

# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Environmental Services

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Director of Environment and Operations

**DATE:** 12 December 2019

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Environmental Services

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** Billinge and Beardwood

**KEY DECISION:** YES  NO

**SUBJECT:** Petition received regarding recycling grey bin collection affecting properties 1-41 Azalea Road, 78 94 Granville Road, Blackburn

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Petitions received by the Council require a response following a report sent to the Executive Board. This report is in response to the petition received from households in the above area and invites the Board to issue a response as outlined below to the issues raised.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board: issue the response to the petition received, appertaining to:-

- 2.1 Contamination – remind residents what to place in their grey bin
- 2.2 Ensure the Biffa collection crew drag bins if their vehicle is not a narrow bodied RCV
- 2.3 Move the properties to collection points for collection from January 2020 (customers drag bins)

## 3. BACKGROUND

The petition (copy attached) asks the Council to address the regular collection of grey recycling bins in the back street.

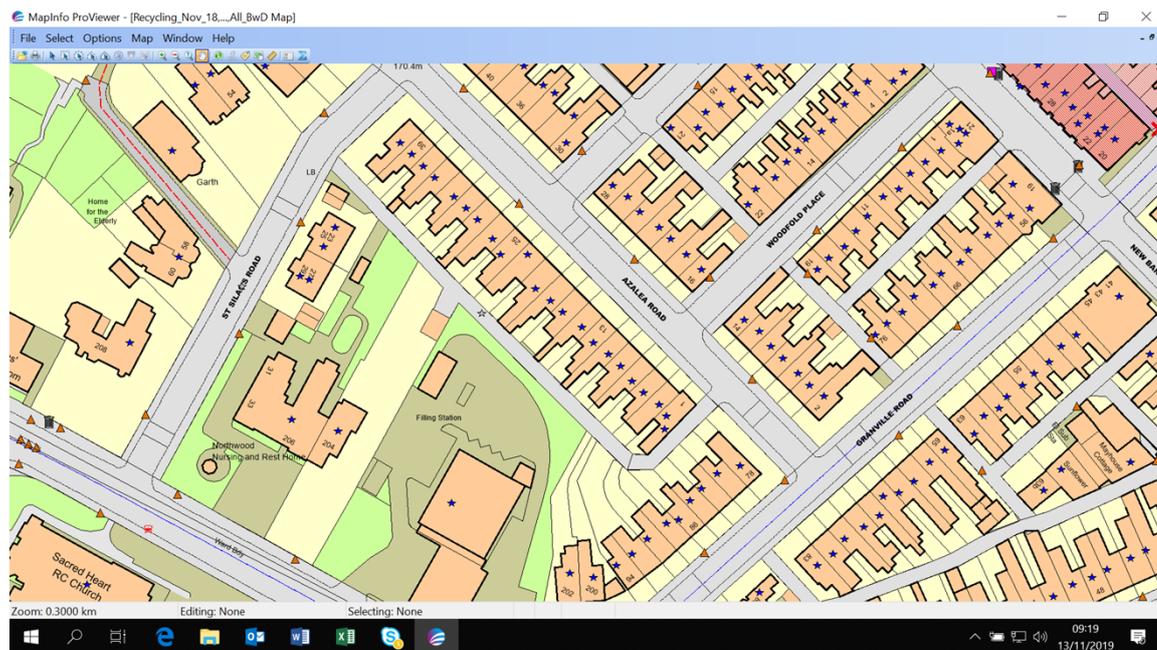
The residents cited frequent missed collections in July, August and September 2019. The residents contend that the reason given for the non-collections of parked vehicles blocking access is not correct. The residents have taken up their issue with Ward Councillors for Billinge and Beardwood. They also state rubbish in the back street is causing distress. The letter suggests that double yellow lines are placed on St Silas Road if parked cars are causing access issues.

### **Azalea Road/Granville Road back street and bin collection arrangements**

A map showing the location and layout of this back street is given below.

Although some terraced households served by a back street, across the Borough have been moved to a 'collection point' for their bin collection (e.g. another section of Azalea Road), this is not the case for this location and for these households: the current arrangement is that the bin crews reverse down the back street from St Silas Road, and drive back out, emptying the bins as they do so. The bin collection from the houses on Granville Road (who place their bins in the 'dog leg' section), are collected by the crew by wheeling the bins a short distance to the refuse collection vehicle (RCV)

which is parked adjacent to no 1 Azalea Road.



### **Data from Biffa regarding collections from the area**

The Biffa recycling crews have in cab devices enabling them to record collection issues. The following data has been recorded by the crews over recent collections :-

- Access issues – 4 occasions of no access
- Contaminated bins – 109 instances of contaminated bins (i.e. not emptied, reported and stickered)

The crew also report a health and safety 'near miss' at this location, which was a hazard that could cause human injury or damage to property.

*Why do the problems appear to be with the recycling service only?*

This would appear to be for a number of reasons:-

- Different vehicles from refuse collection – the in-house refuse collection service have narrow track vehicles only. Due to breakdowns and an aging fleet, Biffa are not always able to use narrow bodied vehicles which are more difficult to get in to back street. The in-house refuse vehicle fleet also includes some vehicles with rear steer, which also aids reversing in to back streets.
- Contaminated bins – sometimes bins are not emptied by the recycling crew because they contain mixed rubbish, not because the crew have been unable to access the back street (contamination is not a problem with burgundy bin collections).

### **Bin information leaflet drop and clear up**

At the end of October, a local Ward Councillor worked with some residents to remove a large number of bags of contaminated bags of recyclables, from the back street. The Cleansing team delivered an information leaflet (see attached) to a resident of Azalea Road, who had volunteered to deliver to all houses in the block, and where possible, talk to their neighbours.

