

Report to	Sustainable development panel 24/07/2013	Item
Report of	Environmental services development manager	4
Subject	Waste and Recycling Update – July 2013	

Purpose

To update members on the progress of the Citywide Engagement project, recycling performance figures, the new MRF contract and other initiatives.

Recommendation

To note the content of this report and to agree on how recycling performance should be reported to the panel in future.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority Value for money services and a safe and clean city and the service plan priority to deliver an efficient and effective waste service whilst increasing landfill diversion rates

Financial implications

No financial implications.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Cllr Stonnard

Contact officers

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Report

Door knocking

1. The door knocking programme has been reduced over the last few months (due to other priorities) and at present it is focussed solely on supporting the Housing Waste Project (HWP).
2. Alongside support for new HWP sites, the two person team are also re-visiting HWP sites from phase 1 of the project. These sites were not provided with a communal food waste facility when they were originally established, so this is now being 'retro-fitted' and residents are being informed accordingly. Recent examples include Springbank and the Marlpit lane area.
3. In October the team will re-run the student door knocking programme which proved successful last year. They will also attend the student housing fair in November.

HWP

4. During this year a number of new sites have been provided with communal waste and recycling facilities. These include Bussey Road/Ives Road, Brooke Place, Barnards Yard and Heathgate. In total over 400 housing properties have been provided with increased or entirely new recycling facilities since February. Amongst sites due to receive new facilities in the near future are Godric Place and Sunnyhill (even numbers).

Customer Satisfaction

5. The contractor continues to hand-out the customer satisfaction surveys. Returned surveys that specify individual collection issues are addressed and resolved by the team. General comments are collated to provide a 'snapshot' of the general level of satisfaction with the service.
6. The latest collation of data was carried out at the end of March 2013 and showed that, of over 400 responses, 80% rated the service as excellent, good or satisfactory. Of those who rated the service as poor, most of these related to specific collection issues which can be addressed and rectified. These latest figures were 'skewed' somewhat due to a number of complaints about the collection service being suspended during severe weather in winter.

School food waste

7. This scheme now provides collection services to 17 schools and is featured in an article in the latest edition of the Citizen magazine. A further 'mail-shot' email will soon be sent out to schools not currently taking advantage of this service.
8. A basic recording system has now been introduced whereby schools note how full their bin(s) is prior to collection – $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ or full. This information will be collated by the team in order to establish an approximation of the amount of food waste being diverted from landfill. It is hoped that this information will help to further promote the scheme and encourage more schools to participate.
9. Officers are arranging for an additional 'sweep' of all schools food waste bins prior to the end of term to ensure that bins are not left full of food over the summer holidays.

Recycling bulky items and WEEE

10. The council is currently working with the County Council, other Norfolk district councils and various third sector parties to identify opportunities for the recycling of waste electronic & electrical equipment (WEEE) and other items of bulky waste. As a result of initial discussions a potential route for the recycling of some bulky waste items has been identified.
11. Create UK is a registered charity and social enterprise currently operating in Speke, Liverpool, which works with the private, public and third sector to reduce the amount of bulky waste sent to landfill. At present this charity takes end-of-life white goods and refurbishes them to sell onwards. They employ disadvantaged individuals providing them with the necessary training and skills. They currently have contracts with Councils in Merseyside and Cheshire to take WEEE items and, as a social enterprise, any profit generated goes back into the business.
12. Create UK has recently taken three 6,000 sq. ft. units in Norwich to take WEEE from civic amenity sites, bulky household collections, businesses, electrical retailers, housing associations etc. and provide a sorting, refurbishment and recycling operation to provide local charities and other groups with quality reused electrical goods. As a result of discussions with officers from Norwich and Broadland, Create are now seeking an appropriate partner charity to handle the furniture side of the waste stream so that they may be able to offer a more complete service for District Councils bulky waste streams. Create have employed a locally based, Masters graduate in Sustainable Waste Management to assess the viability of a comprehensive bulky items recycling service for the western/central Norfolk area.
13. Clearly any progress on this issue would represent an excellent opportunity to recycle some of the 90 tonnes of bulky waste collected in Norwich each year and currently land-filled. There are a number of administrative and operational issues which will need to be resolved prior to the commencement of any new bulky items service and officers will address these as soon as Create have formulated their proposal. Regular updates on the progress of this initiative will be provided to the SDP.

Recycling Performance

14. The Office of National Statistics recently updated and re-launched their 'Local Profiles'. This information allows for a comparison of the performance of waste and recycling services. Section 15 is a comparison of the recycling performance of the seven Norfolk district councils alongside an east of England and an all-England average. Section 16 compares Norwich's performance against a family group of urban local authorities with similar demographics and similar waste collection costs.
15. Norfolk comparison – Household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting (as a %age):

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Breckland	32.5	38.5	41.8	41.8	40.8	40.7	37.5
Broadland	43.4	45.7	47.5	49.5	47.7	50.3	48.9
Great	18.9	25.8	26.8	28.2	26.5	25.7	26.6

Yarmouth							
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	21.6	29.4	34.6	36.7	37.1	37.7	38.2
North Norfolk	39.7	41.6	45.1	45.9	44.5	44.9	42.8
Norwich	16.5	19.5	23.8	34.2	34.6	37.9	40.6
South Norfolk	30.4	32.9	38.5	38.9	37.4	39.6	41.1
East of England	34.1	38.3	41.2	44.5	46.1	48.9	49.7
England	26.7	30.9	34.5	37.6	39.7	41.5	43.0

