

Cabinet

7 October 2014

Report from the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Domestic Waste Recycling Scrutiny Review Final Report - Cover Report

Introduction

1. This cover report presents the final report from the Domestic Waste Recycling Scrutiny Review and asks Cabinet to approve the recommendations arising from the review.

Background to Review

2. In July 2012, the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a scrutiny topic submitted by Cllr Healey on Domestic Waste Recycling. In an effort to reduce domestic waste and increase recycling, his topic proposed:
 - making collection and recycling methods more user-friendly;
 - Identifying prohibitive factors in hotspots where recycling levels were low;
 - Identifying multiple approaches to increasing recycling in hotspots i.e. education, support, improved resources, incentives and enforcement
3. In coming to a decision to review the topic, the Committee set up a Task Group made up of the following members to carry out the review on their behalf and agreed a remit for the review:

Task Group Members:

- Cllr Paul Healey
- Cllr Keith Orrell
- Cllr Brian Watson (later replaced by Cllr Ken King)

Review Remit:

Aim: To identify future improvements in CYC's working methods in order to increase domestic waste recycling

Objectives:

- i. To consider best practice from exemplar Local Authorities including incentive schemes
- ii. To consider the views of CYC waste operatives
- iii. To gather evidence on the effectiveness of the initiatives scheduled for this financial year.

Review Findings

4. Having considered best practice information from elsewhere and information on CYC's promotional initiatives planned for 2012/13, the Task Group agreed to focus their work in support of their third objective on the council's 'Recycle More' initiative, which was one of the themes in the Zero Waste York Challenge work planned for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.
5. That campaign work led to the following:
 - Overall levels of recycling and the number of residents participating in the kerbside collection service increased in the test area, leading to an average increase of 0.42kg of recyclables collected per household (equivalent to increase of 6.9%).
 - In the control area there was a significant reduction in the amount of recyclables collected in April 2014 compared to November 2013. This was primarily due to a change of collection times and householders not putting recyclables out early enough for collection. There was an increased tonnage for a collection made at the beginning of July 2014, however, so it was anticipated that normal performance levels would soon be restored.
 - The waste prevention work carried out had the following impact:
 - Home Composting - 13 compost bins sold. This will help divert 12 tonnes of waste from landfill over 5 years. Following the experience of the one day sale held during the project it is now considered that this type of campaign work is more suited and cost effective in a larger area with more households.
 - Junk Mail - 202 households subscribed. This will help divert 3 tonnes of waste from landfill over 5 years. Easy and simple campaign to deliver making it suitable for a campaign involving a small number of households.

- Reuse collection - 2 tonnes of items picked up by one off collection. Easy and inexpensive campaign to deliver and worthwhile repeating on a regular basis.
- Lack of staffing resources restricted opportunities to liaise with established local voluntary groups and community organisations to establish actions with shared goals. For example, In the Clifton area work is ongoing with local community projects such as St Joseph's church which has developed a green agenda with the first 'Eco congregation' with waste reduction highlighted as a priority. In terms of longer term behavioural change and action in the area, the campaign would have greatly benefitted from additional resources.
- Offering financial incentives to residents was effective but not the sole contributing factor to improved participation in the kerbside recycling service and waste prevention activities. The role of financial incentives in encouraging greater levels of participation was tested during the 'Return to Sender' incentive where only half the residents involved in the incentive were informed about a prize draw. The results demonstrated that participation was consistent amongst residents entered in to the prize draw and those that were not. However a financial incentive was offered to residents for return of the postal survey. A high response rate from residents with over 75% requesting to be entered in to the prize draw suggests that a financial incentive was in this instance effective.

Review Conclusions

6. As a result of the Campaign work used in support of the review, the Task Group concluded that:
 - From the range of activities undertaken, it was not possible to analyse which individual activities were most cost effective.
 - Using specific areas rather than full rounds for the test and control areas led to an increase in the cost of collecting the monitoring information, as the part rounds needed to be weighed separately.
 - It was easier to identify specific needs and solutions in the smaller areas, than it would have been if the campaigns had been city-wide e.g. barriers to using kerbside recycling service, access to bulky waste items collection service.

- The various financial and non financial incentive schemes used all encouraged good levels of participation, but their individual cost-effectiveness could not be evidenced.
- For a total expenditure of £10,304, a 5-year saving of £5,500 would indicate that this campaign failed from a financial perspective.

Review Recommendations

7. In terms of future campaign work and development, the Task Group identified the following recommendations, which were subsequently endorsed by the full Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2014:
 - i. Future area based project work should use whole daily collection rounds where practical to facilitate more efficient data collection, analysis and reporting.
 - ii. The branding should be developed, and bespoke and consistent campaign communications should be produced.
 - iii. Future door step surveys should be carried out in-house or by other lower cost methods rather than be a external company.
 - iv. Where practical, project work should be developed in conjunction with our local higher education establishments to give added value to the process and reduce the costs.
 - v. Future campaigns should follow the example of this review by strictly measuring costs against benefits.
 - vi. The level of savings expected to be achieved with project work should be identified, to establish a base against which all future campaigns can be measured.
 - vii. Sufficient resources and capacity be maintained to enable the continuation of work at a community level and to allow officers time to establish measures that may foster longer term behavioural change and sustained levels of participation.
 - viii. Future campaigns to include working with parish councils, residents' associations and schools.

Council Plan 2011-15

8. Protecting the Environment - The review supports the Council's aim to be one of the best performing areas in the country for waste services; producing less waste overall and re-using, recycling and composting more household waste.

Options

9. Having considered the final report at Appendix 1 and its associated annexes, Cabinet may choose to amend and/or approve, or reject the recommendations arising from the review as set out in paragraph 7 of this report.

Implications & Risk Management

10. The implications and risks associated with the recommendations above are detailed in paragraphs 37-41 of the review final report at Appendix 1.

Recommendations

11. Having considered the final report and its annexes, the Cabinet is recommended to:
 - i. Approve the recommendations shown in paragraphs 7 above.

Reason: To conclude the Scrutiny Review in line with CYC Scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Contact Details

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial Implications:
Patrick Looker
CYC Finance Manager

Legal Implications: None

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Appendix 1 – Domestic Waste Recycling Scrutiny Review Final Report