



# INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## *Committee Report*

**Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009

**Title:** INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES FOR THE COLLECTION OF  
BULKY WASTES

**Report of:** Director of Community Services

**Report reference:** CS 03/09

### **Summary:**

The attached report (CS97/08) detailing proposals for the introduction of charges for the collection of bulky household waste was considered by the Executive at its meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008. The decisions of the Executive were as follows:-

1. 'That the Executive agree to introduce a charge of £15.00 for collection of bulky items such as white goods and larger furniture. The collection of other items would remain free but a limit of 4 free collections per property per year would be introduced'.
2. 'That the Executive support the production of a feasibility study to identify options and issues for enhanced partnership working with the 'third sector' and in particular look to work with Centre 47 in pursuing the possibility of establishing collection, recycling and re-use partnership in respect of those items sent for collection.'

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: CS 97/08 & OS 13/08

The introduction of charges for the collection of bulky household wastes was the subject of a 'task and finish' study by this Committee. The conclusions of that study were presented to this Committee at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

**Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:**

The Executive have requested that the report be forwarded to the Environment and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its comments and observations. These will be considered by the Council as part of the budget process and by the Executive at its forthcoming meeting scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

**Recommendations:**

The Committee is recommended to consider the attached report and the decision detailed above and forward its comments and observations to the Executive for its consideration at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

**Contact Officer:** Mike Gardner

**Ext:** 8572

# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

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Date of Meeting: 18 December 2008

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Public

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Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

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Inside Policy Framework

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**Title:** INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES FOR THE COLLECTION OF BULKY WASTES

**Report of:** Director of Community Services

**Report reference:** CS 97/08

### Summary:

The report presents options for the introduction of a charge for the collection of bulky household wastes.

### Recommendations:

It is RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The Executive supports the introduction of a charge for bulky waste collection and identifies the preferred option from within the report and authorises the Director of Community Services to develop the charging option in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure & Environment.
2. The Executive supports the production of a feasibility study to identify the options and issues for enhanced partnership working with the 'third' sector.

