

## **BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**This matter is a not Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan**

### **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR PLACE TO CABINET ON 9<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017**

#### **Revision to Assisted Waste and Recycling Collection Policy**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To set out the proposed changes to the current Assisted Collection Policy, highlighting amendments to the eligibility criteria and the introduction of an administration and renewal fee.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

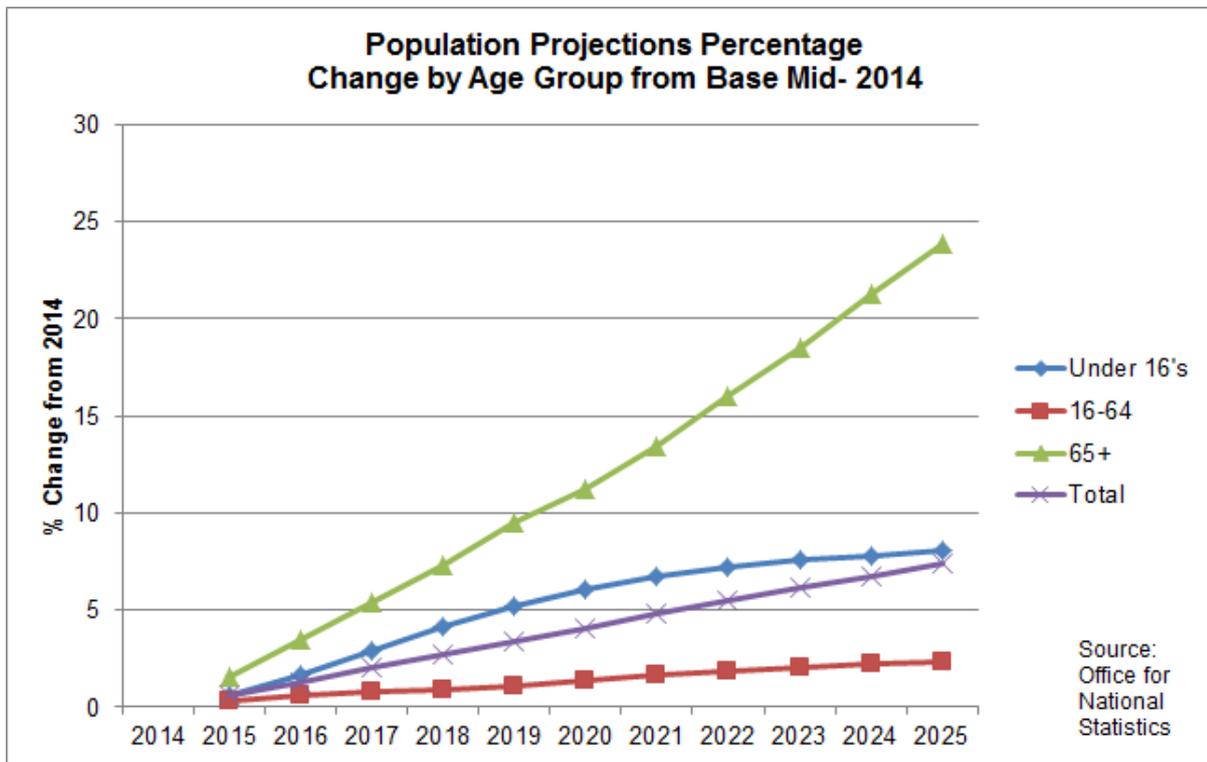
- 2.1. To amend the current eligibility criteria so that the age of applicants is no longer considered as a determining factor, for new applicants after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017;
- 2.2. To support Option 2 to introduce a single, one-off administration fee contribution of £10 (marked as C in the table at 4.3.15), which will be applied to all current service users receiving the service after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017. All future new applicants will also be charged a single, one-off administration fee contribution of £10 thereafter 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017;
- 2.3. To introduce a revised application process for service users to reduce the time taken to determine applications; and
- 2.4. To support a pilot project that determines whether waste and recycling technology is suitably developed to consider the implementation of an 'on-demand' assisted collection.

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1. The Council's Assisted Collection service has been in place for over 20 years and has changed very little over that time. The service is accessible for all residents who meet one of the following criteria;
  - Applicants are 80 years old or over;
  - Applicants have a physical disability and don't live with anyone who can put refuse containers out for collection.
- 3.2. The Waste Collection service currently provides assisted collections to 4,325 properties (c.4%) in Barnsley. However, following a data cleanse this is expected to reduce to 2672.
- 3.3. On average the service receives 32 new application each month, 70% of which are automatically eligible for the service due to the age of the applicants being 80 years

or older. The remainder request the service on the grounds that they are physically unable to move their bins to the kerbside for collection.

