

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD

27 May 2014

Report of the Director of Street Scene and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 WASTE SERVICES UPDATE

Summary

This report provides an update on a number of Waste and Street Scene Service initiatives.

1.1 Plastic Collections at Bring Sites

- 1.1.1 The new contract for the collection of plastics from Recycling Bring Sites was awarded to Countrystyle Recycling, as agreed by the Board at its meeting of 26 November 2013. Since then meetings have been held with Countrystyle's management in order to progress the implementation of the new contract which commenced on 1 May 2014.
- 1.1.2 During the contract implementation period, Countrystyle worked very closely and efficiently with the outgoing contractor, Viridor, to ensure a smooth transition to the new service. This included a phased replacement of the containers at each site over a week long period. All banks are now new and branded to highlight the partnership between TMBC and Countrystyle.
- 1.1.3 Whereas the Viridor contract only provided for the collection of plastic bottles for recycling, the new service allows for the collection of a wider range of plastic containers, such as margarine tubs, yoghurt pots and ice cream containers. All of the new banks bear a number identification system to assist residents in identifying which types of plastics will be required. Any plastic containers bearing the recycling symbol with 1, 2, 4 or 5 can be recycled using the new service.
- 1.1.4 Countrystyle are also investigating future options for increasing the types of plastics they can accept for recycling, but this is dependent on the available markets and reprocessing facilities. Should the opportunity be available to increase the specification further during the contract, we will of course advise residents and Members.

1.2 Review of Charges

- 1.2.1 Following a Scrutiny review of the Council's concessionary charges and fees, a number of recommendations were approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 4 February 2014. The decision to move to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, being the qualifying benefit for Pest Control and Bulky Goods Collections, has been implemented. In addition we will continue to advertise the services and concessions to ensure residents' ongoing awareness.
- 1.2.2 The viability of a single discount card has been looked at by an officer group. The group has found that the discount card does not provide any advantage to residents requesting a Pest Control or Bulky Goods Collection as "qualifying" information is instantly available when services are booked either online or via the Admin Team. In addition the discount card would be expensive to produce and maintain. Consequently it has been decided not to introduce a discount card for these services.

1.3 Transformation Agenda

- 1.3.1 The Waste & Street Scene Team have been a lead service pioneering the online revolution. We continue to work with IT Services to further develop on-line services. As well as improving access to information via our website, self-service forms have been developed which enable residents to carry out some transactions without having to telephone the Council or visit the Gateway or Kings Hill reception. Most of these come into Waste Services as an email report, which then has to be entered into the Lagan CRM system to be actioned by the contractor. However, a small number of these do not need to be dealt with by administrative staff but go direct to Veolia.
- 1.3.2 Bulky waste & fridge/freezer collections can be booked and, where necessary, paid for on-line, giving residents a choice of collection days. Those on means-tested benefits can also book a free bulky collection every three months, using their benefit reference number. During 2013/14, 46 per cent of paid-for bulky collections and 41 per cent of fridge/freezers collections were booked online. However, just 16 per cent of benefits bookings were made online. This may indicate that households on means- tested benefits are less likely to order services and goods online, or a need for further communication with those households about accessing online services. This may inform the future development of the "My Account" service and uptake by these households.
- 1.3.3 Residents can also report a damaged or missing bin on-line, and the report goes direct to Veolia to action, saving on administration time. People moving into new properties can order their new bins on-line. A change of bin size can also be requested via the website. Any requests for the largest bin are sent to the Waste Services admin team for authorisation, but all other requests go direct to Veolia. During 2013/14, 11 per cent of bin orders were made via the online form, with a further 5 per cent by email.

- 1.3.4 Pest control services can also be requested online. Paid-for services are referred to the contractor, Monitor. Of the 166 requests referred since November, almost 30 per cent were made via the web form which goes direct to Monitor.
- 1.3.5 We will continue to develop these “channel-shift” initiatives, with orders for green boxes being the next priority for the service, as they form the highest volume of requests which are not yet directed straight to the contractor. Of the 1,794 requests made during 2013/14, 38 per cent were received by email. There is a potential for many of these, which had to be entered by Admin into the Lagan system, to be received as an online form which goes direct to Veolia for action.
- 1.3.6 We are also linking key pages of the website to the “My Account” service. Residents registering with the service are now able to receive automatic notifications about the Saturday Bulky Service, Bank Holiday collection arrangements and the Waste Services Update page, which we use to advise of any delays to collection services caused by bad weather, vehicle breakdowns or road conditions. We will continue to identify further opportunities for improved communication with residents via the “My Account” service.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The costs associated with these arrangements and initiatives are contained within existing budgets.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The failure to provide effective and efficient front line and high profile services could result in criticism from residents and impinges directly on their view of the Council and their satisfaction with services delivered.

Background papers:

Nil

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