

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2009

HEAD OF SERVICE: HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT
PHIL LONG

SUBJECT: MONTHLY WINTER GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION PILOT

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the implementation of a monthly collection system pilot for garden waste during the winter month's to reduce operational miles travelled, facilitate reductions in CO₂ emissions and secure efficiency savings.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Council is recommended to approve:
- (i) A pilot scheme to reduce the frequency of winter garden waste collections across the district from alternate weekly to once every four weeks during December, January and February 2009/10 to reduce CO₂ emissions and secure efficiency savings.
 - (ii) Outcomes from the pilot to be reported back to Community Services Committee following the trial for consideration.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Government has a long-term goal to reduce carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050. All local authorities are now under a duty, under the National Indicator regime, to report on a new set of indicators regarding carbon dioxide emissions, air quality and adaptation to climate change.
- 3.2 One of the key aims of the Council's Corporate Plan is to have a "High Quality and Sustainable Environment". At Community Services 23 July 2009 members approved challenging CO₂ reduction targets of 2% in 2009/2010 and 3% in 2010/2011 (NI 186).
- 3.3 As detailed previously (Community Services Committee 23 July 2009) it is anticipated that this would be realised by energy efficiency improvements in Council owned buildings, that is the boiler replacement programme for Derwent Pool, Ryedale Pool and Ryedale House, following significant investment committed by the Council of £318,000 through the capital programme). Tenders have been received and works are anticipated to start in October 2009.

3.4 The report of the 23 July also highlighted officer's intention to carry out further work targeted at reducing vehicle miles with the view to potentially increase 2010/11 emission reduction targets once outcomes have been analysed.

3.5 Currently approximately 45% of RDC's total CO2 emissions come from transport movements (the remaining 55% from buildings and street lighting). Of this 77% can be attributed to the 474,066 miles travelled by the operational vehicle fleet.

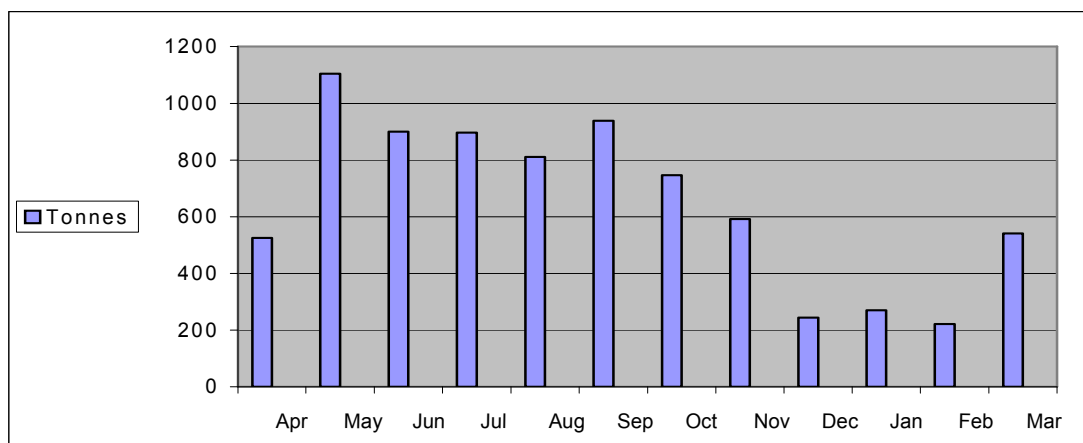
4.0 REPORT

4.1 The action recommended will facilitate performance delivery against the Councils Corporate Plan through the reduction of operational miles travelled, having the potential to:

- Reduce CO2 emissions.
- Contribute to carbon reduction targets and planning of adaptation to climate change.
- Secure immediate efficiency savings with the potential for more in the future.

4.2 With reference to Diagram 1 Garden waste tonnages start to significantly reduce from in the winter months from the end November, in particular during December, January and February before gradually increasing again in March. Similar patterns can be seen in previous years (Annex A).

Diagram 1: Monthly Tonnages of garden waste collected during 2008/09.



4.3 Currently during the winter period staffing levels are reduced on rounds as far as practicable, however set out rates of garden waste bins by the public are inconsistent over this period, making it difficult to accurately predict staffing levels on a daily basis, effectively increasing unit costs per tonne garden waste collected by comparison with other months.

4.4 Moving to monthly garden waste collection during the winter months when tonnage reduces has the potential to increase bin set out rates enhancing efficiency, reducing collection costs and reducing CO2 emissions, through potential savings in fuel, mileage, overtime and longer term staffing efficiencies

4.5 Operational Practicalities of moving to Monthly Garden Waste Collections

4.5.1 **Staffing:** Currently weekly collections rounds in the District are split between refuse and garden waste collections (i.e. Round 4 refuse, Round 5 garden waste etc) As

such effectively 3.0 vehicles and 7.5 staff are used to collect garden waste each week. Initially, for the pilot, staff would be reassigned duties e.g. leaf collection, gritting, bin delivery etc, encouraged to take holidays, sickness cover etc. Longer-term, staff efficiencies have the potential to unlock further savings.