### **Back street collection issues – a recap and summary**

The Borough has many roads and properties that were constructed laid out in the Victorian era, before the advent of motor vehicles and hence not designed with vehicles in mind. This legacy includes hundreds of back streets that were used mainly for the delivery of coal.

Many properties across the Borough have their refuse and recycling (bins or bags) collected from these back streets. In some cases, residents wheel their bins to the end of the back street for

collection, and in other locations the 'bin' crews either wheel the bins to a collection point at the end of the back street, and the bin truck drives through, or reverses down, the back street to collect the bins.

As highlighted by the Health & safety Executive (HSE), the collection of refuse / recyclables from back streets presents various operational and health and safety challenges: -

*Access* – many back streets are narrow (designed as they were for horse and cart and not refuse collection vehicles) which means some refuse vehicles can struggle to drive/reverse in. Manoeuvring a refuse collection vehicles (RCV) in/out of a back street is also difficult as the back streets and adjacent roads were designed to current standards. Moreover, with growing car ownership (and no off road parking at terraced properties), cars frequently park at these back street junctions, which also deny access to RCVs

*Surface condition* – most back streets are adopted. However, they are not maintained, and hence are not to the same standard as highway roads. This means many are not even, or laid with tarmac. Some are cobbled and heavy vehicles, have, over time, worn deep channels since the back streets were not constructed to modern standards. Because they are also over shadowed by the houses on either side, the back streets can become damp and hence slippery. Wheeling bins over uneven surfaces presents physical risks to the bin crews when each staff member is wheeling several hundred bins every day.

*Perimeter walls and back gates* - the walls of back streets are often not maintained and so subject to collapse. Back gates open directly in to the back street, which is a health and safety risk when an RCV is operating there, as demonstrated by fatalities involving members of the public, including one tragic incident, which occurred in recent years in Hyndburn.

*Visibility and obstructions* – back streets are usually unlit. Many are also subject to fly tipping and general dumping of rubbish. Other obstacles in back streets range from skips to scaffolding and dog mess, all of which affect a safe, and convenient bin/bag collection service.

In addition, in some parts of the Borough, the back streets are on a steep incline (e.g. Brookhouse, Shear Brow, Earcroft areas), which adds to the physical strain placed upon the bin crews.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

The key issues to resolve to provide the residents with a regular grey bin recycling collection are therefore: -

A - Collection vehicles – ensure that the Biffa collection crew are instructed to drag the bins if their vehicle is not a narrow track and hence additional risks are involved in reversing the vehicle in. The service will transfer to the Council from May 2020; a new vehicle fleet has been ordered which will comprise narrow-bodied vehicles.

B - Parking – installing double yellow lines (to prevent cars parking at the junction to the back street) would take many months to implement and may meet opposition. Placing signs asking people not to park on bins has been tried elsewhere and found to be largely ignored. It would also require installing posts for the signs.

C - Contamination of recycling bins – education of the residents is required to ensure all bins placed out for collection, are full of clean recyclables only

##### *Collection points for bins*

There are 2 possible solutions :-

1. Keep the existing collection method

2. Change the collection to a 'collection point' system operated elsewhere where residents wheel their bins to the ends of the back streets

Keeping the collection method as it is (1) means that the health and safety issues, and access issues remain. If residents are required to place their bins at either ends of the back street (2), will eliminate the health and safety risks – for both the recycling and refuse crews – as well as eliminating the access risk (parked cars, skips etc.): providing residents place their bins at the locations by 7.00am on collection day, and place only clean recyclables in their grey bin, there should be no interruption to the service (adverse weather or other exceptional circumstances notwithstanding)

The recommended course of action (as outlined in the draft reply to the residents in Appendix 1) is: -

1. Contamination – remind residents what to place in their grey bin
2. Ensure the Biffa collection crew wheel their bins if their vehicle is not a narrow bodied RCV
3. Move the properties to collection points for collection from January 2020 (customers wheel the bins)

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The petition meets the requirements of an 'ordinary' petition as defined within the council constitution and the response is within the range provided within the constitution.

#### **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

**Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

#### **10. CONSULTATIONS**

The Council will reply to the residents as indicated in the draft response letter attached. The ward councillors will be notified when the collection point is to be implemented.

#### **11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151

Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Tony Watson</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	20 November 2019
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	
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## Appendix 1 – letters to residents



Environment & Operations

1 – 41 Azalea Road  
78 – 94 Granville Road  
Blackburn

20 November 2019

Dear Resident,

**Re: Continuous missed collection of grey bins**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October regarding the above issue.

Your letter has been classified as a petition which, under Council rules, means that a report is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Executive Board will meet and discuss your petition at their meeting on 12 December 2019.

I will write to you again after the Board has met and reached a decision as to the best course of action.

Yours sincerely



Environment & Operations

1 – 41 Azalea Road  
78 – 94 Granville Road  
Blackburn

X date 2019/2020

**DRAFT**

Dear Resident,

**Re; Continuous missed collection of grey bins**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October regarding the above issue.

Your letter has been classified as a petition which, under Council rules, means that a report is submitted to the Executive Board (which meets monthly) for consideration. The Executive Board met and discussed your petition at their meeting on 12th December 2019.

Collection of bins in back streets

- 1 Contamination – remind residents what to place in their grey bin
- 2 Ensure the Biffa collection crew drag bins if their vehicle is not a narrow bodied RCV
- 3 Move the properties to collection points for collection from January 2020 (customers drag bins)

Yours sincerely