

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: SPECIAL UPLIFTS: PROPOSED CHANGES TO SERVICE REQUIREMENTS
From: HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND ESTATES		
Date: 28 JANUARY 2014	Ref: KW/JB/HM	

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide detail of the current position regarding the special uplift service and to seek approval for proposed alterations to the service.

2 Background

2.1 North Lanarkshire Council special uplift service has accommodated an average of 92,000 requests, (inclusive of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) uplifts), each year since 2010/11. In the period from April to September 2013 a total of 49,780 requests have been processed, which should projects to 91,134 requests for the current year.

2.2 The current policy provides for three free uplifts per property with a charge of £15 for any additional uplifts in that year. In addition, the service has the capacity to charge £40 for uplifts which involve major refurbishments. This charging policy raised £1,058.00 in revenue, after VAT reduction, in the 2012/13 financial year. Analysis of the requests received indicates that the vast majority of residents are able to remain within the generally allocated 3 free uplifts per year.

2.3 The cost of providing the service offered is significantly increased by the disposal of materials associated with commercial home improvements and builder's materials such as kitchens, bathroom suites, slabs, bricks and other items associated with the fabric of the building. The Council's recycling performance would be greatly improved if this material was removed as part of the refurbishment, or alternatively, if the resident disposes of the material into the segregated streams at a Household Waste Recycling Centre. This would also generate financial savings due to waste avoidance and gate fee reductions.

2.4 The Council operates seven high standard Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC), and there is an increasing need to utilise community based recycling, which promotes waste segregation and waste reduction. Consequently, the emphasis should be in encouraging the greater use of these facilities as it drives down costs and increases our recycling performance.

2.5 As identified in previous reports to committee, uplift requests are arranged through an area based booking system which allocates slots across North Lanarkshire. At present, there is no limit on the size of the uplift, and this means that uplifts such as those described in Section 2.3, can take the crews excessive time and multiple disposal runs to complete. This adversely impacts on the ability to complete all of the allocated slots for that day. One of the key improvements we could enhance, identified in user survey returns, is that householders prefer, and expect that their uplift will be completed on the day they are initially allocated, and this is much more likely where we do not encounter the larger uplift types. The presence of these larger uplifts within the mainstream is therefore disruptive to the service, and detracts from the service provided overall to householders.

3 Proposals / Considerations

- 3.1 The proposal is that the £15 charge for special uplifts in excess of three per year be retained. However, it is recommended requests arising from refurbishments and home improvements should attract a realistic charge of £100. This sum is based on current employee and plant costs, together with the gate fee and landfill tax elements of the waste disposal. Instances have been encountered in the past where the cost of dealing with such uplifts can exceed £200 when the whole costs of the uplift are examined. The items covered by this proposal would include building materials such as rubble, slabs, kitchen refurbishments, bathroom refurbishments and similar materials, subject to assessment by Council staff.
- 3.2 On receipt of an uplift request involving refurbishment, a waste management supervisor would visit the location, agree the uplift with the householder and inform the contact centre of this indicating the date for the job. This would then be completed at a cost of £100. The householder would be reminded at this visit, that the material can be disposed of free of charge, if it is taken to one of our Household Waste Recycling Centres and suitably recycled.
- 3.3 It is proposed that special uplifts, when being booked, should comprise no more than ten (10) household items. These items will include any item taken into or out of the house, but not to include the fabric of the building, or those items identified previously in paragraphs 2.3 and 3.1 above. This item limit is well within the scope of the vast majority of uplifts received at present, however, where the householder exceeds ten items they would be advised at that time that there second or third entitlement is required to complete the full uplift.
- 3.4 Bags for uplift should not exceed twenty (20) in number, and each bag must not be in excess of 10kg in weight. Where more bags than this are present, the householder again would be encouraged to use the recycling facilities at the nearest HWRC. As each uplift is booked, the number of available slots would reduce accordingly at the contact centre, until the all slots available are exhausted.
- 3.5 WEEE goods and white goods are collected separately in accordance with existing legislative directive and good practice. It is proposed that there are no restrictions on the number of WEEE requests or levy any costs for these types of uplift.
- 3.6 All items for uplift must be presented at the nearest point to the location that the vehicle will utilise for the job. This will predominantly be at the front of the property, or on occasions, at the side of the property. This single change in practice, from the former methods where householders would stack material at the rear of their property, would greatly reduce the work required, and the hazards presented to the crews, and therefore improve the overall efficiency and safety of the uplift. Again customer surveys have shown that, where the customer is confident that the uplift will be completed on the day they have been given, they have less of a problem with the material being placed at the front of the house for a short period.
- 3.7 All uplifts should be presented in accordance with the instructions issued by the contact centre at the point of booking. Any deviations from the presentation criteria will result initially in the householder receiving correspondence from the crew, indicating why the uplift could not be completed, and the appropriate action required for the uplift to be completed. If required, a visit from a WMS supervisor will be arranged, who can advise of the appropriate action to conclude the uplift request. This could include, but is not limited to, re-presentation of the items, cancelling of the job until operational health and safety concerns have been met, or arranging further visits to allow completion.