- 4.5.2 **Vehicle Capacity:** Analysis of individual rounds (Annex A) indicates that vehicle capacity will be able to accommodate monthly collection tonnage during December, January and February.
- 4.5.3 **Customer Information:** A critical success factor is the clear communication of changes to the public. From experience collection day and frequency changes are difficult messages to convey. This is a crucial area to address with the added complications of Christmas bank holidays to factor in.
- 4.5.4 **Customer satisfaction:** Satisfaction with alternate weekly collections (AWC) is inherently lower than weekly collection systems Customers could see monthly collections as a further diminution of the service. Encouragement of Carbon emission reduction is inherently difficult and challenging requiring a sustained cultural change in behavior and consumer choices. The proposal is an opportunity to reinforce this message. As such the communication strategy needs to be carefully considered to educate, inform and minimise disruption.
- 4.5.5 **Bin Storage Capacity:** Analysis indicates that customers would have more than adequate storage capacity for green waste over the winter months. Due to the season smells etc should be at minimum, though bins are well sealed in any event. A number of other Districts operate monthly collections of garden waste in winter with no apparent difficulty or adverse affect.
- 4.5.6 **Christmas collection:** Monthly winter garden waste collections create opportunity for revised arrangements over the Christmas period to be considered. Enhanced staffing availability and vehicle capacity could help to reduce overtime, negate the need to hire in additional RCV's and minimise customer disruption.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 There are two potential options:

OPTION 1: Four weekly garden waste collections during December and January.

- Mileage reduction est. 6,007 miles.
- Fuel savings est. £9,630 (2009/10)
- Carbon savings potential of up to 29.1 tonnes est. up to 1% reduction on RDC total emissions. (2009/10) (NI 186)
- Vehicle hire savings over Christmas/New year: £2000.

Option 1- Appraisal:

- Limited savings by comparison with Option 2.
- The shorter period might limit the perception of a reduced service, but could compound communication difficulties due to Christmas and New Year bank holiday day changes.
- Officers consider the period too short to allow the changes to adequately settle down before changing back to fortnightly.

OPTION 2: Four weekly garden waste collections from around the end November to early March- essentially 3 months

- Mileage reduction: est. 8,677 miles
- Fuel savings est. £13,910. (2009/10)
- Carbon savings potential of up to 42.07 tonnes est. around 2% reduction on RDC total emissions. (2009/10).(NI186)

- Vehicle hire savings over Christmas/New year: £2000.
- Potential recurring efficiency savings in future years could be established of around £8,000.

Option 2- Appraisal:

- Enhanced savings by comparison with Option 1
- Clear evidence that tonnage is down over the 3-month period by reference to Diagram 1.
- Longer time period to mitigate against confusion over Christmas and New Year changes.
- Longer time period should help the change to settle down before resuming fortnightly collections.
- Due to the longer time period the option has the potential of additional efficiency gains in future years of an estimated £8000 per annum.

5.2 An investigatory ROUTESMART project has also been commissioned aimed at identifying further potential efficiencies through optimisation of collection rounds and reducing miles travelled. This has further potential to reduce emission levels and secure efficiency savings.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 OPTION 2 should help RDC to realise efficiency savings short term of £15,910 (2009/10), with the potential of further efficiency gains in future years (2010/11) of around £8,000. Within the Council's budgetary framework it is important that additional efficiency savings are constantly identified as expectations of future cuts in Government grant, if not able to be financed from efficiencies, will lead to cuts in services.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 Financial Risk: None

8.2 Strategic Risk: The option underpins RDC's commitment to carbon reduction with the potential of enhanced emission reduction targets, environmental performance and efficiency savings.

8.3 Environmental Risk: The significant risk is that the Council it does not make sufficient improvement in this priority area. This will be mitigated through the implementation of Option 2 as recommended and performance monitoring. A further potential risk could be the loss of green waste tonnage, though this is unlikely given the bins storage capacity.

8.4 Reputational Risk: The public could view the initiative as being a diminution of service. This can be mitigated by good communication of the environmental message, press coverage, individual bin tags, use of vehicle Agrippa system etc but historically any round change notification is an initial challenge despite individual bin tagging, media notification etc.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The Council has made significant strides in actions to reduce CO₂ emissions and challenging targets have been set. Implementation the changes recommended in this report would help to reduce CO₂ emissions and enable RDC to exceed the emission reduction targets set as well as realise cashable efficiency savings. Meeting long-term Government emission reduction targets will continue to be a real challenge, requiring significant further investment.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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