

## Recycling Task and Finish Group



**Final Report**

**September 2008**



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Recycling Task & Finish Group – Final Report

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## **Background**

1. The Environment Scrutiny Committee set up the Recycling Task and Finish Group in November 2007. The Membership of the Group was Councillor J Bridges (Chairman) with Councillors D Everitt, G Jones, A V Smith and M B Wyatt. Councillor Wyatt was appointed as Deputy-Chairman of the group. After May 2008 Councillor P Purver replaced Councillor Bridges on the group.
2. The remit given to the group was;  
***“To examine the Council’s approach to recycling with a view to improving recycling rates; to include examination of the barriers to recycling, methods of encouraging people to recycle more and analysis of different recycling processes.”***
3. The group met on three occasions (11 December 2007, 29 January 2008 and 9 September 2008<sup>1</sup>) and has undertaken two site visits (24 January 2008 to the council’s Linden Way depot and 25 January 2008 to Rushcliffe Borough Council’s depot Abbey Road, West Bridgford<sup>2</sup>).
4. An interim report on the group’s findings was submitted to the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 20 February 2008.
5. At the final meeting of the group, on 9 September 2008, the group concluded its work and this report contains its final recommendations including that the group be dissolved.
6. The group is grateful to officers for the open and enthusiastic manner in which they have supported this examination. This was evidenced not only in the information that was given to the group but the way in which recommendations arising from the group’s discussion have been not only supported but implemented wherever possible operationally. We refer to these recommendations and suggestions later in the report.

## **Evidence gathering**

7. The group received a briefing paper<sup>3</sup> giving details of the service and how it sits in the council’s responsibilities as Waste Collection Authority. This gave a background against which the group based its examination.
8. The group visited depots in North West Leicestershire and Rushcliffe (a Beacon Award Authority for Waste and Recycling). Members were able to see first hand operations in the depots and during discussions with colleagues, were able to acquire knowledge of operational issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of these meetings are attached as appendices to this report. From page 13

<sup>2</sup> Notes of these site visits are attached as appendices to this report. From page 23

<sup>3</sup> Briefing note attached as an appendix to this report. Page 14

9. The group met after the visits and considered the evidence gathered and discussed the issues raised. An interim report was made to the Environment Scrutiny Committee<sup>4</sup>.
10. A concluding meeting was held at which updates were considered and final recommendations drafted.

### **Issues considered**

#### **Used battery collection**

11. Currently, deposit centres in the reception of the council offices and at civic amenity sites were used as the preferred option.
12. It is important that used batteries are not taken to landfill so alternative collection methods could be considered.
13. Officers are monitoring a trial being undertaken by Melton Borough Council involving slightly different vehicles and practices.

#### **Staffing**

14. The physical demands of the nature of the work result in higher than average sick leave amongst the employees engaged in waste management; refuse collectors and depot employees. Pro-active steps are taken to address sickness levels.

#### **Residents of flats**

15. A difficulty was identified in providing recycling facilities for residents in flats, including those owned by the council. The waste facilities are usually limited to a communal bin store that does not permit kerbside recycling. The bin store does not usually cater for the storage of recycling bins and space restrictions limits storage within the flats.
16. At a particular block of flats identified by members, negotiation with the landlord has resulted in the provision of shelving to enable recycling bins to be stored. Officers are continuing discussions with the landlord regarding the provision of shelving at other locations.
17. Residents are able to use 'bring' sites and the possibility of the provision of a glass bank for a trial period is being explored with the council's contractor.
18. It is suggested that involvement of ward members in local promotion activity would help promote local motivation and increase recycling rates that are historically lower than average in flats.

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<sup>4</sup> Interim report is attached as an appendix to this report together with the relevant minute from the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee in response. From page 43

### Number of recycling bins provided

19. An increased number of recycling bins encourage greater separation at source but needs to be balanced with the practicality of storage for householders.
20. The existing red box is being used currently for the introduction of glass collection and the refuse collectors separate at the kerbside. Despite this, 50% of householders have requested a second red box.

### Performance

21. Currently 35% of waste collected by the council is being recycled<sup>5</sup>. This is a good performance and reflects the commitment of officers and participation of residents.
22. Collection of participation data by collection rate is difficult as vehicle capacity covers a large area. Anecdotal crew evidence indicates that some streets had a greater participation rate than others but more accurate data is needed.
23. A participation survey has been carried out to better inform future steps and promotion.
24. The survey has revealed that 95% of respondents are very or fairly satisfied with the recycling service generally<sup>6</sup>.
25. The survey has identified the following key issues
  - a. **‘Provide better recycling containers’** - Yellow bags are being replaced with larger ones with a full flap and Velcro fastener to keep material in the bag. They are also weighted to stop them blowing away on windy days.
  - b. **‘Reduce litter escaping from red boxes’** - Elasticated nets are being issued.
  - c. **‘Provide more information’** - Through the Council website and Vision, more information is being provided on what happens to all recyclable material collected as well as collection days and arrangements.
  - d. **‘Increase recycling awareness in schools’** – The service has secured external funding for a temporary waste education officer to visit schools in the district over the next two years

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<sup>5</sup> Latest figure available 2006/07 35.27%, 83<sup>rd</sup> out of 273 collection authorities. National figure for 2006/07 30.9%. NWLDC projected 39% in current year and over 40% in 2008/09. National targets; 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020. Source: briefing note December 2007 appendix page 14.

<sup>6</sup> Recycling and Refuse Customer Satisfaction Survey 2007/8 - A Report of the Survey Findings, Commissioned by the Head of Street Management and Undertaken by Waste Management. March 2008.  
[http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/recycling\\_news/documents/Recycling%5Fand%5Frefuse%5Fcustomer%5Fsatisfaction%5Fsurvey%5F2007%2D8%5F%283%29%2Epdf](http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/recycling_news/documents/Recycling%5Fand%5Frefuse%5Fcustomer%5Fsatisfaction%5Fsurvey%5F2007%2D8%5F%283%29%2Epdf)

### Promotion of recycling

26. The council's website has a page dedicated to recycling accessible direct from the home page<sup>7</sup>.
27. Aspects of recycling are featured in almost every issue of Vision.
28. Publicity and leaflet distribution are undertaken throughout the year. Work is carried out in schools and members could help with promoting recycling in their own wards.
29. It is particularly important to offer appropriate incentive for participation and to get the message across to people that their efforts have a financial as well as an environmental impact.
30. Doorstep visits are made, targeting areas with low participation rates to encourage those who currently do not co-operate.

### Freeuse website

31. The Freeuse website<sup>8</sup> has been launched and has been advertised on the council's website, on Google, in Vision and on the bulky waste collection leaflet. To date 70% of items placed have been successfully transferred.

### Commercial waste

32. Although commercial waste does not count towards the council's recycling targets; there could be some potential for generating income through recycled materials. Investigatory work is continuing.

### *Interim report and recommendations*

33. An interim report was made to the Environment Scrutiny Committee<sup>9</sup>. The interim recommendations were;
  - a. The report be received and the work carried out thus far by the task and finish group be approved.
  - b. The bid for additional monies made by the head of street management in the budget round for infrastructure costs in order to enable extension of the recycling activities to be undertaken and increased separation of materials to be introduced be supported.
  - c. The Head of Planning be requested to put forward proposals to ensure that on the completion of new build properties developers make a realistic contribution under the terms of a S106 agreement to the infrastructure costs of waste management and recycling.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/refuse%5Frecycling/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/freeuse/home.asp>

<sup>9</sup> Interim report and relevant minute attached as appendix from page 43.

34. Recommendations a. and c. were endorsed but recommendation b. was deferred pending detailed costs. The group reviewed these recommendations at its final meeting.

**Final conclusions and recommendations**

35. The group welcomes the endorsement of the interim report by the Environment Scrutiny Committee while noting that the proposed infrastructure to increase separation of materials was deferred pending detailed costs.

36. It is noted that officers have acted upon a large number of the items that had been discussed by the group. The table below was presented to the final meeting of the groups and shows the progress made.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b><u>Update of previous recommendations:</u></b>  |   |
| Provide Agar Nook flats with suitable recycling facilities (trial)   | ✓ |
| To consider the introduction of bulky waste recycling  | ✓ |
| Develop and promote the Council’s own Freeuse website dedicated to reusing unwanted items in good working order  | ✓ |
| Provide recycling education in primary schools to promote reduce reuse recycle   | ✓ |
| Conduct household visits to offer practical advice and education to struggling householders  | ✓ |
| Deliver recycling talks to key community groups  | ✓ |
| Conduct road shows at local supermarkets and town centres to promote:<br>Home composting<br>Reduce junk mail<br>Love food - hate waste (food waste reduction initiative)<br>Real nappies | ✓ |
| Make greater use of Vision and website for promotional purposes  | ✓ |
| Work with Leicestershire Municipal Waste Partnership on all waste related promotions to maximise publicity and value for money   | ✓ |
| Lead by example and introduce recycling bins to council offices  | ✓ |

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
|   |                             |
| <b><u>Other updates:</u></b>  |                             |
| Yellow bag, net, newsletter, sticker roll out (based on feedback from survey work)  | ✓                           |
|   |                             |
| <b><u>Recommendations – new or work in progress</u></b>   |                             |
| To consider the introduction of trade waste recycling   | Ongoing                     |
| To consider the introduction of schools recycling facilities where the service is not provided by Leicestershire County Council           | Ongoing                     |
| Upgrade ‘high usage’ bring sites with new signage and new/extra bins where possible*<br>* additional financial resources will be required | -                           |
| On street recycling (trial)   | Funding app to be submitted |
| Provide Agar Nook flats with suitable recycling facilities  | Ongoing                     |
| Publish leaflets in keeping with Leicestershire Municipal Waste Partnership’s brand guidelines  | -                           |
| Organise competitions to increase positive recycling awareness  | -                           |
| Investigate any potential sources of external funding to contribute towards promotional activities  | -                           |
| Consider kerbside collection of batteries   | -                           |

**Table 1 Update of progress on suggestions/recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group during discussions. Presented as an update to the meeting held on 9 September 2008.**

### Material separation machinery

37. Following the Environment Scrutiny Committee’s request and further investigation, the group was told that the cost of provision of appropriate equipment to enable extension of the recycling activities to be undertaken and increased separation of materials would be in the region of £70-80,000 with a current pay-back period of 3-4 years.

