

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 JUNE 2012

REPORT BY HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

INCREASING DRY RECYCLING CAPTURE

WARD(S) AFFECTED:

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To advise Members what is being done to improve recycling performance

<u>RECOMMENDATION ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY</u>	
That:	
(A)	The Committee consider and scrutinise the approach taken to improve recycling performance in areas where take up is lower.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council now offers residents the opportunity to be able to recycle paper, cans, glass, plastics, food waste, garden waste and cardboard from the kerbside. These services have gradually been introduced with the most significant change the introduction of ARC (Alternate Refuse Collection) in November 2009. Since that time there has been a steady increase in the amount of recycling and the overall amount of waste reduce.
- 1.2 The Council measures recycling performance through two local indicators – NI192 (Percentage of waste recycled) and

NI 191 (Kilograms of wastes produced per household). The recycling performance for 2011/12 was 48.35% against a target of 50%. The amount of waste produced was 474kgs against an expectancy of 459kg.

1.3 Recycling performance is lower than expected due to the economic down turn. In particular, residents are buying fewer newspapers and magazines and there is much greater use of electronic media. These are national trends. It is essential that the Council improves upon last years performance and reaches next years targets; there are several reasons for this:

- Addressing the loss of income from dry recyclable sales. (More details can be found in the Financial Implications section of Appendix A)
- Improving efficiency from the Council's recycling services
- Reducing landfill waste and the high costs to taxpayers of disposal (funded by the County Council).
- Engaging with those members of the public who are not currently participating with recycling services
- Maximising environmental benefits of removing waste from landfill and reducing carbon emissions..

2.0 Report

2.1 A recent study undertaken by North Herts District Council (who have a similar collection system and population to East Herts) looked at what materials remained in the black bins that could have been captured as recycling. The main material was found to be food waste, comprising on average 33% of the contents. (Note that improving waste food waste recycling is being undertaken as a separate project through the Herts Waste Partnership's 'Waste Aware' campaign).

2.2 The next figure of significance was that of paper, the study suggests that there is 0.60kg of paper per household per week still being thrown away and land filled. If this figure is applied to East Herts residents it could be as much as 1,560 tonnes per annum! If it were possible to capture all of this as recycling this could generate over £200,000 per annum in income. The North Herts study also shows that

0.11kgs of glass and 0.07kgs of cans per household per week are also being thrown away in the black bin. (Note: North Herts Council does not collect any plastics from the kerbside).

- 2.3 Along side of general communications activities to encourage all residents to recycle more, the Service has been looking to specifically target lower performing areas with recycling messages to encourage a greater participation (the number of people using the kerbside service) and capture rate (ensuring the people using the service know what they can put out and are doing so).
- 2.4 The dry (paper, cans, glass and plastics) recycling collection vehicles do one round each per day. There are 8 recycling vehicles with a different route each day over a 10 day period i.e. 80 separate collection areas. The vehicles are weighed in at the Buntingford depot before the material is tipped. The vehicle is then weighed out again providing a weight for the recycling from that round. When the weight is divided between the number of households this gives an average weight per property.
- 2.5 Looking at all 80 rounds it is possible to indentify the ones with the lowest weights by comparing the average weights per property. These are the residents to be targeted first with the additional messages.
- 2.6 All residents were advised in the most recent service leaflet and Spring addition of Link that we would be contacting people in these areas, in the hope that residents would not wish to be the “lowest performing area”.

The areas are:

2.7

Recycling Round Ref.	Area	No. properties	Kgs per property
W1 Weds Rural Rec A	58% Bennington 34% Walkern	604	4.41
W2 Fri Rec A	62.7% M.Hadham 36% Bishops Park	908	4.75
W1 Fri Rec B	Standstead Abbotts 54.2% Hunsdon 45.7	708	4.93
W2 Thurs Rec D	Thorley North	976	5.16
W2 Mon Rural Rec A	32% Thundridge, 24% High Cross, 20%	666	5.2

	Wadesmill, 10% Barwick 10% Colliers End		
The Highest performer			
W2 Thurs RecE	82% Thorley Street (including Proctors Way, London Road, Mitre Gardens and Burley Road 18% Spellbrook	236	15.29

- 2.8 Prior to the information (in the form of a 'bin hanger') being delivered, the ward councillors for the lower performing areas were advised and provided with detailed information on their areas' performance and copies of the literature their constituents would receive so they we able to prepare and champion the scheme.
- 2.9 Promotion schemes work better if they have a catchy name that can easily be recognised. This exercise has been entitled 'SURGE', which stands for:
- S - Seek (to identify those rounds that are lowest performing)
U - Urge (those residents to recycle more)
R - Reiterate (recycling messages and provide information to enable residents to recycle more)
G - Gauge (what was the impact is upon recycling rates and waste tonnages)
E - Evaluate (to examine how well the project worked and to which areas would this be moved to next.
- 2.10 The information will be delivered via a card (known as a 'bing hanger') hung onto residents black bins. Previous experience measured by the Herts Waste Partnership, shows that this is the most effective way of getting the message across to the targeted area. Examples of bin hangers can be found at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.
- 2.11 The hanger explains to residents the value of recyclables and that their area is one of the lowest performing. It is hoped that by presenting residents with the facts about recycling and the financial implications the messages might reach those who may not have been incentivised to recycle in the past. Traditionally the Council has exhorted

residents to recycle more using environmental arguments. The hanger also explains which materials can be placed in each of the containers and invites residents to ask for more containers should they need them.

