

REFUSE COLLECTION (WHEELED BINS) REVIEW GROUP

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

1. This is the final report of the Refuse Collection (Wheeled Bins) Review Group, established by the Place Scrutiny Committee to examine the introduction of wheeled bins in the Borough.

Background Information

2. At a meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 19 April 2012 consideration was given to a 'call-in' from the Cabinet held on 3 April 2012 (Minute C147(2)/Apr/12) in relation to its decisions in respect of the Refuse Collection. At that meeting it was agreed to establish a Review Group.
3. A wide number of issues have been considered and discussed at the meetings and these are referred to in the notes attached (**Appendix 1**). This report describes the outcome of the Review Group, it summarises the work undertaken, the findings from the processes and the subsequent recommendations.
4. A draft Terms of Reference (**Appendix 2**) in relation to this piece of work was developed and approved by Place Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 14 June 2012 and all Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
5. A wide number of issues were discussed and considered at the meetings and a visit was taken to a neighbouring authority to ascertain whether any problems were encountered during implementation of the wheeled bin system.
6. At its meeting held on 20 December 2012, Place Scrutiny Committee approved a number of interim recommendations of the Review Group for consideration by Cabinet. Cabinet subsequently accepted the twelve recommendations of the Group which have since been implemented.

Membership of the Review Group

7. All Members of Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review and the following Members attended meetings :-

Councillor Carson;
Councillor Cossins;
Councillor Grundy;
Councillor Harman;
Councillor L. Hughes;

Councillor Lawton;
Councillor Lewis;
Councillor Long;
Councillor E.A. Richmond;
Councillor Wright

The Group was led by Councillor Long.

8. The following Councillors also attended one or more meetings of the Review Group :-:-

Councillor Curry;
Councillor Francis;
Councillor L. Haszeldine;
Councillor Johnson;
Councillor B. Jones;
Councillor Kelley;
Councillor Lee;
Councillor McNab;
Councillor Wallis

Acknowledgements

9. The Review Group acknowledges the support and assistance provided in the course of their investigations and would like to place on record its thanks to the following :-

Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services;
Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services;
Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning;
John Herdman, Senior Enforcement Officer, Environmental Services;
Andrew Casey, Head of Highway Network Management;
Mike Smith, Area Team Leader Central Ward;
Officers representing Durham County Council;
Gordon Pybus, Darlington Association on Disability; and
Karen Graves, Democratic Officer

Methods of Investigation

10. The Review Group met on seven occasions between May 2012 and July 2013, and the notes containing the discussions held at those meetings are attached **(Appendix 1)**. Several Members of the Group also undertook a visit to Durham County Council's Chilton Depot and met Council Officers and the relevant portfolio holder.

Findings

11. Initial findings indicate that back lanes are now cleaner following the introduction of wheeled bins.
12. Wards with concentrated terraced properties did experience problems in the first few weeks but these issues have now been resolved and almost all lanes are now

extremely clean.

13. Residents may purchase their own smaller bin which must meet the specification to fit onto the refuse collection vehicles. So far 25 residents have requested the specification required.
14. Residents have the option to choose whether to place rubbish into the wheeled bin bagged or unbagged.
15. The maintenance of wheeled bins is the responsibility of residents.
16. All crews are provided with a list of residents who require assistance and also of the properties which have been allowed to remain on a black bag system.
17. Crews are receiving on-going training with regard to the new operating system and regulations.
18. Although assisted collection requests have risen from 1055 to 2705 since 17 June 2013 they are expected to decline.
19. There have been 1715 requests for larger bins which are allocated to households containing five or more residents. Not all requests have been granted.
20. It was envisaged that digital technology would be introduced which would assist crews on route, locations of black bag collections, assisted collections and residents wishing to take household waste to the Civic Amenity Site.

Recommendations

21. That it be recommended to the Place Scrutiny Committee that :-
 - (a) Cabinet be requested to note the following :-
 - (i) That the thanks of the Refuse Collection (Wheeled Bins) Review Group, for the successful wheeled bins introduction in the Borough, be conveyed to all employees;
 - (ii) Although the Review Group has concluded Place Scrutiny Committee would like to monitor progress in 2014 on the following :-
 - a) Recycling Rates;
 - b) Fly Tipping;
 - c) Replacement wheeled bin costs; and
 - d) General operational issues.
 - (iii) That Place Scrutiny Committee receives a detailed financial breakdown including savings on street cleansing.

- (iv) That a visit for Members of Place Scrutiny Committee to John Wade Waste Management be arranged during the Autumn.
- (v) That the idea of engaging educational establishments on waste management be investigated.

Refuse Collection (Wheeled Bins) Review Group

REFUSE COLLECTION REVIEW GROUP

18th May, 2012

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, L. Hughes, Lewis and Long (in the Chair).

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin and Grundy.

OFFICERS – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Claire Hutton, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors L. Haszeldine, Johnson, B. Jones, Kelley and Lee.