38. The estimated pay-back period is based upon current values for materials. This reflects an enhanced value for separated materials.
39. As the industry has developed, however, reprocessing companies have become better equipped to deal with bulk separation and the price advantage is being eroded.
40. The price benefit to the council of additional material separation is being reduced and this throws the viability of the proposal into doubt, particularly at a time when the council needs a clear benefit to justify the investment of up to £80,000. The proposal merits further consideration and a full cost benefit analysis could be undertaken through the normal budget process.

### **Developer contributions**

41. The principle of developer contributions was endorsed by the Environment Committee in a recommendation that; ‘The Head of Planning and Development put forward proposals to Cabinet to ensure that on completion of new build properties, developers make realistic contribution under terms of a Section 106 Agreement to the infrastructure costs of waste management and recycling.’
42. It is recognised that the justification and the amount of any contribution would have to be considered in each case on its merits.

### **The task and finish group**

43. The group congratulates officers on the progress made within the limited resources available.
44. The group has now completed its work as defined in the remit for which it was established (page 5) and therefore feels that it should be dissolved.

### **Recommendations**

45. The group recommends that;
  - a. The interim recommendations and the recommendations that have been already implemented (shown in Table 1 on page 10) are endorsed.
  - b. Consideration is given to the provision of appropriate equipment to enable extension of the recycling activities to be undertaken and increased separation of materials during the forthcoming 2009/10 budget process.
  - c. Developer contributions under Section 106 Agreements towards infrastructure costs of waste management and recycling are considered when planning applications for developments are considered.
  - d. The Recycling Task and Finish Group is dissolved.



## Appendices

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## Recycling Working Party – Briefing Note

### 1. Waste Management Responsibilities

- 1.1. NWLDC is the Waste Collection Authority (WCA) and is responsible for the collection of all domestic waste. The council also has a legal responsibility to collect commercial waste if requested to do so by a business in the district.
- 1.2. Leicestershire County Council is the Waste Disposal (WDA) and are responsible for the disposal of all household waste.
- 1.3. The county and district councils have formed the Leicestershire Waste Management Partnership to address all waste management issues. Representation on the Member Steering Group is the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Rushton.
- 1.4. The Government has issued a new Waste Strategy for England 2007.

### 2. Current Recycling Arrangements

- 2.1. Materials collected kerbside fortnightly
  - Cardboard (in yellow bag)
  - Paper (in blue bag)
  - Mixed cans and plastic bottles (in red box)
  - Glass bottles and jars (in red box) – introduced to half of the district in December 2007 and the remainder to be added in March 2008.
  - Garden waste (in brown lidded wheeled bin)
- 2.2. Materials collected at “Bring” sites
  - All materials collected kerbside PLUS
  - Textiles
  - “Tetra” packs (plastic coated cardboard)
  - Book and music banks

### 3. Disposal Arrangements

- 3.1. A new depot and waste transfer station, funded from DEFRA grant and district council capital resources, was completed earlier this year at Linden Way, Coalville.
- 3.2. Until the depot was completed recyclable materials were either taken to the County Council operated facility at Whetstone (paper, cans and plastic bottles) or disposed of to a local reprocessing company.
- 3.3. Delivery of all recyclable materials collected kerbside is being transferred to the new depot on a phased basis to coincide with the introduction of glass collections.
- 3.4. Formal bids have been invited and long term contracts let where possible for the sale of material collected.

#### **4. Data Collection**

- 4.1. We are currently analysing the replies from a customer satisfaction survey sent to 8,000 properties in the district.
- 4.2. Also ongoing at the current time is a participation survey to establish the number of properties and the frequency of presentation of recyclable materials for collection.
- 4.3. The County Council, on behalf of the Waste Partnership, have just commenced a compositional analysis of waste across the county. As the survey is conducted in each of the four seasons, the results of this will not be available until next summer.

#### **5. Publicity and Promotion**

- 5.1. There is a page on the Council web site dedicated to recycling.
- 5.2. Information on specific aspects of recycling are included in almost every edition of "Vision"
- 5.3. Leaflets and other promotional literature is issue throughout the year to support specific campaigns

#### **6. Recycling Statistics**

- 6.1. The percentage of waste recycled/composted has risen from 6.8% in 2002/03 to 35.27% in 2006/07 and places the district 83rd out of 273 collection authorities. The recycling/composting rate is projected to reach around 39% in the current year and over 40% in 2008/09. This compares with a national figure in 2006/07 of 30.9% and national targets of 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020.
- 6.2. The cost of waste collection in NWL in 2006/07 was £50.00 per household compared with the national average of £50.32 and is the 2nd lowest in Leicestershire.
- 6.3. Residual waste per head of population in 2006/07 was the highest in Leicestershire at 294kg but less than the national average of 303kg.

#### **7. Commercial Waste Recycling**

- 7.1. Waste recycled from commercial collections does not count against the council's recycling performance.

Keith Fairbrother

Head of Street Management

10 December 2007

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Recycling Working Party held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on Tuesday, 11 December 2007.**

Present: Councillor J Bridges (Chairman) (in the Chair)

Councillors G Jones and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mrs L S Birtwistle, Messrs P Coates and K J Fairbrother

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs A V Smith

### **1. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: That Councillor M B Wyatt be appointed to serve as Deputy Chairman of the Working Party.

### **2. CONFIRMATION OF REMIT OF WORKING PARTY**

The Working Party had been appointed by the Environment Scrutiny Committee as a “task and finish group”. The terms of the remit the Working Party were clarified and agreed as follows:-

“To examine the Council’s approach to recycling with a view to improving recycling rates; to include examination of the barriers to recycling, methods of encouraging people to recycle more and analysis of different recycling processes”

### **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Keith Fairbrother spoke to a briefing note which had previously been circulated and which is attached to the minutes. In summary:

#### **(a) Waste Management Responsibilities**

- NWLDC is the waste collection authority
- Leicestershire County Council (LCC) is the waste disposal authority
- Leicestershire Waste Management Partnership has produced a countywide Strategy (summary attached – for full copy, contact Keith or view on LCC website) which is linked to the Government’s Waste Strategy 2007 (see DEFRA website) (which focuses on the future management of waste and the issues to be addressed nationally)
- The Partnership addresses issues around waste, but predominantly concerning recycling
- A member steering group, on which our portfolio holder sits, works with the Partnership.

#### **(b) Current Recycling Arrangements**

In addition to the materials regularly collected, which were listed in the briefing note, collection of glass had commenced in the previous week in a part of the District and would be rolled out to the remainder in March 2008.

The only other material he last which could realistically be considered for regular collection was kitchen waste. This presented more of a problem in

terms both of collection and disposal and the cost involved. A pilot scheme was being operated by the Partnership, which had begun in October in Hinckley and Harborough Districts and would run for approximately 12 months, after which it would be evaluated and the options considered.

**(c) Disposal Arrangements**

- Recyclable materials can be disposed of using county sources e.g. the facility at Whetstone
- since the construction by the District Council of a new depot and waste transfer station adjacent to the Count amenity site on Linden Road Coalville, the majority of waste is being taken to that location.
- One big advantage of using this is that the material has a value and is a source of income to the Council, with reprocessing companies putting bids to buy our materials. Purchasers had been found to buy the waste glass, paper and cardboard on a contractual basis and interim arrangements made for the sale of cans and plastic bottles.
- As a result, from 08/09 there should be a reduction in the costs of waste management to the Council.

**(d) Data Collection**

- A detailed customer satisfaction survey was being undertaken - more than 8,0000 forms had been sent out and thus far 2½ thousand had been returned. Analysis would take a while but results should be available in February.

Members requested a copy of the survey form be circulated to them.

- A recycling participation survey undertaken in a representative area of the District was nearing completion. This had involved counting the number of red boxes etc. put out by customers and the frequency with which this was done.
- The LCC was carrying out a compositional analysis of selected bins on a seasonal basis over a period of a year to identify the predominant elements in the waste. Information would be available in the late summer of 2008 and would assist with targeting waste management appropriately.

**(e) Publicity and Promotion.**

- Articles in “Vision”
- Leaflets produced, to support particular initiatives
- Good coverage on website.

**(f) Recycling statistics**

- Percentage of waste recycled/composted 35.27% I n 2006/07 (6.8% in 02/03).
- District 83/273 collection authorities.

- Recycling /composting rates estimated for 39% in 07/08 and over 40% in 08/09 (national figure – 30.9%)
- Cost 06/07 was £50p per household – slightly below national average and 2nd in Leicestershire
- BUT the total waste per head of the population and the amount of waste going to LCC is the highest in Leicestershire - a salutary minder that there was still work to be done.

