

# Report on the Panel's Scrutiny of Refuse Collection

## 1. Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference were approved by the Panel at its meeting held on 5th April 2000 (Minute 25a refers):-

"To consider the efficiency and effectiveness of all aspects of the Refuse Collection Service in Tameside, with particular reference to the Borough's recycling facilities".

The Panel Members comprised the following persons:-

Councillor P J Robinson (Chair), Councillor M Wardle (Deputy Chair), Councillors S Ballagher, A Doubleday, Joe Fitzpatrick, A Gwynne, W Harrison, A Holland, C Meredith, K Roberts and S Smith.

## 2. Method of Review

2.1 The Panel invited comments from members of the public by advertising in the local press.

2.2 The Panel interviewed Councillor C Piddington (Cabinet Deputy - Environmental Services), Mr G Kaufman (Head of Environmental Health), Mr R Monk (Divisional Manager - Operations), Mr L Conway (Cleansing DSO Manager), Mr P Johnson (Transport Manager), Finance and Administrative Officers and considered written information. The Panel also interviewed two Refuse Collection Operatives.

## 3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Scrutiny Panel sees refuse Collection as an excellent service but market research feedback undertaken for the Council by MORI in 1999 did show a drop in the level of customer satisfaction. It is the Panel's view that this was due to the attitudes when dealing with customers. However, as the poll was undertaken at a time of a refuse round review, this may or may not have had a bearing on the result

3.2 Overall, costs included in the budgets are increasing faster than both inflation and income and continuation of this would therefore lead to a budget deficit in future years.

3.3 No clear distinction has been made between domestic and trade collection for many years, as any profits from one account have been used to cross fund other trading accounts. However, in recent months costs are, in general, related to individual cost centres. New financial controls will result in costs only being allocated to the actual service cost centre and continual improvement in budget control will be taken account of in the Business Plan 2001/2002.

3.4 Ultimately, the main areas of improvement recommended by the Panel include the incorporation of priorities given by management to utilise control data and ensure that the

data obtained is accurate, for both financial and budgetary areas as well as service quality measurement.

3.5 The new management structure will allow the joining up of relevant services i.e. bulky waste, Tameside service and paid jobs and these will be reflected in the Business Plan 2001/2002.

3.6 A new business strategy is currently being developed and will be included in the new Business Plan 2001/2002. With mixed heriditament properties, some commercial advantage is gained by utilising a combined trade service. This may not be the case for all commercial contracts, for example town centres and other issues such as time and day of collection.

## 4. Evidence - Officer's Observations

### 4.1 Reorganisation

Environmental Health assumed responsibility for Refuse Collection on 28th May 2000. Client staff were relocated to operations in mid June 2000.

a Not unnaturally, this led to a number of teething problems and, as with all front line services, the importance of delivering the service on a continuum meant certain short cuts were taken with regard to combining budgets.

As part of the reorganisation, a number of activities were assessed by the former Director of Environmental Services, including the skip service, which had been transferred to the Engineering division. It is understood that this took place around November 1999.

b Conversely various clerical and administration operations were being reviewed and transferred from Engineering Services to Environmental Services as part of the rationalisation. These activities would ultimately affect budgets.

c Environmental Services operate a large depot at Ash Road and they were expecting to relocate a number of services there, having closed Cavendish Street.

### 4.2 Budget

a The summarising of contractor amounts has led to confusion with an apparent doubling of the figures. The new management however, were recognising a significant number of opportunities to create improvement and were proposing radical changes to the performance management system.

b The Finance Manager felt that his role was to accept the costs provided by the operational support staff and to collate this against a predetermined budget. If errors had occurred in the collation of this information, central staff had little way of identifying these other than over a period of time. Similarly, budget projections and allocations would be subject to review in accordance with the corporate monitoring timetable, (ie. at least every two months) and now monthly. Current budgets were, in general, based on the out turn of

previous years and through changes, it was more difficult to highlight trends.