- 2.12 The impact of the campaign will be measured in a number of ways:
- Increase in weights of recycling
 - Requests for additional containers.
 - The collection crews for the targeted areas will be hanging the information so we will ask them for any anecdotal information about their experiences and feedback from residents.
- 2.13 Overall it is hoped that we will see an improvement in the amount recycled and a decrease in the amount of waste sent to landfill.
- 2.14 As with any project SURGE is supported by other recycling communication initiatives including:
- Service leaflets
 - Bin hangers
 - Adverts in local publications
 - Website information
 - Hertfordshire wide WasteAware campaign on reducing contamination, increasing food waste capture (Note the WasteAware is the communications sub group of The Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), which is a partnership between the County Council and the ten district and borough councils. It was formed in 1992 to coordinate the waste management services provided by Hertfordshire's councils).
- 2.15 The information was attached to residents black bins the week commencing 18th June 2012. Collection rounds continue to be weighed and recorded for the whole of the district.

2.16 As waste generation is highly seasonal the results of this study will need to take into account several collection cycles in order to provide a new average collection figure comparing areas before and after the 18th June 2012. This will then show whether the rounds detailed in 2.7 have increased the amount recycled per property and how effective SURGE was at reaching those targeted. Members are invited to request a further report detailing the results at the November meeting of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

NONE

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives <i>(delete as appropriate)</i> :	Place This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.
Consultation:	<p><i>There has been no specific consultation in relation to this report. Resident's satisfaction with waste and recycling services is captured through the residents survey, every 2 years. This was last conducted in November last year and reported to Joint Scrutiny Committee on 14th February 2012. Results showed that public satisfaction with recycling and composting services increased by 9% from 68% to 77%.</i></p> <p><i>Satisfaction with the types of material collected rose 28% from 51% to 79%.</i></p> <p><i>Satisfaction with the information provided about recycling and collection services increased from 79% to 87%, an 8% increase.</i></p> <p><i>The SURGE campaign supports the Council's objectives of raising public awareness about the benefits of recycling and satisfaction with these services.</i></p>
Legal:	<i>There are none.</i>
Financial:	<p><i>The Council generates around £1m per annum from the sale of materials and 'recycling credits' received from the County Council for diverting waste from landfill. This is used to partly offset the costs of waste collection services. The economic downturn has resulting in a decline in the amount of waste residents are producing and therefore the tonnage of recycling. In the last financial year this resulted in an under recovery of income of approximately £150,000. With the increasing use of electronic media and the decline in the newspapers, magazines and junk mail, these trends are likely to continue.</i></p> <p><i>The SURGE project seeks to offset some of this by</i></p>

	<p><i>encouraging residents to divert more waste from the black bin to the recycling box.</i></p> <p><i>Expenditure on media material for this project is expected to cost £6,700, which will allow for each household to receive the hanger if necessary. This is being funded from existing Service budgets set aside for the production of collection calendars and publicity.</i></p>
Human Resource:	<i>There are none</i>
Risk Management:	<i>It is essential that the Council continues to promote recycling services and encourage residents to recycle as much of their waste as possible to maintain both environmental and financial performance.</i>

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

'SURGE' – Bin Hangers



Recycling: Stop throwing your money away!

We have been looking at our collection rounds to see which areas produce the lowest amounts of recycling.

Your area has been identified as one of the lowest performing in all the district

Income – We sell your waste paper, cans, glass and plastics. This money helps to pay for your collections: **Sending recyclables to landfill is throwing money away.**

Money – It costs £100 to send a tonne of waste to landfill – this comes out of your taxes!

No Limit – Unlike your black and brown bins, there is no limit to the amount of recyclables we can collect through your kerbside boxes!

Overleaf is a quick guide to help you recycle as much as you can.

Let's see if we can transform your area into one of the highest performing areas. We will let you know how well you are doing via the Council website and Twitter. Follow us @EastHerts.



01279 655261
www.eastherts.gov.uk



Do you have enough containers?

Do you have green and blue boxes for your recyclables? If the answer is no, call or email us and we will arrange for boxes to be delivered to you.

Do you have enough green boxes for:

Brochures • Magazines • Junk mail
Newspaper • White paper envelopes
Yellow Pages • Catalogues • Shredded paper*
All colours of glass bottles and jars?



*Please ensure shredded paper is put in an old envelope or wrapped in newspaper to stop it blowing around.

Do you have enough blue boxes for:

Cans and tins • Aerosols

Plastic types: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ?



If you would like more information or to order containers please call 01279 655261 or email recycling@eastherts.gov.uk
www.eastherts.gov.uk