Purpose of the Meeting – To receive a presentation on the implementation of wheeled bins in the Borough.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services gave an overview of the current position in relation to refuse collection and highlighted that, at present, 48,500 properties in the Borough had their waste collected each week, with 753 of those being assisted collections, equating to 1.57 per cent of the service. Currently there were nine per cent of Councils in the UK who were still using black sacks although some were moving to wheeled bins.
- The Group were informed that, from 2003 to 2012, there had been a total of 70 reported injuries to operatives within this Council collecting refuse which equated to 631 days of working day's lost.
- Particular reference was made to Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 that requires this Council to put findings of their risk assessment in place and also the Health and Safety Executive Report that identified the risk factors of musculoskeletal disorder in refuse collection and recommendations for methods of reducing musculoskeletal disorder in refuse collection.
- The Group were advised that there would be a significant health and safety benefit to the Council's refuse collectors if wheeled bins were introduced, particularly in relation to manual handling and to cut/needle stick injuries. The Head of Environmental Services also highlighted that there would be a reduction in street litter through containment of refuse, it would encourage residents to participate in the recycling scheme as there would be limited capacity in a wheeled bin, it would provide a facility for residents to store refuse and would control the amount of waste put out for collection.
- A number of benefits of the wheeled bin system to householders and refuse collectors were highlighted in the presentation, which included the large storage capacity of a standard wheeled bin which could contain two and half to three times as much refuse as a traditional dustbin; stopping foraging by domestic pets and wild animals and birds;

reducing the amount of refuse being scattered on collection days from split sacks, no manual lifting, one container instead of multiple sacks and the removal of the risk of cut/needle stick injuries.

- In relation to the collection policy, it was highlighted that a 240 litre wheeled bin has the capacity to hold three to four black sacks and that households of five or more residents have the option to opt for a 360 litre wheeled bin, as no additional bags could be placed at the side of the wheeled bin for collection, except during the Christmas period. No green waste could be placed in the wheeled bin.
- The Head of Environmental Services highlighted that wheeled bins must be brought to the curtilage and returned to the curtilage of the property or, in the case of farms, to the end of the farm track on the same day as collection. In relation to terraced properties with back lanes, wheeled bins would need to be placed in the back lane for collection and that for some locations, particularly back lanes with restricted access that were unsuitable for refuse collection vehicles, collection points would be identified where residents would be required to bring their wheeled bins to.
- It was accepted that a limited number of properties may need to retain black sacks collection service.
- The Group were advised that, at present, there were six and half different rounds to collect refuse which would increase to eight with the implementation of wheeled bins.
- A Member raised a concern in relation to the wheeled bins being blown over once they have been emptied and requested Officers to look into this.
- The existing Assisted Refuse Collection Policy would remain and operatives would collect and return the wheeled bin for those residents who were incapable due to ill health or disability.
- Following a question raised by a Member in relation to whether there would be an increase in residents requiring the Assisted Refuse Collection, the Head of Environmental Services responded and stated that it was envisaged that there would likely to be an increase from 1.57 per cent to two and half per cent and that this has been taken into consideration.
- At present, the operatives were developing a list of properties where there could be potential problems to collect wheeled bins from and were identifying alternative solutions. A list of properties would be circulated to all Members in due course and there would be an opportunity to feedback any other areas within their wards where they felt there could be potential problems.
- Following a question, the Group were advised that there shouldn't be any problems with the refuse vehicles accessing back lanes that they currently access once the wheeled bins have been introduced, however, if this did cause problems there were alternative solutions such as placing bins at one side of the lane.
- A question was raised in relation to residents not putting their wheeled bins back once refuse has been collected and whether this would be enforced and the Assistant Director,

Community Services stated that it was down to individuals where they store their bins but that the Council could stipulate that they must not be left in lanes and that they must be put back within the curtilage of their property. Enforcement would be the last consideration

- Concerns were raised in relation to the size of the wheeled bins and the impact this could have on the quality of life for residents, as some residents only have one to two bags of refuse each week and have no space to store the bin within their yards. Suggestions were made to explore the possibility of reducing the default size of the wheeled bins and also giving residents the opportunity to state which size bin they would like, however, he Assistant Director, Community Services advised Members of the problems that this would be likely to cause.
- To enable the correct size of the bins to be purchased, a Member suggested that a pilot wheeled bin collection be undertaken to ascertain the level of refuse generated by properties. The Assistant Director - Community Services highlighted a number of technical issues in undertaking a pilot scheme and advised Members that the Council did not have the correct vehicles to undertake such a pilot and that any such vehicles would cost approximately £1,000 per week to hire. He also advised the Group that a number of other Local Authorities had implemented wheeled bins and that this Council could learn lessons from them.
- With regard to the size of the wheeled bins, questions were raised in relation to how the default size compared to other Local Authorities across the Tees Valley and whether the Procurement process of wheeled bins should be put on hold until the Place Scrutiny Committee considers and finalises the recommendations from this Group.
- The Chair recommended that the Group visit another Local Authority of similar size to Darlington that had recently implemented the wheeled bin collection.
- The Group referred to the removal and enforcement of fly tipping and were informed that there were two teams dealing with this.
- Following a question, the Group were informed that there was no desire to go to alternate weekly collections. A Member expressed a view that the Council were implementing wheeled bins with the view of privatising the refuse collection in the future.
- In relation to recycling it was highlighted that there had been an increase from twenty seven per cent to forty four per cent.
- Particular reference was made in relation to the bid that has been submitted to DEFRA for supported weekly collections to help fund the implementation of wheeled bins.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That thanks be conveyed to Ian Thompson and Brian Graham for the informative presentation.

