

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 MARCH, 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council, held at County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 7 March, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor M.J. Peers (Chairman)

Councillors: E.G. Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, J.E. Falshaw, G. Hardcastle, C.M. Jones, S. Jones, C. Legg, D.I. Mackie, C.A. Thomas and D.E. Wisinger

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors: J.B. Attridge for A. Minshull and R.J.T. Guest for C.J. Dolphin

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, H. Brown and H.D. Hutchinson

APOLOGIES: Councillors: C. Hinds and N.M. Jones

CONTRIBUTORS: Executive Member for Waste Management, Executive Member for Environment, Director of Environment, Head of Streetscene, Waste Services Manager, Waste Strategy & Recycling Officer, Team Leaders Waste and Technical Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (including Whipping Declarations)

No declarations of interest were made.

79. REVIEW OF THE NEW WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The Executive Member for Waste Management introduced a report to update Members on the review of the operations of the new Managed Weekly Collection Service.

She thanked Members for their input during the Workshop on Managed Weekly Collections held on 23 February, 2012. The issues and suggestions from Members at the Workshop were shown at Appendix 3 of the report and had been built into Improvement Action Plans which specified expected delivery dates and nominating officers to deliver the changes where appropriate. The draft Improvement Action Plans were shown at Appendix 4 of the report.

The Executive Member for Waste Management reported that introducing the new full service on 7 November, 2011 had resulted in a reduction of waste sent to landfill each month of 720 tonnes per month, the collection of 457 tonnes of food waste per month and the collection of an extra 212 tonnes of recycling compared to the same period last year.

The Head of Streetscene gave a presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Details of Motion
- The Terms of Reference of the Service Review
- Overview of the Council's Waste Collection Policy
- Survey Statistics and Outcomes
- Call Volumes
- Survey Feedback
- Members Survey
- Town and Community Council Feedback
- Customer Feedback – February 2012 Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Employee Feedback
- Survey feedback conclusions
- The next steps

The Chairman thanked the Head of Streetscene for the presentation and asked the Committee to consider the draft Improvement Action Plans to ensure that all the issues and suggestions made during the Workshop had been included.

Councillor G. Hardcastle welcomed the positive report on the amount of food waste which was being collected each month and thanked the officers who had attended the Workshop. He asked if clarification could be given on whether black refuse sacks left at the side of black wheelie bins were still being collected and when it was proposed that this would end.

The Head of Streetscene explained that the Council's Household Waste Collection Policy stated that all non recyclable waste must be contained within the Council supplied black wheeled bin and no excess side waste would be collected during the normal collection. The Council had taken the decision to continue to collect side waste following initial changes to the service. Operators had been asked to notify the Waste Strategy & Recycling Officer of instances where residents continued to put out side waste so that a member of the Waste Strategy & Recycling team could visit the residents to encourage them to recycle in the future. The Waste Strategy & Recycling Officer reported that the number of instances reported to her team had reduced but officers would continue to visit 'hot spot' areas to ensure that all residents were advised on what waste should be put in the black wheeled bins.

The Director of Environment advised the Committee that when a decision was made to revert back to the Policy on side waste, all Members, Town and Community Councils and residents would be informed.

Councillor D.E. Wisinger said that many residents had previously raised concern that they had found it difficult to speak to an officer of the Council due to the high number of telephone calls being made and thanked officers for the improvements made in this area. He commented on the high number of black refuse sacks which were being left in resident's gardens and on the side of the street at Queensferry.

The Team Leader Waste thanked Councillor Wisinger for his comments. He explained that operatives could not go into resident's gardens to collect black refuse sacks as the operatives would not know if there were personal belongings in the sacks. He said that he would obtain the addresses from Councillor Wisinger following the meeting and arrange a site visit.

Councillor J.E. Falshaw asked how much the Council was charged to take waste to landfill. He also raised concern on the receptacles used for recycling which he said had been strewn across many streets during bad weather conditions. Councillor Q.R.H. Dodd asked if the purchase of additional stable black wheelie bins could be considered.