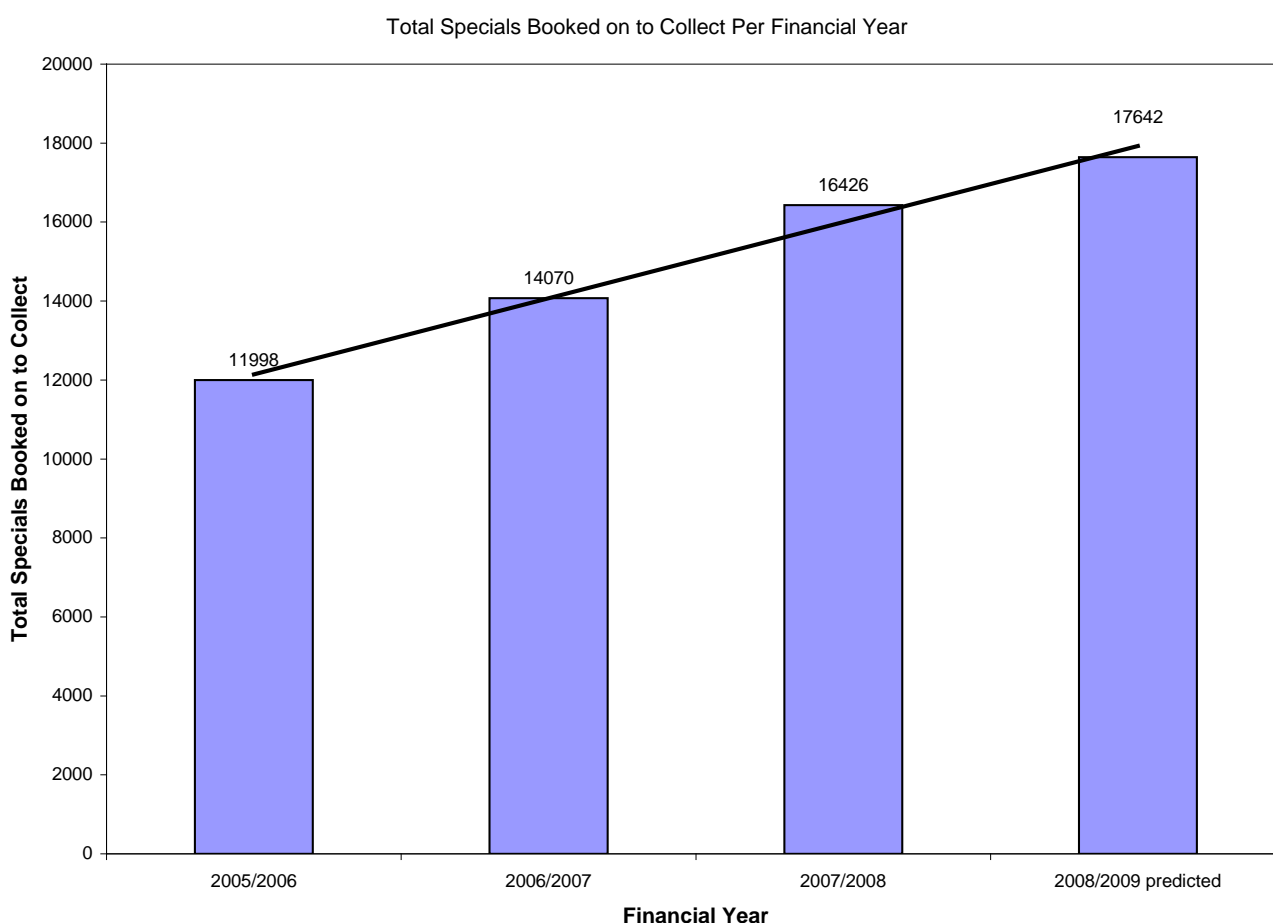
**Contact Officer:** Mike Gardner

**Ext:** 8572

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 Bulky household wastes are defined as household waste items that are not presented for collection in the bin provided by the Council for the collection of non-recyclable wastes. Bulky household wastes include items of furniture, white goods (such as fridges, freezers etc) and household fixtures and fittings (such as kitchen units). Whilst a charge is made for the collection of fixtures and fittings, the vast majority of bulky wastes (over 95%) are collected free of charge. The number of collections has steadily increased over recent years peaking at 16,426 collections in 2007/08. Figure 1 illustrates this increase over time.

Figure 1: Total number of bulky household waste collections ('Specials') undertaken by the Council per annum.



- 1.2 2 collection vehicles and 4 operatives are now dedicated to the collection of bulky household wastes at an annual cost to the Council of £220,000. The growth in the number of collections has put pressure on the existing waste budget and extended the collection period.

- 1.3 Whilst a significant proportion of the bulky items collected by this service are recycled and re-used via a partnership with Impact Housing's 'Centre 47' (in particular 'white goods' such as fridges, freezers, washing machines and cookers), over 50% of the items collected are landfilled. The Council operates an 'appointment' system for collections (i.e. customers are told which day their bulky wastes will be collected). Full details of the policies governing the bulky household waste collection service are provided in Appendix 1. The service aims to make a collection within one week of the request being received by the Customer Contact Centre. However, the continued growth in the number of collections is testing the ability of the service to meet this standard.
- 1.4 Analysis of the collections undertaken over the last 18 months has identified that a significant number of properties are utilising the service disproportionate to the average. 537 properties (just over 1% of the total number of properties) are responsible for receiving 12% of all collections (3,254 collections). This would suggest a degree of abuse of the existing service.
- 1.5 A survey of local authorities in the Council's 'Nearest Neighbour' family group showed that the majority of authorities charge for the collection of bulky wastes (i.e. not just for the collection of fixtures and fittings). However, it should be noted that there is a considerable variation in the level of charge applied by different authorities. Appendix 2 illustrates the variation in charges applied by members of the 'Nearest Neighbour' family group.

#### Options for Charging

- 1.6 The growth in bulky collections with the associated financial and operational implications is not sustainable and an approach adopted by many other Authorities is to introduce a charge for the service. Experience elsewhere indicates that this will reduce the number of requests received but there is a concern about the potential increase in fly-tipping. The benefit of introducing a charge is that the receiver of the service pays rather than the costs being met by all Council Tax payers. This issue has been considered by a Task and Finish Group of Members and their report (included as Appendix 3) is due to be considered by the Infrastructure O/S Committee at its meeting on 4 December.
- 1.7 Should a charge be introduced then the existing administrative framework for receipt of service requests would be maintained. All of these would be handled by the Customer Contact Centre who would receive payment and arrange a suitable date for collection. No collection would be undertaken until confirmation of

payment has been received. Experience from an adjacent Authority suggests approx. 65% of payments are made by credit/debit card, 30% by cash and 5% by cheque. It is anticipated a similar profile would arise in Carlisle. The advice is that there would be a minor bank charge for these transactions of up to £2000/year in total.

1.8 Two main charging options have been assessed and are as follows:-

**1.8.1 Introduce a standard charge for each collection**

Appendix 2 provides details of the charges levied by 'Nearest Neighbour' Authorities. If this charge was £15 (same as the 2 adjacent Cumbrian Authorities) and based on a 50% reduction in requested collections this would generate income of approx. £120,000/year.

This would be a relatively simple system to administer but the level of charge could increase the risk of fly tipping.

A possible variant to this could be to introduce a concession (as considered by the Task and Finish group) for those properties in receipt of Council Tax/Housing Benefits. This would reduce the income by approx £15-20,000/year.

**1.8.2 Introduce a charge for bulky items such as White Goods/large electrical equipment and furniture. Other items remain free, although a limit could be provided on the number of free items collected and the collections/property each year.**

This is a much more tailored solution for Carlisle and is based on experience of local problems/issues. If a charge of £15 was introduced for the 'chargeable' items this is estimated to generate an income of approx £50-60,000/year.