(b) That the default size wheeled bin be 240 litres and that officers explore possible locations where it may be appropriate for 140 litre bins.

(c) That Councillor Wallis be invited to attend a meeting of this Group.

(d) That a visit to Durham County Council (former Wear Valley District Council) be arranged to examine their wheeled bin service and the problems that occurred when they implemented the service.

(d) That the next meeting of this Group be arranged in consultation with the Chair.

REFUSE COLLECTION REVIEW GROUP

16th July 2012

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Harman, L. Hughes, Lawton, Long (in the Chair) and E. A. Richmond.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Cossins.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Curry and Wallis.

OFFICERS – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director - Community Services, Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services and Paul Dalton, Elections Officer (Democratic Services).

Purpose of the Meeting – To reflect and give consideration to the findings with regard the implementation of Wheeled Bins, following a visit to Durham County Council’s South Durham Depot at Chilton on Tuesday, 10th July 2012.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services, provided an overview of the visit to Durham County Council’s South Durham Depot at Chilton on Tuesday, 10th July 2012. Councillors Cossins, Curry, L. Hughes and Long had attended the visit, and were escorted by Officers from Durham County Council. Members were able to witness where bins were placed, and saw the collection process in operation.
- A Member commented that a detailed analysis of each route should be conducted, taking into consideration the requirements of each individual property. It was noted that public perception was extremely important, and such an exercise would reassure members of the public that the Council was taking any concerns seriously. A role for Councillors was identified in dealing with individual residents, however it was acknowledged that Officer support would be required.
- Brian Graham advised that all Members will receive a list of properties where potential difficulties have been identified, and that Officers will also investigate any issues raised by Members. Discussion focused on the number of properties where it might be perceived that wheeled bins were not appropriate. Ian Thompson stated that the key was to keep a minimal number of properties on the ‘black sack scheme’ as the fleet was geared up for wheeled bins.
- Members noted that this list would only be drafted on the basis of a physical observation of the property, and that it would be important to ensure that residents were informed about the Assisted Refuse Collection Policy – the scheme whereby assistance will be provided to residents who may have difficulty in physically manoeuvring their wheeled bin due to disability or ill-health. Discussion ensued on the communication strategy around this, with Members informed that all available channels of communication would be used to promote the policy, including the ‘Darlington Together’ magazine, Social Media profiles, etc. Members were informed by the Portfolio Holder that a three month period of communication was planned, commencing in August 2012.

- Members entered into discussion on the level of Assisted Refuse Collection that would be required. Members were informed that Assisted Refuse Collection in Durham was approximately 5%. Brian Graham explained that the Assisted Refuse Collection List in Durham was continually added to, but not maintained so that residents who moved, died, etc., were not removed from the list, and therefore it was expected that this figure would be reduced following the forthcoming review.
- It was noted that there was an acceptance from Members that wheeled bins would be introduced from June 2013, however it was commented that in order to gain public acceptance the Council would need to ensure that those who could not use the wheeled bins received as much assistance as possible, and that the public relations exercise would have to be compelling.
- It was suggested that road-show-style events should be held in supermarkets, and similar venues, to raise public awareness of the implementation of the wheeled bins.
- Questions were asked as to whether the public relation exercise ‘lead in’ time was sufficient, however it was suggested that there was the possibility of members of the public confusing this June with next June.
- Ian Thompson provided an overview of the implementation process:
 - **August 2012:** Members will receive a list of properties where potential difficulties have been identified, and Officers will investigate any issues in relation to properties raised by Members.
 - **September 2012:** Information regarding the wheeled bin scheme will appear in the ‘Darlington Together’ magazine.
 - **Autumn 2012:** Work will be conducted in relation to the Assisted Refuse Collection List, and a FAQ will appear in the ‘Darlington Together’ magazine.
 - **April 2013:** Households leafleted, and subsequently refuse collection days change.
 - **May 2013:** Wheeled Bins delivered to residents doorsteps.
 - **17th June 2013:** Wheeled Bins Scheme goes live.
- Brian Graham stated that the leaflets delivered to every property would include a list of “Do’s and Don’t’s”, contact telephone numbers, etc.
- Members entered into discussion on the visual impact of wheeled bins on the locality, with the view expressed that the wheeled bins may ‘disfigure the landscape’. It was suggested that the removal of wheeled bins from the frontage of properties might be encouraged as part of the public relation process. Members also felt that there was an opportunity to make good connections with local communities and schools, by encouraging innovative and creative methods of decorating the wheeled bins.

- Discussion progressed to the size of the wheeled bins, with the suggestion that the 240 litre bin may be too big for many households. One Member explained that 38% of households in Pierremont were single elector households, and suggested that there may be a sizeable minority of households that would benefit from a smaller (140 litre) bin. The Chair advised that the procurement exercise for the wheeled bins was now underway, and that she understood that only 800 140 litre bins had been accounted for in the tendering process. Ian Thompson explained that the number of residents per household did not necessarily correlate to the volume of refuse produced by that household, and that the offer of smaller bins would restrict capacity and lead to an increased number of queries on the doorstep. Brian Graham explained that the majority of the 800 140 litre bins would be provided to already identified OAP accommodation.
- In terms of the size of bins, Brian Graham explained that it was important to remember that the wheeled bin remained with the property. The Portfolio Holder stated that it was important that the scheme met the needs of the vast majority of residents, rather than juggle bins around, and therefore the default bin should be as big as possible. Further concern was expressed by Members in relation to the lack of flexibility in terms of the number of smaller bins available, however it was highlighted that the decision regarding the procurement of the different sizes of wheeled bins had already been taken by Cabinet.
- A Member recalled that sheltered accommodation in Durham shared one 240 litre bin between properties.
- Concerns were raised with regard the manoeuvrability of the refuse collection vehicles in the small and tight back alleyways.
- A Member clarified what colour the wheeled bins would be ('Dark Grey'), and whether the changes with regard the collection dates were a necessary part of the implementation process. Ian Thompson confirmed that the collection process would be moving from six to eight rounds, so most collection days would change.
- The Chair enquired whether RIEP funding could be used for additional 'in-cab tech', and asked whether the specification of vehicles that would be used in Darlington would be the same as the specification of vehicles in Durham.
- Members entered into discussion on the use of collection points, and were advised that these would only be imposed in streets where there were less than ten properties. Members asked questions about the arrangements in such a scheme.
- Discussion ensued on the tonnage of refuse collected in Darlington, and whether the Council had a target for the reduction of waste. Members were advised that key targets and indicators were part of the Waste Minimisation Scheme. The Portfolio Holder explained that 'a carrot approach' had been adopted in Darlington when it came to encouraging recycling and waste reduction, rather than an aggressive approach.
- Members expressed concerns in relation to properties whereby steps formed the curtilage of the property, and it was explained that if residents were unable to manoeuvre the wheeled bin to the curtilage of the property then they may be able to gain assistance under the 'Assisted Collection Scheme'. A Member highlighted that it would be possible for residents to place incorrect materials in a black sack prior to putting the black sack in

the wheeled bin, and that this would not be identified by the refuse collectors, although it was conceded that this could happen under the current scheme. Another Member did suggest that refuse collectors in her Ward do open black bags to check that the correct type of waste had been placed inside, however pointed out that they wouldn't be able to do that with a wheeled bin.

- Further discussion took place on the numbering of wheeled bins, and Members were informed that each bin would have a specific address label.
- A Member highlighted that there are many properties whereby the only curtilage to a property is the drive, and by placing a wheeled bin at the end of a drive access and egress for residents' to their property would be obstructed. Members were informed that residents in such properties would have to get out of their vehicle and move the wheeled bin each time they wished to access and egress their property on collection days.
- Further concerns were expressed in relation to those properties where there are small courtyards at the front of the property and no rear access, in terms of the visual impact of residents storing their wheeled bins at the front of the property. The Portfolio Holder suggested that Officers needed to look at what other areas did to encourage residents to store their wheeled bins at the rear of the property.

IT WAS AGREED – That the following draft recommendations be submitted for consideration by the Place Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) That there should be a detailed consultation with residents by both Officers and Members, ward by ward, round by round, street by street, and resident by resident, if necessary, to ensure the best possible preparation for this implementation. Environmental and social factors dictate a flexible approach to the collection of wheeled bins.
- (b) That consultation with refuse collection workers and appropriate unions is essential given the increased complexity of the work which will result.
- (c) That close attention should be given to the need for assisted collection and close monitoring of this scheme post implementation.
- (d) That monitoring of the implications of the introduction of wheeled bins on recycling rates is essential and the possibility of resultant changes to operation of both schemes (collection of household refuse and recycled refuse) be acknowledged.
- (e) That, where rear access exists, there should be no storage of wheeled bins, or collection from, the front of any terraced properties. Where this is impossible to avoid, residents should remain on the black bag regime. The reasons for this are, the pavement is a public highway and storage in front gardens is unsightly and would reduce visual amenity for all residents.
- (f) That consideration be given to encouraging a system of consistent numbering of wheeled bins.
- (g) That the possibility of engaging and involving local schools and communities in the promotion and implementation of the wheeled bin service be explored.

