Equipment

- Paperwaste blowing out of the back of vehicles in high winds and some cans/bottles being spilled when put into vehicles (vehicle design/care of workforce solutions).

#### Communication

- Concern that food waste is being placed in with residual waste.

3.07 The customer survey highlighted the following key issues:

- Receptacles not being returned after collection
- Not receiving supply of bio bags when tags are displayed on caddy

- Recycling blowing around streets after collections
- Repeated missed collections
- Bags/boxes going missing, long wait for deliveries

3.08 The employee survey highlighted the following key issues:

- Delivering new service with a large number of agency staff
- Round review software did not capture all the properties, in particular some Flats and some rural properties
- Side waste is a big issue, collecting waste which is not built into the time of the rounds
- Underestimated the amount of requests for recycling bags/boxes
- Vehicles were too large to access some areas in particular narrow entry's and some Rural locations

3.09 The responses revealed consistent themes from each of the surveys and these were then considered by the Members workshop under the following headings:

- Communications and Complaints process
- Operations Issues
- Containers
- Missed Collections

Full details of the issues raised and suggestions provided by Members at the workshop are shown on **Appendix 3**.

3.10 The issues and suggestions from the workshop were then built into Improvement Action Plans, specifying expected delivery dates and nominating officers to deliver the changes where appropriate.

The Improvement Action Plans are summarised under the following areas of control:

1. Changes to Policy
2. Operational/Training issues
3. Vehicles/Containers
4. Communication

The draft Improvement Action Plans are attached **Appendix 4**.

3.11 The Improvement Action Plans will in future be integrated into the Streetscene Service Plan and a further report will be presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable the progress made by the service to be considered in 6 months time.

3.12 It was intended that the service delivered to Flats within the County was to follow the November 2011 rollout however some changes to collection arrangements became necessary at some of the sites for operational reasons. An Action Plan detailing the proposed rollout to all flats has been prepared

and will be available for Executive and Full Council meeting. This will allow the new arrangements to be introduced to flats over the following 3 month period. The process will follow the recommendations from the current review making sure the lessons learnt from the larger rollout are taken on board.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the Executive :-

4.01.1 Confirms that the review process has met the Terms of Reference stated in 2.06 of this report.

4.01.2 Approves the Improvement Action Plan shown in Appendix 4 for the service resulting from the review.

4.01.3 Considers a further report on the progress made against the Improvement Action Plan at its meeting in October 2012.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 The Managed Weekly Collections service is anticipated to deliver a further £245k of efficiencies in 2012/13. This is in addition to the £200k that was estimated for 2011/12.

5.02 The 2011/12 efficiency was not fully deliverable due to considerable one-off costs being incurred upon full roll-out in November. Additional labour and vehicle costs have been incurred to deliver the service and significant numbers of new recycling bins and sacks were requested by householders. However, it has been possible to offset all these costs against landfill savings from increased diversion to recycling and food waste.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 The Managed Weekly Collections Service is reducing the amount of waste taken to landfill and has had a significant impact on the Council's recycling performance.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 The service was subjected to a desk top EIA prior to rollout.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.1 The service will continue to consult with stakeholders and residents regarding the service.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Extensive consultation was undertaken prior to the implementation of the new services and as part of the review process.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

- 12.01
- Appendix 1 – The Councils Household Waste Collection Policy
  - Appendix 2 – Call levels
  - Appendix 3 – Summary of issues raised and suggestions provided by Members
  - Appendix 4 – Improvement Action Plans

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985**  
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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