

BARNSELEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a 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 1st 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.

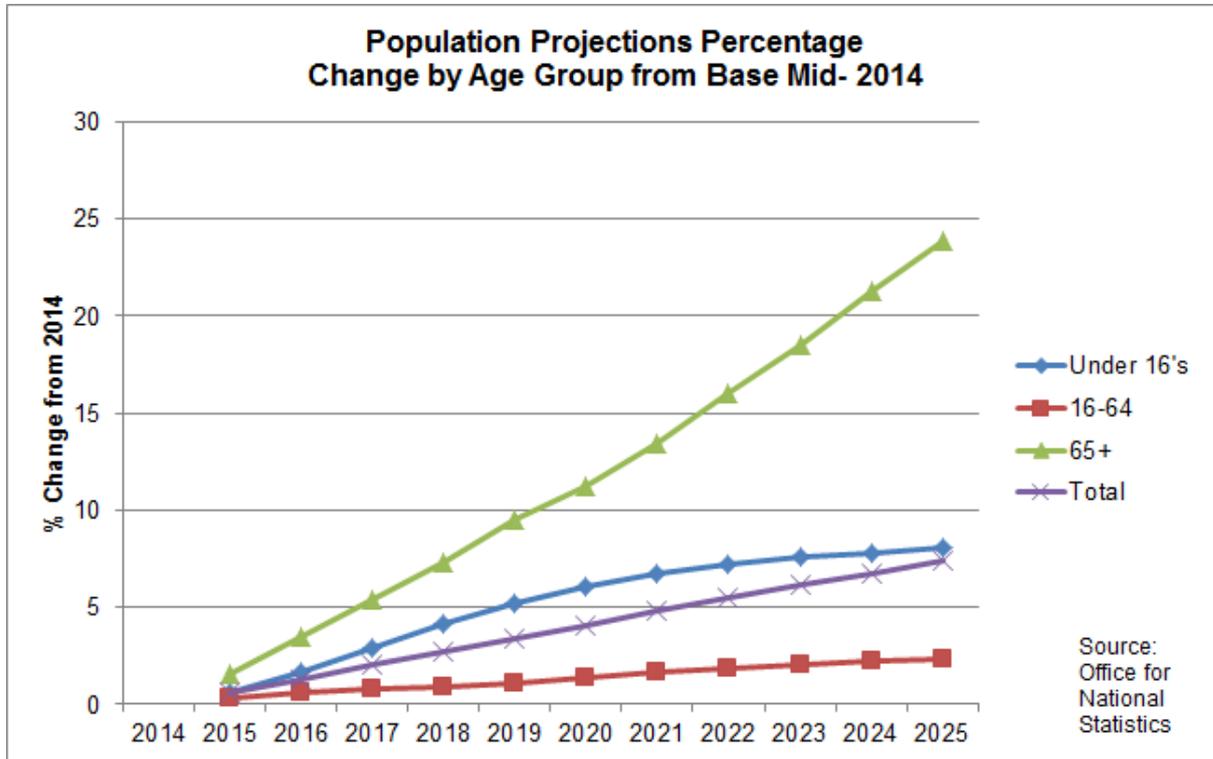
2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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 23rd November 2017; and
- 2.2. To introduce an administration fee of £10 which will be applied to all new applicants and those renewing the service; and
- 2.3. To introduce a revised application process for service users to reduce the time taken to determine applications; and
- 2.4. That, once approved, the new policy changes will only be applied to new applicants.
- 2.5. 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 in Barnsley. This equates to around 4% of the total population.
- 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 108 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 additional properties per year) 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 would lead to the service requiring additional resources (vehicles and staff) at significant additional cost to the Authority. The current cost of providing a refuse collection vehicle and three man crew is around £130,000

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; and
- Changes to the recovery of administration and processing costs;
- 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 change would reduce the exposure of the service to an increasing number automatic age based applicants and instead base the criteria for eligibility on whether or not, irrespective of age, a resident can place their bins out for collection.
- 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 who 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. It is proposed to introduce an administration charge of £10 for all new applications and/or the annual renewal of these users. This charge is in line with the fee charged for applying for a blue badge.
- 4.3.16. For clarity, it is not proposed to apply this charge to the current active list of service users. I.e. no retrospective charging will take place.
- 4.3.17. The administration charge will 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 for collection because of a medical condition or disability regardless of age. There must be no-one else living at the property who is able to move bins to the kerbside.
- 4.3.21. This default service offer will include the collection of the grey residual bin and will also include the collection of green garden waste and recycling bins provided the resident produces sufficient recycling to at least half fill a recycling bin in a four week period or the green bin in a two weekly period.
- 4.3.22. For those residents who only produce small quantities of recycling it is proposed that the service will advise them that the assisted service will only cover the grey bin and all waste and recycling should be placed in this bin. For those residents who query this approach we can make them aware that the BDR Waste PFI treatment plant will separate out their general waste into recyclates and create a fuel to generate electricity. Furthermore, we can ensure that more than 95% of their bin will avoid being landfilled. This is a 2020 Corporate Outcome target.
- 4.3.23. The proposed policy changes are summarised in Appendix A.

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 the levels of waste in the container that they are located. 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 us to route services based 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 B.

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

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. The proposed changes will 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.

6.2. The proposed £10 administration fee will generate around £960 over the first 12 months of the service, based on 8 successful new applicants being added to the service each month.

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

9.1 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 – Summary of Proposed Changes

Appendix B – Initial Equality Impact Assessment

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Date:09/08/2017

Financial Implications/Consultation

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

Appendix A – Summary of proposed changes

| | Current policy | Proposed |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Eligibility criteria | 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 |
| Evidence required | 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 which may include a G.P. letter |
| Process | 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 facility to download evidence and pay admin fee electronically |
| Renewal | All scheme members are written to every 2/3 years to confirm service still required | Annual renewal |
| Administration Fee | None in place | £10 administration fee for each new application or renewal. |
| Administration | Office based paper system | Electronic application and payment |
| Level of service | All waste and recycling bins are emptied | Default service will be grey bin only with option to include recycling bins if sufficient usage |