16. 'Family Group' comparison – Household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting (as a %age):

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Cambridge	35.2	39.6	41.5	41.2	40.7	43.7	43.2
Exeter	29.7	34.5	34.0	36.2	36.2	36.9	36.1
Ipswich	36.8	37.0	39.9	41.1	40.2	42.0	42.5
Oxford	19.4	24.7	35.6	37.8	38.2	43.2	44.4
Northampton	36.1	37.2	37.7	38.5	38.2	38.3	41.6
Norwich	16.5	19.5	23.8	34.2	34.6	37.9	40.6

17. These tables give a clear picture of the progress made in Norwich over recent years. In both comparisons Norwich began in 2005 as the poorest performing authority but has shown the most significant improvement across Norfolk and of the national comparators only Oxford has shown a similar rate of progress.

18. Whilst the improvement in recycling performance is very pleasing, the figures for waste produced per household provide an even more impressive illustration of how well Norwich has performed when measured against other authorities.

19. Norfolk comparison - Residual household waste per household (in kg):

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Breckland	608	553	513	500	501	503	524

Broadland	520	496	487	448	448	436	433
Great Yarmouth	673	544	576	530	525	551	545
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	640	554	539	514	511	502	496
North Norfolk	484	498	453	446	449	442	436
Norwich	702	648	608	476	450	430	396
South Norfolk	539	556	485	482	484	452	445
East of England	776	733	676	617	571	541	525
England	845	798	735	669	625	598	568

20. Family group comparison – Residual household waste per household (in kg):

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Cambridge	653	593	556	528	524	505	503
Exeter	578	526	518	491	480	451	442
Ipswich	561	604	540	512	509	505	492
Oxford	685	657	527	482	458	432	420
Northampton	575	571	549	530	506	506	492
Norwich	702	648	608	476	450	430	396

21. In both sets of comparisons Norwich has progressed from producing the largest amount of household waste per household in 2005/6 to producing the least amount per household by 2012. This is clearly a great credit to the way that residents have embraced the improved recycling services that were introduced as part of the Waste Strategy Action Plan (2007/12) and strongly suggests that a majority of residents have adopted the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' mantra.

22. As noted above, the action plan for the waste strategy expired in 2012 and this now requires updating. The updating process has been on hold whilst negotiations continued on the new contract for the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) as

referenced in sections 24-27. Now that this contract has been awarded and the new recycling material streams have been confirmed, officers can compile a list of options for future actions which will be presented to this panel for consideration in September.

Future reporting of recycling performance

23. The above data highlights different methods of measuring recycling performance. Members of the panel are requested to consider in what format they would wish to see recycling performance measured and reported in future. The recycling rate represents the percentage of waste that is treated and re-processed. This figure is used by most local authorities as a performance indicator, however it is recognised that this figure does not give any indication of residual waste levels. For example, the recycling rate can increase, which will appear to represent an improvement in performance, but the amount of residual waste could also increase.
24. The household waste per household (in kgs) is considered to be a suitable measure to report on waste production alongside the continued reporting of the headline recycling rate figure. It is therefore proposed that these updated figures are reported to subsequent SDP meetings.
25. It must also be noted that most local authorities are now reporting that recycling rates have 'plateaued' and that this is currently the case in Norwich. A rate of around 38% to 41% recycling has been consistently achieved over the last year, but there is little evidence of this improving beyond 41%. This is primarily the result of the recession, which has significantly impacted on the amount of new goods being purchased (and therefore a reduction in packaging) alongside significant and continuing reductions in the amount of newspapers and magazines being produced and purchased.
26. The work of the recycling team and the various council initiatives has clearly helped Norwich to retain the current level of recycling performance despite the economic pressures and it is expected that the extended range of materials collected as part of the new MRF contract (detailed in the following paragraphs) will provide a new impetus to the service.

MRF contract re-let

27. The contract for reprocessing Norfolk's recycling has been the subject of a lengthy procurement process which involved all seven Norfolk district councils and the county council. This process is now complete and the new contract will be awarded to the existing service provider, Norfolk Environmental Waste Services (NEWS).
28. The bidding process allowed for both 'compliant' bids (those which met the specification and the contract conditions) and for 'variant' bids, with the proviso that only the variant bid provided by the winning compliant bidder would be considered. The NEWS compliant bid was the clear winner and as a result the evaluation team were then able to consider the NEWS variant bid. This variant bid proposed the formation of a joint venture (JV) company under the Norse umbrella and with the potential for shared profits, not just from the MRF but from the other companies in the NEWS group.
29. Given the increased financial benefits available through the joint venture, officers recommended this option to members of the Norfolk Waste Partnership (NWP). NWP

members and senior officers subsequently negotiated directly with Norse/NEWS and have agreed the headline terms of the JV.

30. The JV will be based on an enhanced range of recycling materials whereby glass bottles and jars, mixed rigid plastics (food trays) and plastic film can also be collected in the blue recycling bins. This means that, from the start-date of the new service, the requirement for a separate collection of glass in green boxes will cease. Officers are currently considering the implications of these changes and compiling the relevant operational and communications plans to manage the change in service.
31. Officers will arrange for representatives of the Norse joint venture to attend city hall and speak to members about the new service and the new contract.

A detailed report on the procurement process and the outcome was presented to cabinet on 10 July 2013.