**(g) Commercial Waste**

The amount recycled from commercial premises does not count toward the District's recycling targets. Nevertheless, some trade customers had been surveyed and the response received was generally a positive one. Furthermore, it was relevant to provide trade customers with the service they required in order to increase recycling, for which of course money could be received.

**(h) Hazardous Waste**

Trained operatives collect this from the Authority. In the event of asbestos being dumped, the Council would take action against any known offender.

**4. ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS.**

**(a) Used battery collection – response to a member's question.**

Paul Coates reported that provision of deposit centres, currently in the Reception at of the Council Offices and at Civic Amenity Sites were the preferred option.

Melton Borough Council was currently running a trial on collection, using slightly different vehicles and procedures. It was important that this material did not go to landfill, so alternative collection methods could be considered.

It was agreed to circulate details of the trial to members.

**(b) Staffing matters**

In answer to questions, Keith Fairbrother indicated that:

- Overall more than 50 employees were engaged in waste management duties, including the refuse collectors, employees at the depot and office staff.
- The figures for sick leave amongst these employees was higher than the Council average, but pointed out that traditionally records for those involved in manual work were greater in part because of the physical demands of the job
- Long-term sick leave was the main problem
- Pro-active steps were being taken to address the levels of sick leave

**(c) Recycling facilities for flat dwellers**

A member raised this issue of the lack of recycling facilities provided for those living in East Midlands Housing Association (“EMHA”) flats within the Greenhill ward and it was acknowledged that the problems to be addressed in this regard affected all blocks of flats, including those which were Council owned.

Keith Fairbrother explained that storage of containers within flats presented a difficulty and the usual provision for such buildings was a communal bin site but no kerbside recycling service. Residents could use recycling bring sites or there was the possibility of provision of appropriate shelving in the bin store.

A member gave evidence relating to arrangements for the contents of bulk containers to be recycled by private companies on a commercial basis – an option which could be explored.

**(d) Number of bins provided.**

Keith Fairbrother explained that options for the provision of bins included supplying one bin only for all recyclable material which would then have to be transported elsewhere to be sorted. The decision had been taken as far as possible to separate at source. The benefits included:

- Clear message to residents that materials collected recycled encouraging their co-operation in the process
- Different elements of recyclable waste ready for sale
- Materials of higher quality and therefore value, because of reduced contamination

This had to be balanced against the issue of the number of containers to be accommodated by the householder. Consultation in respect of the introduction of glass collection had indicated that if possible no additional container should be required. Accordingly, the existing red box was currently being utilised and the refuse collectors separating at the kerbside. In practice however, 50% of householders had taken up the option of requesting another red box.

**(e) Overall performance**

Keith Fairbrother reminded members that 35% of waste collected by the Council was now being recycled which was a good result and reflective of rapid improvement, Key factors were:

- Establishment of an efficient infrastructure and collection regime
- High participation rates by the residents who were of course the key participants in recycling of waste. The decision to run operational trials when introducing a new recycling initiative, which involved newsletters being issued part way through the trial requesting feedback, ensured householders were engaged in the process and problems ironed out.

- It was difficult accurately to measure the amount of waste collected from a particular area – the tonnage of each refuse collection vehicle was measured but the waste could have been collected from up to 300 properties.
- Similarly, it was difficult to identify individual areas where there was poor recycling performance. Crews would be able to report that all the boxes were put out on some streets and not others, but a more scientific method was needed. The data collection currently being undertaken in a representative area should help to identify the type of area where recycling figures were lowest

**(f) Promotion of recycling**

There was still more to be done to engage those who currently did not co-operate. Work was undertaken in schools and local members could help to promote recycling in their own wards.

Keith Fairbrother reported that evidence from other local authorities indicated that the most effective ways to improve the rates were:

- Provide a carrot – the current recycling initiatives were predicted to save £4% per household per annum on waste collection costs and it was important to get across to people that their efforts had a financial as well as an environmental impact.
- Undertake face to face visiting of households, targeting poorly performing areas

**5. SCOPING OF REVIEW**

The Scrutiny Officer circulated a paper which indicated the main elements to be considered when scoping a review. It was acknowledged that the scoping needed to allow a degree of flexibility, as some elements e.g. witnesses to be called, might alter, in response to evidence received during the course of the work carried out.

In addition to the remit, identified at the beginning of the meeting, the following aspects were agreed:

**(a) Purpose of review**

The purpose was to consider whether the Council was receiving good value for money in the processes which it used for recycling and to look at whether methods could be employed which would bring about improvements.

**(b) NOT included**

Issues directly relating to collection of non-recyclable household waste, frequency of collections etc. unless any linkage became evident in respect of recycling collections.

**(c) Time Scale**

The work of the Task and Finish Group to be completed within a 3 month time span when the conclusions would be reached from the evidence gathered and put into a report with constructive recommendations. Insofar as proposals could be accommodated within existing policy and resources, they could be implemented without delay.

**(d) Methods to be used**

- Visits
- Evidence from witnesses
- Researched information including evidence from council officers, relevant documents including Waste Management Strategy, evidence of approach of other Councils to recycling and reports of Scrutiny reviews of recycling undertaken elsewhere.

**(e) Visits**

The Chairman indicated that he considered it important that members should have the opportunity of visiting sites and understanding the processes which were undertaken and best practice in the field.

He suggested that visits include:

- The District Council's own depot
- Another Council's recycling activities
- The premises of a commercial recycling business

Having this firsthand experience would undoubtedly raise issues in members' minds and inform their questions.

A number of authorities' plants were mentioned, including Rushcliffe and Lichfield and the Scrutiny Officer was asked to make the necessary arrangements for a visit to the local depot and one farther afield.

**(e) Witnesses**

- The officers and operatives whom members encountered during their visits would effectively be witnesses from whom evidence was gathered.
- Mr Davis from EMHA was to be invited to attend in respect of recycling provision for blocks of flats.
- The portfolio holder to be invited to a future meeting.
- Further witnesses if required to be identified at the next meeting.

**(f) Co-options**

This was not considered necessary at the current time

**(g) Any further engagement with the public.**

There were several surveys recently completed or in process of being undertaken and the results would be available to members. At the present time no decision was taken to undertake any other form of consultation with or interview any members of the public

**5. NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on 29 January 2008 at 6.30pm

Prior to the meeting provision of samples of promotional material and reports from Council which has undertaken similar scrutiny reviews to be circulated.

Members proposed to consider:

- Evidence gathered from the proposed visits of which it was anticipated that at least two would have been undertaken
- Recycling provision for blocks of flats and in this connection it was requested that Mr Davis from EMHA be requested to attend
- Council publicity and promotional initiatives relating to recycling.

Councillor Jones entered the meeting at 6.56pm.

The meeting terminated at 7.55pm.

**Notes of a Site Meeting of the Recycling Working Party held at North West Leicestershire District Council Depot, Linden Way, Coalville on Thursday, 24 January 2008 at 9.30a.m.**

Present: Councillors J Bridges (Chairman of the Working Party), D Everitt, G Jones and M J Wyatt.

Officers: L S Birtwistle, C Clarke, P Coates and C

Introduction: Prior to inspecting the recycling site a description of the recycling operation was given by Paul Coates and Charlie Clarke and members asked a number of questions. They subsequently toured the site and examined a number of vehicles, the bays where recyclable materials were temporarily stored and the bales of materials.

Summary of information given.

(a) Fortnightly Collections

Members were informed of the regular rounds undertaken, one week to collect household refuse and alternate weeks to collect plastic bottles and cans (mingled in the red box and preferably flattened), garden waste, paper and cardboard and in some areas, glass.

Brown paper could be put in with cardboard (which should be flat-packed by the householder) or paper or in the compost bin!

The kerbsider was used to collect recyclables in the form of clear and green bottles, paper, and mingled plastic and cans and provided different compartments along its side. When these were full, at the press of a button they were elevated and tipped their contents into separate compartments in the vehicle. The garden waste and cardboard were collected in a split vehicle, the rubbish being put in separately from the rear of the vehicle.

Garden waste, which would be rejected if contaminated e.g. by pet faeces or animal bedding, was taken to Lount and reprocessed for composting. Indeed 15 litre bags of compost could be purchased from there for £3. Subsidised compost bins, to encourage householders to utilise their own garden waste, could be acquired from the Council.

(b) Statistics

There were around 38,000 properties in the District and 4 crews which collected from between 12 to 1400 properties per day. The kerbsiders came back to the depot usually 3 x a day to empty. Since they no longer had to go on a regular basis to Whetstone, which was 17 miles away, to undertake this task, there was a great saving made in terms of lost time and also around £15,000 p.a. in fuel costs, plus saving the fee of £20 per ton which was charged at Whetstone.

The planned increase in properties in the area would stretch the service. A lorry had the capacity to carry the waste from 400 to 450 properties prior to emptying. 400 more houses were to be built in Ashby – insufficient to require another round, but difficult to accommodate within the existing schedule with maximum capacity nearly

reached. 2000 homes were planned for Hugglescote which would require some expansion of current capacity once a critical mass was reached.

The Council owned in total around 96 vehicles of which there were about 35 at the depot. There were 8 refuse lorries, (4 dustcarts and 4 split bodies for gardening waste and cardboard) and 4 kerbsiders and the crew consisted of a driver and 2 operatives. There was also 1 operator who drove a smaller general domestic collection vehicle around farms and remote rural areas (collecting from about 300 households per day) this had 3 compartments and pods on the front for the different recyclables.