It was also recognised with recycling, the management of the Waste Disposal Authority and the operational services had been under different management control.

Recycling data and official recycling rates are calculated by Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority. They have been subject to audit by District Audit.

Waste arisings in tonnage is calculated from weighbridge tickets from district collections and civic amenity data. Commercial data is based on estimates agreed with the GMWDA.

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All claims for recycling credits are supported by weighbridge tickets submitted by TMBC and other organisations.

Government has previously given advice on how local authorities should estimate the amount of home composting for inclusion in data compilation. A recycling rate using this calculation is evaluated but the official GMWDA figure does not include any calculations in home composting.

In the previous year, the operational DSO had returned to the general fund a figure of £140,000, which has, in essence, to be deducted from the current budget for the service.

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Recycling had operated at a break-even figure, due to the extremely favourable price newsprint from the blue bin scheme achieved and recycling credits.

In this year's budgets a calculated risk had to be taken with regard to the replacement of the domestic wheelie bin as these had now been in service for 14 years and it was likely they could start failing in larger numbers. However, there is a real probability of high numbers of failures in the next few years because of age and a strategy for replacement of the total stock needs to be implemented. (This could total up to 70,000 new bins).

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### 4.3 Central Support

The central support staff, by way of financial management and human resources, had again seen significant change in April and by and large, staff were operating in new areas with little historic background.

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### 4.4 Staffing Matters

Front line managers did not consider Council policies with regard to disciplinary procedures, competency and sickness monitoring as being supportive. They quoted 2 examples where employees had been suspended on full pay for several months pending management investigations. They also felt a lack of support for upholding dismissals. However, the Panel felt that if management had controlled and monitored absence, sickness and complaints in the first instance, then maybe appeals would have been concluded at an earlier stage.

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Reliance had been placed in the past and at the time of the Panel's meetings was still placed on agency staff, however, they were no longer used except in an emergency which could not have been pre-planned as the service must be maintained at all times. Temporary operatives were given training and protective clothing, in accordance with Council policy.

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## 4.5 Best Value

a Best Value was a totally new concept for local Government and to date there had been insufficient time and training provided for all levels of their organisation to be able to comply with the legislative requirements because of lack of understanding and resources. The Division did place great importance on this concept and measures were being undertaken to ensure that they obtained Best Value for all their services.

b It was accepted that for Performance Indicators, Best Value Performance Plans etc., either changes in the regulations or misunderstandings in the requirements led to errors. Managers believed this to be universal through all authorities and that too much reliance could be placed on performance data.. Management generally take a pragmatic view of view of benchmarking data and its ability to compare "like with like". Nevertheless, it is felt important to monitor performance and to use process data collected to continually improve the service delivery.

## 4.6 Business Plan

4.6.a The current Business Plan seen by the Panel had, in fact, been produced by the previous management. Whilst they copied budgets that were some 7 years old, it was accepted that some work had been done to improve these plans and to introduce far more factual data in support of the account procedures. Business Plans were in the process of being linked to Council policies, the Best Value Performance Plan and the overall vision for the authority.

## 4.7 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction surveys carried out by the Environmental Health Division had shown very high levels of satisfaction with the services, as had independent MORI-type polls and management were committed to further improve efficiency and quality of services. Appropriate areas were the bulky waste service and recycling.

a Many initiatives were being introduced to reduce the volume of waste collected. These included increasing the provision of blue bins for newsprint, co-ordination with the Waste Disposal Authority on initiatives for commercial composting for soil enhancement, the support of voluntary groups inclined to green policies, the current green box glass scheme, new increased bring site provision, and plans for the expansion of home composting.

Consultation exercises showed that the public had a high level of satisfaction with the Council's recycling performance, although further improvements would be continued.