The Waste Services Manager reported that the cost to the Council to take waste to landfill was £120 per tonne which included landfill tax and transport costs. The Director of Environment explained that penalties from the Welsh Government (WG) for not reaching the target set for diverting waste from landfill and infraction charges passed on by the WG could cost the Council a total of £400 per tonne in addition to the landfill costs. The Team Leader Waste explained that operatives sometimes leave the wheeled bins on their side during windy conditions for health and safety reasons. The Chairman explained that concern around the suitability of the receptacles had been raised during the Workshop and had been included within the draft Improvement Action Plan.

Councillor C.M. Jones commented on the need for supermarkets to work with Councils in reducing the packaging on food, many of which could not be recycled. She reported that following the Workshop she had spoken to the Housing Officer for her ward about the suggestion to have a Flintshire residents pack to ensure that tenants living in sheltered accommodation had the necessary receptacles to be able to recycle their waste. She thanked the Waste Strategy & Recycling Officer who had resolved this matter shortly after the Workshop.

The Executive Member for Waste Management said that packing on food at supermarkets was a country wide problem. A study around what could be done to tackle the volume of packaging used on supermarket products was being undertaken by the Environment Agency in conjunction with the WG. Councillor D.I. Mackie said that a suggestion had been made at a previous meeting of the Committee that non-recyclable packaging from supermarkets should be taken back to them to dispose of. Councillor R.J.T. Guest reported that Mold Town Council had contacted the MEP's some years ago to seek their assistance in introducing legislation to make manufacturing packaging recyclable and suggested that they be contacted again on this issue.

In response to concerns on assisted collections, the Executive Member for Waste Management said that the operatives were advising residents to put the stickers for assisted collections on their wheeled bins. The Head of Streetscene explained that the assisted collection addresses would be input onto the tracking systems of all vehicles and this would be completed before December, 2012.

Councillor C.A. Thomas referred to C.10 outlined within the draft Improvement Action Plans and said that the issue raised at the Workshop had not been fully

covered and asked that operatives leaving wheeled bins on resident's driveways be included within this action. She also asked whether providing smaller bins for tenants of sheltered accommodation would be considered. The Waste Strategy & Recycling Officer said that the introduction of smaller bins would need to be considered and reported back to Members.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest thanked officers for the Workshop which he had found helpful and informative and asked if the Council was confident that it would meet its recycling target of 52% for 2011/12. He asked whether many residents had requested a larger black wheeled bin and how many of these had been successful. He also asked when weighted bags would be available for all future replacements.

The Waste Strategy & Recycling Officer reported that the current recycling targets as of quarter 3 2011/12 was around 48%. It was expected that the target of 52% would be reached and would continue to rise to 58% with continued advice and education on recycling provided to residents. There had been around 2,000 requests for larger black wheeled bins and 700 had been issued to residents across the County. When a request was received a member of the Waste Strategy & Recycling team visited the resident to ensure that they were recycling all that they could. An order for weighted bags had been placed and they were expected to be available from June, 2012.

Councillor S. Jones, as a Member of the Task and Finish Group, thanked officers for their hard work. She also thanked the front line staff who had dealt with comments from unhappy members of the public. Her comments were supported by the Committee.

The Executive Member for Environment thanked the Chairman, the Committee and the officers for their hard work. He said that there were still issues to be addressed including further educating residents across the County and that the problems experienced by residents of urban areas differed from those living in rural areas of the County. He also thanked the Executive Member for Waste Management who had worked tirelessly following the introduction of the new managed weekly collections.

The Chairman thanked officers and Members for their contribution.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the performance standards for a settled, high performing collection service and the current position against those standards be noted;
- (b) That the issues and suggestions from the Members Workshop and the resulting Improvement Action Plan for the service be noted; and
- (c) That a further report on the progress made against the Action Plans, together with an update on the performance of the service be presented to the Committee in September, 2012.

80. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting began at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.15 p.m.

81. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were four members of the press present.

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Chairman

**SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT**

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	DATE: 7 MARCH 2012
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST WERE MADE		