The cost per household of the whole package of disposal of domestic waste and recyclables was less than £1 per week. A good service charge had been negotiated

Whilst overall the amount of rubbish going to landfill was tending to stabilise there had been no marked decrease as a result of recycling initiatives. This was largely because the population was growing and also because there was a tendency to generate more waste overall, even if more were being recycled. Better ways of treating residual waste needed to be found.

#### Value of sales

In what was a volatile market especially in relation to certain recyclable products, it was built into the contracts that if the value of the produce fell into negative territory, there would be no net cost to the Council and the company concerned would still collect and pay the haulage.

The volatility of the market was one reason for the Council's not handling coloured plastics at the moment as the lack of an assured long term market made it very difficult to find any business which would commit to a contract of any length. Coloured plastics could however be taken to the LCC site.

The value of clear glass was currently about £25 per ton net

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| Green glass | £8 |
| Mixed glass | £6 |

Mixed glass would probably be used for such a purpose as road aggregate whilst clear uncontaminated glass would go for re-melt to be made into bottles again.

The value of paper was approximately £50 per ton

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Cardboard          | £45       |
| Mixed paper & card | under £40 |

#### Contamination

There was a small degree of tolerance in terms of contamination. There was bound to be some but overall the Council's contamination rates were good – whilst when the Whetsone Transfer Station had been used previously it was usual for them to indicate a contamination rate of 2%, since the council had started to sell to re-processors directly there had been no incidents of contamination or rejects.

Sorting of different types of glass was undertaken at the kerbside which increased the collection costs but ensured that the highest quality was sold and thus the highest price gained, thus offsetting the additional costs.

Paul explained that it was now possible to dispose of envelopes with paper as long as they were not in large quantities since the glue used to fasten them could cause problems especially if oil based. Please to the manufacturers to use water based glue had been made but this interrupted the manufacturing process as this took much longer to dry.

(c) Adjacent site

This was an LCC Waste Site – effectively a large bring site - managed by contractors. This accommodated receive extra garden waste, mixed plastics, and other recyclables and could dispose of some items which the District could not.

Question – cost to the District of the use of this facility?

(d) Disposal of Waste

Street sweepings are taken to landfill, being transferred to the LCC Albion site.

Tyres were kept at the depot and then taken to Skeffington to be shredded (formerly taken to Stratford). It was not possible for members of the public to take tyres to the DC or the LCC site for disposal and the advice was to take them to ATS depot, where there might be a small charge.

The DC was able to handle asbestos and had trained operatives and a locked container to store the material.

Incentives

At certain Tesco superstores if materials were recycled there, then the customer was given additional club card points.

Members expressed the view that consideration should be given to incentives both for the householder and also for crew members and drivers to raise the level of efficiency and thus speed of process still further. One idea was to negotiate with the Council's paper suppliers and to agree to make donations of recycled paper to schools/libraries as a reward to householders for improved recycling habits.

(e) Site

It was acknowledged that currently the site was too small to accommodate safely all the vehicles on the site and the consequent vehicle turning movements. There had been an awareness of the need to address the issue of a separate parking area for the vehicles and this had been reinforced by opinions expressed by the Health and Safety Executive. A planning application had been submitted and a decision would be forthcoming early in February, for the use of land to the north (?) of the site for a distance of 3.5 metres. As well as freeing up the main body of the site, this would enable the required markings in the main enclosure to be added and a one way flow system introduced with a different "IN" and "OUT".

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(f) Baler

More money was received for the goods if they were baled. Another one (cost around £45,000) was being purchased.

**Notes of a Site Meeting of the Recycling Working Party held at Rushcliffe Borough Council Depot, Abbey Road, West Bridgford on Friday, 25 January 2008 at 2.00.pm.**

Present: Councillors D Everitt, G Jones and M J Wyatt.

Officers: L S Birtwistle and P Coates (NWLDC); Darryl Burch (Recycling2go Manager) and colleagues (Rushcliffe Borough Council)

Apologies:- Councillors J Bridges (Chairman of the Working Party) and A V Smith (NWLDC) and Councillor Debbie Mason Portfolio Holder (Rushcliffe Borough Council) (who indicated her regret that she was unable to be present and her willingness to meet with the Working Party on another occasion or to be contacted by its members by telephone or email)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Working Party had indicated its desire to look first hand at how recycling was conducted in other areas and as its remit included making recommendations which would result in the District Council improving its recycling rate, it was appropriate to visit a Council which had achieved a higher rate. Rushcliffe is one such and has the distinction of being granted a Beacon Award for Waste and Recycling. In fact last year it achieved the 3rd best rate in the country and a “satisfied” or “very satisfied” rate from its own householders of nearly 90%, which is a rise of 20% in the last 2 years.

2. BACKGROUND

(a) Collection system

Rushcliffe collects waste from approximately 45,000 properties. Previously black bags had been used for waste collected from the rear of properties. A company was employed to undertake a waste audit to examine the current collection system and the waste disposal habits of the residents. Very soon afterwards, with a 6 months trial in a built-up area followed by further 6 months in a rural area, wheeled bins, grey for residual waste and green for compostable waste were introduced and extended over the district over a period of 2 years with an alternate weekly collection. Result:- Uproar! This was in part just because the system was new, in part because the bins had to be put out “We are doing your job for you” and in part because of the lack of a weekly collection of residual waste.

Rushcliffe saw its recycling and composting rate increase over a 2 year period from 9.7% in 2002 to 28% and the service was subsequently expanded to include collection of card, paper, cans and plastic, by the use of a third bin in which the different types of waste were co-mingled. The recycling rate had risen steadily and now was over 53% without a kerbside glass collection. There had been no marked increase in fly tipping although there had initially been a problem with rubbish being dumped in litter bins until the message had been successfully conveyed that this was not permissible.

The reasons for using a 3rd bin with non-separated waste were as follows:

- To make it simple for residents

- Originally bags had been placed next to the bins for paper etc but there were problems with their blowing away or being stolen.
- It was considered for health and safety reasons that a box or other container was more onerous for the collectors, involving continuous bending down and lifting of potentially heavy receptacles

(b) Promotion

A lot of hard work had been undertaken promoting the original scheme and again when the blue bin was introduced there had been resistance – e.g. no room for a 3rd blue bin, the bins are ugly - and more promotional work was undertaken which had resulted in the complaints gradually dying down. Specifically, in response to complaints as to the ugliness of the bins the tack taken was that they were safe receptacles in which to remove waste and that in this the Council was looking after the welfare of its crews.

- Over a 100 roadshows were organised,
- members of the team knocked on doors and set up on Saturdays at such popular places as Asda where the 3 bins were put on display, freebies were handed out and people were actively engaged in conversations and the whole idea of a 3 bin scheme constantly “pushed”. One to one contact was of paramount importance.
- “Your bins are coming” packs were delivered
- Branding was very important. The “Recycling2go” logo - instantly recognisable and snappy - was placed on everything, umbrellas, footballs, rulers and pencils etc.
- A lot of work was done in schools
- There had been sustained and professional publicity given to the Scheme. The communications teams had co-operated fully and enthusiastically and the Green Apple award for communication of the Scheme had been received.

(c) Costs.

The costs of operating the service were relatively high, coming out at £55 per household per annum (NWL £50 and coming down).

(d) Disposal

5 years ago 45% more waste was being taken for landfill.

Overall, 50,000 tons of waste were produced of which half was composted or recycled. 80% of residual waste was taken to an incinerator ½ mile away which produced energy which lit up most of the City of Nottingham and also contributed to the National Grid! There was a very small amount of residual waste from this process which went to landfill as did the rest of the residual waste. The negative from use of an incinerator was the effect on neighbours but the operation was tightly regulated and in fact the emissions were composed of water vapour and steam.

Rushcliffe were unable to operate their own transfer station for recyclable materials in the same manner as NWL because they were locked into obligations under a 28 year PFI contract negotiated by Nottinghamshire County Council which meant that they received no money for their materials, although they did receive recycling credits with their bring site materials and did not have to pay any gate fee. There was a transfer station in Nottingham where the plastic bottles were compacted and baled up and then sent to a materials recycling facility into Milton Keynes. Paper was bulked elsewhere and transported to a paper mill in Birmingham.

The contract does not apply to glass and glass from the bring site is collected by an external company and taken to a re-processing plant in South Yorkshire.

As to food waste, a green cone digester (not effective on a clay soil) and home composting were promoted. They were successful in the sale of compost bins on one occasion selling 7,000 in a day. They had been working with WRAP but it was likely that funding from this source would end or be reduced so that the price of composters had risen from £6 to £10 and £20 for large ones. Hereford and Worcester promoted the disposal of food waste down the sink, which was supposed to be an environmentally friendly method.

### 3. CONTAMINATION LEVELS

A survey undertaken of a large sample of recycled waste had indicated a contamination level of 4.5% although a sample of 20 bins examined by a County Council contractor had shown a level of 7%.

The Authority operated a zero tolerance approach with regard to contamination – there was no penalty as such (cf. Exeter – where court case on this lost) officers from time to time went out with crews to check recyclables and originally where there were recyclables in a residual waste bin it would be tagged and not emptied. Current policy is to contact the householders and to indicate that officers wished to talk to them about their management of waste.

### 4. COMPOSITION OF RECYCLED MATERIALS

90% of blue bins were put out and 60%/70% were very full.

With a target of 54%, the current figures were currently 25% dry recyclables, including glass from the bring sites, and between 28% and 29% compostable materials. The marketing had focussed on the dry recyclables which now could include yogurt cartons and margarine tubs. This compared with NWL - 16% dry recyclables including glass from the bring sites (a large discrepancy) and a similar figure of 24%/25% garden waste,

In Rushcliffe, twigs could be placed in with the compostables but not scrap wood. There was no income received for garden waste but no gate fee charged. It was sent to a farm with a composting facility but not sold on as a soil conditioner. In NWL a gate fee was paid but the recycling credit was higher.