The disadvantage of this option is the potential confusion this would cause to the public and is more difficult to administer.

A similar concession could be considered for those households in receipt of Council Tax/Housing Benefits with a similar reduction in the forecast income.

## Fly-tipping

- 1.9 The clear concern about the introduction of charges is the potential for an increase in fly-tipping. Experience from the introduction of alternate weekly collections introduced last year in Carlisle shows that an increase in fly-tipping was a problem in some localised areas. A number of Councils have been contacted, who charge for bulky collections to assess the relationship to fly-tipping. The outcome from this is that there is no tangible evidence to support an increased problem. However this would need to be related to an initial baseline assessment. The DEFRA 'Fly Capture' web site does not enable an appropriate assessment.
- 1.10 Should the Executive support an option for charging then the potential for increased flytipping must be recognised. Additional environmental enforcement resources would be essential to address this problem and must be considered to address future and current issues, which would offset income projections.

## **2. RE-USE AND RECYCLING OF BULKY WASTES**

- 2.1 Currently all white goods collected by the Council's Bulky waste collection service are taken to Impact Housing's 'Centre 47' where they are made available for re-use and recycling. Despite this partnership arrangement, over 50% of bulky wastes are still landfilled. Alternative models for enhanced partnership working with the third sector are operated in a number of authorities around the country. Whilst the modus operandi may vary from authority to authority, the common feature of these enhanced partnerships is increased re-use and recycling of the bulky items collected. It is proposed that the Council supports the production of a feasibility study to identify the practicalities and implications of the available options for enhanced partnership working with Centre 47. It is recommended that external funding from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the County Council's Waste Prevention budget is sought to fund this work.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 Consultation to date: The introduction of charges for the collection of bulky household wastes has been examined by an Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee 'task and finish' sub-group'. The results of this examination will be presented to the meeting of the Infrastructure O&S Committee at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

- 3.2 Consultation proposed: It is proposed that the report will be considered by Infrastructure Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The Executive supports the introduction of a charge for bulky waste collection and identifies the preferred option from within the report and authorises the Director of Community Services to develop the charging option in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure & Environment.
2. The Executive supports the production of a feasibility study to identify the options and issues for enhanced partnership working with the 'third' sector.

#### **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Introducing charges for bulky household waste collections is recommended for the following reasons:

- (i) the continued year on year growth in the number of bulky household waste collections that the Council's Waste Services is required to undertake is unsustainable within existing resources;
- (ii) Evidence from elsewhere demonstrates that introducing charges for the collection of bulky household wastes is an effective tool in reducing the number of collections and reducing the overall amount of household waste generated. Waste minimisation is a cornerstone of the Council's corporate aim of a 'cleaner, greener, safer Carlisle'.
- (iii) Income generated by the introduction of charges for the collection of bulky household wastes could be utilised to enhance those services that make a demonstrable difference to the quality of local environments (e.g. the enforcement of the Council's waste collection services and the collection of fly-tipped wastes).

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources - To be considered.
- Financial – The introduction of charges for bulky waste is anticipated to reduce the number of bulky waste collections by 50%. The options discussed in the report would generate between £30,000 and £100,000 additional income after offering concessions to those in receipt of Council Tax/Housing benefit. This



would increase to between £50,000 and £120,000 if no concessions were given. If this charging policy is approved, the estimated income generated will form part of the Executive's budget proposals for consultation purposes. There is also a risk that the Council may incur additional fly tipping costs and this should be kept under review as part of the regular budget monitoring process.

- Legal – The Council has powers in Section 45(3) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to charge for the collection of bulky household waste. The comments of the Head of Legal Services are incorporated within the body of the report.

Corporate – A reduction in the number of bulky household waste collections will reduce the pressure on the Customer Contact Centre enabling customers to more easily access the Council and its services.

Risk Management – The Council's Waste Services have been subject to considerable evolution (some would say revolution) in recent years. In 2007/08 some 48% of all the household waste collected by the Council was recycled. The economics of recycling are complex but the recent volatility in the markets place for recovered materials, resulting directly from the global economic downturn, has exposed the Council to unforeseen costs. An additional income stream will help to minimise the risks associated with the collection of recyclables, thus helping to secure a high profile service which enjoys almost universal public support.

Equality and Disability – It is proposed that households in receipt of benefits administered by the Council (Council tax benefits and Housing tax benefits) should qualify for free collections of bulky household wastes.

Environmental – Experience elsewhere has demonstrated that the introduction of charges for the collection of bulky household wastes results in an overall reduction in the amount of household waste (householders not wishing to pay for a collection make alternative arrangements which include re-use by other organisations). However, it should be acknowledged that some households may dispose of bulky items inappropriately. It is therefore prudent to utilise some of the income generated by the introduction of charges to provide additional resources for the delivery of services which can be clearly seen to make a difference to the quality of local environments.

Crime and Disorder – The enhancement of services which result in a demonstrable improvement in the quality of local environments will have a positive impact on crime and disorder.

