

**MEETING:** **Equality Steering Group**

**DATE:** **17 April 2008**

**SUBJECT:** **Equality Impact Assessment – Recycling Services**

**REPORT OF:** **Paul Marsden, Cleansing Contracts Manager**

**Contact details:** Telephone 01323 415278 or internally on extension 5278.  
E-mail address: paul.marsden@eastbourne.gov.uk

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**Purpose:** To advise the Equality Steering Group of an impact assessment undertaken of the Recycling services provided by the Cleansing Group within the Amenities Division and to propose an action plan.

**Recommendations** That the Equality Steering Group notes the content of the report and approves the action plan detailed at Appendix 1.

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## **1.0 Executive Summary**

1.1 The Cleansing Group provides and maintains frontline customer services for the communities within the Borough in providing recycling services.

These services are:

1. Kerbside Recycling
2. Collection from communal areas at blocks of flats
3. Community Bring Sites
4. Green Garden Waste

These services generally form a part of an externalised Refuse Collection Service and Green Garden Waste Collection Service undertaken by Contractors on behalf of the Council.

From the assessment there are a number of common issues and some more specific issues relating to services which are included in the Action Plan at Appendix 1.

These are in summary:

- **Training**

A need for all staff to receive appropriate training on the equality policies of the Council.

A need to ensure that management representing Contractors who undertake work for the Council are aware of the Council's equality policies and receive appropriate training along with the Council's staff.

- **Review**

A need to monitor services provided to the public to ensure that they are promoted and accessible to all communities and where necessary services are adapted to reflect the changing needs of minority groups within the town.

A need to monitor the number of requests received for information leaflets and guidance notes to be available in alternative languages and formats, especially the need for such information to be available on audio tape/CD.

A need to review information presented on the Council's website.

A need to consider access for disabled people to the Council's recycling 'bring sites'.

A need to research methods of collection facilities within and from blocks of flats.

A need to consider any potential equality implications arising from providing an assisted collection service for designated minority groups only.

- **Service provision**

A need to investigate the provision of additional recycling facilities for disabled people.

A need to improve public awareness of the assisted collection service for recycling collections.

- **Process**

To monitor and to review periodically minority groups to assess whether service provision is accessible and fit for purpose.

To conduct a survey of 3,000 randomly selected households throughout the town to assess whether service provision is fit for purpose

Undertake periodically inspections of Recycling 'bring sites' to assess accessibility.

Assess the methods of collection from blocks of flats to establish whether they are fit for purpose.

## **2.0 Policy Aim**

- 2.1 The current policy aim is focused on the Eastbourne Community Strategy Foundation Document 2003/2004 in which the Council, along with its other partners, commits to giving the people of Eastbourne the opportunity to take part in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the town.

It also focuses on the Council's own commitment to equality issues set through objectives and values within the Council's Corporate Plan.

The Cleansing Group also takes into consideration the related policies of Contractors who provide services on behalf of the Council including Refuse Collection, Street Cleansing and the Cleansing of Public Conveniences.

East Sussex County Council and the Borough, through the Municipal Waste Management Strategy promote waste awareness which encourages residents to recycle with the objective of reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Currently the majority of the waste in East Sussex is sent to landfill as untreated waste. This is no longer acceptable and will not be allowed by law in the future.

## **3.0 Data Collection and Consultation**

- 3.1 Consultation has taken place on the recycling services since the kerbside collection service was launched in 2003. Set out in section 4 are the key headlines from previous consultation and attached at Appendix 2 are the results received from the Disability Involvement Group (DIG).

Also considered are the results of the Cleansing Team equality impact assessment which took place in 2003, and previous service reviews.

- 3.2 The service has a Community Forum consisting of community representatives/groups. Members of the forum receive information and awareness of service changes and work of topical interest. There is also the opportunity for members of the forum to raise issues which are then addressed.
- 3.3 The service also has up to date information available on the Council's website which also has feedback forms to enable users to make comments on the recycling services.

- 3.4 The Council has recently carried out consultation on its budget proposals enabling Eastbourne residents and businesses to express their views on where future spending should be focused. Recycling formed part of this exercise and the results show that enhancing the service would cause the most satisfaction.
- 3.5 The Council's Disability Involvement Group and other disability groups were consulted on the recycling services as part of the equality impact assessment and their feedback can be found at appendix 2. Future engagement with this group is planned.
- 3.6 Further consultation will be carried out on service specific areas and these are listed in the Action Plan.
- 3.7 The service regularly works with outside agencies in order to continually improve and provide the most cost effective recycling services.
- 3.8 The service is also monitored through performance indicators set by Government, known as Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's)
- 3.9 Involvement of the community in recycling services has enabled effective communication and procedures for reporting.

Communication takes place in a variety of ways, face to face interviews, telephone response/enquiry and in writing. The Team is also able to make home visits where these are appropriate and requested.

Interpretation and translation is offered but to date has not been requested or identified when visiting people in their homes or at commercial premises. There is also extensive consultation on a variety of topics through postal communication and surveys with postal responses, presentation to community groups and provision of walk-in surgeries which are advertised in a number of locations across the town.

#### **4.0 Key Findings**

- 4.1 Key findings arising from this review are:
  - (a) The service is provided to disabled people through an assisted collection service. The service has effective means of community engagement and has a history of adapting its delivery methods to improve access. It is recognised that some development work is required around the accessibility of bring-sites.
  - (b) Feedback also shows that more work is required around the delivery of a no-charge green garden waste collection service for senior citizens in terms of equalities.
  - (c) Further consideration is required around the potential equality

implications in providing a no charge bulky waste service for Senior Citizens only.