3.4. This bias in application eligibility towards the age based criteria is supported by the ONS mid 2014 based population projection estimates. This data demonstrates that Barnsley has an aging population with the age range demographic experiencing the most growth being the 65years +. By 2045 it is estimated that the 65+years demographic will make up almost 25% of the total population.



3.5. Further analysis shows that there are 11,000 residents in Barnsley who are aged 80 years or older and who would automatically qualify for an assisted collection service based on the current criteria.

3.6. Observations carried out by the Service indicate that on average an assisted collection takes 1 min 30 sec longer to carry out than a standard kerbside collection. This may not appear to be a significant amount of time in isolation, however, when multiplied to reflect the current number of active service users this equates to around approx. 100+ hrs per week of front line service capacity.

3.7. In order to apply a degree of control to the total number of residents receiving the service, the current database of active users is refreshed every 2-3 years. This involves writing to all users and requesting notification that they still require the service. Typically around 25% of all users contacted no longer require the assisted collection service.

3.8. With the pressure on front line services to operate with greater efficiency and productivity against a backdrop of increasing demand for services, due to an aging population and increasing housing levels, existing policy's must be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose for the next 3-5 years. The following sections set out the proposals and rationale for amending the current assisted collection policy with a view to maximising efficiency and productivity of front line services.

## 4. PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

4.1. The following sets out the options with regard to potential policy changes.

### 4.2. Option 1 – Do Nothing

4.2.1. Preserving the current Policy puts the front line waste collection service at risk of ever increasing demand. As highlighted in paragraph 3.6, each and every assisted collection carried out reduces the overall daily collection capacity of the front line crews and reduces overall productivity levels. In short, in the time it takes to carry out 1 assisted collection, 5 standard collections could be completed.

4.2.2. With an aging population and an annual increase in the nett number of households (approximately 800-1300 additional properties per year are being constructed) the core aim of the Waste Collection service is to maximise the use of its resources so that it can absorb demand without additional investment.

4.2.3. If the policy is not amended as proposed then the result would be less efficient and less productive collection rounds which are less able to absorb the increasing demand for services. This could lead to the service requiring additional resources (vehicles and staff) at significant additional cost to the Authority sooner than originally forecast. The current cost of providing a refuse collection vehicle and three- man crew is around £130k.

4.2.4. Alternatively, by trying to absorb the increasing demand within existing resources would put additional pressure on an already stretched service which in turn would result in a poorer quality of service for all users and additional workflow though supporting council services i.e. Customer Services (call centre and complaint teams)

### 4.3. Option 2 – Proposed Policy Amendments

4.3.1. The proposed policy changes can be categorised in the following way;

- Changes to eligibility criteria;
- Changes to evidence required to support an application;
- Changes to the renewal frequency;
- Changes to the recovery of administration and processing costs; and
- Changes to the default service provision for eligible users.

#### 4.3.2. Eligibility Criteria

4.3.3. As highlighted in paragraph 3.1 the current criteria for eligibility centres on two key factors;

- The applicant being 80 years or older and not living with anyone who can put bins to the kerbside; or
- The applicant having a physical disability and not living with anyone who can take bins to the kerbside.

- 4.3.4. The proposed change to the current eligibility criteria is to remove the age trigger and simply rely on applicants demonstrating that they are unable to move bins to the kerbside because of a disability or medical condition.
- 4.3.5. This would reduce the exposure of the service to an increasing number applicants who would be automatically entitled through their age alone and instead base the criteria for eligibility on whether or not, irrespective of age, the resident can place their bins out for collection at the kerbside.
- 4.3.6. The proposed change to eligibility is in keeping with the policy adopted by other Councils across the country i.e. Newcastle, Salford, Rochdale, East Cambridge, N.E. Lincs', Durham and Huntingdonshire.
- 4.3.7. Supporting evidence
- 4.3.8. The current policy requires no evidence to be supplied in respect of an applicant's age. Instead the service cross reference the applicant's submitted details with the details held on existing council systems (i.e. Academy).
- 4.3.9. With regard to providing evidence with respect to eligibility on disability or medical grounds the proposal is to leave this unchanged. Applicants will still be required to submit a G.P. authorised application form which is evidenced by obtaining a stamp from their G.P.'s practice.
- 4.3.10. Renewal Frequency
- 4.3.11. The proposal is to renew the active list every 12 months, rather than writing to users every 2/3 years, to improve the accuracy of the information that is kept on eligibility for the assisted service.
- 4.3.12. By renewing the active list more frequently will allow the service to maintain as accurate a record as possible so that collection resources are not directed to properties that no longer qualify or require the assisted collection service.
- 4.3.13. This change in frequency better discharges our responsibility under Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998 -