## 4.8 Vehicles

a Repairs, including damage to refuse collection vehicles, often meant that wagons were 'off the road' for some time. In order to minimise 'downtime', the garage kept a supply of spare parts and has maintained a "imprest" system with major suppliers for refuse vehicles and

lifting equipment.

#### 4.9 Garage Facilities

a Members were informed that the Division did have established practices to reduce 'downtime' of vehicles, but noted that management expressed concerns regarding the opening hours of the garage. As the Refuse Collection Service operated on Mondays to Thursdays inclusive, management considered that the garage needed to be open on Fridays to Sundays inclusive, in order to maintain the vehicles and ensure they were in good working order each Monday for that particular week.

b Whilst visiting the Tame Street vehicle workshop, a software programme utilised primarily to schedule vehicle repairs, hiring and accounts was demonstrated. Work was underway to link the software systems to operations, however this software was a stand-alone system which gave only limited management information. Panel Members were also advised of suspected deliberate damage to refuse collection vehicles. IT experts are to evaluate the benefits of this system to refuse collection management.

#### 4.10 Preventative Measures

a One of the preventative measures undertaken by the division was the continued investment of CCTV installations in the refuse collection vehicles, to assist the drivers and prevent rear end damage to the vehicle, which was probably the most expensive damage to repair. Damage to the lifting gear on the rear end of the vehicle could cost between £3000 to £7000.

#### 4.11 Health and Safety

a Safe working practices were in place to reduce personal accidents/injuries.

b An accident profile was maintained by the division, identifying the reasons for sickness. Statistics suggest that a significant proportion of long term sicknesses were age related. However, this would be addressed through Human Resource planning. Currently 18% of refuse collection staff are over 50 years old. Foot injuries were higher than normal. The division provides compulsory protective footwear to appropriate staff.

c Management viewed health and safety as an important issue and disciplinary measures were undertaken against any employees not adhering to the procedures.

d Households with elderly or infirm people were being identified sometimes by the Refuse Collection operatives themselves and a 'pull out and return' service was provided for those persons who cannot physically do this themselves.

Operatives interviewed by the Panel made a number of salient points: -

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1. The recent round review failed to address a number of practical issues.
  2. Sickness was high due to a variety of reasons and reliance on casuals lost time and

increased the potential to miss bins. It also delayed start times and reliability.

## Member's Observations

### 4.12 Policy

There did not appear to be a written policy regarding refuse collection and associated services. The Authority would be advised to have a simple descriptive policy for all services. Such a document for Environmental Services should include the following, which would be seen as good practice:-

1. Domestic refuse is collected from the curtilage of the properties and the bins returned to the curtilage on all occasions and at all locations. The service is provided once per week, 52 times per year. All bins must be out by 7.15 am.
2. Any waste (excluding hazardous wastes, paints, batteries etc) placed in the bin is taken, including garden risings, free of charge. The bulk household service is also offered free of charge depending on the type and number of items.
3. Householders are provided with a wheelie bin free of charge, subject to the payment of a one-off charge for insurance, which covers the cost of replacing and repairing the bin, belonging to a particular property. This charge is payable by the owners of new properties. The bin shall be used for refuse only and is supplied to eliminate most spillage and seal the refuse from vermin and animals. The bin should be filled so as to allow the lid to shut and seal the bin. Extra waste beside the bin will not normally be removed. Where the physical aspects of a property make the provision of a bin not practical, an infinite number of black bags are provided which equate approximately to the weekly contents of a 240 litre wheeled bin.
4. Facilities such as blue bins, bags or boxes should be made available to every household to reduce the amount which is land filled.

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Whilst there is a charge made to each new property for the repairs and maintenance of bins, householders who repeatedly lost or damaged bins should be charged for replacement.

Budgets and costs should be accurately recorded to show clearly those associated with the Domestic Waste Collection Service, the Trade Waste Collection Service (excluding skip hire/emptying), Bulky Collection and Recycling. Profit targets should be re-set for Trade Waste and recognition given to the need to support recycling initiatives for a number of years - if Government recycling targets are to be met, investment above income is necessary.