### 5. ADDITIONAL WASTE

Rushcliffe allowed residents to place flat-packed cardboard by the side of the blue bin for collection but otherwise no additional waste was collected and no additional bin of any description provided except for large families and for disposable nappies

after inspection of the householders' grey bin had shown that it was being properly used and did not contain material which could be recycled using the other bins provided.

There was special provision for medical waste. Yellow bags were provided for incontinence pads for which there was a rear door collection – these are treated as household waste even though they are sent to the incinerator. There was a 120 kilo capacity box on the vehicle to carry such items and waste from doctors' surgeries etc. There was a charge made for collections from surgeries.

There were facilities for furniture and fridges (rear door collection) etc at a charge

## 6. STRUCTURE AND COLLECTION DETAILS.

Under Darryl there were 3 managers and 2 waste advisers and until a year ago a project adviser. Officers were very committed and assisted collections and undertook waste audits as well as promotions work and they were paid for week-end work. Indeed when the new scheme had started they had been out every week-end.

The pattern of waste collection and use of crews was explained to members. There were 15 men on the crews, 5 on grey bins, 5 on blue and 5 on green and there were 9 rounds including one for isolated locations. And the crewman on the latter round had responsibility for half the week to pick up missed bins. A crew covered 5600/6000 properties each and since the introduction of the blue bins they carried out 2 trips per day (formerly 3) and on very rare occasions 3, usually for the green bin. The green bin was not collected over the Christmas period for 5 consecutive weeks. They operated a 5 day week in contrast to N's 4 day week, which could explain NWL's extra trips.

The same type of rear loading vehicle (26 cwt) was used for all the main collections. Vehicles were serviced and delivered on Mondays. On two days trade waste was collected and on two others bulky waste.

15 separate calendars showing collection dates, were prepared and to ensure that all received notification, these were hand delivered to every property by specially recruited individuals.

## 7. FUTURE PROPOSALS

- (a) Recycling of batteries was being considered, the idea being to supply a bag for householders to fill which might then be clipped to the bin. The bags would be stored in a container kept in the lorry and would be taken to the County Council site.

This could be considered in NWL and the bag clipped to the green bin.

- (b) Glass recycling

A consultation had been undertaken and 90% of residents had indicated that they wanted kerbside collection to be introduced although there were some concerns about noise levels. However, they did not want to pay any extra for this service. The glass could be mixed when it would be used for aggregate or separated into colours

when it could be re-used for bottles. If this were to be introduced it would probably increase the recycling rate by between 4% and 5%. However, it was unlikely to go ahead because of the cost which was likely to add £5 per head on Council Tax.

There were separation issues and collection of the amount expected within the rounds – 3x more glass than at present.

A discussion about glass recycling ensued.

At Rushcliffe a waste analysis undertaken had forecast 6,000/7,000 tons of glass disposed of (some commercial) of which only 2.5 tons was taken to the bring sites. Perhaps there was a high figure because it was an affluent area. This was likely to increase as more European wine producers bottled in this country because we produced more clear glass bottles.

Retailers were looking at reducing the weight of glass to assist with the pressure to reduce their packaging. This could have an impact on the income received from glass. At NWL the income from clear glass was £24 a ton and £6 for mixed. Rushcliffe were not tied into a contract for glass and used Berrimens in South Yorkshire for disposal (a very interesting site to visit).

(c) Trade recycling

Consideration was being given to the introduction on a Monday of a Trade Recycling Service even though the recyclable materials collected could not be counted in to the Council's recycling figures. It could not cost the businesses more or they would not participate.

(d) More publicity

This year they would be working on driving up the blue bin recycling rate – in some councils this was as high as 30%.

Latterly, in part because of some restructuring and less resources, the work in schools had reduced but during the coming year the intention was to pick this up again. In this assistance was given by 2 officers appointed by the County Council who worked in schools across the County. In the past the local team had taken refuse vehicles into the playground and allowed the children to get inside them, and radio each other and they had worn the logo on their jackets. Other services had followed suit such as street cleansing and grounds maintenance and there had been a very successful "streetwise" campaign in the schools.

The team would also respond to invitations to attend garden fetes etc and operate from a gazebo, go armed with large banners and publicity material and of course the 3 bins.

The website was also used for publicity and various leaflets were produced. To encourage recycling of other articles, there was also work being done on a website which promoted free recycling by response to "wanted" advertisements and required no log on.

## 8. REASONS FOR RUSHCLIFFE'S SUCCESS

Discussion elicited a number of contributory factors:

- (a) Relatively affluent rural area, with low levels of deprivation
- (b) Full cross-party member support. The Portfolio Holder was very enthusiastic but all were behind the scheme.
- (c) Potentially the co-mingling of materials, because it was simple and imposed fewer burdens on the householder and fewer containers.

However, clearly that system had financial implications.

- At the present time the industry wanted separated waste (although that could change as companies acquired more sophisticated means of separation). If NWL adopted it it would not be able to sell its recyclable waste and would have to pay a gate fee at the disposal site.
  - Into the mix had to be put time of crews and any additional journeys required – and thus the carbon footprint – to collect separated waste.
  - However, in considering any change, the cost of new bins/receptacles would be a factor.
- (d) A stringent policy towards those who misused the system, although there was not at present any intention to introduce penalties.
  - (e) Branding – “Recycling2go”.
  - (f) Very pro-active promotion and publicity. In fact, Darryl believed that the Beacon Award was not so much for the recycling rate but for the effective communication of the scheme and the high levels of public satisfaction.
  - (g) Councillor Jones suggested that one reason for the satisfaction rate increasing after the initial period of reaction to the new scheme had passed, would have been the change over to the more user friendly wheelie bins. It was agreed that that might have been an influencing factor but it should be remembered that residents could formerly have unlimited numbers of bags collected and collected from the rear of the premises.

#### 9. THE PROS AND CONS OF WEEKLY BIN COLLECTIONS

Councillor Jones explained that the Council had promised to reconsider the position in NWL and the feasibility of reintroducing a weekly collection. The topic was debated at some length. It was explained that when it had been removed in Rushcliffe, there had originally been a lot of complaints but now there was no pressure to return to such a system.

In nearby Mansfield, which was Labour controlled and a less affluent area, a consultation had been undertaken on this matter and 80% of respondents had indicated that they were content with the current system. In Gedling Borough, in pursuance of an election pledge, a weekly service had been restored for 13 weeks in the summer weeks. Unfortunately the weather had been poor, the service had by no means been fully used – probably in large part because residents had become used to a different pattern with the way they dealt with their waste - and the weather had turned warm after the 13 weeks had elapsed. The initiative had cost nearly £500,000 for hire of vehicles (£1000 per vehicle per week) and additional labour and additional

disposal costs and consideration was now being given as to whether it was appropriate to repeat it in the summer of 2008. It was believed that the figure for the recycling percentage had reduced by 2% during the period of weekly collections.

Habit was clearly a factor. Erewash had ceased the green bin collection between October and March and then faced problems when it was re-instated.

There could be problems with flies and maggots when it was warm but a lot of work had been done by officers to encourage people to wrap up their waste, especially food waste, in air-tight bags to avoid this.

Experience in Rushcliffe indicated that it was not always in the most deprived areas or the estates with lots of children that the poor recyclers were concentrated – indeed there were some pockets of big houses where the degree of contamination of recyclables was very surprising.

It was important to give capacity to deal with special waste and if a household were large to provide extra bins – thus, subject to inspection of the grey bin, household of 5 or more could have an additional bin.

There was no definitive proof of the effect that the re-introduction of weekly residual waste collections would have, the available evidence tended to point to a small reduction in the figures for waste recycled.

#### 10. COMPUTERISATION

Rushcliffe has installed a recently updated tracking system and computerised data base through (Bartex?) Information Services for their refuse collection vehicles. They have chips in their bins (10p each). On two of their collection vehicles there is a touch screen unit in the cab with an 8" x 8" screen, (which costs £2,000 to £3,000 and a monthly charge of £30 for the first vehicle and £70 per vehicle thereafter for software support but the exact charge can be negotiated), which enables them to report any problems which they encounter and the menu can be set to record e.g.

- A property where the bin has not been put out,
- Excess refuse,
- Contaminated waste (e.g. glass or recyclables in grey bin),
- Wrong bin out,
- Requires assistance but gate locked,
- Property has 2 bins but that is not shown on the system.

A computerised mapping system is shown on a screen at the depot to which any point of interest can be added and which tracks the location of the collection vehicles and records the driver's notes. When the lorry is outside a property the screen will display the nearest 14 properties.

The crew also have a hand held scanner which holds the same information as the base unit so that for instance, if a bin has been placed in the wrong place, they can find out its correct location. The operative can walk in front of the lorry and record details e.g. contaminated bin and take a photograph if he wishes. Initially the crews

found the system a bit difficult but in reality it is just a question of pressing keys to put in the date, property etc and is quite simple to use.

The system enables an accurate record to be kept of how the service is operating and where there are problems and can be used without the chips on the bins, although correct data is dependent upon the crew's input. It enables reports e.g. as to number of recycling bins not put out, set out rates, to be run very readily and saves telephone calls from the crew to report problems and giving them messages in paper format. Text messages can be sent to the crew e.g. the A52 is closed; pick up a bin at No. 24. There is also a saving in officer time obviating the necessity to chase residents who have "got it wrong" because the information is recorded on the spot.

