

## ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Bulky Waste Collections
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Streetscene
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A proportion of the 'waste' generated by households in Flintshire includes many items that still have a use or value, in particular larger items, such as furniture and electrical goods. These items, which are commonly known as 'bulky waste' can be problematic for the householder to dispose of in a way that retains the intrinsic value of the item.

Welsh Government's Waste Collections Blueprint recommends that local authorities provide a service for the collection of these materials, which should be provided in a way that maximises their value.

Flintshire County Council currently has an agreement with a local social enterprise (Refurbs Flintshire) for collecting and handling bulky waste items in the county. Refurbs Flintshire was established in 2002 and are a registered charity and not-for-profit company. Under the agreement, Refurbs Flintshire work in partnership with Flintshire County Council to provide the collection service for bulky waste items from households within the County of Flintshire.

In November 2021, the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a report on how the bulky waste service is operated. This reports provides the Committee with an overview of this popular collection service, information on the number of collections made and volume of waste collected, and outlines the impact that the COVID pandemic has had on service delivery.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Scrutiny Committee welcomes the report and supports the work undertaken to maintain the bulky waste collection during the pandemic.
---	--

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND FOR THE BULKY WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE</b>
1.01	<p>In November 2021, the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a report on how the bulky waste service is operated. This reports provides the Committee with an overview of this popular collection service, information on the number of collections made and volume of waste collected, and outlines the impact that the COVID pandemic has had on service delivery.</p>
1.02	<p>Bulky household waste refers to items that are too large to be taken away with the normal weekly kerbside collection. These can be items such as white goods (fridges, washing machines, and tumble driers), household appliances and furniture, garden furniture or metal items.</p> <p>Flintshire County Council currently has an agreement in place with a local social enterprise (Refurbs Flintshire) for collecting and handling bulky waste items. The items collected, which are suitable for reuse, are sold at Refurbs Flintshire's premises in Aber Park, Flint, where the revenue generated from the sale of the donated items is re-invested into the charity, in order that they can continue to provide a service to customers and for the benefit of the local community.</p>
1.03	<p>The diversion of these items, away from waste disposal, is included in Flintshire's recycling figures and supports the Council in achieving Welsh Government's statutory recycling targets and adhering to the 'repair and reuse' priority within the waste hierarchy and the Welsh Government 'Beyond Recycling' strategy.</p>
1.04	<p>The types of bulky waste residents can request to be collected is detailed in <b>Appendix 1</b>. For any items that cannot be collected by the bulky waste service residents can utilise one of the five Household Recycling Centres to dispose of their waste appropriately.</p> <p>Waste produced from home improvements, including kitchen/bathroom renewals, fitted wardrobes and any soils and rubble from landscaping, will not be collected as part of a bulky waste collection and residents must make the appropriate arrangements with their contractor for disposal.</p> <p>To book a collection residents can contact the Streetscene Contact Centre on 01352 701234 or at a local Connects Centre.</p> <p>Once a booking has been made, Refurbs aim to collect items within six working days. Residents are requested to place their items outside of their properties, but within the boundary (e.g. front garden/drive), from the time that the collection has been agreed. This request is made as any items of 'waste' found on the public highway could be classified as fly tipping.</p> <p>Where pre-arranged, Refurbs staff can offer further assistance to support residents with retrieving items from their property. Properties with difficult access e.g. flats, also require pre-agreed arrangements to be put in place before collection.</p>

1.05	<p>The current charge for a bulky waste collection service is as follows:</p> <p>Charge for up to 5 items            £40  Charge for each extra item            £5*</p> <p>*Maximum number of additional items is 5 (i.e. charges capped at £65.00 for a transaction with 10 items in total)</p> <p>A concessionary discounted charge for bulky collections is applied for those residents claiming benefits (Proof of benefit is required).</p> <p>Charge for up to 5 items            £20  Charge for each extra item            £5*</p> <p>*Maximum number of additional items is 5 (i.e. charges capped at £45.00 for a transaction with 10 items in total). Only two collections are allowed per household, per year at the discounted rate.</p> <p>Waste containing refrigerants, such as refrigerators or freezers are collected free of charge</p> <p>Charges are reviewed annually in line with the annual review of fees and charges.</p>												
1.06	<p>The following table details the number of requests made over the past three years, including the associated tonnage collected: -</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="288 1104 1425 1256"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>No. of Requests</th> <th>Tonnages</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>4,572</td> <td>656</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>4,573</td> <td>544</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22 (to date)</td> <td>4,511</td> <td>668</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The data shows that the service is well utilised and Flintshire residents make use of a service where reuse and/or repair is the priority over disposal. It is also welcomed that this service is used as an alternative to the smaller 'man in van' type disposal companies advertising on social media that may not have the correct licences to collect and dispose of waste legally.</p>	Year	No. of Requests	Tonnages	2019/20	4,572	656	2020/21	4,573	544	2021/22 (to date)	4,511	668
Year	No. of Requests	Tonnages											
2019/20	4,572	656											
2020/21	4,573	544											
2021/22 (to date)	4,511	668											
1.07	<p>Since the COVID pandemic began, the bulky waste collection service has been impacted by the restrictions. At the commencement of lockdown, from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the service was temporarily suspended in order to comply with the government guidelines at that time. During this time, residents were asked to store their waste items safely at home until the service resumed as Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) were closed during the same time.</p> <p>The service resumed collections again from 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020, but with a longer lead-in time for items to be collected due to reduced staff resources to deal with collections and the backlog that had built up over the preceding few months.</p> <p>To manage the backlog of collection requests, an agreement was made with Refurbs in the short term to advise all residents not to place their items out for collection, but Refurbs staff would call the resident to arrange a convenient time to collect as resources allowed.</p>												

1.08	<p>As the service resumed, Refurbs were affected by further staff resource issues due to workforce self-isolation, restricted ways of working due to government guidelines on social distancing, staff members needing to shield and vacancies.</p> <p>As Refurbs are a social enterprise their workforce is lean with little resilience to cover staff absences. Therefore ongoing disruption to service has occurred over the past two years, which has been unavoidable.</p> <p>In an effort to continue providing the service to the residents of Flintshire, the collection timeframes have been extended at times to ten and fifteen working days to cope with the demand. The intention of this was to continue to offer a collection service rather than continually suspend services when resources were reduced.</p> <p>When extended collection dates were in place, customers were informed at the point of booking, so that they were fully aware of the changes. At this point, they could make an informed decision as to whether to continue with booking a collection or make alternative arrangements.</p> <p>There was a further need to suspend bookings for a couple of weeks in August 2021 to allow Refurbs the opportunity to catch up on all outstanding bookings.</p> <p>While these changes were in place, residents had the option to take items to the Household Recycling Centres if they so wished.</p>
------	--

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Reduced staff resources due to self-isolation, restricted ways of working due to government guidelines on social distancing, staff members needing to shield and vacancies have affected service delivery.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	Reduced or delayed bulky waste collections could result in residents using the services of unlicensed waste removal companies, this could increase fly tipping. During periods when collections have been suspended or delayed both the Council and Refurbs have communicated with residents.
3.02	Some residents may not have adequate space in which to store bulky household waste. Household Waste Recycling Centres have been available, in the most part, as an alternative location in which to dispose of items appropriately.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	N/A

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – List of Bulky Waste Items.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="https://refurbs.org.uk/">https://refurbs.org.uk/</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Ruth Tulley, Regulatory Services Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704796 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk">ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<b>Bulky Waste</b> – Large household items that cannot be collected via the weekly kerbside collection