*Principle 4 – Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.*

4.3.14. Recovery of Administration costs

- 4.3.15. A variety of fee arrangements were considered. These can be seen in the following table

Assisted collection options	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
<b>A) Administrative fee contribution to all new members plus annual renewal fee</b>						
Number of new applicants per year	360	360	360	360	360	
Number of renewals of these applicants		360	720	1080	1440	
<b>Total</b>	360	720	1080	1440	1800	
	<b>£3,600</b>	<b>£7,200</b>	<b>£10,800</b>	<b>£14,400</b>	<b>£18,000</b>	<b>£54,000</b>
<b>B) Administrative fee contribution to all members and renewal fee each year thereafter</b>						
						<b>Total</b>
Number of existing members	2672	2532	2392	2252	2112	
Number of new members each year	360	360	360	360	360	
Residents leaving scheme	500	500	500	500	500	
<b>Total</b>	2532	2392	2252	2112	1972	
	<b>£25,320</b>	<b>£23,920</b>	<b>£22,520</b>	<b>£21,120</b>	<b>£19,720</b>	<b>£112,600</b>
<b>C) Administrative fee contribution to all existing members and new members with no renewal fees</b>						
						<b>Total</b>
Number of existing members	2672					
Number of new members	360	360	360	360	360	
Residents leaving scheme	500					
<b>Total</b>	2532	360	360	360	360	
	<b>£25,320</b>	<b>£3,600</b>	<b>£3,600</b>	<b>£3,600</b>	<b>£3,600</b>	<b>£39,720</b>

4.3.16. It is proposed to introduce a single one off administration fee contribution of £10 (marked as C in the table above) which will be applied to all current service users receiving the service after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017. All future new applicants will also be charged a single one off administration fee contribution of £10 thereafter 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

4.3.17. The administration contribution fee is payable on application and will be used to offset the cost of processing the application / renewal and a visit to the property by the waste collections team to agree the level of service required by the resident.

#### 4.3.18. Redefining the Default Service Provision

4.3.19. Residents eligible under the proposed policy changes will have their waste and recycling collected from an agreed location on their property that is safe and accessible for the refuse collection crews.

4.3.20. The service will provide an assisted collection service to those residents who are unable to place waste and recycling bins /sacks on the kerbside because of a medical condition or disability regardless of age. As part of the assessment process checks will be undertaken to ensure that there is no-one else living at the property that is able to move bins to the kerbside.

4.3.21. This default service offer will include the collection of the grey residual waste and will also include the provision of recycling services, namely; green garden waste; and blue & brown recycling. Provision of the recycling services will be assessed by Waste Officers based on quantities of material produced by the household.

4.3.22. The proposed policy changes are summarised in Appendix B.

4.4. As part of the implementation of these policy changes to support the consideration, evaluation and potential piloting of new technology being developed around 'on-demand' waste collection services.

4.4.1. Technology in the waste and recycling sector exists that can monitor levels of waste within the container. Service data generated by the unit can also predict how long it will take for a bin to become full.

4.4.2. Once a container reaches a predetermined capacity level it can alert services requesting it to be emptied. When services have a number of these units deployed, management software can also develop collection routes based upon the collection data.

4.4.3. From a customer perspective, this would mean that the bin would only be emptied once it had reached a predetermined level.

4.4.4. From a service perspective it starts to allow services to be routed upon demand, rather than attending to every bin every collection.

4.4.5. There are potential implications for both customers and the service. By piloting this we can determine how effective and efficient this could make the service for a potential future roll out.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS**

5.1. The revised policy for Assisted Collections will continue to fulfill the needs of those residents who genuinely require assistance to move their waste and recycling bins to the kerbside for collection. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix C. The EIA sets out sources of advice for residents, the arrangements that will be in place for people who are unable to submit an online application for assisted collection, and identifies that work has also been taking place with GP practices to ensure that they are aware of the revised policy. It also recommends that trends in take-up of the revised assisted collections service are monitored, so that the impact can be reviewed, and assurance provided that the revision to the service and application fee have not deterred potentially eligible people from applying for assistance.