Impact on Customers – Householders currently receive a free bulky household waste collection service.

## **Existing bulky household waste collection policies 2008**

- Carlisle City Council provides a separate collection of bulky household wastes.
- Collections will be made on a specified day as per the attached schedule.
- No charge is made for the collection of bulky wastes except if they are deemed to be 'fixtures and fittings'.
- A charge is made for the collection of items deemed to be 'fixtures and fittings' (see list below) and the payment is made prior to collection of the item.
- Only when the charge has been received by Carlisle City Council will the items be collected and a receipt will be sent to the customer.
- The maximum number of items that will be collected from any one property at any one time is 5.
  - For example a 3 piece suite i.e. a sofa and 2 chairs are 3 items.
  - A mattress a bed base and a head board is also 3 items. If a resident has more than 5 items then they will have to book the extra items on to a separate collection on a separate day.
- Only items listed on the collection sheet will be collected
- If the collection crew arrive at a property and there are more items presented for collection than are listed on the collection sheet, the crew will photograph the items and notify the Waste Services office.
- Householders are requested to present their items at the front of their property on the day of collection unless they are disabled or elderly and cannot carry the items to the kerbside.
- Collection crews will only collect from the rear of a resident's property if they are disabled or elderly and cannot carry the items to the kerbside.
- In the event where collection crews cannot collect all of the bulky wastes booked for collection on a particular day, affected customers will be contacted and an alternative collection date arranged.

### Summary of Collection Areas and Days

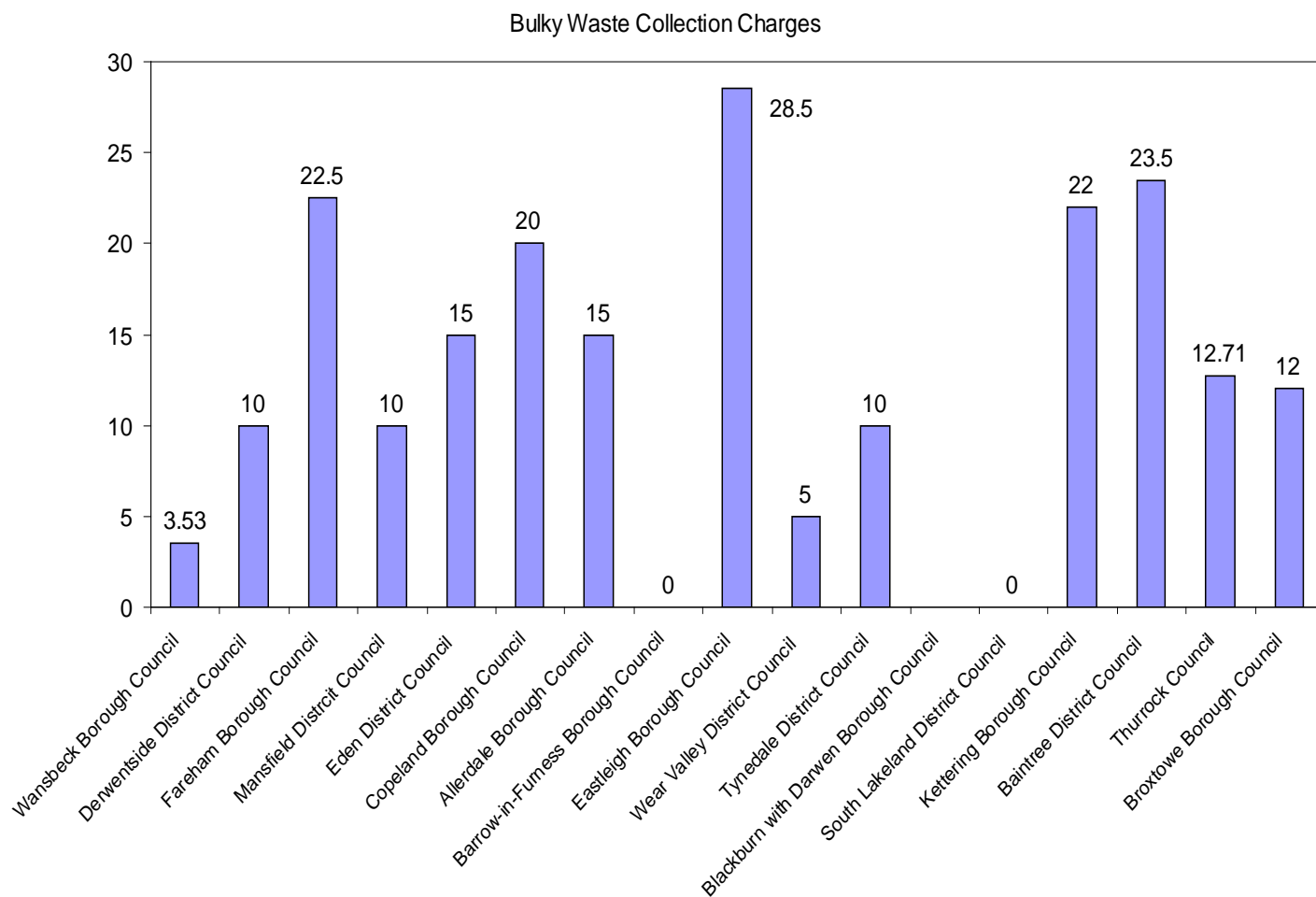
Day	Areas
Monday	London Road Area, Harraby, Durrhill, Botcherby, Cumwhinton, Cotehill, Wetheral Pastures, Carleton, Scotby
Tuesday	Denton Holme, Long Sowerby, Dalston Road, Cummersdale, Dalston, Currock, Wreay, Burthwaite, Raughton Head, Durdar and Brisco
Wednesday	Westlinton, Corby Hill, Warwick Bridge, Heads Nook, Wetheral, Brampton, Faugh, How Mill, Newby East, Laversdale, Crosby on Eden, Gilsland, Cumwhitton
Thursday	Caldewgate, Newtown Road, Wigton Road Belle Vue, Morton, Newby West, Moorhouse, Burgh By Sands, Grindsdale, Kirkandrews on Eden
Friday	Town Centre, Stanwix area including Houghton, Cargo, Rockcliffe, Longtown, Penton, Catlowdy

