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## Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3 September 2014

### Domestic Waste Recycling Scrutiny Review - Final Report

#### Background

1. In June 2012 the Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee met to consider a number of possible topics for scrutiny review during the 2012/13 municipal year. They also received information on a number of planned service reviews by Directorates for areas within the committee's remit, which included:
  - The rationalisation of waste rounds (including consideration of a move away from the policy on same day waste collection arrangements)
  - Policies at household waste sites
  - Green waste collection
  - Commercial waste/recycling/incinerator
2. Discussion took place regarding a proposed topic on commercial waste. Officers provided information as to why commercial waste income targets were not being achieved and the charging structure, together with an update on the waste incinerator plan and the alternative arrangements that might be put in place depending on the outcome of an ongoing planning application.
3. In view of the planned service review of commercial waste, the Committee agreed that it would not be appropriate to carry out a scrutiny review on that topic at that time. However, they agreed there were aspects of domestic recycling that merited review e.g. the disparity between rates of recycling within different parts of the community and comparisons with other local authorities.
4. At a meeting in July 2012, the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered an associated scrutiny topic submitted by Cllr Healey on Domestic Waste Recycling.
5. In coming to a decision to review the topic, the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee set up a Task Group to carry out the review on their behalf and agreed the following remit:

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

Key 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.

## Information Gathered & Analysis

### 6. Objective i - To consider best practice from exemplar Local Authorities including incentive schemes

The Task Group carried out an analysis of the 20 top performing Local Authorities (LAs) in terms of recycling rates recorded in 2010/11 – see table in Annex A. Of the 20 LAs looked at, 2 were Unitary Authorities and 18 were Waste Collection Authorities (WCA). The highest recycling rate recorded was by Rochford District Council, a WCA with a recycling rate of 66%.

### 7. Residual Waste

- 1 WCA had a weekly collection of residual waste in a 140L wheeled bin.
- 18 LA's had an alternate week collection of residual waste and recycling
- 1 LA had a fortnightly collection of residual waste and a weekly collection of recycling.
- 2 x LA's collected residual waste in 240L wheeled bins
- 3 x LA's collected residual waste in 180L wheeled bins
- 1 x LA collected residual waste in a 140L wheeled bin.
- 1 x LA collected residual waste in black sacks.
- 13 x LA stated wheeled bins but size was unspecified
- 19 LA's specified a 'No side waste policy'
- 1 LA allowed residents to purchase additional sacks for residual waste to be placed alongside their wheeled bin. (£12 for roll of 15 sacks)

### 8. Dry Recycling

- 19 LA's had a fortnightly collection of recycling
- 1 LA has a weekly collection of recycling

9. <u>Materials collected</u>	<u>% of LA's that collect at the kerbside</u>
Paper	95%
Cardboard	85%

Aluminium tins and cans	95%
Foil	50%
Aerosols	55%
Plastic bottles	85%
Mixed plastic packaging	65%
Plastic film and bubble wrap	25%
Tetra packs	45%
Glass	85%
Textiles	5%
Shoes	5%
Books	10%
Batteries	10%
Mobile phones	5%
Printer cartridges	5%

#### 10. Garden Waste

- 100% of the Local authorities have some kind of Garden waste collection service available for residents
- 2 x LA's have a weekly service
- 18 x LA's have a fortnightly service
- Of the 18 LA's with a fortnightly service, 5 have a chargeable subscription system (prices range from £30-£47 per bin per year)
- None of the LA's that charge for garden waste suspend the collection over the winter period.
- Of the 15 free collections from LA's, 4 reduced the garden waste service over the winter months.

#### 11. Food Waste

- 16 LA's have a food waste collection.
- 8 of these LA's have a weekly collection and 8 have a fortnightly collection
- All 8 LA's that have a fortnightly collection co-mingle the food waste with a fortnightly garden waste collection
- All 8 LA's with a weekly collection collect food waste separately in a food waste caddy.

#### 12. Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) & Trade Waste

A common theme throughout was the non acceptance of trade waste at nearby HWRC's. In addition, many LAs had stringent permit schemes in place at HWRC, including not allowing any construction waste or trailers entry and only allowing vans if they are the only registered vehicle at the property.

13. Bournemouth Borough Council had a 64% recycling rate despite no food waste collection and a subscription based garden waste collection. However, they did have dedicated garden waste bring sites which may explain their high recycling rate.
14. Waste Prevention  
Waste prevention campaigns and information varied widely between Local Authorities. Most WCA that had food waste and garden waste collections had limited waste prevention information available for the public.
15. Whereas, those Local Authorities that did not have food waste collections, or charged for garden waste collections or collected a limited number of dry recycling materials, provided comprehensive waste prevention information.
16. The Task Group looked in detail at the following four 20 top performing LAs from 2010-11, in an effort to better understand their recycling rates (see Annex B). They noted that:
  - Rochford District Council provides a simple and instructive bin schedule and detailed lists of the widest ranges of recyclables collected nationally.
  - South Oxfordshire District Council provides in depth information via their website about what can and cannot be recycled. Also information on where else / other ways things can be recycled.
  - Bournemouth Borough Council runs 'big' bin / 'little' bin scheme. Bin provided for landfill rubbish is smaller than recycle / garden waste bins. Comprehensive website including waste strategy and schemes.
  - Stratford upon Avon District Council
  - 3 out of 4 of the above LAs:
    - Collect household waste and garden waste fortnightly – Bournemouth Borough Council collects household waste weekly and Rochford District Council collects garden waste weekly
    - Collect garden waste all year round with the exception of South Oxfordshire District Council which offers a year round 'opt in' service with a charge per bin (see paragraph 16 below)
    - Runs a food waste service and offers a kitchen caddy to those who want one, with Bournemouth Borough Council being the exception.
  - All use one mingled bin
  - All have very detailed lists and guidance
17. The Task Group noted the charges made by South Oxfordshire District Council for the collection of garden waste and bulky items; £34.00 a year

for a 240 litre wheeled bin emptied fortnightly, and a minimum charge for bulky waste collection of £21.00 for up to 3 items and a further £6.67 for each additional item (service limited to a maximum of 6 items per collection day).

18. The Task Group also looked in detail at four of the 20 top performing LAs from 2010-11 (see Annex C). They noted that Vale of White Horse District Council runs an app named 'BINFO' that helps users find out when their next collection is due and which bin needs to be out. Residents can also register online for their garden waste scheme. It also provides homes and flats unsuitable for wheeled / shared bins with pink sacks for rubbish and green sacks for recycling, which are collected fortnightly (rubbish one week and recycling the next).
19. The Task Group also considered information on recycling by other LAs considered similar to York i.e. within the same family group. Information and waste statistics for those LAs for the periods 2010-11 & 2011-12 are shown at Annex D.
20. The Task Group also considered the pros and cons of 'Co-mingling' i.e. the collection of materials in a single compartment vehicle with the sorting of these materials occurring at a Materials Recovery Facility. They considered a Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP)<sup>1</sup> document called 'Choosing the Right Recycling Collection System' which addressed the issue of which recycling collection system was best and in particular whether kerbside sort systems or co-mingled collections were to be preferred. – see copy attached at Annex E.
21. Customer Insight Study on Residents' Recycling Behaviour & Communication Preferences  
The Task Group considered the findings from a study of resident's behaviour carried out by Southampton City Council & its Partners. The project was undertaken in an effort to tackle waste management & recycling issues, and enable a more direct targeting of customers who did not recycle or who contaminated their bins, thereby reducing the need for the Council's more generic campaigns. See a summary of the work undertaken and the finding from the study at Annex F.

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<sup>1</sup> WRAP UK was set up in 2000 to help recycling take off in the UK and to create a market for recycled materials. Over the last decade, they have helped and continue to help local governments devise strategies to deal with those issues through their expertise, research and practical advice.

22. The Task Group were particularly interested in the results from the socio-demographic profiling undertaken as part of the study, and noted that Southampton City Council had used those findings to help focus their behaviour change campaigns and achieve better value for money.
23. The Task Group agreed that where those same profile groups existed in York, similar achievements could be made if the propensity of each group to change its behaviour, and each group's communication preference was taken into consideration. The level of achievement possible would be based on the population volumes of each of those profile groups.
24. **Objective (ii) - The views of CYC waste operatives**  
Whilst the task group did not meet directly with waste collection staff, those staff were involved with selecting the geographic areas in which to carry out the comparison work undertaken in support of objective (iii) of this review. Their experience and local knowledge was used to help identify the most appropriate areas to work. They also provided valuable insight to help frame the content of the initial customer survey questionnaire.
25. **Objective iii. - To gather evidence on the effectiveness of the initiatives/campaigns scheduled for this financial year.**  
The Task Group received information on the promotional initiatives planned for 2012/13, and 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 plans for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.
26. 'Recycle More' included promotion of kerbside recycling to boost participation, capture rates and quality of material collected, which the task group agreed would support the aim of their scrutiny review. The Scrutiny Task Group therefore sought the agreement of the appropriate Cabinet Member for a number of rounds to be used as control rounds during the implementation of the 'Recycle More' initiative in 2012/13. The Task Group planned to use the data gathered to carry out a comparison of the results from the control rounds with that of the remaining rounds of a similar type.
27. The Task Group learnt that for each basic area subject to review, the following key elements would be included:

- Background - Identify demographics of area, current and proposed services, waste data and targets, research, funding and support.
- Situational Analysis - analyse current position, outline where we need to be.
- Aims & Objectives - Define aims and objectives (**S**pecific / **M**easurable / **A**chievable / **R**ealistic / **T**imebound).
- Target Audience - Identify audience i.e. all householders, internal and external groups, specific groups, hard to reach and engage, lifestyle characteristics.
- Branding & Messaging - Developing communications i.e. visual identity, tone of voice, type of message.
- Strategy & Communications Methods - Develop overall approach, methods to support services, methods to reach audiences, impact of each method, and distribution methods.
- Campaign Activities - Develop individual campaign aims and objectives, communications tactics, agree measuring and evaluation mechanisms - such as participation, tonnages, recycling rate, website hits etc.
- Planning Activities - Scheduling and costs linking with service provision and national events. Schedule campaign activities, outline indicative costs, and include contingencies.
- Monitoring & Evaluation - Evaluate whether overall aims and objectives achieved, and individual campaign aims and objectives achieved. Review impact of campaign activities and determine future activities.

28. An example of how the approach would be utilised was provided i.e.:

Comparing block of flats A and B that are of similar size, have same recycling service and similar recycling performance.

Block of flats A

- Identify recycling performance and customer satisfaction.
- Make no changes to services.
- Do not promote services.
- Review recycling performance.

Block of flats B

- Identify recycling performance and customer satisfaction.
- Review service that is provided to ensure that there are sufficient communal recycling containers on site. If not, arrange for additional containers to be provided.

- Consult with residents to identify any issues and barriers to using recycling service. Try to resolve any reasonable and affordable service issue(s).
- Promote recycling service to ensure that residents know what is available and how to use it (leaflets, posters, door to door canvassing etc.). Also take the opportunity to inform residents about what other services are available from the council or other organisations.
- Try to recruit a local person to help monitor the recycling service so that problems can be identified and resolved as soon as possible.
- Assess opportunity to introduce additional recycling facilities in the area (for example at a local meeting hall or school).
- At the end of the trial period quantify the outcome of the work, e.g. expenditure, impact on recycling performance, customer satisfaction etc.

#### Compare block of flats A with block of flats B

- Compare recycling performance and customer satisfaction at both locations to establish if the work undertaken provides value for money and could be rolled out to other similar locations.

29. It was agreed that the comparison work would focus on the actions and participation levels of residents living within areas predominantly consisting of semi detached housing and a high density of council owned housing. The comparison project ran from October 2013 to March 2014 and focussed on the Kingsway North and Monkton Road areas.

- Test area - Kingsway North & streets surrounding (629 properties)
- Control area - Monkton Road & streets surrounding (604 properties)

30. The streets included in the test and control areas are listed in Table 1 at Annex G.

31. For the purposes of comparison, both areas were monitored and evaluated at the beginning and end of the project, but only one area (test area) was targeted with a bespoke campaign, whilst the other experienced no changes (control area). At the Task Group's request, data was collected again in June 2014 in an effort to track any sustained benefits from the campaign work. To ensure consistency of approach the same methodology for monitoring and evaluation was carried out in both areas. The work was carried out in a number of phases:

Phase 1 – Monitoring & Evaluation - October to December 2013



Phase 2 – Planning, project work and area based communications –  
January to March 2014

Phase 3 - Monitoring, evaluation and recommendations

A detailed breakdown of the work carried out in each phase is shown at Annex G.

### 32. Cost Evaluation

Details of expenditure incurred and impact of the project are shown below. Costs are split between kerbside recycling and waste prevention activities.

Action	Kerbside Recycling £	Waste Prevention £
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Doorstep survey (using private company)	1,500	800
Survey prize draw (vouchers)	25	
Vehicle and crew for tonnage monitoring	900	
Smarter York Challenge brochure print	200	
'No Junk Mail' letters – print		100
'No Junk Mail' stickers – print		42
'No Junk Mail' scheme prize draw (vouchers)		100
'StreetbyStreet' recycling incentive stickers – print	485	
'StreetbyStreet' recycling incentive prizes (£5 voucher per household)	350	
'StreetbyStreet' recycling incentive – Letter print	168	
Reuse collection flyer print		150
Drop in sessions (room hire)	56	
Second survey printing	150	
Compost Bin one day sale – Friends Of St Nicholas Fields		1,618
Staff time (also refer to note below table)	2,370	1,290
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£6,204</b>	<b>£4,100</b>
<b>Pay Back Tonnages Needed To Cover Expenditure</b>		
<b>Savings: Kerbside Recycling - £110 per tonne / Waste Prevention - £100 per tonne</b>	57 tonnes	41 tonnes
<b>Campaign Impact Diverting Waste From</b>		

<b>Landfill Over 5 Year Period</b>		
<b>Tonnages</b>	34.5 tonnes	17 tonnes
<b>Financial Savings</b>		
<b>Kerbside Recycling</b> - Increase of 0.42kg of recyclables per household (equivalent to 6.9% increase). This could generate an increase of 6.9 tonnes of recyclables per annum or 34.5 tonnes over 5 years.	£3,800	
<b>Waste Prevention</b>		
Home Composting - 13 compost bins sold. This could divert 12 tonnes of waste from landfill over 5 year period.		£1,200
Junk Mail – 202 households subscribed to scheme. This could divert 3 tonnes of waste from landfill over 5 years.		£300
Reuse Collection - 2 tonnes of items picked up by one off collection.		£200
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>£3,800</b>	<b>£1,700</b>

33. The project attracted interest from University students and graduates, which helped to secure a free of charge staffing resource of almost 300 hours. An Environmental Science student also used the project as the basis of a dissertation.

### Comparison Work Findings

34. The campaign work led to the following:
- Overall levels of recycling and the number of residents participating in the kerbside collection service increased in test area. There was an average increase of 0.42kg of recyclables collected per household (equivalent to increase of 6.9%). This could generate an increase of 6.9 tonnes of recyclables collected per annum in the test area.
  - 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, and it is anticipated that normal performance levels will 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

35. As a result of the Campaign work used in support of this 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

36. In terms of future campaign work and development, the Task Group identified the following draft recommendations:
- 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.

### **Associated Implications & Risk**

- 37. Influencing behavioural change is a very important aspect of any project work. This project generated a wider interest and understanding about waste services with residents and the benefits of this are potentially much more wide reaching than just the kerbside recycling service. In particular many residents are now more aware of opportunities for preventing waste and reusing items and materials and this should provide financial benefits in the future with more waste being diverted from landfill.
- 38. **Resources** - All future campaigns and project work will have to be accommodated within existing staffing levels and budgets. This might by necessity limit the scope and ambition of future work undertaken unless additional resources can be obtained.
- 39. **Financial** – The current budget for waste minimisation is £47k. The cost of undertaking project work and campaigns will need to be met from within this budget. The council is facing ongoing budget reductions in future years and Members will need to determine priorities for how where to allocate limited resources as part of future annual budget processes.
- 40. **Legal** – There are no specific legal implications associated with the review recommendations.
- 41. There are no other known implications or risks associated with the recommendations arising from this review.

### **Council Plan 2011-15**

- 42. Protecting the Environment - This 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.

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Report Approved  Date 22 August 2014

Wards Affected:

All



**Financial Implications** – Patrick Looker, CYC Finance Manager

**Legal Implications** – Andrew Docherty, AD ITT & Governance

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** N/A

### Annexes:

**Annex A** – Analysis of the 20 top performing Local Authorities (LAs) in terms of recycling rates recorded in 2010/11

**Annex B** – Breakdown on 4 of the top performing LAs in 2010/11

**Annex C** – Breakdown on 4 of the top performing LAs in 2011/12

**Annex D** – Information on LAs in York Family Group

**Annex E** – Supporting information on Choosing the Right Recycling Collection System

**Annex F** – Customer Insight Study on Residents' Recycling Behaviour & Communication Preferences

**Annex G** – Detailed Feedback on Campaign Work Carried Out in Support of Objective (iii)

### Report Abbreviations:

**CYC** – City of York Council

**HWRC** – Household Waste Recycling Centre

**LA** – Local Authority

**WCA** – Waste Collection Authority