WHEELED BINS REVIEW GROUP

20 November, 2012

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Francis, Harman, L. Hughes, Lawton, Lewis, McNab, E.A. Richmond and Wright.

APOLOGIES – Councillor Cossins.

OFFICERS – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services, Mike Smith, Area Team Leader Central Ward, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

Purpose of the Meeting – To receive an update on the position with wheeled bins and for Members to give feedback on consultations they had undertaken with residents within their wards.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- Ian Thompson advised Members that following the report to Cabinet in October the procurement exercise had been completed and the supplier MGB will be delivering 50,000 wheeled bins in order to start the roll out of supply of wheeled bins to households in the Borough commencing 6th May in readiness for the first collection of Monday, 17th June 2013.
- Mike Smith reported that he has received positive feedback from the residents he had visited across the Borough and has made personal visits to 76 households to date.
- **Councillor Wright (Central Ward)** confirmed that he had met with positive feedback.
- **Councillors Lawton and McNab (North Road Ward)** had identified some residents who wished to be placed on the Assisted Collections List and were working to identify the degree of assistance required and if these were genuine. The Councillors requested if it was possible to receive a list of those residents who were on the Assisted Collections List.
- **Councillor L. Hughes (Pierremont Ward)** advised that she had not received any complaints from her Ward Members only general questions.
- **Councillor Harman (Park East Ward)** reported that he had raised the question of wheeled bins with residents at every possible opportunity but has not had any negative feedback. His ward includes a number of Council properties.
- **Councillor Lewis (Mowden Ward)** had received no complaints from his residents just general queries.

- **Councillor Francis (Eastbourne Ward)** had received no complaints although he had some issues with Emley Moor Road and Holgate Moor Green which were being addressed by Officers.
- **Councillor Richmond (College Ward)** had only minor issues within his ward.
- **Councillor Long (Northgate Ward)** advised Members that there were a lot of issues in her Ward mainly to do with the back lanes and storage of bins and one issue raised by the Police was the risk of anti-social behaviour. The Chair asked Officers if they had liaised with CPO's and suggested that the Review Group meet with John Herdman from the Regulatory Team to discuss further.
- **Assisted Collections** - With regard to residents requiring Assisted Collections, Brian Graham advised Members that due to data protection and advice from the Legal Department, he was unable to circulate details of those residents on the list to Ward Members. Members were also advised that it has been anticipated that the number of assisted collection requests may increase, therefore officers will be visiting each resident to undertake a full assessment and take with them a wheeled bin to show the residents and to hopefully help to alleviate any concerns they may have.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the storage of wheeled bins at the end of farm tracks and similar households in the rural areas.
- Brian Graham also reported that it is the intention to distribute wheeled bins in key Council buildings to show visitors and it was also suggested by a Member that displays of the bins are also placed in supermarkets as a PA exercise. A Member also offered to take a wheeled bin to Ward and PACT meetings.
- A question was raised as to what happens if a wheelie bin was stolen and Brian Graham advised Members that there were no plans to charge residents for replacement bins.
- Some Members expressed concerns about the nuisance factor of leaving bins out in the back alley after collection as they may be at work and also the added risk of advertising that the house is empty by virtue of the fact that the bin has not been brought back into the property.
- Clarification was given to Members that the advice given to residents will be to place the wheeled bins at the curtilage of their property.
- Some discussion ensued on making it a recommendation that residents do not leave wheeled bins on the pavement outside their property and arrangements for houses in multiple occupation were being addressed. Brian also advised that alterations were planned to the bin stores in some council houses.
- **Publicity** – it was reported that on-going publicity was planned. Running up to 29th April there will be more enhanced publicity about changes to collection days leading up to the roll out of the wheeled bins on 17th June.