### Chargeable Items

<b><u>FIXTURES AND FITTINGS</u></b>		
Doors	1-3	<u>£10</u>
	3-5	<u>£15</u>
	6-10	<u>£20</u>
	11+	Inspection
Kitchen Suites		<u>£25</u>
Individual Parts (sinks, cupboards, sideboards)		<u>£10 (each)</u>
Bathroom Suites		<u>£25</u>
Individual Parts (Sinks, Toilets, Baths, Showers, B-Day)		<u>£10 (each)</u>
Rubble, Plaster, Etc		Inspection
Fires		<u>£20</u>
Fire Surrounds		<u>£15</u>
Windows		<u>£15 (each)</u>
Guttering		Inspection
Gates		<u>£15</u>
Fencing		Inspection
Wood (unless dismantled Furniture)		Inspection
Green Houses		Inspection
Insulation		Inspection
Glass		Inspection
Radiators		<u>£15</u>
Boilers	Small	<u>£15</u>
	Medium	<u>£20</u>
	Large	<u>£30</u>

## Appendix 2

Survey of charges applied to the collection of bulky household wastes by members of the Council's 'Nearest Neighbour' family group (*N.B. the 'Y' axis lists the costs per collection*).



# **INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## ***Committee Report***

### **Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 4 December 2008

**Title:** Bulky Household Waste Collection

**Report of:** Bulky Household Waste task and finish group

**Report reference:** OS13/08

### **Summary:**

This report provides details of the work undertaken by the Bulky Household Waste task and finish group. The conclusions of the group are provided for discussion by the Infrastructure Committee to determine if the Committee wishes to make recommendations to the Executive.

### **Recommendations:**

Members are asked to:

- Consider the report and agree whether they wish to make recommendations to the Executive.

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## Introduction

At the Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee on 31 July 2008, members agreed to establish a task and finish group to look at the possibility of charging for bulky household waste collections. The initial membership of the task and finish group was Councillors Bainbridge, Rutherford, Patrick, Vasey and Styth. Councillor Styth withdrew from the group prior to the first meeting.

The task group held two meetings to review the bulky household waste collection service. The first meeting, on 18 September, looked at the options available for charging for bulky household waste collections. The members requested that Waste Services Officers undertake further research and report to the next meeting of the group on 6 November. At this meeting, members discussed the findings and agreed that a report should be taken to the Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee on 4 December 2008 that detailed:

1. The current bulky waste collection service and why it needs to change.
2. The option to undertake a feasibility study of developing a bulky waste collection service with a third sector partner.
3. The options available for charging and the importance of learning from Councils who have already introduced charges for bulky waste collections.

This report provides the conclusions of the task and finish group for discussion by the Infrastructure Committee. Members should consider the findings and agree if they wish to make recommendations to the Executive about the bulky waste collection service.