The programme is linked to the Customer Tracking System so that if a resident telephones an officer in the call centre has a clear picture of the situation – e.g. refuse lorry been but bin not out.

The elected members wanted an operative to go back for every missed bin but if there were a consistent pattern of the bin not being put out then the resident would be approached. If the crew reports a missed bin then the missed bin collector will pick it up but if they do not report it then they have to return for it. However, in future, with their new system, recalls will normally be accommodated by sending the nearest vehicle to the missed bin to collect it and thus saving fuel costs incurred by specially made lengthy journeys.

The system can link in with on board weighing provision. That is very expensive to install in an existing vehicle and it is far better to purchase it already installed in a new vehicle. This may be a sensible step to take as in the future the Government may insist that bins are weighed at the point of collection.

Principal factors to consider:

- Promotion – branding, visits, schools work, publicity etc.
- Customer satisfaction – is a weekly collection what is wanted and what of the effect on recycling rates?
- Computerised system bringing more efficiency and easier to chase up non recyclers
- Co-mingling

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Recycling Working Party held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on Tuesday, 29 January 2008.**

Present: Councillors J Bridges (Chairman of the Working Party),

Councillors D Everitt, G Jones, A V Smith and M B Wyatt.

Officers: L S Birtwistle, P Coates and K G Fairbrother.

There were no declarations of interest.

### **1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2007 be approved as a correct record.

### **2. FEEDBACK FROM INSPECTION OF RECYCLING FACILITY IN COALVILLE AND VISIT TO RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Scrutiny officer circulated notes of the two visits which had been made during the previous week. These were detailed and provided evidence which could be used by members to substantiate any recommendations which the Working Party put forward.

The Chairman apologised that he had been unable to attend the visit to Rushcliffe because of the injury he had sustained. He invited members to feed-back on the visits. Those who had been present indicated what a valuable experience both visits had been and how they had increased their knowledge and understanding of the refuse and recycling operations and of the issues to be addressed. They acknowledged that Rushcliffe was at a further stage of development of its service and whilst lessons could be learned from their experience and ideas picked up to explore, it was necessary to be realistic and to work within the local situation, which was not identical, and with the constraints in particular of resources, and developing the service gradually.

Councillor Wyatt indicated that he had tried to identify the areas where this Council was weak and he drew attention to the poor collection rates in Agar Nook and Coalville.

#### **Tracking System**

Councillor Wyatt also praised the technology which was in use in Rushcliffe and considered that their tracking system was something to aspire to; believing that over time it would pay for itself would increase efficiency. There was general agreement that it had great benefits and was one of the developments which should be considered in the future. However, whilst it should be included on a list of innovations which it was desired to introduce it was considered that in the immediate future there were other improvements which could be carried out more readily and which would have a beneficial effect on the Council's recycling quite rapidly. The acquisition of such a system could be recommended for consideration at a later date.

There was also some concern expressed that the use of such a system could provoke an adverse reaction – the “big brother” syndrome but it was believed that this could be overcome if the introduction were handled correctly and its benefits were “sold” to the residents. It was also pointed out that the system could be utilised without the necessity to put chips in all the bins – which perhaps might be adversely received.

Action: it was agreed that the capital costs of installing such a system should be investigated, with a view to possible future introduction. These figures would enable members to decide whereabouts on the list of priorities for improvement such a scheme should come.

### **3. UPDATE ON DOOR-STEPPING ACTIVITY**

Paul Coates reported that the Council had employed MEL (?) Research, a company which was considered the expert where recycling door-step campaigns were concerned, to visit properties in certain areas over an 8 to 10 week period. They had begun last week following some initial training. Those properties in residential neighbourhoods which fell within Acond (?) categories 4 and 5 (where 1 was the most affluent) were being targeted. Participation studies had previously been carried out over a 6 week period and had revealed that, in terms of putting out the recycling boxes, the rate was 88% for category 1 homes, 76% for category 3, 72% for 4 and 59% for 5, hence the focus on the latter two areas.

The remit of the door steppers was to “sell” the benefits of recycling, tease out objections and feed-back questions asked comments etc. One identified barrier was just not understanding how the system worked and so the doorsteppers would explain and this should immediately improve participation rates. All would receive a leaflet describing the service and a calendar which on one side carried the useful information of the dates of the school holidays and on the other, details of how to dispose of a variety of items so that they were recycled. This design had been chosen because it was families with young children who had the most difficulty in recycling.

A question was asked about waste compositional analysis and Paul indicated that the results were inconclusive. In fact which ever category properties came into, this authority produced more rubbish overall than other authorities (in Leicestershire?). It was very difficult to ascertain which properties were producing the most waste.

Paul explained that at the end of the current Campaign, there would be a repeat of the initial survey to ascertain what impact had been made. Evidence from elsewhere all pointed to such Campaigns having a beneficial result.

#### **Incentivisation**

It was the case that the more recyclable material deposited the more money that the Council received and it was suggested that it was important to get this message across to incentivise residents. This was what was needed, ways

of encouraging them to separate their materials and for them to be informed what they were going to get out of doing it was an important factor. However, officers indicated that it was difficult to quantify in that way and that first of all the necessary education must be carried out. In terms of the lowest recycling rates, Paul indicated that there were one or two streets where the rate had only been 39% and in one or two more as low as 17%, so there was a long way to go with some residents.

At Christmas the recycling rates went up considerably, but then so did the amount of all waste collected.

Government had consulted on the possibility of differential charging for waste and the question was would that be seen as incentivisation or as a penalising measure? Concern had been expressed within the industry both about the need to measure the waste disposed of at each property and to weigh every bin and the administrative requirements of billing, with the inevitable cost implications, as well as about the associated customer relations difficulties. Accordingly, this route was not being pursued at the present time.

The Chairman suggested that the possibility of giving incentives to schools to join in the recycling programme e.g. by supplying them with some free/discounted paper should be explored. The recycled materials collected in this way could not be included in the Council's figures but they it would generate material from which the Council would gain some income and it would therefore be good to give something back to them which would be seen as a benefit to the local community. It would in effect be a scheme which could be compared with Tesco giving clubcard points.

What was already known, had been reinforced by the visit to Rushcliffe, that a key element in driving up recycling rates was the handling of promotion and publicity. Involvement of the schools would be an element of that and much work could be done with the children, who then passed the message on to their parents.

#### **4. RECYCLING FACILITIES FOR FLAT-DWELLERS**

Paul Coates explained that the principal problem at the East Midland Housing Association flats in Agar Nook was an operational one. There was a separate very small lock-up under the flats where there was barely space for 4 bins which had to serve 8 flats. Furthermore, there was no room for the boxes inside the flats. He had worked with the Housing Association and Councillor Wyatt to seek a solution. There was a small space at the side of the flats where a red box would fit and the Housing Association had agreed to build shelving so that it would accommodate 4 boxes, 2 for plastic and cans and 2 for paper. Slave bins (?) would be used for the contractors to us to empty the boxes. Leaflets explaining the new arrangements would be sent to residents affected.

### **Bring sites**

With regard to the glass recycling, they had looked at introducing a bring site and the adopt-a-bin scheme so that the residents would receive money for the glass. However, the contractor was reluctant to install banks in that location because of the likelihood of vandalism and consequent danger from broken glass etc. an alternative solution had yet to be found.

With regard to bring sites generally, the issue of failure to empty them often enough, with the consequent eyesore that resulted and potential for vandalism. Officers agreed that this was an issue and there was a need to be constantly “on the tail” of the contractors. One officer had responsibility for monitoring the sites and reporting in when there was a problem. The contractors indicated that they emptied the banks within 24 hours of receiving such notification but that clearly was not always the case.

### **Planning provision**

With regard to the erection of flats, in answer to a question Keith Fairbrother indicated that there was now more joined up working with the planners than had previously been the case. When considering an application they would approach this section to ascertain whether the proposals would be adequate for the storage containers for waste. Thus if there were 12 flats then the builder would be asked to provide a space for 12 bins and supplied with the measurements. In addition space for 2 communal recycling bins would be required, 2 for paper and 2 for other recyclables. Planners were also more aware of road layouts and access issues for refuse vehicles.

Councillor Wyatt was satisfied with the arrangements which had been made thus far for the flats at Agar Nook. He explained that negotiations had been ongoing to bring back into use all the allotments and a bid for lottery funding was being made to ensure that they were as environmentally friendly as possible. There was a proposal to accommodate recycling banks on the site and for the Allotment Society to take responsibility for them. Residents would be encouraged to use composting facilities on the site. It was hoped that the venture would be up and running by next spring.

## **5. CURRENT COUNCIL PUBLICITY AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

The principle information which has been given to residents thus far has been in the nature explanations of the service and the implications for them. Thus as Phase 2 of the glass collection was soon to be brought in, deliverers have been recruited to deliver leaflets to the homes affected by 24 February.

A question was asked about the number of permitted containers and it was explained that a maximum of 3 red boxes, 3 yellow bags, 3 blue bags and 2 green bins was permitted. In addition, extra recyclable waste would be taken on odd occasions e.g. after a party but no extra residual waste over and above the one black bin was permitted.

The Communications Team had recently produced some stickers which would be put on every black bin and which were to encourage recycling – in 2007 we recycled 35%, the target for 2008 is 40%.

