



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

15 JANUARY 2008

SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL'S FINAL REPORT ON MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL'S WASTE SERVICES

Purpose of the scrutiny investigation:

The principal aim of the scrutiny exercise was to provide an elected Member input into a review of waste services being undertaken by the Executive Director of Environment.

Terms of reference:

The terms of reference of the scrutiny investigation were as follows:

- To provide an elected member input to the review of waste services being undertaken by the Executive Director of Environment.
- To examine the background relating to the Executive Director's review.
- To assess the impact of the National Waste Strategy and any other relevant national guidance, including performance requirements, in the context of the scrutiny review.
- In the light of performance requirements and anticipated recycling targets, to investigate existing service provision and policy options for:
 - domestic refuse collection
 - trade waste activities
 - street washing
 - back alley cleansing
 - junk jobs
 - side waste
- To examine how efficiencies can be made in service delivery.

- To investigate how other local authorities have improved waste services and increased recycling rates and to consider examples of best practice in relation to this topic.
- To consider any relevant external reports or policy documents that are appropriate to the scrutiny review.

Findings:

The scrutiny panel found that changes to waste services operations and service provision, to make the services more efficient, are imperative if the Council is to achieving its recycling targets. This has been the starting point of the Executive Director of Environment's ongoing review of waste services and has formed the basis of the panel's investigation.

The scrutiny panel heard details of how it is planned to achieve improvements in waste services provision. In some areas of the service, proposals are still to be developed and finalised - for example revised refuse collection rounds will not be introduced until later in 2008. The panel's report has therefore been produced on an interim basis and includes a recommendation that any further proposals developed by the Executive Director of Environment should be submitted to the Environment Scrutiny Panel prior to their finalisation or consideration by the Executive.

Conclusions:

Based on the evidence considered during the investigation, the panel made nine conclusions. These are shown in full at paragraph 98 of the final report and relate to:

1. The need for the Council to move towards providing the most efficient waste collection service possible while encouraging the reduction of waste and the maximisation of recycling collections.
2. The need for changes to service operations and management arrangements to enable the authority to increase recycling levels and meet future targets.
3. The ongoing review of waste services by the Executive Director of Environment and the fact that the panel has produced an interim report as a result.
4. The use of alternate weekly collections of refuse by 19 of the top 20 local authorities with the highest recycling rates.
5. Problems concerning back alley cleansing and proposals for improvement.
6. Proposals to alter refuse collection rounds and crews' working arrangements and proposals to examine street washing arrangements.
7. The future of the Council's trade waste service.

8. The need to resolve problems relating to side waste collection.
9. The fact that that recycled materials from the Energy From Waste Incinerator cannot be included in the Council's recycling targets.

Recommendations:

The scrutiny panel's final report contains seven recommendations. These are shown in full at paragraph 99 of the report and relate to the following:

1. The fact that the report has been produced on an interim basis.
2. The submission of the Executive Director of Environment's finalised proposals on the review of waste services to the Environment Scrutiny Panel.
3. The submission of any future proposals to alter waste services operations to the scrutiny panel.
4. The submission of monitoring reports on the Council's recycling targets and rates to the scrutiny panel.
5. The need to undertake street cleansing prior to refuse collection.
6. Reaffirmation of the Council's 'no side waste' policy.
7. Making representations at a national level regarding the inclusion of recycled materials from the Energy From Waste Incinerator in Council recycling targets.

**COUNCILLOR JOHN COLE
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL**