
**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Neighbourhoods**

16 February 2010

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Investment In Containment and Presentation – Recycling Boxes

Summary

1. This report asks the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services to consider the options outlined in the report and approve the recommendation made by officers.

Background

2. Kerbside recycling collections are now an integral part of waste collections for most York residents. From an initial starting point of only 1,000 properties, generating around 120 tonnes per year and representing 9.8 per cent of the total waste collected, the service has grown to a position where, in 2008/09, the tonnes of recyclate collected was 27,010 tonnes. This represents a recycling rate of 45.13 per cent (subject to audit).
3. The main milestones in developing the service are as follows:
 - i. **1997** – 1,000 households receive a weekly recycling service
 - ii. **May 2002** – 9,000 households provided with a fortnightly collection of paper, cans and glass
 - iii. **October 2002** – a further 10,000 households added to fortnightly recycling collection service
 - iv. **June/July 2003** – a further 40,000 households added to fortnightly recycling collection service
 - v. **October 2005** – Alternate Week Collection of recyclate (including garden waste) and general refuse introduced to the 60,000 households above.
 - vi. **March 2006** – plastic bottle recycling added to the 60,000 households above and cardboard collections added to 10,000 of these households

- vii. **July 2006** – cardboard collections added to another 10,000 households
 - viii. **March 2007** - cardboard collections added to another 40,000 households
 - ix. **July 2009** – ongoing roll out of kerbside collections to c12,000 properties
4. The materials collected via the kerbside collections are paper, cardboard, cans (both aluminium and steel), plastic bottles and glass. Garden waste is collected separately using wheeled bins and is collected on alternate weeks to general refuse but using the same vehicle and crew.
 5. There has been a downturn in the recyclate market in recent years and the value of some materials has depreciated significantly – mostly paper and plastics. The council has ensured that, through its contractor Yorwaste, the maximum is made from the materials collected and we currently mix cans and plastic, paper and cardboard and the three main colours of glass. This, in effect, means we collect seven material types but mixed into three core types.
 6. As the service has developed and more materials have been available for residents to recycle, so the number and type of containers, used by residents to store and present their recycling, has increased. In the early days only a box and one bag were provided and crews sorted the mixed material by hand into the vehicle. Given the small number of properties this did not present a significant issue.
 7. With the amount of materials collected increasing, the amount of containers increased. At each stage of development, the type of containers provided matched the collection method at the time and the vehicles used. In 2005, given the steady increase in recycling participation and presentation, larger vehicles were introduced to cope better with the capacity.
 8. Residents are encouraged to present their recycling in the containers provided and we do not limit the amount of containers residents can have. This does mean that we are continually providing additional boxes and bags as well as replacements for those that go missing or get damaged.
 9. Residents now have four different containers yet, as described in para 5, we only collect three core types of material. This has led to confusion amongst residents about what and how to present and also additional time for crews having to sort ever increasing amounts of material at the kerbside.

Options

10. There are 2 options for the Executive Member to consider:
 1. Keep the existing arrangement of mixed box and bags or

2. Move to providing 3 boxes, with lids and/or net covers, to residents where practical.

Analysis

11. The current method of storage and presentation does present problems for both residents and crews:
 - a. The use of bags for plastic and paper encourages residents to use their own bags. These are often black sacks that are tied and the collection crew have no idea what the contents are.
 - b. Using boxes without lids and bags causes difficulties on windy days. The material is blown about the street prior to collection and the bags blow away from properties before they are retrieved, following collection, by the resident.
12. During the financial year 2008/09, a comprehensive trial of recycling methods was undertaken in The Groves area of the city. This trial was intended to identify the optimum method for the collection of kerbside materials from terraced and communal properties. The trial concluded in April 2009 and the results widely published.
13. During the trial, various means of storage and presentation were available to residents including providing 3 boxes for the storage and presentation of recyclable materials. One box would contain paper and cardboard, another would contain plastic bottles and cans and the final box would contain glass. This method was found to be the best and suited the vast majority of properties.
14. At the same time, some smaller trials were undertaken where streets were issued with 3 boxes. These streets had been on the recycling service for some time and it was found that when residents used 3 boxes the time taken for crews to collect was reduced significantly. The time per household reduce from 77 seconds, where a mix of box and bags is used, to 18 seconds where 3 boxes are used.

Consultation

15. The use of 3 boxes was included in the budget consultation process with residents during December 2009 under the following heading:

'if residents separated their recycling into different types that go into the compartments on the lorries (1: paper and card, 2: glass bottles and jars, 3: plastic bottles and cans) our crews could be more effectively used as they would spend less time sorting the mix of recycling at the

roadside. This means that the homes in York currently without the collection could be added at less additional cost to Council Tax)

16. The two questions that residents were asked to respond to were:
- a. *Would you support the separation of waste in this way if it meant having three boxes the same size as the current green box and,*
 - b. *Would you support the separation of waste using the existing City of York Council boxes and bags (on the understanding that crews would not collect the recycling if it was not separated properly)?*
17. The results of the consultation were received by the council on 11 January 2010 and the results specific to the questions above are attached as Annex A. From 12,694 responses the survey shows that 63% of residents support the separation of recycling and 83% are in favour of a separate box for each material stream.
18. In addition to the public consultation as part of the budget process, the proposals have been discussed by the Social Inclusion Working Group. This group were positive about the proposals and will also be consulted during the tender process.

Corporate Priorities

19. The Without Walls Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2025 provides a sustainable framework which aim for York to be a city with low levels of pollution and waste production and high levels of recycling. Moving to three boxes and encouraging residents to separate their material, thus ensuring we collect more high quality material, will help make a significant contribution to fulfilling this aim.
20. This work contributes strongly to the corporate strategy direction statement of placing environmental sustainability at the heart of everything we do.
21. This work also contributes to delivering the aims of the Corporate Sustainability Strategy by reducing York's CO2 emissions, increasing recycling and managing waste to the best practice standards.
22. As part of the More for York Efficiency Programme, the council is looking to achieve efficiency savings where possible. Moving to three boxes will ensure the we maximise the potential of the collection crews.

Implications

Financial - The cost of implementing a 3 box system is £490K. This includes the purchase of boxes and lids as well as the delivery to each property. It will

also cover the cost of a comprehensive information pack for each resident receiving the boxes. It is estimated that annual efficiency savings of £210K will be achieved as a result of this investment.

The council's procurement team have indicated that a mini tender, using the established YPO framework, is a suitable and practical way to undertake the procurement necessary for this project.

Human Resources (HR) – No HR implications

Equalities – an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken prior to the specification and tender process.

Legal - There are no implications in this report.

Crime and Disorder - There are no implications in this report.

Information Technology (IT) - There are no implications in this report.

Property - There are no implications in this report.

Risk Management

23. The risks associated with this report are already contained in the Magique Risk Register for Environmental Services. A copy of the risk report and self certification statement are attached as Annex B to this report.

Recommendations

24. The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services is asked to consider the options outlined in this report and to approve the move to a 3 box system for residents on kerbside recycling.

Reason

25. York will continue to provide first class recycling facilities for its residents and ensure that the collection service operates as efficiently and effectively as is possible.

Contact Details

Author:

Geoff Derham
Head of Waste, Fleet &
Cleaning Services
Tel No 553111

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Sally Burns
Director of Neighbourhood Services

Report Approved *tick* Date *Insert Date*

Chief Officer's name
Title

Report Approved *tick* Date *Insert Date*

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Implication: Procurement
Name: Chris Shoesmith
Title: Procurement Officer
Tel No 551129

Implication: Financial
Name: Rachel Harrison
Title: Finance Manager
Tel No 553210

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Supporting Papers:

Annex A: Results of budget consultation (December 2009).
Annex B: Self Certification Statement and Risk Register Report.