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### 4.13 Business Planning

The purpose of the business plan is to implement the policy. As such, the existing Business Plan appeared to provide little in the way of measurable targets, clear goals or supportive information. Supplementary questions and information provided by the section showed much needed to be done to link together the old DSO, the client function, the recycling

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initiatives and the Environmental Health Operations Section.

b The present link between refuse collection, disposal and recycling are contained in the borough's recycling plan and a new draft version has just been published for consultation. However, it has been acknowledged for some time that the Recycling Plans do not in themselves create a basis for a total waste management strategy. This has been recognised by government who have announced a commitment to publish guidance for Councils who will be required to produce and publish a new "Municipal Waste Management Strategy" although a timetable has not yet been decided. Recycling plans will then no longer be required.

c Since July 2000, continual improvement has been ongoing in all areas and is constantly used to improve the division's services.

All Plans and Performance Indicators should be based on the same formula.

#### 4.14 Performance

a The service is provided at a high standard at very competitive prices and is also generally well thought of. Complaints have slightly increased and management are addressing this issue.

b The MORI poll on household refuse collection conducted for the Authority as a whole, showed the percentage of very satisfied residents has reduced significantly over the last two years, although the Quest Report indicated that this number was still very high. The reasons for this appear to relate to resourcing and management issues. In forward strategies, this seems to be ignored. Collation of some of the Performance Indicators, key to the service, appeared to have reduced, prior to July 2000.

c There was evidence that not all complaints were being logged in accordance with agreed practice. There was a record kept for a period of time but there have been changes with the way that Performance Indicators are measured. The range of Performance Indicators was not clear with the definition of complaints varying. It was felt that when the collection of some bins was missed, this should be regarded as a complaint, and dealt with in accordance with the Council's complaints policy.

d Budget information was not contained in the current Business Plan 2000/01 and whilst various restructures and extra twilight shifts etc. are proposed, there was no evidence that this had been properly costed, nor that they would be cost effective if introduced. There was also evidence that the levels of sickness, overtime working and agency employees were all increasing. There was little or no evidence that there was a significant increase in the number of properties being served. Management's view was that in the past, they had to rely on inadequate financial information.

e Prior to June 2000, accountancy practice, regarding invoicing, timesheet management and insurance claims meant that these were not easily identifiable, and therefore improvements suggested by the manager were difficult to substantiate.

#### 4.15 Service Issues

a The service was once one where all staff were directly employed by the Council. To resource fully the domestic collection service requires 42 persons, plus approximately another 6 to cover holidays and sickness. In addition to these, a rural round plus bin delivery service and bulky items collection require another 9 employees, plus one to cover holiday. Since August/September 2000, some reliance was placed on agency staff whereby on average, at least 4 were employed, a figure which, for the first 13 weeks of this financial year, has doubled. Loaders employed from the agency cost less, but drivers cost more. Further, no reductions are made to payroll costs when employing agency staff. Administrative costs and resources appeared to increase. Agency employees and the way the system was operating, do not necessarily result in savings. The outsourcing of resources needs to be properly investigated and total costs understood. During the course of this review, we understand management, under normal working conditions, reverted back to employing all staff directly.

b The Panel could not determine whether, in law, the employment of each temporary agency worker represented a separate contract or whether the total value of agency workers provided by a single agency made up a contract. If the latter were to be the case, it would appear the contracts were of sufficient size to be covered by E.U. Procurement regulations. Agency staff costs for 1999/2000 totalled £58,000 and in 2000/2001 they totalled £66,000.

c Concern was expressed regarding the payment of wages. The division worked on a 'Task and Finish' basis, but no alternative was feasible.

