

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD

19 January 2009

**Joint Report of the Director of Health and Housing and Cabinet Member for
Environmental Services**

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR COLLECTION OF CARDBOARD AT
RECYCLING 'BRING' SITES**

Summary

**The report considers changes to the collection arrangements of cardboard
from our 'bring' sites.**

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Since 2004 the borough council has, along with Sevenoaks, Maidstone and Tonbridge Wells Councils, provided banks for the collection of cardboard at various recycling 'bring' sites. The emptying of these banks and delivery of the materials to the re-processor has been carried out by Biffa Waste Services under a contract let by Tonbridge Wells Borough Council on behalf of the West Kent Consortium.
- 1.1.2 The Council currently collects around 800 tonnes of cardboard from around 30 recycling sites. This represents about 1.6 per cent of our total waste.
- 1.1.3 Sevenoaks District Council has recently withdrawn from this service. Tunbridge Wells and this Council already provide a kerbside collection service for cardboard to the vast majority of residents. We include cardboard within the green waste collection service. Maidstone is currently expanding its service and expects residents will have a kerbside service, including cardboard, within the next six months.
- 1.1.4 Until recently the cost of the service has been offset by the recycling credit income received from Kent County Council. However, the recent downturn in the value of cardboard has required the contractor to increase collection costs to the level that has now exceeded the income received in recycling credits.
- 1.1.5 The increased cost of providing this service, along with the knowledge that we provide a kerbside collection service, means that the continuing provision of banks at the 'bring' sites is no longer considered economically sustainable. There is also

real concern that end markets will, at some point in the very near future, no longer be able to recycle the cardboard collected from our banks. This would lead to incineration or land filling of the collected material which is clearly unacceptable and would cause reputational harm to the Council.

1.2 Plan of Action

- 1.2.1 Along with colleagues from Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells, officers have looked at a number of options to make this service more financially sustainable. However, having considered those options, we feel that withdrawal of the service is the only real option available to us.
- 1.2.2 If we were to withdraw the service it will, of course, be necessary to ensure public awareness of the change. This would include advising residents of the reason for the change, as well as promoting the use of the green-lidded bin for cardboard recycling.
- 1.2.3 The cardboard banks are the property of the borough council and would be removed from sites and disposed of appropriately. Operationally, this will require the banks and service to be removed in a phased manner.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 In order to withdraw from this contract the Council must give a month's notice to Biffa Waste Services.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The current year's budget for the collection of card is £30,000. Recent increases will see actual costs for 2008/09 rise to approximately £33,000. This is offset by associated recycling income of £44,000. It is expected that collection costs early in 2009/10 will rise to at least £43,000. This equates to a £13,000 increase in the base budget for 2009/10.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 The removal of the banks may lead to complaints from residents and fly tipping of materials at sites. These should mainly be offset by advance publicity, including promoting the green waste scheme, together with close monitoring and additional responsive cleansing for a period following removal.

1.6 Policy Considerations

- 1.6.1 The Council aims to continue to recycle a larger proportion of household waste. It is difficult to exactly predict how removing the cardboard recycling banks will affect our recycling rate, as some of the cardboard will be diverted to the green-lidded bin. In addition, some of the cardboard collected at these banks may be commercial waste. The worst case scenario would see a drop in our recycling rate of 1.6 per cent from an estimated 49 to 47.4 per cent in 2009/10.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the Council **WITHDRAW** from its contract with Biffa Waste Services in respect of the collection and recycling of cardboard from recycling 'bring' sites as soon as practically possible.

The Director of Health and Housing confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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