



Committee and Date

Local Joint Committee for
Market Drayton and Rural
areas

12th May 2010 at 7 pm

Item

Public

8

REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SKIP SERVICE

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Summary

A review of the Community Skip service was considered by Development Services Scrutiny Committee on 9th March 2010 and by Cabinet on 31st March 2010. It was resolved that the service be withdrawn.

History and details of the service

1. Shropshire Council operated a 'Community Skip' service for public use at various locations and dates throughout the year in the former North and South Shropshire District Council areas only. The service was introduced by the former District Councils. This service was in addition to the core collection services, chargeable bulky collection service and Household Recycling Centres (HRCs).
2. The service was based on the deployment of collection vehicles or skips to a series of sites across the area in question, to which members of the public were invited to bring waste materials. The service was provided according to a publicised schedule.
3. No similar service was provided in the former Bridgnorth District Council, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough or Oswestry Borough Council areas. SABC and OBC operated similar services in the past but withdrew them a number of years ago for reasons similar to those set out in this report. Experience in withdrawing the SABC and OBC services indicates that there is unlikely to be a noticeable increase in fly tipping as a result of withdrawing the service from the former NSDC and SSDC areas.
4. Due to space constraints it was not possible to increase the amount of material segregated at the collection points. The service therefore consigned around 520 tonnes of waste per annum direct to landfill. It is estimated that diversion of this material to the Council's Household Recycling Centres (HRC sites) will result in approximately 260 tonnes being sorted into separate bays and therefore recycled.

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5. However the Community Skip service had lower levels of supervision compared to the HRC sites where a team of attendants are on duty and where a permit system applies to large vehicles and trailers. Traders who seek to bring waste to the Community Skip sites go to some lengths to conceal the origin of the waste they are carrying. Despite the best efforts of the site staff it is very hard if not impossible to distinguish genuine users of the sites from those who bring trade waste in private vehicles or use trade vehicles and claim that it is waste from their private home rather than from trade activities.
6. There are significant safety concerns as most of the sites become congested at times and many are used for other purposes such as car parking. Trip hazards and the mixture of members of the public carrying bulky items in amongst moving vehicles are particularly dangerous to site users and Veolia staff alike. All of the sites are managed to the best of the ability of the site attendants/drivers and at times appear safe and well managed. However overall the sites cannot be sufficiently regulated nor do they have adequate space to allow proper management to meet current health and safety requirements. This would have serious ramifications if there were a serious injury or worse at one of these locations - it would not be sufficient to claim that the sites were satisfactory some or even most of the time. Veolia and the Council will be judged on what had been done to manage the worst situations, and due to experience it will not be possible to claim that the outcome was unforeseeable.

Financial Implications

7. Total savings from withdrawal of service (per annum) £47,400

Alternatives to the Community Skip Service

8. The waste previously brought to the Community Skip sites can be disposed of in the following ways:

- (a) Council HRC sites at:

- Witchurch
- Battlefield (Shrewsbury)
- Mile Oak (Oswestry)
- Barnsley Lane (Bridgnorth)
- Craven Arms and Coder Road Ludlow (South Shropshire)

These sites offer recycling facilities for up to 28 different materials, and a trip to the HRC can often be combined with a journey for other purposes.

- (b) Bulky Waste Collection Service

Cost £21 for up to three items, £32 for four to six items, £42 for seven to nine items. Items are collected by the Shropshire Furniture Schemes which will divert for re-use any suitable items of furniture and household goods.

(c) Charity Shops

Many items will be accepted by local charity shops.

(d) Take-back schemes

In many cases free or low-cost take-back schemes exist where new household appliances and white goods are purchased.

(e) Home composting

The council supports a network of Master Composters and is happy to give advice on getting the best from composting of garden waste at home. Home composters are available to purchase. See Master Composters at www.shropshirecomposters.co.uk and Garden Organic at www.homecompsting.org.uk.