

Report to Scrutiny Commission

Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement

Date of Commission meeting: 7th January 2014

The “Pass it On” Re-use Trial

Report of the Director of Environmental & Enforcement
Services



Leicester
City Council

Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Jonathan Feeley/Steve Weston/Caroline Jackson
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- Date of Exec meeting N/A

1. Summary

A report presented to the Commission on 4th July 2013 provided information about the development of a new Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in the city. It was also proposed that a re-use scheme would be piloted. This report provides feedback on the first nine weeks of operation of this scheme.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

The views of the Scrutiny Commission are sought.

3. Supporting Information

The main objective of the scheme was to ascertain whether the re-use of waste items collection through the council's bulky waste scheme could help meet the essential needs of the clients applying for Community Support grants (CSG) from Revenues & Benefits for furniture, white goods and households items, particularly in the light of diminishing funding from the Department of Work & Pensions.

The Community Support grant scheme currently has funding which is targeted, through its policy objectives to support individuals returning to the community and in so doing the council provides a grant for the provision of new goods.

Applicants in general ask for beds, sofas, carpets, curtains and curtain poles, cookers, fridges, washing machines, bedside cabinets, tables, chairs. Also, household items such as crockery and cutlery, kettles, irons, bed linen etc.

For this trial scheme, a proportion of calls to Customer Services Centre requesting a bulky waste collection were asked whether key items were re-usable. Where this was the case, the items were collected and taken to a workshop store where they were inspected, tested, cleaned and made fit for purpose. Suitable items were then delivered to applicants in appropriate circumstances.

It is important to bear in mind that this is a relatively small scale trial; with approx.. 600 bulky waste collection each week, it has only been possible to apply the scheme to approx. 25 to 30 calls each week, because of the staffing, transportation and

storage implications.

This report provides feedback on the first 9 weeks of operation in October and November 2013 (approx. 25 to 30 collections per week). Based on this, the scheme has:

- Reused 202 household items that would otherwise have gone straight to the HWRC for disposal;
- Diverted 5.9 tonnes of waste from landfill saving c.£590 in disposal costs;
- Saved expenditure of c.£20,500 from Revenues and Benefits CSG fund by supplying requested items from the scheme;
- Based on this, the annual equivalent figures, even when operating on this relatively modest scale, can be estimated to be:
 - 1,167 items reused saving 36 tonnes of landfill @c£100/tonne = £3,600
 - Cost savings to Revenues & Benefits c.£118,400.
 - Total savings to the council = c.£122,000.

However, these figures do not take into account the operating costs (staff, transport and premises), which at the present time are equivalent to approximately £100,000 per annum, reducing the net savings to £22,000. It is anticipated that some of these “overhead” costs can be reduced should the scheme operate on a longer term basis as well as if the volume of items processed increased; bearing in mind that currently only approximately 4 to 5% of bulky waste collections are being targeted, there are a large number of suitable items that are not being utilised. Only by increasing the number of collections can the full potential of the scheme be identified; clearly this will need to be the subject of further analysis.

The most popular items (and number supplied in this period) have been: two seat sofas (16), three seat sofas (23), armchairs (14), single beds (19), double beds (16), bookcases (9), chest of drawers (10) and coffee tables (10). Mattresses have not been supplied because the quality is generally poor.

Through the two months of deliveries, the scheme supplied items to 54% of approved CSG applicants. Items in short supply included beds, wardrobes, chests of drawers, tables and chairs. These may be available from the bulk collections and may be identified by focusing the call centre staff to look for the most needed items to fill any shortfall.

What cannot be measured is the social value to the recipients of the additional items that we have supplied, above and beyond what the CSG can provide for. Additional items include things like ironing boards, mirrors, wall units, rocking chairs, ottoman, computer tables & desks, dressing table, television cabinet and many more. The feedback has been that the majority have been extremely grateful for the items that the team have delivered and have thanked them on most occasions. Two case studies are detailed below:

Case Study 1

A lone parent, with 2 children aged 10 and 3, residing in council property. Property had a serious fire which caused damage to 90% of their furniture. Customer was then rehoused by Leicester City Council into an unfurnished tenancy. Through the “Pass it on” scheme, the Community Support Grant team, were able to refurbish the new property providing a sofa, 3 single beds (with mattresses), table and chairs, wardrobes and chest of drawers. This ensured the customer, and her children, were able to resettle quickly into the new property while the previous address was being refurbished.

Case Study 2

A customer suffering from domestic violence left her marital home overnight taking nothing with her. She was rehoused, via the Safe Project, but had nothing to take with her and needed assistance with furniture for her new property. As the customer was very vulnerable the Community Support Grant team decided to support her and via the “Pass it on” scheme, a bed, wardrobe, sofa, table and chair, vacuum cleaner, bookcase and kitchen utensils were provided to her to set up her new home and help her to resettle back into the community. By using the “Pass it on” scheme we were able to give the customer additional non-essential items which would have not been available through the Community Support Grant scheme.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

This scheme appears to offer good financial and social benefits, which will be further tested as the pilot continues.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081

4.2 Legal implications

None at this stage.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards

4.3. Climate Change implications

There is a very positive benefit in this scheme as there is a considerable amount of “embedded” carbon that is created in the manufacture of household goods. By re-

using goods resources and energy are saved and the potential carbon production from waste disposal is avoided.

Anna Dodd, Environment Manager

4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

The scheme will benefit people across all protected characteristics by providing them with needed household goods (in keeping with Revenue and Benefits criteria) and in so doing, improve their standard of living.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead

4.5 Other Implications

None.

5. Background information and other papers:

“New Household Waste Recycling Centre”, Report to Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission, 4th July 2013

6. Summary of appendices: None

7. Is this a private report ? No