d Sickness levels were also highlighted as a concern for two reasons. The first being the overall level of sickness taken seemed excessive, but at Christmas, a time recognised as having a high incidence of infectious diseases, sickness was at its lowest at 2.7%. Compared with August, a big month for holidays and low sickness trends, it was at its highest at 10%. The Scrutiny Panel do not consider that appropriate data regarding absence and the reasons for it was being kept prior to June 2000, management initiatives had been strengthened.

e Vehicles were often referred to as a problem by the service and the Panel accepted that there were issues around vehicle provision. The most significant evidence appeared to be that both services blamed the other, rather than meeting to resolve issues. Lessons learned by both parties were often ignored and problems recurred. By example, long ago it was agreed that 8-wheeled vehicles provided no additional benefit above the 6-wheeled standard refuse wagons, yet trials still take place of new 8-wheeled vehicles. Faults are not reported or were reported late and, as a result, were not being managed. Having heard evidence from both services, the Panel felt that there was no case to answer for an extra refuse collection vehicle.

f Concern was also expressed in respect of the high level of bins and damage to refuse collection vehicles. Whilst some evidence was produced to quantify these incidents, the Panel considered that much greater investigation is necessary to substantiate the claims. As part of the substantiation, the disposal points at Bredbury and Newton Heath should be asked to provide the number of bins they have to pull out of the waste stream, as clearly

these could not be catered for in their waste processing operation. The lifting mechanism manufacturers (Zoller) should also be consulted to discover why prevention systems to avoid bin loss were not functioning as designed.

g Consideration was given to the introduction of a system whereby developers of new properties fund the purchase of an initial domestic wheelie bin within the fees payable in their planning application. This would omit the need to pursue house-owners for payment.

h Issues were also raised regarding the capacity of rounds and the need to commence a twilight shift, which appears to be a further round and then create additional commercial rounds. The function and activity of these proposals was unclear to all. Why couldn't new properties be accommodated on existing rounds?

i No evidence was produced to support that rounds are working to capacity compared with information that a number of crews regularly complete by midday. In the reports produced by the personnel unit, the indication is that rounds still have capacity. It was always expected that some rounds would require three tip runs. This, however, is not a reason for extra vehicles and drivers.

j One of the major sources of complaint received at Members' surgeries relates to the refuse collection operatives moving bins away from the curtilage of properties to collection points to facilitate the speed with which they can provide the service. There is no objection to this practice, provided bins are returned to the properties. The majority of complainants objected to having to find their bins at a collection point, which could well be at the end of the road or out of sight. The practice also results in a high instance of lost bins, which then require replacement, which seems more of a protest by customers than a reality. The recent Kwest survey of satisfaction however, does not highlight this as a problem and gave Tameside a very high level of satisfaction, compared with other Boroughs.

#### 4.16 Recycling

a Waste as a whole, appears on the increase and moving counter to the overall objectives of LA21. New Best Value Performance guidelines require Councils' and the Waste Disposal Authority to work in partnership to achieve meaningful recycling targets. There is no general acceptance that the Government's current targets and policies can be delivered.

b In the past, there has been a drive to provide larger and more bins to collect waste which is believed to be in part responsible for the increasing tonnage and volume of waste collected. Most emphasis has been placed on recycling one product, namely newsprint, and is a success story. The static recycling points have been redesigned and re-marketed to take the blue bin scheme into account.

c About 4,500 subsidised compost makers have been provided in the Borough. The practice of composting is being fully promoted but may not be having a significant effect on reducing the amount of garden refuse etc. deposited in bins.

d It was felt that efforts should be made to reduce domestic bin sizes to induce the public to recycle more. Why are smaller bins, i.e. 120 litres, not provided as a matter of course to

persons claiming single household discount on Council Tax? Some checks are being carried out on the replacement of bins but there is evidence a number of households now have two or more bins. The set specific criteria for the issue of 330 litre bins to households providing large quantities of waste should be reviewed and there is suspicion that some 330 litre bins are used for commercial waste.

