

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 11 JUNE 2013

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY  
SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

NEW RECYCLING SCHEME – REMOVING CARD FROM THE  
ORGANIC WASTE STREAM – PROGRESS WITH  
IMPLEMENTATION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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Purpose/Summary of Report

- To advise Members on the progress being made to change dry recycling collections to a dual stream system.

<b>RECOMMENDATION FOR ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:</b>
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That:	
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(A)	Members scrutinise and comment upon the progress being made to implement the new recycling scheme.
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1.0 Background

1.1 On 6 March 2013 Council approved a scheme to change the current kerbside sorting of dry recyclables using boxes to a dual stream comingled system, with paper being kept separate in a box and all other dry recyclables placed in wheeled bins.

1.2 The primary motive behind this change was to enable cardboard to be moved from the organic waste stream into the dry recycling, as it was proving difficult to compost the card and with changing standards for compost quality it would be impossible for processors to meet the new

standards with the level of coated card being collected.

## 2.0 Report

- 2.1 The report details the progress made to date on the project, covering planning, programming, procurement, and outlines some of the milestones to be met.

### **Progress**

- 2.2 A project plan with a separate media plan and associated risk assessment has been drawn up to enable all the actions necessary to deliver the new service commencement in November 2013, to be identified and tracked. Contingency plans have been developed to mitigate against any potential delays. Considerable progress has been made, with a multi discipline project team having been formed, which has met on three occasions so far. Various tasks have been allocated either to individuals where appropriate or to small groups of staff (2 or 3 members) to give a wide range of viewpoints and inputs, whilst also providing some resilience if one team member should become unavailable.
- 2.3 Quotations have been received for the six 'twin pack' (two compartment) vehicles that will be required for the new system. These were sourced through a regional Local Authority consortium contract for refuse and recycling vehicles, managed by Braintree District Council. The lead time on the vehicles is 20 – 22 weeks, so should be available well before the service commences. An order has been placed and the cost is within the capital budget allocated.
- 2.4 The new wheeled bins were procured through another regional framework contract managed by the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO). Regional consortium contracts are now the way that most local authorities procure bins and vehicles as they reduce the cost of procurement and deliver better prices. Five tenders were received and evaluated, with the winning tender being within the capital budget allowance. The supplier is able to provide the containers before house to house deliveries are scheduled to commence. In practice this means some initial deliveries to Buntingford Service Centre to provide the house to house distribution crews with as stock and successive bulk

deliveries continuing as stock is distributed. The supplier has also committed to being able to complete the house to house deliveries in the timescale the Council require. A stock of the inner paper boxes has also been ordered and will be received some weeks before individual deliveries begin.

- 2.5 Other procurements include the design work for the branding of the scheme, which will be marketed to residents as 'SPARC' (Separate Paper and Recycling Collections). This name is easy to remember and builds on the current 'ARC' (Alternate Refuse Collection) branding. Officers will ensure that information provided to the public clearly distinguishes between 'Refuse' in ARC and 'Recycling' in SPARC so that there is no confusion.
- 2.6 Members will recall that the Council agreed to offer residents an inner paper box on an 'opt in' basis (i.e. households will need to confirm that they would like one for it to be delivered with their new wheeled bin).
- 2.7 The new service reduces the number of recycling collection rounds and vehicles and is more efficient than the current service. As a result there are likely to be a significant number of collection day changes for residents. As with the current service, wherever possible households will receive a 'same day collection' i.e. their waste and recycling will be collected on the same day of the week but on alternate weeks.

### **Significant Milestones**

- 2.8 The intention is that the new service will commence on 11 November 2013. Key milestones taken from the project plan are shown below:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Date</u>
Procure vehicles and containers	May
New collection rounds designed	May
Design media	May
Branding	May
Opt in leaflet	May
Service Leaflet & Calendars	June - July
Road shows	June - Sept
Opt in leaflet delivered to residents	August

Vehicles delivered	Sept - October
Bulk bin deliveries to depot commence	September
Inner paper boxes delivered to depot	September
Calendars & Service leaflets delivered to residents	Sept/Oct
Container deliveries	October
New service starts	November

## **The New Service**

2.9 Member will recall that the new service will allow glass, cans, plastics, cardboard, aluminium foil and cartons to be collected as recycling in the new wheeled bin. Residents will present their paper separately, either in their existing recycling box or in the new inner box, if they have chosen to receive this. The inner box sits conveniently inside the wheeled bin, reducing the 'footprint' of recycling containers and savings space. Most residents will find this type of collection system easier than recycling boxes and as a result recycling performance and diversion from landfill is expected to increase in the future, reducing costs and making savings for local tax payers.

## **Enforcement**

2.10 The vast majority of residents follow the Council's instructions on how to present their waste; however, there is a small minority who do not. Even a small amount of waste in the wrong containers can lead to whole loads being rejected at significant additional cost to the tax payer. For this reason the Council has enforcement policies covering how it will address non-compliance. Legislation allows local authorities to specify how waste must be presented for collection and fines can be issued if householders consistently fail to comply. East Herts Council makes every effort to help residents to understand how to present their waste and offer guidance and support before resorting to enforcement action. Details of how it does this are contained in the Contract Annual Performance Report, also on the agenda of this meeting. Under the SPARC scheme there will be a few minor changes to these procedures.

2.11 Residents will receive an advisory note if they inadvertently leave glass in the paper box or card in with their composting,

and crews will empty such bins and boxes for the first three months of the new service. Thereafter we will revert to our usual procedure by sending a series of letters, advising the resident how to manage their waste correctly. We will also offer householders a visit from a Recycling Advisor, who will offer advice on how to manage their waste. Where these requests go unheeded the Council can issue a formal Notice under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990). Having been given every opportunity to comply, the Council may then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice with a fine of £80. This is an extremely rare occurrence, as detailed in the Annual Contract Performance Report, and only applied to repeat offenders, who have received three advisory letters inside a six month period. During the first three months of the new scheme every effort will be made to help residents understand the changes to the recycling service, before incorrect practices become habit forming, rather than use enforcement powers.

### **Sack Customers**

- 2.12 Currently there are 781 households served with a weekly collection of waste in sacks, as these properties cannot accommodate wheeled bins for operational reasons or access reasons e.g. they have no front garden or rear access to allow a bin to be stored off the public highway. These properties will be inspected to confirm that they are unable to accommodate bins, but it is believed that, following a similar exercise pre ARC, that these are genuine cases where bins cannot be used. The Service will continue to collect recyclables from these properties by way of the current blue and green boxes. These residents will be able to include aluminium foil, cartons and card in their blue box, but the material will need to be contained within the box. Should a resident have a capacity problem, then further boxes will be provided.
- 2.13 The new recycling vehicles are designed to load wheeled bins rather than boxes and unless there is a clear operational reason all properties will need to present their recycling (other than paper) in a wheeled bin. To do otherwise would result in collections taking longer and the need for additional vehicles and crews, at extra cost to the council tax payer. It is possible that some residents may decline to have the new

recycling wheeled bin. Where this occurs the property will be inspected to ensure the bin can be physically accommodated and if this is the case officers will try to persuade the resident, advising them that they could use an inner box for their paper, thus reducing the footprint of the recycling containers. If the resident still refuses, then officers will advise that only paper will be collected in a box in future.

## **Communications**

- 2.14 There will be an article in the latest Link magazine outlining the new service and letting people know that they will be able to request an inner box for their paper.
  - 2.15 Throughout the summer there will be a series of road shows at carnivals, farmers markets where it can be assured of reaching a good number of people to explain the new service and demonstrate the inner box.
  - 2.16 We will provide information to parish and town councils and other partners for them to include in their newsletters etc.
  - 2.17 The leaflet to provide residents with the opportunity to opt for an inner box will be distributed during August. Residents will be encouraged to respond via a dedicated mail box or by using a tear off return strip. This will enable the data handling to be managed more efficiently and reduce telephone traffic on this matter.
  - 2.18 From mid September through to mid October the new service leaflets and collection calendars will be distributed.
  - 2.19 When the bins are delivered throughout October a leaflet reminding people to refer to the new service leaflet will be attached in a clear envelope to the outside of the bin lid.
  - 2.20 Inside the bin lid there will be a sticker providing residents with an easy check of what to put in this bin and just as importantly what not to put in it.
- 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

Contact Member: Malcolm Alexander – Executive Member for the Community Safety and Environment  
[Malcolm.alexander@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Malcolm.alexander@eastherts.gov.uk)

Contact Officer: Cliff Cardoza – Head of Environmental Services ext. 1527.  
[Cliff.cardoza@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Cliff.cardoza@eastherts.gov.uk)

Report Author: Trevor Watkins – Waste Services Manager.  
[Trevor.watkins@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Trevor.watkins@eastherts.gov.uk)