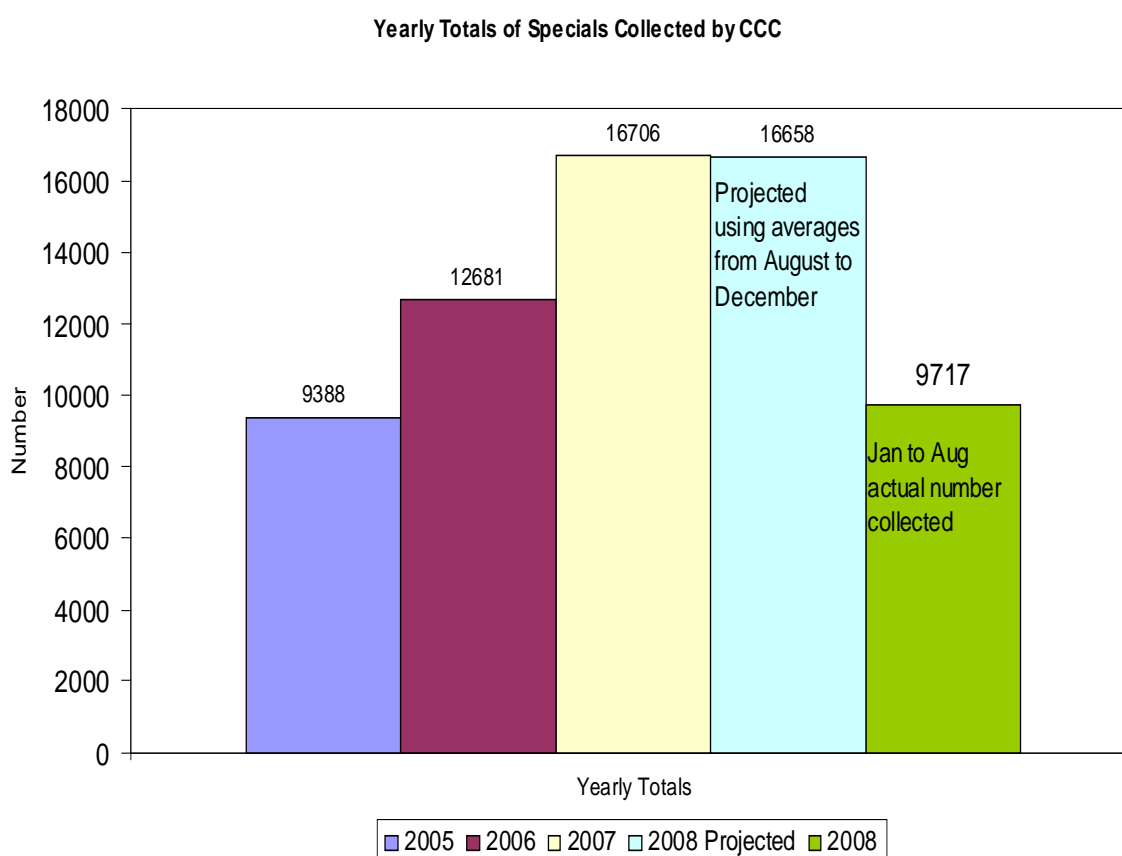
A report outlining proposals to charge for bulky waste collections is scheduled for the Executive on 18 December 2008. The Committee has the opportunity to make recommendations to the Executive on 18 December which could be considered alongside the Executive report. The Executive report and decision will then be referred to the Infrastructure Committee meeting on 22 January 2009 for members to comment on the detailed proposals.

## 1. The current bulky waste collection service and why it needs to change

The Council provides a free bulky household waste collection service separately from household refuse collections. The service is provided by 2 vehicles and 4 members of staff, with a total budget of £220,200 for 2008/9. Most items are collected free of charge, however, there is a charge for fixtures and fittings based on the type of material to be collected and how long it will take to collect it. Commercial customers have to pay for the removal of bulky waste items.

The number of special collections by the Council increased from 9,388 in 2005 to 16,706 in 2007 (see Figure 1). The figure for 2008 is projected to be 16,658. The count is based on the number of properties collected from, not the number of items, so the actual number of items collected could be much higher than the figures shown here. The Council caps the number of items that can be collected from properties, but does not cap the number of collections per property. The increase in collections predates the introduction of the Council's new refuse and recycling service, which was implemented between March and June 2007. However, the introduction of alternate weekly collections is likely to have contributed to the further increase in collections during 2007.

Figure 1





The task group requested that officers undertook an analysis of the demographics of current collections, including the frequency of collections and location. This analysis was based on the 5 collection areas for bulky waste, shown in Figure 2 below. The results show that the greater the number of properties within an area, the more collections there are. Officers commented that more detailed information could be obtained from drilling down into postcode areas, however this would require time and detailed analysis. It was felt from initial assessment of addresses that currently use the service most frequently and anecdotal evidence from collection crews, that the highest number of collections are from those areas of the city with the highest levels of deprivation.

Figure 2

Collection day	Area	No of properties	Total collections Jan-Sept 2008
Monday	London Road Area, Harraby, Durranhill, Botcherby, Cumwhinton, Cotehill, Wetheral Pastures, Carleton, Scotby	11323	2809
Tuesday	Denton Holme, Long Sowerby, Dalston Road, Cummersdale, Dalston, Currock, Wreay, Burthwaite, Raughton Head, Durdar and Brisco	10441	2750
Wednesday	Westlinton, Corby Hill, Warwick Bridge, Heads Nook, Wetheral, Brampton, Faugh, How Mill, Newby East, Laversdale, Crosby on Eden, Gilsland, Cumwhitton	6825	2099
Thursday	Caldewgate, Newtown Road, Wigton Road, Belle Vue, Morton, Newby West, Moorhouse, Burgh By Sands, Grindsdale, Kirkandrews on Eden	11389	3254
Friday	Town Centre, Stanwix area including Houghton, Cargo, Rockcliffe, Longtown, Penton, Catlowdy	8922	2358

A number of properties have multiple collections, which is classed as having more than 5 collections per annum. Over the past 18 months, the Council has made 27,417 special collections. 537 properties have had more than 5 collections, which equates to 12% of all collections. These figures seem to indicate that the service is open to abuse as collections are free and the Council does not cap the amount of collections properties can have. Properties with frequent collections are located throughout the city rather than one specific area. This could be due to a number of reasons such as Houses with Multiple Occupancies, properties in student areas, farms and rural properties, and could also be linked to areas of deprivation as described above.