#### 4.17 Complaints Handling

a Complaints reaching the telephone at Tame Street were almost without exception, not being logged on the corporate complaints system. The complaints, which were recorded, were those going through the corporate call centre, or through the Customer First help desk. The Panel were informed that new livery had been put on all Refuse Collection vehicles indicating the corporate Call Centre number for complaints.

#### 4.18 Client Control Roles

a Since 1988, the service has been split between two functions, which has involved duplication of resources. These have been combined from June 2000, but Scrutiny was unable to identify what savings had been made and how the resources were being better utilised. Refuse Collection is a front line service, whereby a greater presence at the workplace, i.e. on the streets of the Borough, was seen as the best way of resolving long standing problems of difficult access, non-returned bins, over spills and other complaints. Clear job descriptions should be produced to ensure that staff whose role is not administration are able to undertake their duties away from the office/depot and have a presence in the district.

b References to ISO9002 suggest that the service is intending to get accreditation from 2001. Irrespective of ISO9002, there do not appear to be any records or evidence that regular statistically sound quality checks are carried out by the Control Officers. Are management sure quality control is carried out by the teams themselves and their immediate supervisors? Prior to June 2000, very little evidence was produced with regard to the long-term control charts being kept, so the Panel was unsure of claims that standards of quality etc. were being improved. There were two continual improvement projects in existence, Bulky Waste and the Information Technology System.

c The aim of combining the function is to create better value for money. In 1999/2000, it was noted that the income from commercial waste alone (mainly skips) increased by approximately £100k. All other budget costs were included in line with inflation, which would indicate that last year the actual cost of the service increased by £100k as no change occurred in the financial return to the authority. From the limited financial information available, it would appear that the £100k is nearer £140k when services such as administration provided free of charge in 1999/2000 by Civil Engineering are taken into account.

d The largest financial increase in the service would appear to be through sickness, overtime, higher staff costs and the award of lieu days. These, of course, are covered by more reliance on agency staff with a new budget heading of £46k. There also appears to be a figure of

£15k of investment in a video camera, desks, furniture and five computers, which is a one-off. Other costs would appear to relate to staff re-grading.

- e In November 1999, the skip service was transferred to the Civil Engineering section. The accounts for 2001 do not fully reflect the effect of this change in service management.

#### 4.19 Trade Waste

- a The Trade Waste Service does not appear to be increasing its sales figures in the way that the original marketing plan in 1995 suggested. Significant income comes from a totally separate activity, skip hire and emptying, which is predominantly financed from internal sources, i.e. Grounds Maintenance, Building Services etc. Part of the increase in 1999/2000 can be seen in the commercial businesses was due to the annual hike in charges. We were not able to obtain information on the viability of the commercial waste collection service, because it was still being investigated.

- b The Business Plan 2000/2001 indicated that there was to be the development a "Tameside Total Waste Management " package and an internet business was also planned. To date, this has not been achieved.

- c The cost of providing the collection of blue bins would appear to have incurred considerable charges over the last 18 months which could indicate that recycling is being subsidised from other operations. The Panel support limited subsidies to promote recycling, provided levels are determined in advance and properly accounted for.

- d Little reference is made to a clinical waste service which we understand is provided and in which, through lack of investment and the size of the operation, would appear totally unviable. No effort seems to be taking place that would bring in an external contractor similar to the White Rose organisation of Yorkshire Water, to provide the service, make it fully cost effective and to a higher standard.

### 5. Recommendations/Key Messages

- 5.1 Management should take full responsibility for management control at all levels of the service.

- 5.2 Business Plans and preparation for Best Value, must be developed with clear measurable targets, financial planning and supportive information.

- 5.3 The local waste minimisation strategy being developed in partnership with the Waste Disposal Authority and other Greater Manchester Authorities needs to be linked to the strategy for waste collection in the borough. The reported weights of materials collected from each source need to be rechecked and strategies developed with Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority for the recycling of trade waste, bulky household waste and the skip service.