### **Website exchange**

An innovative initiative to be promoted was the disposal of bulky waste such as furniture via a “Freeuse” website. This was being set up so that it did not require the user to log in, and was basically an exchange mechanism. All that was required was a description of the article and contact details and a photograph could be uploaded and the item would be left on the web for 30 days. The article must be in good working order and the District Council was able to vet what would be included to ensure it was suitable. There would be no money exchanged and it was a mechanism for putting people in touch with one another and reducing waste taken to the tip. It would save the customer money as there was a charge for collection of such waste. The legal team had come up with appropriate terms and conditions and it would go live on 1 March 2008.

**Action:** Members were conscious that this excluded those without internet access and asked officers to examine ways in which this could be overcome e.g. by putting it on the website for them, use of internet access in libraries, community shops etc.

Members were keen that the initiative should be well publicised including through articles in Vision and that details should be given of how to access the service.

Keith gave credit to the Communications Team for their work on this project. He indicated that the rest of the authorities in the County were watching with interest to see how well it worked.

### **Survey**

Appended to the back of the agenda was a blank copy of the Customer Survey which had been recently completed and which was now being analysed. No detailed report could be given until it was validated when the results would be published, but on an initial examination they were looking encouraging. They would be presented at the next meeting of the Working Party.

## **6. POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Some thought had commenced as to recommendations which the Working Party might consider, although it was premature to draw up a complete report at this stage.

One area which members within members’ remit to consider was clearly how additional recycling could be achieved. Already discussed had been:

- Introduction of schools recycling facilities where not undertaken by the County Council
- Provision of suitable recycling facilities at Agar Nook flats

- Introduction of bulky waste recycling

and members supported these initiatives

In addition the introduction of trade waste recycling could be considered as could upgrading high usage bring sites with new signage and new/extra bins where possible but these would require additional financial resources at least initially although the trade waste recycling should ultimately be self-financing.

In addition, the Chairman wished to propose that the possibility of acquiring a magnet or other form of equipment which would enable the in house separation of plastics and cans, be explored, since this would increase the value of the waste on the market. There were funds had been set aside in the budget to which a bid could be made for the capital outlay. Minimising waste and increasing recycling were Council priorities, so the likelihood of some success in making a bid was favourable. It was important that whatever infrastructure investments were made brought a return the future, rather than a future cost. The bid could include money for such equipment and the extension of recycling mentioned above.

### **Batteries**

Another initiative which could be examined was the collection of batteries, e.g. by providing a bag for them which could be tied on to the green bin. Melton was to carry out a trial of a similar scheme. A member also asked about the potential for collection and disposal of car batteries.

### **Publicity and Promotion**

The other recommendations which members might focus on were around the area of publicity and promotion. It was recognised that ultimately more of the money earned from recycling would need to be invested in this as education was very important. The evidence from Rushcliffe and elsewhere was that leaflets were needed for messages but that in terms of influencing peoples' habits then one to one contact was necessary.

Leicestershire County Council had a pot of £300,000 in connection with waste disposal which over the next two years the district councils could bid for. The Council had been successful in a bid to which Keith Fairbrother had put match funding from his budget and which was enabling the employment of a Waste Education Officer. This officer would be able to carry out many of the publicity/promotion initiatives considered desirable including work in schools, conducting roadshows at supermarkets and town centres, visiting parish councils, Women's Institutes etc. and making better use of publications,.

### **Logo**

Members had been impressed by the use of branding which Rushcliffe had made and it was suggested that this Council needed a recycling logo which caught the eye. Keith explained that Leicestershire Waste Partnership was

establishing a Communications Framework which would issue brand guidelines and was promoting the use of the national logo and work recycle on the front of publications. The wisdom of using these was accepted but support was also given to creating this Council's own or a suitable slogan and having a competition in schools to produce one.

### **Waste food recycling**

This was an area where there was room for progress, not least because a scheme would reduce complaints about flies etc in black bins in the hot weather. Leicestershire Waste Partnership included provision for collection of food waste in its Strategy and an operational trial was being undertaken at the present time in parts of Harborough and Hinckley. A small container for indoors and a larger one to put outside, were being provided. After collection it was bulked at a site in Leicester and then sent to Etwell for composting, since no-one in Leicestershire currently had the facilities to dispose of it.

### **Free compost bins?**

A member raised the possibility of providing free composting bins to certain residents who found the cost even discounted, too high. And yet would compost if they had the facility. A degree of caution was expressed since there was often a gap between what people said they would do and the reality. All other bins etc were free but composting bins never had been and there could be complaints from those who had had to pay for them already if others were now being given them free of charge. It could be examined but some criteria for eligibility for a free bin would need to be established. Perhaps free bins to schools or old peoples residential accommodation might be considered where there was a clear rationale for donating them.

Action: consider this proposal further

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

- (a) Visit a private recycling centre which would recycle in similar fashion to the Council but trade waste on a commercial basis and thus on a much larger scale. The waste included high volumes of household waste (from hospitals etc), builders' waste, asbestos, tyres, food etc. 75% to 78% was recycled for cash.
- (b) Interim report to be taken to the Scrutiny Environment Committee meeting on 20 February 2008.
- (c) Members also considered that if possible a further meeting of the Environment Committee should be called towards the end of April for the final report from this Working Party since it would be too long a delay until the June Meeting. The final meeting of this Working Party should be held prior to that, early in April, to consider further information which was outstanding, report from the visit undertaken and clarify the final recommendations and content of the report.
- (d) Consider contribution by developers towards additional costs of refuse and recycling collections and the associated infrastructure, caused by extensive

new build of residential properties in the district. A certain number of properties could be absorbed into the current system but ultimately a critical mass was reached and a new round and new vehicle etc were needed. It was more difficult when the properties were located in a number of different areas.

**8. INTERIM REPORT TO THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

It was agreed that an interim report should be taken to the Environment Scrutiny committee which would briefly outline the work which the committee had undertaken thus far and include interim recommendations. These would be to the effect that:

- (a) Members support a bid for monies from the budget for additional infrastructure improvements which would assist in increasing both recycling and the monies received for recyclable material
- (b) Members request that the principle be accepted that for every new home built the developer be requested to pay a certain sum under the S106 Agreement, towards the infrastructure costs of waste disposal and recycling

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A question was asked about the civic amenity sites and the cost to the District Council but it was explained that the County Council had statutory responsibility to operate such sites and there was no cost to the district except of course through the Council tax.

Councillor A V Smith left the meeting at 7.34pm.

The meeting terminated at 8.06pm.

## Interim Report of the Recycling Working Party to the Environment Committee Meeting 20 February 2008

### 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At the first meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 20 November 2007, items for inclusion in the future work programme of the Committee were considered.
- 1.2. A report from Head of Street Management was received with the purpose of introducing the members of the Committee to the issue of recycling in North West Leicestershire.
- 1.3. In the report a brief description was given of the recycling procedures in use by the Council and the recycling/composting rate achieved.
- 1.4. Whilst a steep rise in that rate could be seen over the years since 2002, in view of the fact that it was a priority of the Council to maximise recycling opportunities, the Committee was asked to consider establishing a Task and Finish Group to evaluate the Council's approach to recycling and to examine in detail whether there were barriers to increasing the recycling rate still further.
- 1.5. The Committee considered that this was a piece of work which it was suitable for a small group to undertake over a time limited period, and that there was a likely prospect that such a review would be able to add value to the approach to recycling and thereby contribute to the delivery of one of the Council's priorities.
- 1.6. Accordingly a Task and Finish Group was set up and the members appointed were Councillor J Bridges (Chairman), and Councillors D Everitt, G Jones, A V Smith and M B Wyatt.
- 1.8. The remit given to the Group was as follows:

“To examine the Council's approach to recycling with a view to improving recycling rates: to include examination of the barriers to recycling, methods of encouraging people to recycle more and analysis of different recycling processes.”

### 2.0 PROGRESS OF THE GROUP TO DATE

- 2.1. For the purposes of this interim report a brief outline only of the steps taken thus far in the conduct of the review is given. A fuller description will be included in the final report.
- 2.2. At the first meeting of the Group held on 11 December 2007, members received from the Head of Street Management a brief description of the current processes in place relating to waste.
- 2.3. This included an overview of the Council's waste management responsibilities, the existing recycling arrangements, statistics relating to

recycling, waste disposal arrangements and the publicity and promotion undertaken.

- 2.4 The members then considered how they wished to proceed with the conduct of the review.
- They agreed that they would aim to complete the work of the Group within a period of 3 months
  - They identified additional information which they would like to receive including details of best practice elsewhere and the results of a customer survey undertaken and of the door-stepping campaign to commence in January within this District and of other trials relating to waste collection being carried out at other locations within the County.
  - They decided that it would be important to their understanding of recycling processes and the factors involved, to undertake visits to recycling sites, to include the Council's own depot, another Council's recycling site and the premises of a commercial recycling business.
- 2.5 At the time of writing this report a visit to the Council's depot and to the depot of Rushcliffe Borough Council, which is a Beacon Council for waste and recycling, has been undertaken and a visit to a commercial operation is in the course of being arranged.
- 2.6 Members found both visits to be extremely worthwhile in enabling them not only to understand better the processes which were carried out by the two different authorities but also to identify the key issues which affected performance and where choices had to be made.
- 2.7 At this Council's depot, which operated as a transfer station, members were able to see where and how the different types of recyclable material were stored and prepared for collection, in general by bulking and baling and were impressed by the way in which the process was managed.
- 2.8 Members did note however, that in view of the number of vehicle movements on the site and the amount of recyclable waste which was handled, the existing area of land in use was of insufficient size. They therefore welcomed the fact that it was intended, subject to the grant of the necessary planning permission, to extend the boundary of the site on one side to provide an additional area which would be adequate as a park for the refuse vehicles.
- 2.9 If this took place, it would free up a reasonable space in the existing part of the site, to enable other activities to be undertaken which potentially would improve the recycling process and allow for more recyclables to be collected.
- 2.10 An added benefit of the extension would be to allow for a two way traffic flow to be introduced which would ease congestion and allow vehicles to manoeuvre more safely.