All items collected by the bulky household waste service, with the exception of electrical items (30%), are landfilled. The Council works in partnership with Impact Housing Association to collect bulky household items that can be recycled by being made available at a low cost to low income/disadvantaged people. The Council's website has been altered to encourage people to contact Impact Housing for collections, rather than the Council. The Customer Contact Centre will also try to redirect customers to Impact if the item can be recycled. Impact focuses on recycling items and also has the advantage that it can enter properties to collect items. The Council's insurance does not cover staff to enter houses, so often goods are left outside, become damaged and cannot be recycled.

The Council has finite resources to respond to demand, and is currently limiting collections to 80 per day. The key implications of the high demand for the service are the cost to the Council and the number of bulky items that are being landfilled. As a result, the Executive will consider introducing charging for bulky waste items as part of the budget proposals for 2009/10 onwards.

**The task group recognised the limitations on the Council's resources and was concerned by the increase in collections, given the Council's environmental responsibility to reduce waste and develop recycling and reuse. The group concluded that the service needed to be reviewed, including considering the option of charging for collections. If charges were introduced, the group felt there were key factors that should be considered - these are provided on the following pages under parts 2 and 3 of the report.**

## **2. The option to undertake a feasibility study of developing a bulky waste collection service with a third sector partner.**

There are a number of options available to the authority to collect and dispose of bulky items that need to be identified and assessed. One suggestion is that the Council could strengthen partnership working with the voluntary sector and develop the infrastructure for recycling and reuse. Consultation has taken place between Impact Housing and Waste Services to discuss 3 options for developing the bulky collection service:

- Option 1: Contract the service out to Impact Housing/third sector collector who will collect all bulky waste items. This option is the best in terms of maximising the quantity of items that are either re-used or recycled.
- Option 2: Impact Housing make part of the collections i.e. all electrical and white goods only, or the collections are split between the Council and Impact Housing to reduce pressure on the Council's collection crews. This could be complicated, particularly if collections were a mixture of recyclables and waste, and could be difficult to administrate.
- Option 3: Re-evaluate the current system to make efficiencies where possible. It should be noted that the Council has already tried to improve this situation with limited success.

Impact believes there is the demand for recycled furniture and are motivated to develop their service. Their premises are not big enough to provide a full collection service; however, they would not expand until they have a commitment from the Council. If the Council decided to contract the service to Impact, it would be approximately 2/3 years before this would be set up, so this is a longer-term solution for collections. The task group raised a number of questions that they felt would need exploring prior to entering into a contract with Impact. These included concerns that Impact would be able to manage the number of collections and if there would be any flexibility over collection charges if Impact had to recover the running costs of the service.

**The task group supported the development of partnership working with the third sector to provide the bulky waste collection service. The group supported the possibility of undertaking a feasibility study of the 3 options outlined above to examine the detail and costs. As the proposals seek to develop links with a third sector partner, there could be money available through WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) or the County Council's funding for waste prevention to support the study.**

### **3. The options available for charging and the importance of learning from Councils who have already introduced charges for bulky waste collections.**

The task group felt that it was important to research how other councils provide bulky waste collection services and learn from their experiences. Waste Services contacted other authorities through the Association of Public Service Excellence to find out how bulky waste services are provided. The findings of this show that there is a wide variation in the services provided (see Appendix 1 for full details). The task group discussed the findings and highlighted key considerations to be discussed by the Infrastructure Committee.

#### **Financial implications of charging for bulky household collections**

Councils can introduce charges for special collections to contribute to the costs of the service, completely cover the costs, or cover the costs and generate additional income.

Evidence from other authorities indicates that collections drop by up to 50% when charges are introduced, this would need to be taken into account when calculating projected income.

If Carlisle introduced a charge of £10 per collection the anticipated gross income would be £80,000 per year, assuming collections reduced by 50% (from a current level of 16,000 collections per year). Part of this income would go towards administration costs associated with charges. Carlisle already charges for the collection of fixtures and has

systems in place to administer this process that could be developed to handle charges for bulky items. Currently, all fixtures must be pre-booked and paid for through the Council before collection is arranged. Payment can be made by post or in person at Council offices. The task group highlighted there could be equality issues concerning payment if people could only pay by cash in person, which could lengthen the process. There could also be difficulties for people who could not access the Council offices. It is not considered viable for crews to take the money at the point of collection or for people to pay in Community Centres.

