

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 March 2015

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Baldwin, Carson, Cossins, Culley, Donohue, Harman, EA Richmond and Wright. (9)

APOLOGIES – Councillors L Hughes. (1)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Wallis, Portfolio Holder, Leisure and Local Environment. ()

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director – Community Services and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

P51. CHANGES TO REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) on the introduction of both wheeled bins and the more recent revised weekly collection service.

The submitted report stated that there had been two major changes to the refuse and recycling collection service in the past 18 months with the introduction of wheeled bins in June 2013 and the revised weekly collection in October 2014. The implementation of wheeled bins was extremely successful and improvement has been seen in the cleanliness of back lanes due to the result of containment of refuse on collection day.

Implementation of the revised weekly collection service was part of the 2014 medium term financial plan (MTFP) and achieved savings of £400,000 per annum with refuse collection one week and recycling the following. The new service was introduced in October 2014 with final teething issues being worked through.

It was reported that the amount of material collected at the kerbside had increased by 72 per cent with the anticipation that, after a full year of operation and further publicity, overall recycling tonnages would be in excess of 7000 per annum.

Particular reference was made to the potential for increased fly tipping as all waste had to be contained within a wheeled bin. Scrutiny was advised all Councils reported fly tipping through a national database and that there were two classifications used nationally for fly tipping, namely small fly tips which were generally classed as bin bag size and larger fly tips which were multiple items from a small van and larger.

Scrutiny was advised that large fly tips have varied over the past three years and the Council takes a proactive approach with regard to prosecution. Smaller fly tips have risen during the past three years by approximately 34 per cent, however this is not surprising as, since the introduction of wheeled bins, any collection not put

within the wheeled bin was classed as fly tip and not removed as part of the refuse collection service.

Discussion ensued on green waste and composting, Wades sorting arrangements and the small amount of problems encountered when the new service was implemented.

Members stated that some issues were out of Council control i.e. windy conditions resulting in litter problems, and it was suggested that lids be used for green boxes to alleviate this issue.

The Assistant Director – Community Services advised Members that for every tonne of recycling the Council received £27.50 and when the cost saving for not putting the waste through Wades Sorting Centre was taken into account the actual figure was £100 per tonne.

Particular reference was made to the increased recycling rates, the new collection service being more environmentally friendly and the back lanes being tidier due to less littering from black bags.

Members were also informed there were several means of disposing of bulky items including, collection by charities (dependent on condition), taking the item to Household Waste Recycling Centre or accessing the bulky collection service at a cost of £16.10..It was highlighted that caution had to be taken to ensure collection services had the relevant licences to avoid fly tipping in the Borough.

Members were assured that Darlington had one of the highest prosecution rates for Fly Tipping and that surveillance cameras were placed, following the correct procedures and processes, in some known fly tipping areas. The Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio holder stated that he was extremely pleased with the service and that fly tipping was anti-social and a criminal act which resulted in prosecution whenever possible.

Members noted that assisted collections had risen and praised the service, especially for the elderly. In relation to recycling sites it was advised that some had closed down due to the new kerbside recycling service.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That Scrutiny was pleased to note that the anticipated savings were on target.

(c) That Scrutiny welcomed the arrangements for the prosecution of fly tipping.

(d) That all staff involved in implementation of the service be commended.