- 2.11 Members had held an extensive discussion with a number of different officers at Rushcliffe where a recycling rate of over 53% had been achieved even though no kerbside glass recycling undertaken. There were a number of different factors to which their success could be attributed, and one of these was their outstanding record in terms of communication. They maximised all opportunities for publicity and promotion and this is an aspect which members will wish to highlight in their final report.
- 2.12 Interestingly a co-mingled waste recycling system is used at Rushcliffe and partly as a result of this and partly owing to their specific arrangements with Nottinghamshire County Council with regard to waste disposal, the return on the sale of recyclable materials is much lower than that of this Council. As a consequence the service is more expensive to run and costs the ratepayer more.
- 2.13 Members were impressed by the computerised tracking system for its refuse vehicles which Rushcliffe had in place which produced efficiencies by enabling instant communication with links to the Customer Services section, and easy production of statistical reports, and facilitated monitoring of household collections, participation rates and any problems which might arise. This was an initiative which this Council might consider in the future.
- 3.0 INTERIM CONCLUSIONS
- 3.1 At the meeting held on 29 January 2008, members reflected on what they had learned from their visits and identified issues which they wished to be explored further and also put forward some interim suggestions.
- 3.2 Members noted that a positive result of the Council having its own depot and waste transfer station was that it was able to sell much of the recyclable material and the better the quality and less contamination of such material, the higher the price paid.
- 3.3 It was therefore in the Council's interests to maximise the amount of waste which it could recycle and also to ensure that as much of the waste as possible was separated into its component parts. Despite the greater inconvenience to the householder of being required to separate materials, they believed it would be a regressive, as well as an expensive step, to adopt a co-mingled waste system
- 3.4 Members therefore supported proposals to consider processing more recyclable materials. In particular they were keen to see the introduction of schools recycling facilities where the service is not provided by Leicestershire County Council. In addition they were in favour of consideration being given to the introduction of trade waste recycling and bulky waste recycling.
- 3.5 One possibility to be explored was additional separation of waste and members have requested that consideration be given to the acquisition of a machine which would separate plastics from cans, currently bulked together, by use of a magnetic system. This would result in a higher price being given for the recyclables in question.

- 3.6 One further issue which was discussed was the high numbers of new houses which were to be built in the District which inevitably would strain the resources in terms of management of the waste produced, which it was envisaged would ultimately require the introduction of an additional round. Members were strongly in favour of the developers on the completion of a new house being required to contribute under the terms of a S106 Agreement to the waste management infrastructure costs.
- 3.7 Members also endorsed an initiative being undertaken in respect of provision of suitable recycling facilities at flats and indicated the desire to consider the possibility of extending collection of recyclables by the collection of batteries and food waste in respect of which trials were taking place in nearby authorities.
- 3.8 Whilst requesting that members of the Environment Committee endorse the work which the task and finish group has carried out to date, members would also like its approval of interim recommendations for additional financial resources to be granted from the available budget monies, to enable the recycling of materials to be to be extended and refined as indicated above. They also wish to recommend that appropriate steps be taken in respect of contributions from developers under the terms of S106 Agreements.
- 3.9 It is anticipated that the work of the review will be completed early in April and the members of the Working Party wish consideration to be given to the holding of a special meeting of this Committee so that their report can be received and their further recommendations considered and action taken upon them, prior to the next scheduled meeting which will not take place until June.
- 4.0 RECOMMENDED THAT:-
- (a) THE REPORT BE RECEIVED AND THE WORK CARRIED OUT THUS FAR BY THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP BE APPROVED.
  - (b) THE BID FOR ADDITIONAL MONIES MADE BY THE HEAD OF STREET MANAGEMENT IN THE BUDGET ROUND FOR INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS IN ORDER TO ENABLE EXTENSION OF THE RECYCLING ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN AND INCREASED SEPARATION OF MATERIALS TO BE INTRODUCED BE SUPPORTED
  - (c) THE HEAD OF PLANNING BE REQUESTED TO PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS TO ENSURE THAT ON THE COMPLETION OF NEW BUILD PRPERTIES DEVELOPERS MAKE A REALISTIC CONTRIBUTION UNDER THE TERMS OF A S106 AGREEMENT TO THE INFRASTRUCTRE COSTS OF WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

**Extract of Minutes of a Meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on Wednesday, 20 February, 2008**

Present: Councillor G Allman (Chairman) (In the Chair)

Councillors J Bridges, C Bowley, G Dalby, D Everitt, J B Webster and M B Wyatt.

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr K Fairbrother, Miss R Levy and Mr S Saunders.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A V Smith.

There were no declarations of interest.

**8. INTERIM REPORT OF THE RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

As Chairman of the Recycling Task and Finish Group, Councillor J Bridges presented the report to members.

In response to a question, Councillor J Bridges explained that currently the return on the sale of recyclable materials was going directly to the County Council. The task and finish group had discussed this fact and would prefer the income to come back into the district instead of to the County Council.

It was noted that the cost of the machinery for the implementation of the separation of the recyclable waste had been considered and details would be provided in the full report.

In response to a question, the Interim Director of Environment explained that to ensure that developers contribute; a policy could be brought forward which sets out areas of negotiation, this formed part of the recommendations within the report.

The Head of Street Management reported that currently the majority of recyclable waste was collected in the district. Trials were taking place at other authorities regarding the collection of batteries and kitchen waste; once the findings had been released the Council would look at the possibility of collecting the additional waste.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (a) The report be received and the work carried out by the task and finish group be approved.
- (b) The recommendation for Cabinet to consider utilising some of the Council's budgeted improvement fund for infrastructure costs in order to enable extension of the recycling activities to be undertaken and increased separation of materials to be introduced, to be deferred to allow a final report to be submitted to members to include full cost details.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The Head of Planning and Development put forward proposals to Cabinet to ensure that on completion of new build properties, developers make realistic

## Recycling Task & Finish Group – Final Report

contribution under terms of a Section 106 Agreement to the infrastructure costs of waste management and recycling.

The meeting closed at 7.42pm.

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Recycling Task and Finish Group held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on Tuesday, 9 September 2008

Present: Councillors D Everitt, G Jones and M B Wyatt (Deputy Chairman of the Group)

In attendance: Councillor J Bridges

Officers: P Coates, K G Fairbrother and K Gordon

Councillor J Bridges declared a personal interest as a member of Cabinet.

### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

**Resolved:** that Councillor Wyatt, Deputy Chairman of the Group take the Chair for this meeting.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Purver and A V Smith

### 3. MINUTES

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2008 be approved as a correct record.

### 4. INTERIM REPORT OF THE RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members noted the interim report and that the Environment Scrutiny Committee had approved the work carried out by the Task and Finish group but had deferred the recommendation relating to an increased separation of materials to allow a final report including full cost details.

### 5. AGAR NOOK FLATS RECYCLING

Paul Coates reported progress made with recycling arrangements at Agar Nook flats.

East Midlands Housing had erected shelving enabling the storage of recycling boxes. The take-up, with little publicity, had been low but it was hoped that this could be improved. Discussions were continuing with East Midlands Housing regarding the provision of shelving at other locations.

The council's reprocessing contractor would provide a glass bank for a trial period.

In response to members' questions Paul gave details of the largely instructional publicity given to the box scheme to date. Paul anticipated that if the trial period was completed successful greater publicity would be given to the scheme in conjunction with East Midlands Housing. The scheme could become an 'adopter' scheme and this could result in an income to the community centre directly resulting from residents' recycling. This could serve as an additional incentive.

Members supported the proposals and suggested that additional publicity involving ward members could be arranged beneficially.

## 6. CONCLUSION OF BUSINESS

Members reiterated the interim report and noted that the report had been endorsed by the Environment Scrutiny Committee although the proposed infrastructure to increase separation of materials had been deferred pending detailed costs.

Investigations had revealed that suitable machinery would cost in the region of £70-80,000 with a current pay-back period of 3-4 years. Paul Coates advised that although there had been a considerable price advantage for separated materials, as the industry developed reprocessing companies were better equipped to deal with bulk separation and the price advantage was being eroded. This meant that the benefit of installing separation machinery was being lost putting the viability into question. Keith Fairbrother suggested that the expenditure be considered during the normal budget process. This would enable an assessment of the developing price difference.

Paul informed the group that weighted yellow recycling bags and elasticated nets were being distributed throughout the district over a two month period. The 'Freeuse' website had been established and has been advertised on the Council's own website, on Google, In Vision and on the Bulky Waste Collection leaflet. To date approximately 70% of items placed have been successfully transferred.

Members welcomed the progress made with recommendations arising from the interim report and paid tribute to the officers for the progress made with limited resources.

It was agreed that a final report of the group be made to the Environment Scrutiny Committee outlining the work of the group and including final recommendations to the effect that;

- a. The interim recommendations and the recommendations that have been implemented already are endorsed.
- b. Consideration is given to the provision of appropriate equipment to enable extension of the recycling activities to be undertaken and increased separation of materials during the forthcoming 2009/10 budget process.
- c. Developer contributions under Section 106 Agreements towards infrastructure costs of waste management and recycling are considered when planning applications for developments are considered.
- d. The Recycling Task and Finish Group is dissolved.

The meeting closed at 3.15 p.m.