- 5.4 It is recommended that the Cabinet Deputy (Environmental Services) works closely with the

management of the Refuse Collection Service to ensure that the service keeps pace with customer expectations and past service performance.

5.5 Control systems should be strengthened with regard sickness absence monitoring.

5.6 The ever-increasing reliance on short-term employment contracts and agency labour is reducing the motivation of collection teams. There is also a loss of front line knowledge, which is leading to increased complaints. Whilst the new employment contracts reduce labour costs, this could well be offset by increased administration and the cost of collecting more missed bins eg. the temporary use of a twilight shift.

5.7 The service has a commercial advantage in making trade waste collections with the domestic bin service in all but town centres. The Panel could see no justifiable reason why a feasibility study was being undertaken to introduce a totally separate trade round. Overall there appeared to be little expansion of the trade waste service, despite a potential market, a fact which was masked by the repeated increase in turnover in skips. The skip market was predominantly internal business or that associated with New Charter. Anomalies in the waste disposal charges led to hidden subsidy of the skip service to the overall detriment of community priorities.

5.8 The deployment of the Tamesider vehicle, a twilight shift, bulky note service, bin delivery round and the farms round should be rationalised, to provide an integrated service and avoid purchase of additional spare vehicles.

5.9 Within budgets, large sums were allocated for bin purchase and replacement with similarly large sums for collection and delivery. The Panel felt these budget sums were in excess of those required or planned in similar organisations.

5.10 The Refuse Collection Service operated on a Monday to Thursday inclusive. In order to maintain and service the vehicles to ensure they were available for each week's work, the management sought a requirement for the garage to be open for repairs and maintenance etc. on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Scrutiny Panel do not support this proposal, believing the garage already works on Friday, but given there are a number of spare vehicles to cover breakdowns and servicing, it would only be in the exceptional circumstances of a major repair that the garage would be required to work on a Saturday. Given the level of spare vehicles and maintenance standards, there was no justification for incurring the costs of premium time working at weekends.

5.11 The bonus system should be further investigated. The Operatives work on a 'Task and Finish' basis, therefore, overtime payments should not be required except in extreme circumstances and certainly not to complete routine cyclic work.

5.12 Any round reviews should be undertaken only after full consultation with the operatives. Regular consultation meetings with the operatives, at which, they should be given an opportunity to have an input into the working practices of the service, would make considerable improvements to morale, service efficiency and quality.

In addition, consultations should be held with the appropriate Ward Councillors, and notification given to the Town Managers, who should be given an opportunity to discuss any

changes to rounds with constituents, in order that any feedback can be considered during the review.

5.13 Facilities such as blue bins, bags or boxes should be made available to every household to increase the amount of waste recycled and reduce that amount which is land filled.

5.14 Whilst there is a charge made to each new property for the repairs and maintenance of bins, householders who repeatedly lose or damage bins should be charged for a replacement.

5.15 Clear job descriptions should be produced to ensure that staff whose role is not administration are able to undertake their duties away from the office/depot and have a presence in the district.

5.16 Consideration should be given to charging property developers the initial cost of providing household refuse bins, within the initial planning application fee.

5.17 Consideration should be given to providing free composters to households who will accept smaller refuse collection bins.

5.18 The criteria for the issue of 330 litre bins to households should be reviewed, with the aim of providing smaller bins, in line with government policy.

5.19 The creation of a suspense budget possibly in central purchasing which would allow the refuse collection operation to draw off requirement for replacement of "failed" wheeled bins.

5.20 New arrangements must be agreed by Human Resources to enable the recruitment of casual employees within a shorter time period than at present.

5.21 The existing IT software system used at the garage should be linked to the refuse collection services management IT systems.

5.22 That a Code of Conduct be prepared regarding the behaviour of all employees of the service in relation to their contacts with members of the public and appropriate training instigated to ensure the required standard is achieved by every employee.