(d) Training needs have been highlighted through this assessment not only for the Councils' staff for appropriate training on equality and what this means for the Council, but also for the employees of the Councils' contractors.

(e) The need to ensure that management representing Contractors who undertake work for the Council are aware of our equality policies and how they have an important role to undertake on the Councils' behalf.

(f) Requests for information in different formats to date are limited. However, the service recognises that it needs to raise its awareness of the formats available and how to access them in order to respond quickly to any future requests which will be monitored.

(g) A review of the accessibility of bring sites is needed not only in physical access, but visual access also, with the positioning of clear and accessible signage.

(h) The Disability Involvement Group (DIG) has requested an awareness session on the recycling services. DIG views recycling and green waste as important issues, especially for their community members who have no choice but to have a green waste collection and to pay for it. They wish to increase their knowledge and to assist the Council in future delivery options which will encourage and enable more disabled people to recycle in their own homes.

(h) Continuous monitoring of the recycling service is necessary to ensure the service is able to make reasonable adjustments which complement and support the changing needs of all communities within the borough.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 The service has a history of community engagement and welcomes community feedback. It is continually looking for opportunities to improve and increase awareness of recycling among across all sectors of the community. The service was in the process of researching and reviewing opportunities to increase recycling collections from blocks of flats, and improve accessibility of bring-sites. This assessment has provided feedback in support of these initiatives.

Like all assessments in the past it has become apparent that the Cleansing Group need to increase awareness of equality issues and considerations. The Disability Involvement Group has and wishes to assist us further in this regard which is welcomed.

It is also hoped that by monitoring requests for information to be provided in different formats that innovative ways can be found to encourage communication with more minority groups in the borough.

Raising awareness of the services and educating communities on recycling opportunities appears to be favoured and is included in the Action Plan.

A significant finding from this assessment is the fact that disabled people feel they have no choice but to pay for a green waste collection service. Also recycling in the home can be very difficult for those living on their own and who cannot handle recycle into bins and boxes. The Group is considering this as a service development and will be looking at ways of improving awareness of the difficulties and working together with disabled people and community groups/organisations to find solutions to these issues.

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### **Background Papers:**

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Comprehensive Equality Policy  
Corporate Equality Action Plan  
Recycling Strategy  
Equalities Audit – Cleansing Services – Mark Probyn, Head of Amenities  
September 2003.

EBC – Contract Documents for Refuse Collection;

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.  
(document reference)

## Appendix 1

### *Recycling Services Equality Objectives and action plan*

**Community Strategy Theme:** Inclusive Community – A) Everyone can access information, services, natural greenspace, cultural and recreational facilities in a way that is suitable to them B) Diversity is valued C) Everyone feels they belong and each person is important to the future of the town

**Council Values:** 1. Representing the community 2. Maintaining high standards of conduct and accountability 3. Respecting the dignity of everyone and promoting equality 4. Involving the public and partners in improving services 5. Managing our resources efficiently 6. Providing a positive working environment for staff 7. Delivering excellent customer service

Objective	Action	Target	Lead Officer	Outcome/Monitoring
Ensure all staff within the team and employees of contractors have a good understanding and awareness of equality and diversity and use this understanding to improve service provision  CST: B CV: 3 / 6 / 7	Source and book equality training for the team and individuals as appropriate and in response to training needs highlighted through appraisal process or as a result of the impact assessment.	Training Plans in place by 1 April 2008	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Evaluate training received and the difference it has made with individuals/team
	Offer places to employees of contractors to attend training on equality and diversity	6 places booked by 30 May 2008	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Work in partnership with contractor to monitor outcome of training among employee's
	Ensure all staff are aware of Council policies on equality and diversity	Team briefs used periodically to highlight and discuss policies – ongoing	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Increased levels of awareness around accessibility, dignity at work etc reinforced by Manager
	Periodically arrange refresher training for team and ensure new employees receive equality as part of induction	All new team members aware of equality agenda - ongoing	Cleansing Contracts Manager	As all above
	Work with financial management lead officer for EIA on collection of discretionary charges in relation to green waste charge	Work to timetable set by FM	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Choice on payments offered which may increase uptake of service

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome/Monitoring</b>
Carry out effective consultation and/or research with hard to reach groups and engage all sectors of the community in evaluating, planning and improving the recycling service  CST: A, B CV: 3 / 4 / 5 / 7	Arrange for Contractors to carry out an annual survey of the kerbside collection service for recycling and assess whether service provision meets the realistic expectations of its users and make reasonable adjustments where necessary	Survey completed by 1 April 2009 and repeated annually	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Annual Survey results – Service meets realistic expectations and requirements of its users and potential users
	As above but for Bring Sites and also to assess the accessibility of the Sites and the services they deliver			
	Respond to feedback following consultation with members of the Disability Involvement Group to raise awareness of the recycling service	Consultation completed by 29 February 2008 – presentation delivered by July 2008	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Service improvements and awareness of issues. which can be reviewed and as appropriate acted upon.
	Raise profile of recycling service among all groups and using their feedback and other research assess need of providing information in different formats	Research completed by 1 September 2008	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Specific requirements met where reasonably practicable
	Inspect 21 Bring-sites for recycling to assess accessibility for all members of community – involve DIG members particularly for accessibility of signage and units.	All 21 sites assessed by 1 October 2008	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Sites are easier to use with improvements to signage and where achievable to recycling receptacles
	Research methods of collection within and from flats. Following research and where achievable use the findings to install facilities most appropriate to the users	Research completed by 30 November 2008 Installations into 650 flats by March.2009	Cleansing Contracts Manager	Increased recycling opportunities for residents in flats resulting in increased levels of recycling across the town