5.2. Existing service users will be unaffected by the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria as it is recommended that the changes are only applied to new applicants.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer).

6.2. It is proposed to introduce a one off £10 administration fee for all users (including existing users) of the assisted collection service. This fee will be payable on renewal/new application from December 2017. It is estimated that this proposed administration fee will generate upwards of £25k in 2017/18 (which includes all

existing users of the service) with the full year effect of £3K from the new registrations.

6.3. This income will help the service meet its increased income targets from 2018/19.

6.4. There will be no additional requirement for additional staff to administer the scheme as this is currently part of the services' workloads

6.5. The proposed changes may generate capacity across the front line collection service; however it is difficult to quantify this as direct saving. Instead this should be viewed as a cost avoidance as any capacity generated as a result of the proposed changes will, over time, be taken up as new properties come on line across the borough.

6.6. The financial implications are shown on the attached Appendix A.

## **7. EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. There are no employee implications

## **8. COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. The current web pages and associated e-form will need to be amended and a policy will be published on our web site following approval of the changes.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

We will write to all current members of the assisted collection scheme informing them of the changes to the service.

## **10. LIST OF APPENDICES**

**Appendix A – Financial Implications**

**Appendix B - Summary of proposed changes**

**Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment**

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Officer Contact:** Matt Bell

**Telephone No:** 01226 774352

**Date:** 06/11/17

Financial Implications/Consultation

.....  
*(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer  
where no financial implications)*

## Appendix B— Summary of proposed changes

	<b>Current policy</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	Residents aged 80 or over Residents unable to move bins to kerbside because of disability or medical condition	Removal of age limit  All residents unable to move bins to kerbside because of disability or medical condition
<b>Evidence required</b>	80 or over – no evidence required Medical condition- Paper form taken to G.P. to be stamped	All applicants will need to produce proof of disability or medical condition. Paper form taken to G.P. to be stamped
<b>Process</b>	Simple e-form completed either on line or by contact centre Paper form posted out as necessary to be completed and returned to department	An e-form application form to include the facility to upload evidence and pay admin fee electronically
<b>Renewal</b>	All scheme members are written to every 2/3 years to confirm service still required	Annual renewal
<b>Administration Fee</b>	None in place	£10 single administration fee for each new application or renewal.
<b>Administration</b>	Office based paper system	Electronic application and payment
<b>Level of service</b>	All waste and recycling bins are emptied	Default service will be grey bin only with option to include recycling bins if sufficient usage

## Appendix C -Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment (Waste Management - Changes to Assisted Collections Policy)			
Details	Service	Lead Officer	Date
	Waste Management	Matt Bell	3rd October 2017
	Business Unit	Email	Telephone
	BU6 - Environment & Transport	matthewbell@barnsley.gov.uk	0
Summary	Outline of proposal		
	Revision to Assisted Waste and Recycling Collection Policy -to set out the proposed changes to the current Assisted Collection Policy, highlighting amendments to the eligibility criteria and the introduction of an administration and renewal fee.		
	Summary of objectives	Reference	
	<p>To amend the current eligibility criteria so that the age of applicants is no longer considered as a determining factor</p> <p>To introduce an administration fee of £10 which will be applied to all new applicants and those renewing the service</p> <p>To undertake an annual refresh of the service delivery database to maintain accuracy and comply with Data Protection principles</p> <p>To introduce a revised application process for service users to reduce the time taken to determine applications</p>	0	

**What are the key equality and diversity questions you would like to ask?**

eg *Do some diverse groups experience poorer outcomes or barriers to access?*

*Do some diverse groups experience greater need for services?*

*How can the investment help improve outcomes for diverse groups?*

*How can the investment help to promote equal access / take-up of services for all sections of the community?*

1 **How do you identify the people who are potentially eligible for support under the Assisted Collections Policy?**

2 **How will you make contact with these potentially eligible people to give them the opportunity to apply for Assisted Collections?**

3 **Have you identified other potential sources of support / routes for information sharing? (eg. council, voluntary and community services who have regular contact with older people)**

4 **What are the planned access channels for people who wish to apply?**

5 **What support is available for people to use the proposed access channels?**

6 **Do we know how many people in the target age group have internet access?**

7 **How will we ensure that eligible older people are not deterred by the application / assessment process?**

**How will you find out the answers to these questions? (please include brief details of findings if already known)**

8 Ask staff and other stakeholders what they know.

Discuss the issue with service users.