The task group considered the service provided by Barrow Borough Council and the importance of effective financial planning and robust contractual arrangements. From 2003/4 the council charged for bulky waste collections, helping to reduce the number of collections from 15,500 to 7,500 per annum. The council reverted to free collections in 2005/6 and contracted a partner to make 10,500 collections per year. The partner would charge the council extra for any collections made above this figure. The number of collections has continued to rise to the extent that in 2007/8, 22,500 collections were made which incurred an additional £120,000 in payments to the contractor.

**The task group concluded that the Council would need to identify what the objectives of charging were (ie to cover costs or to generate income) as this would inform the levels of charging. The Council should consider how the service will be administrated and ensure that the service is accessible to all the community.**

### **Different levels of charges for different situations**

The task group discussed whether discounts should be available for people receiving benefits. It could be difficult to prove that a person was elderly or disabled – although this could be linked to council tax or benefits. There is also the option to charge different rates for different items. Members felt it would be easier to administrate if a flat rate was charged for all types of items. The level of charge would depend on the objective of charging as mentioned previously, if it would be to generate income or to cover the costs of the service.

Another mechanism to help reduce collections, possibly combined with charges would be to cap the amounts that will be collected. Examples could include allowing 5 free

collections but charging for anything beyond this. This is particularly relevant given the significant number of properties with frequent collections.

**The task group concluded that the Council should consider charging a flat rate for all items and look at the option to cap the number of free collections before charging. They also supported the option to discount or offer free collections to residents in receipt of benefits.**

### **Investing/ringfencing income**

Members commented that there would have to be an identifiable benefit from the charges and that income should be reinvested in services. They also felt the Council would need to have in mind how the money would be reinvested before charges were introduced so that this could be explained as part of the proposals. Members believed it was important to apply resources and enforcement across the district so that they were visible. Some of the proposals discussed included investing in:

- Flytipping/enforcement
- Education about waste prevention and recycling
- More resources for recycling
- Investment in third sector partners
- Ideas scheme, where the public could put forward areas that could be improved. Members gave the example of the County Council's Highways Stewards who have helped to promote work being undertaken and are a visible presence in the community.

**The task group concluded that income should be reinvested in waste services to show identifiable benefit to the public as a result of the charges.**

## **Flytipping**

The feedback from other Councils was that once charges were introduced the number of collections had decreased but fly tipping had not risen. It was difficult to obtain quantifiable evidence about how flytipping was affected, particularly as it was measured differently by local authorities. Members commented that income from charges for bulky waste items could provide more resources to deal with flytipping such as enforcement or education. It was also important to recognise the role of others partners, such as the Environment Agency in flytipping.

**The task group felt that if charges for bulky waste were introduced, it would be important to monitor flytipping levels in future to identify if there was an increase as a result of charging for bulky waste collections.**

## **Communications**

Members agreed that communications would be a key part in introducing charges and ensuring that the public were well informed about changes and also why the charges had been applied. For example, if the income was invested in supporting the third sector and promoting recycling, this should be clearly communicated to the community. The Council does not monitor customer satisfaction with the service provided. This could also be introduced as a means of obtaining feedback from customers to help improve the service.

**The task group concluded that the Council would need to be clear about how income would be reinvested in services before charges were introduced so that this could be clearly communicated to the public. It should also be clear how charges would be applied and how they would be administrated.**

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Charge</b>	<b>Additional information</b>
Wansbeck Borough Council	£3.53 for 10 bags	White goods charged at £3.53 each
Derwentside District Council	£10 per visit	
Fareham Borough Council	Single item is £22.50	Half a lorry load is £50 Full lorry load is £87.50
Mansfield District Council	£10 for a collection of up to 3 items £5 for additional items	OAPs and residents in receipt of benefit receive a 50% reduction on the costs
Eden District Council	£15 per collection of furniture	£15 for fridges and freezers
Copeland Borough Council	£20 basic charge which covers 15 minutes of collection time or 2 white goods	£10 charge for collecting tvs and PC monitors with free standing items. For larger items the council normally provides a quotation of an hourly rate of £70.
Allerdale Borough Council	£15 for bulky items (£7.50 for residents in full receipt of Council Tax Benefit)	Fridges are charged at £7.50 (3.75 for residents in full receipt of council tax benefit)
Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council	No Charge	
Eastleigh Borough Council	Minimum charge is £28.50, this covers the removal of up to 8 units	Residents on benefits are allowed 2 free collections in a 12 month period
Wear Valley District Council	£5 per item	
Tynedale District Council	£10 per 3 items, an extra £10 for every extra 3 items	
South Lakeland District Council	5 items are collected for free	£20 charge for removal of fridges and freezers
Kettering Borough Council	£22 for 6 items household waste including white goods	Those on income related benefit can have 2 items for free per year
Baintree District Council	£23.50 is charge for 6 items	
Thurrock Council	3 items £12.71, up to 10 items £22.25, over 10 items requires a quotation	
Broxtowe Borough Council	£12 for 1 item £18 for the collection of up to 3 items	No Concessions