3.8 As previously stated, service users will be encouraged to utilise the Household Waste Recycling Centres for segregated disposal of all other items. This would be the recommended action for all items resultant from renovations, and include kitchens, bathrooms, builder's rubble, slabs, central heating systems and other refurbishment materials. The request for uplift must be made by the householder, and not the contractor tradesman performing the work.

3.9 It is not proposed to change the bereavement special uplift service. In these cases, a WMS supervisor would arrange to visit the location, and agree the uplift with the contact centre and the deceased's representative. The WMS supervisor has full authority in such situations to ensure the matter is dealt with as courteously and promptly as possible.

4 Financial Considerations

4.1 The proposals now ensure that the nature of a chargeable special uplift is more clearly defined. It is anticipated that revenue generated from the service will increase, principally due to refurbishment uplifts now recovering the true cost to the service.

4.2 Any increase in the cost of refurbishment material being processed through the Household Waste Recycling Centres, will be more than offset, by the reduction in the gate fee costs of disposing of the material collected from the household directly by the crew.

4.3 By way of illustration, the tonnage disposed of this year from the special uplift service will be in the region of 9,114 Tonnes. This has a disposal cost averaging £79 per tonne, equating to £720,006 per annum. The operational cost of the service is £1,144,081 meaning an overall cost to the council around £204 per tonne, or £20.45 per uplift.

4.4 Where material is taken to the HWRC, the financial situation would still improve, as the gate fees payable in the case of segregated wood and rubble are in the region of £10 and £3 per tonne respectively, with scrap metal recovering an income of £140 per tonne for the Council.

4.5 The proposals outlined in this report will have a positive impact in reducing the gate fees incurred, or by waste reduction, due to it transferring from the domestic waste stream into more commercial streams.

5 Staffing and Corporate Considerations

5.1 The special uplift service will not fundamentally change. However, the constituent parts of the uplift will be redefined to ensure compliance with manual handling regulations, service risk assessments and safe systems of work.

5.2 The proposed changes are expected to have a positive impact on the attendance levels within Waste Management Services, and will significantly reduce the risk of industrial injuries attributed to lifting and carrying.

5.3 There are no staffing level implications as a result of the above proposal.

6 Recommendations

It is proposed that the Committee:

6.1 Approves the proposals to ensure that the content of a special uplift is more clearly defined, that the limits on uplifts per annum are retained, and that refurbishment uplifts are taken in future on the basis of full cost recovery;

6.2 Approves the content of the report regarding the proposal to refine certain operational requirements of the service, noting the likelihood of improved crew health and safety, efficiency and user satisfaction;

- 6.3 Notes the retention of the cap on the number of routine uplifts for residents within North Lanarkshire Council at three (3) uplifts per annum, and approves the revised fee of £100 for refurbishment uplifts;
- 6.4 Notes and approves the description and constituent parts of a refurbishment uplift, and the fee payable for this type of uplift; and
- 6.5 Notes and agrees with the principle that promotes the use of the Household Waste Recycling Centres for the disposal of household items by residents.



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Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information on this report, please contact: Jim Brown, Assistant Business Manager (Waste Management Operations) on 01698 506235