Meet with a relevant community group or forum.

Analyse service performance data and compare it with local demographic data.

	Who	When
1 Information is included on the council website, with an e-form to complete. Berneslai Homes and housing associations also know about the scheme so can inform their tenants. It is also included in information sent to residents about collection points, and the service talk it through with residents on home visits. Elected Members are also aware of the scheme and can publicise it with residents. Awareness and take-up is generally high among the target group of residents.		
2 Under the revised policy, the contact channels will be the same (see point 1 above), the information sent out will be amended and the payment facility will be built into the e-form. A communication plan will be done around this as well, in advance of the proposed implementation in December. Contact centres will be made aware of the changes, and they will be able to offer advice about alternatives if people are reluctant to pay the £10 charge (eg. potentially identifying family members or neighbours who could help out). Refuse vehicle crews also advise residents about the scheme if they see someone who appears to be struggling - they have information they can give out to residents.		Changes planned to be implemented from 1st December 2017.
3 See point 1 above. Awareness and information sharing routes about the scheme are already in place. Changes to the process are being kept as simple as possible, avoiding the resident having to provide a lot of information or imposing extra work on GPs in providing medical evidence. People applying will just need to get a form stamped by the GP practice.		
4 The initial request for service will be via a new e-form. People will also be able to call a telephone helpline.		
5 For people who are not able to complete the e-form (or do not have internet access) support is available over the phone. Help will also be given at Libraries, and discussions are taking place to enlist the support of the Digital Champions.		
6 We don't have easy access to comprehensive data about this, but in Barnsley internet take-up is likely to be relatively low among the target group. People tend to ask for assistance from family members, or access support on the phone helpline or at libraries, as outlined above. This is not thought to be a prohibitive issue in making sure eligible people access the service.		
7 The initial e-form is being kept as simple as possible - it won't ask for a lot of information - just enough to provide residents with information about how to apply and what evidence is needed. Also, as outlined above, support is available via other routes.		

### Customer Access - How accessible is the service and how will this be affected by the budget efficiency?

Has the service been assessed for the Minimum Access Standard?	<b>Yes</b>	According to the MAS, what access priority level is your service?	<b>Medium</b>		
<b>How will the following groups of people with different access needs be affected by the proposal?</b>					
Deaf (BSL Users)	Physical Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Difficulty	Community Language
<i>Not anticipating a major impact compared to current arrangements, unless people are also over 80 and have other medical issues.</i>	<i>This will be the main target group of residents - the changes to the policy will ensure that the assisted collections service focuses on assisting those most in need of support to get their waste collected.</i>	<i>Some people with visual impairments may not be able to use the e-form. They will be able to apply over the phone, or with support in libraries.</i>	<i>Not anticipating a major impact compared to current arrangements, unless people are also over 80 and have other medical issues.</i>	<i>Not anticipating a major impact compared to current arrangements, unless people are also over 80 and have other medical issues.</i>	<i>Some people whose first language is not English may be affected - however, the council website now has an auto-translate function into a wide range of different languages.</i>

### How can any potential adverse impacts be minimised?

As outlined earlier, the proposed implementation of this change to the Assisted Collections scheme will primarily be via a new e-form for residents to apply and make payment. This will however be supported by a phone helpline for people who are unable to access the service online, and arrangements are being made for face-to-face support where necessary.

Refuse collection crews, contact centre teams, social landlords and elected Members will continue to have the knowledge about the scheme to ensure that eligible residents know how to access it.

The auto-translate function on the council's website will assist any eligible residents who are not fluent in English - it is recommended that the e-form also has this functionality if feasible. Also, it is recommended that samples of the auto-translated text are 'sense-checked' to ensure that it provides clear instructions.

The Minimum Access Standard includes the suggestion of using a text message short-code number for use by people with hearing impairments. This could be a way of improving access for this group of people if it becomes apparent that accessing the service is a barrier for some eligible people with hearing impairments, although the service do not anticipate a major impact in this respect.

### Consultation, Advice and Support

E+I Team Consulted	E+I Business Partner (Name / email)	Date of most recent contact
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sue Smith (suesmith@barnsley.gov.uk)</b>	<b>17th October 2017</b>

Please email your completed EIA to: [equalityanddiversity@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:equalityanddiversity@barnsley.gov.uk)