- Mike Smith advised Members that he was visiting all Council house stock to assess any potential problems with the bins and will be reporting back.
- **List of Problem Streets** - Members discussed the list of streets which presented problems and it appeared that some streets had now been removed from the list – in particular China, Ruby and Dublin Streets? Brian Graham advised Members that the list was a work in progress and issues were being continually addressed and resolved. Streets had been removed from the list because a solution had been found. It was proposed to present an updated list to Scrutiny at their meeting in December including these solutions.
- There was some discussion on the cleaning of the wheeled bins and some suggestion that there could be a business opportunity for establishing a cleaning business. With this in mind it was suggested that households be given some guidance on the potential increase in traders and that such traders require to be licensed.
- **Recycling** – Some concerns were raised regarding recycling and residents using the wheeled bins instead of recycling. It was suggested that the recycling rates be monitored to see if recycling rates decline and that a report be received at a future date, possibly after a year of operation i.e. 2014. It was confirmed by Officers that there are no changes planned to the Green Box and Blue Bag recycling facility with the provision of wheeled bins.
- There will be continual publicity to encourage people to recycle more and a suggestion was made to attach a sticker to the underside of the bin lid with the 'Reduce Reuse Recycle' message.
- **Size of Wheeled Bins** – A member expressed concern regarding the number of large wheeled bins that had been ordered and that in particular Cockerton East Ward and Bank Top Wards have a number of residents who have requested smaller bins. Members were advised that the bin would belong to the property and not the householder therefore to allocate a smaller bin now may not be the wishes of the household in future. Mike Smith advised Members that he was examining ways of properties sharing bins in some areas of North Road and Bank Top. It was the view of Officers that there was a greater problem of the bin being too small, rather than too large as side waste would not be collected and this could be a problem. It was also pointed out that such residents need not put out their bins every week and that the footprint of both bins were similar therefore the same space was required for storage purposes.
- **Training** – A question was asked regarding training of operatives on the future use of wheeled bins and Members were assured that all vehicles are to be fitted with lifts. New vehicles are being purchased and all staff will be trained by the vehicle supplier and will be visiting neighbouring authorities who already operate wheeled bins.
- The Group were pleased to find the move to wheeled bin collections was universally accepted by the operatives and the general feeling was that the

operatives welcomed the wheeled bins mainly due to removing manual handling issues.

Future action –

- Invite John Herdman to attend a future meeting of this Review Group to receive more information about the regulatory issues.
- Receive an updated list of streets including problems identified and solutions to Scrutiny on 20th December, 2012.
- Receive a report on the possible impact on recycling rates in 2014 – a year after operation of the wheeled bins.

WHEELED BINS REVIEW GROUP

5th February, 2013

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Curry, Grundy, Harman, L. Hughes, Lawton and Lee.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Lewis, T. Richmond and Wright.

OFFICERS – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning, John Herdman, Supervisor – Street Scene Enforcement, Andrew Casey, Traffic Management and Road Safety Manager and Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

Purpose of the Meeting – To receive an update on the position with wheeled bins and for Members to meet with Gordon Pybus, Darlington Association on Disability to discuss his concerns and also to look at enforcement and other issues Members may have.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- **Gordon Pybus, Darlington Association on Disability** – Mr. Pybus referred to a recent article in the Northern Echo which reported that the wheeled bins would be placed on the pavements. Ian Thompson clarified the position with regard to the placing of wheeled bins to be on the curtilage of the property and that the Northern Echo had incorrectly reported the policy on the positioning of the wheeled bins.
- Mr. Pybus advised Members and officers that his main concern was how the message regarding the positioning of wheeled bins is given out to the public, he has concerns that wheeled bins will be placed in the same place as the black sacks where and in streets with narrow pavements this will create problems for wheelchair users and the visually impaired as you could have a situation with the recycling boxes on the kerbside and the wheeled bins on the side of the property.
- Mr. Pybus also had concerns that the wheeled bins would remain on the pavements for longer as previously once the black sacks had been collected, the obstruction was removed. His main priority was to ensure that the pavement are kept clear.
- **Brian Graham** responded to Mr. Pybus and confirmed that the advertising and publicity campaigning was well underway in liaison with the Council's Communication Unit and also in April when the new rounds will be introduced all households will receive leaflets and again when the bins are delivered to re-iterate the policy on positioning of the wheeled bins. Brian reassured Mr. Pybus that everything was being done to get the message across and that all crews will be reminded that all bins are to be returned to the position from where it was collected and no wheeled bins will be allowed to be kept kerbside.

- **Assisted Collections** – Brian Graham advised Mr. Pybus to encourage residents who may experience difficulties to contact the Council to discuss assisted collections and confirmed that the existing list of assisted collections was automatically being transferred over for the wheeled bins.
- **Councillor Lawton (North Road Ward)** raised his concern that as the recycling bags/boxes were remaining as a kerbside collection this may confuse residents also and that this needs to be made clear in all publicity material.
- **Councillor Harman (Park East Ward)** raised a question regarding the allocation of funding for publicity to educate residents and was assured by officers that there was adequate funding for publicity within the £60k allocated for the implementation of the wheeled bins. Some discussion ensued on the use of the word 'curtilage' in the publicity material which may be confusing for some residents and it was agreed that all publicity would be plain English.
- **Enforcement** – John Herdman advised Members of the actions and sanctions available to the Council for enforcement under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act for persistent offenders but re-iterated that initially officers were focussing on education and using a preventative rather than punitive approach. Provisions in the Act allow the Council to stipulate where and when to place
- Andrew Casey also advised that the Police can also enforce under 'wilful obstruction' under Highways legislation and again reaffirmed that the focus will be on educational enforcement. Officers also confirmed that operatives will be educated to replace bins correctly and to ensure that they are adhering to the guidelines. It was acknowledged that side waste may be an issue and will need to be addressed also.
- **Conservation Areas – Councillor Lee (Heighington and Coniscliffe Ward)** advised Members that he was in discussions with his Ward residents residing in West Green who have concerns about the visual impact of wheeled bins around the Green and also the physical issues of bins in that area of the village. Councillor Lee is discussing with officers the option of allowing those residents to continue with black sacks, however Ian Thompson confirmed that it is Council Policy for all households, where it is physically possible, to be issued with a wheeled bin.
- **Rural Areas** – Brian Graham advised Members that there were on going discussions with Ward Councillors for the villages and in a vast majority of cases wheeled bins will be acceptable. There have been some households identified in Middleton One Row which will remain with black sacks.
- **Anti Social Behaviour – Councillor Long (Northgate Ward)** asked Officers if they anticipated problems with anti-social behaviour i.e. removing of the wheeled bins or setting fire to them. John Herdman advised the Members that in his opinion he did not envisage any increase in anti-social behaviour and other authorities who operate wheeled bins do not experience any major problems either. There is currently a problem in some areas with slashing of the black sacks so with wheeled bins he anticipates less problems.

