

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 6 MARCH 2012

STREAMLINING OF BRING BANK SITES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To examine a proposal to streamline the bring bank operation, in order to focus on materials that are not collected from each home, release resources to improve the cleanliness and appearance of the bring sites, and improve the efficiency of the service.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE BRING BANK COLLECTION

- 2.1 Glass bring banks are the only method of capturing household glass recyclate as it cannot be co-mingled with the other recycling materials and processed through the ECC Materials Recycling Facility, due to contamination and safety considerations arising from glass shards.
- 2.2 There are 72 bring sites throughout the city, providing separate banks for green, clear and brown glass; keeping the colours apart achieves the highest sale value, with clear glass being the most valuable.
- 2.3 In addition to the glass banks, 28 of the sites also have paper banks and 22 have mixed cans/plastic/card banks. The provision and servicing of these banks is an additional and questionable cost when householders have kerbside collections for an unlimited amount of these materials each fortnight.
- 2.4 The vast majority of the paper, card, plastics and cans are collected via the kerbside system, whereas approximately 5.0% of these materials come from the banks.
- 2.5 The new collection vehicle acquired in May 2011 records the weight of material from each bank as it is emptied, as well as the number of collections per site, which gives an accurate record of bank usage.

3. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- 3.1 Analysis of the data recorded by the collection vehicle (kg/container/lift) highlights the relatively low tonnage collected from the cans/plastic/card banks and many of the paper banks, as described below.

Mixed cans/plastic/card banks

- 3.2 From May 2011 – Feb 2012 there were only 31 tonnes of cans/plastic/card collected from 22 banks. This is an average of only 70 kg per collection, (compared to the 5500 tonnes collected from the kerbside during the same period). This low tonnage is a reflection of the bulky and light-weight nature of the mix that fills up the banks making regular collections a costly necessity. It is predicted that the removal of the banks will divert much of this material to the kerbside collection or trade recycling.
- 3.3 Approximately 1 day a week (50 days/year) is allocated to collecting this material from the banks. This does not represent efficient use of the driver's time which could

be more usefully deployed on other tasks currently done by an agency worker, (eg cleaning wheeled bins for re-use, delivering bins at busy times and covering for staff on the shop floor of the MRF).

Paper banks

- 3.4 There are 28 sites with paper banks, and like the collection of mixed plastic/cans/card it is uneconomical to continue supporting this at many sites where the tonnages are low, especially as paper is also collected from the kerbside in the co-mingled collection. However it makes sense to retain paper banks where significant tonnages are collected such as supermarkets and other popular shopping areas (e.g. Sainsbury's, Tesco, Morrisons, Co-op (North Street), Holman Way (Topsham), Magdalen Road, Pinhoe Surgery and Cowley Bridge Road).
- 3.5 Shredded paper can be processed more effectively through bring banks and continuing to offer paper banks at the main sites would be economical as well as providing an outlet for shredded paper recycling. If shredded paper is put into the green wheeled bin or box it will not be rejected by the collection crews but much of the value will be lost as it 'falls through' the belt system in the MRF.

4. FINANCIAL SAVINGS

- 4.1 An estimated revenue saving of £5600 per annum together with a one-off saving of up to £10,000 can be derived from removing the mixed can/plastic/card banks and reducing the paper banks as shown below:
- reduction in wear and tear on the collection vehicle of up to 15%, approximately £600;
 - reduction in fuel costs between 15% -20%, approximately £2000;
 - releasing an operative to replace agency costs for 50 days/ year, saving approximately £3,000
 - the redundant banks can be refurbished and reused thus reducing the demand for new banks, making a one off saving of up to £10,000.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGES

- 5.1 To fully inform the public about the removal of banks it is proposed that a series of posters are attached to the bins that will be removed. This will be a 'count down' campaign stating that the bin will be removed in 4 then 3 weeks, etc. with further information on alternative sites for the paper and reminders that paper/cans/plastic/card can be collected from the door-step. Phone numbers for ordering additional recycling containers at home will also be on the posters.

6. OTHER BENEFITS

- The driver will save approximately half a day each week by reducing the number of paper banks and it is proposed that this time is used for a bank cleaning programme. Maintaining cleaner banks may encourage greater participation from the public.
- The number of visits/glass bank is also being reviewed as part of this process to avoid unnecessary visits, from which a further time saving is expected to accrue.
- The space released from removal of the banks can be used to increase the spread of textile banks and possibly other bank types (either under ECC/DCC's contract with Wilcox Textile Recycling or by Charities supplying their own banks)

- The redundant banks can be used for additional glass banks and used to reduce the collection frequency and improve the capability to cope with the peaks in recycling that occur during the Christmas period.
- Further 'drinks carton' recycling containers could be deployed but there is a cost for emptying any additional banks imposed by the company that collects the cartons (this would not be covered by the recycling credit received for the tonnage collected from these banks and so would incur a cost to the Council) but could be off-set by part of the estimated £5600 savings derived; this will be given further consideration.

7. SUMMARY

- 7.1 Removing the bring banks for mixed cans/plastic/card will make approximately £5,600 revenue savings and up to £10,000 capital savings, and removing the low-usage paper banks will enable the driver to maintain the remaining sites to a high standard and help encourage greater public participation in glass recycling.

8. RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee – Community:

- 1) Support the proposal to streamline the bring bank operation and increase the range of banks for recyclates that are not collected from homes.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT

S:PA/LP/Cttee/312SCC1

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None