- **Cleansing of Streets – Councillor Harman (Park East)** raised a question regarding the savings on street cleaning and was advised that the saving made of £100k was by the reduction of 2 crews and operatives as the move is made away from black sacks which was very labour intensive for cleansing. The Lanes will still be cleaned but it is envisaged that this will be much reduced by the use of wheeled bins.
- **Houses in Multiple Occupation** – Brian Graham advises Members that he was visiting and assessing individually for residents needs.
- **Key Dates** – 29th April refuse rounds will change and letters being sent to all households. Week commencing 6th May delivery of wheeled bins to households. Week commencing 17th June collection of wheeled bins commences and schedules to be circulated to Ward Councillors.

Future action –

- To undertake a Review of the Wheeled Bins Service following 12 months operation.
- To look at the issue around the kerbside recycling scheme and the wheeled bins at the curtilage of the property and the confusion that this may create for residents.
- Receive an updated list of streets including problems identified and solutions to Scrutiny on 18th April, 2013.
- Conservation Areas and the environmental impact of wheeled bins.
- Examine the Environmental Protection Act S46 sanctions.
- Ensure adequate publicity material is being distributed and the message is getting across and for Members to receive information for inclusion in their newsletters.
- Assisted Collections.

WHEELED BINS REVIEW GROUP

17th April, 2013

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, and T. Richmond.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Cossins, Lawton and Lewis.

OFFICERS – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

Purpose of the Meeting – To receive an update on the introduction of wheeled bins in the Borough and for Members to comment on the literature prepared for householders and other issues Members may have.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- IT outlined the process regarding rolling-out of the wheeled bins which included residents receiving three leaflets over the coming weeks giving detailed information on the benefits of using wheeled bins, the changes to refuse and recycling collection days and the 'dos' and 'don'ts' to follow on collection day;
- He also advised the Group that there would be no bin deliveries during whit week, that the bins were secured with tape and there was a large label stating that the bin was not to be used until 17th June;
- Canvassers, who work to Electoral Wards, had been employed to deliver leaflets to residents over the weekend of 20th/21st April, in order to assist them they had been given street lists, maps and lists to show which properties were week one and week two collections;
- It was also reported that there was information available to residents on the Council's website, Darlington Together magazine was publishing articles in line with the Council's timescale, Officers were visiting supermarkets with information stands which were also going to be located in the Dolphin Centre, Town Hall and the Library, and finally, information was being provided via Facebook and Twitter;
- The Group were advised that a dedicated phone line would be allocated to answer the public's queries, that collection zones would be highlighted at the information stands and members could provide the information on their Newsletters;
- The Group discussed various problems relating to bins storage encountered with a small number of properties in the Borough and the resultant outcomes due to discussions with residents, however it was noted that with the exception of approximately 30 properties and all of Hargreaves Terrace residents would transfer to wheeled bin collections;

- The Group were also advised that in areas of sheltered housing, such as Swan Street, residents shared bins and this worked well – residents who produced little waste and wished to share bins should notify Street Scene and this would be noted and the surplus bin collected;
- Trade waste was collected at the same time as residential waste as the lifts on the waste refuse wagons could accept both types of bin;
- Street Scene have worked closely with all Housing Association and Railway Housing to ensure bins can be store can accommodate the bins, many residents have been visited to address their issues and once they have seen how easy a bin is to manoeuvre they are happier;
- Assisted collection lists are continually updated and the information passed to Crews;
- Group were informed that more queries were expected once the collections commenced, however eight residents have stated they do not want a wheeled bin and will dispose of their own waste; 48000 households had been given a wheeled bin and there were 2500 families of five or more although only around 200 had requested a larger bin;
- IT advised that any problems should be referred to Street Scene, the reason for introducing wheeled bins was for the health and safety of employees, and that some properties were suited for wheeled bins whilst others were not and that all problems had been overcome;
- References were made to 'before' and 'after' photos of a Darlington back lane which clearly showed that littering would dramatically decrease following the introduction of wheeled bins as bags would not be split or scavenged by animals;
- Finally the Group were advised of the following timeline for introduction of wheeled bins :-
 - w/c 29 April – rounds would change;
 - w/c 6th May – distribution of wheeled bins would commence; and
 - w/c 17th June – wheeled bin collections would commence

IT WAS AGREED – That a meeting of this Review Group be held after the Council recess to assess the introduction of wheeled bins and any problems that may have occurred.

WHEELED BINS REVIEW GROUP
19th July, 2013

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Cossins, Curry, Harman and L. Hughes.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Lawton, Lewis and T. Richmond.

OFFICERS – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

Purpose of the Meeting – To be advised on how the introduction of wheeled bins was received in the Borough and to formulate recommendations for a Review Group Final report to Cabinet.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- IT advised the Group that the wheeled bins collection service had been in operation for five weeks now and although there had been several ‘teething problems’ the majority of residents were happy and Officers were really pleased with its introduction;
- He also advised the Group out of over 100 complaints received they had been sorted apart from two or three consistent complainants ;
- BG provided several statistics including :
 - There had been 4,838 enquiries in total;
 - 25 residents required smaller bins;
 - There had been 1715 requests for a larger bin although not all requests had been approved;
 - There had been an increase in requests for green recycling boxes; and
 - Prior to June there had been 1755 assisted collection requests – there was now 2705.
- BG confirmed that 17 residents did not want a bin and had opted to take their waste to the Civic Amenity Site and that there were 43 communal bins in various locations across the Borough;
- It was confirmed that assisted and black bags collections were made at the same time as the wheeled bin collections;
- The Group were advised that crews were in receipt of a list which detailed black bag areas, assisted collections and own rubbish takers although it was confirmed that crews were operating on new routes and needed time to get used to them, it was further reported that it was hoped to introduce digital technology which

would assist crews on routes, locations of black bag collections and assisted collections and residents who wished to take their waste to the Civic Amenity Site;

- BG stated that as the new system had been in operation for several weeks residents who still left black bags would have action taken against them, some residents had complained that wheeled bins were not returned to the place they were left, however it was stressed that bins were replaced where they were taken from and that on occasions children had been known to move bins as bins were placed with the handle pointing outwards;
- Several Members commented on the cleanliness of the back lanes and that few litter problems now occurred;
- Following a question it was stated that fly tipping had increased slightly although there was no correlation with wheeled bins, it was felt that this increase was due to charges for rubbish removal;
- Reference was made to the Health and Safety implications with black sack collections and that crews now lifted approximately 200 out of 48,000 sacks, although it was agreed that at Christmas crews would be lenient and take waste which could not fit into the wheeled bin;
- Residents did have the option to purchase a smaller bin as long as it met the specifications required to be lifted by the refuse vehicle;
- It was confirmed that it was residents choice as to whether they continued using black sacks and placing them in the wheeled bins or no sacks at all, however, black sacks had reduced at the waste plant;
- Group members requested the recycling statistics to ascertain if a reduction had been made and as the new system had just been introduced it was agreed to produce a report in Autumn for Place Scrutiny Committee;
- It was stated that Wades sorted and sent relevant waste to a plant which turned it into fuel which resulted in 80 to 85 per cent landfill diversion;
- It was suggested that schools and/or colleges would find the information useful and informative and possibly use as a topic piece; and
- It was reported that a saving had been made on the purchase of wheeled bins and Members requested a financial breakdown including the cost of cleaning by mini-sweepers which it was envisaged would be less since wheeled bin introduction.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That a final report be prepared and submitted to Cabinet on the findings of this Review Group.

(b) That the thanks of this Review Group be conveyed to all Street Scene staff and management for their excellent work and commitment to the introduction of wheeled bins.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: Wheeled Bins (Refuse Collection)
Scrutiny: Place Scrutiny Committee

Start Date: May 2012

End Date:

PURPOSE/AIM	RESOURCE
<p>To contribute to the implementation of a Wheeled Bin system in the Borough of Darlington.</p>	<p>Director of Place Assistant Director – Community Services Head of Health and Safety Head of Place Strategy and Commissioning Head of Environmental Services Relevant Portfolio Holder Democratic Services Ward Councillors Neighbouring Authorities</p>
PROCESS	OUTCOME
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive a presentation/report from the Assistant Director. 2. Consider the evidence base arising from key lines of enquiry. 3. Question relevant Officers and challenge findings. 4. Scrutiny Members to collect evidence from Wards, analyse the information and review best practice from elsewhere. 5. Identify implications on interested parties. 6. Examine good practice with other authorities. 7. Formulate a Final Report for submission to Scrutiny. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To have an increased understanding of the proposed changes and the impact on residents of the Borough. 2. To recommend appropriate action to Cabinet if necessary.

COUNCILLOR
 (TO BE SIGNED BY MEMBER OR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REQUESTING TOPIC)

CHAIR
 (TO BE SIGNED BY CHAIR OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)