

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Update on recycling, performance and progress on the Plastic Clever Council Initiative

Date: 11 October 2018

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Wards Affected

Borough-wide.

Purpose

To provide an update on the latest position regarding recycling performance, and progress on the Plastic Clever Council Initiative.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

1.1 Background

Waste Recycling Update

The district and borough councils within Nottinghamshire work in close partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council to improve waste recycling rates. All 7 local councils collect a range of dry recyclables and these materials are taken either directly or via dedicated transfer stations to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Mansfield, from this point the collected materials are sorted and separated through a variety of methods and processes then baled and sent for reprocessing.

In a two tier local authority arrangement waste collection is carried out by the district and borough councils as the designated Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) whereas disposal arrangements and costs are the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA). The County Council awarded a 26 year PFI (private finance initiative) contract to Veolia Environmental Services Ltd in 2006. Gedling Borough Council are therefore responsible for collecting and delivering waste to contractually designated disposal sites and has limited influence in what can be collected and subsequently recycled.

The dry recyclable items currently collected by the council are as follows:

- Paper & cardboard
- Telephone directories & catalogues
- Envelopes
- Newspapers/magazines/junk mail
- Food tins
- Drink cans
- Empty aerosol cans
- Milk & drinks bottles
- Beauty product bottles
- Cleaning product bottles
- Yoghurt pots & margarine tubs
- Rinsed bottles & jars

In addition we also collect:

- Batteries placed in a plastic bag on top of the bin
- Any small electrical item can be left out with weekly collections and our crews will collect. The crews do have limited capacity to take items, but if they cannot collect an item they have stickers to place on the item advising the customer that the item is either too big or that if they leave it out we will collect the following week.
- Garden waste, providing a chargeable collection service. We currently have 14,937 customers signed up to the service.

The council has the flexibility to offer residents an extra glass box or recycling bin if required.

A number of initiatives have been introduced to educate and support residents to recycle more of their waste and help our recycling targets. These include an email bin reminder service, articles in the contacts magazine and on the council website, advertising on the bin collection calendar, vehicle signage and through social media channels.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) requires the County Council to provide an annual recycling plan to detail how year on year progress will be made in order to move towards achieving the waste contract overall target of 52% of household waste being recycled or composted by 2020 along with an overall tonnage reduction. This is a target that aligns with the EU Waste Framework Directive target of 50% by 2020 and recycling 65% of municipal waste by 2030. The districts and boroughs have a key role in supporting the County Council in delivering this performance.

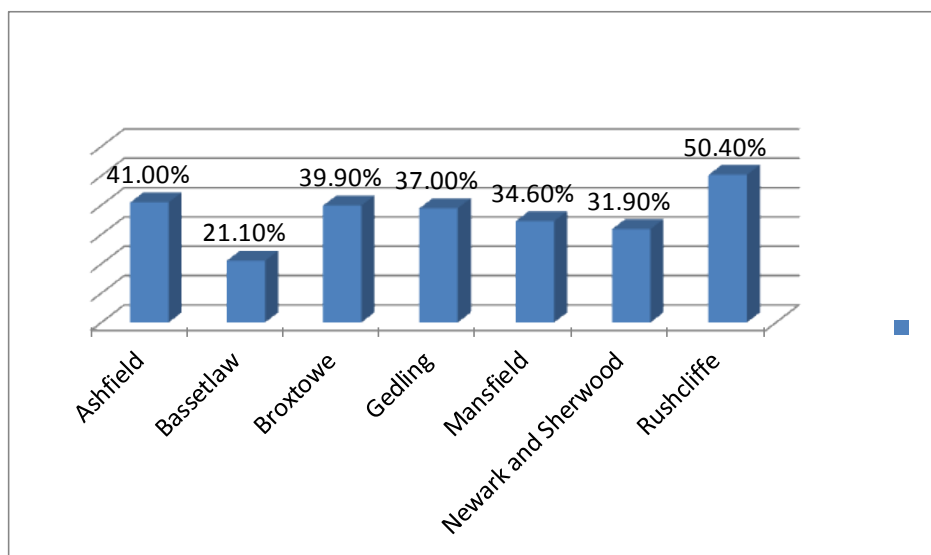
Although recycling rates in Nottinghamshire have plateaued in recent years, 2016/17 saw the first increase in the overall rate for many years as it climbed to 44.2%.

Information is gathered quarterly relating to household waste and recycling from Nottinghamshire County Council and Gedling Borough Council and is entered into

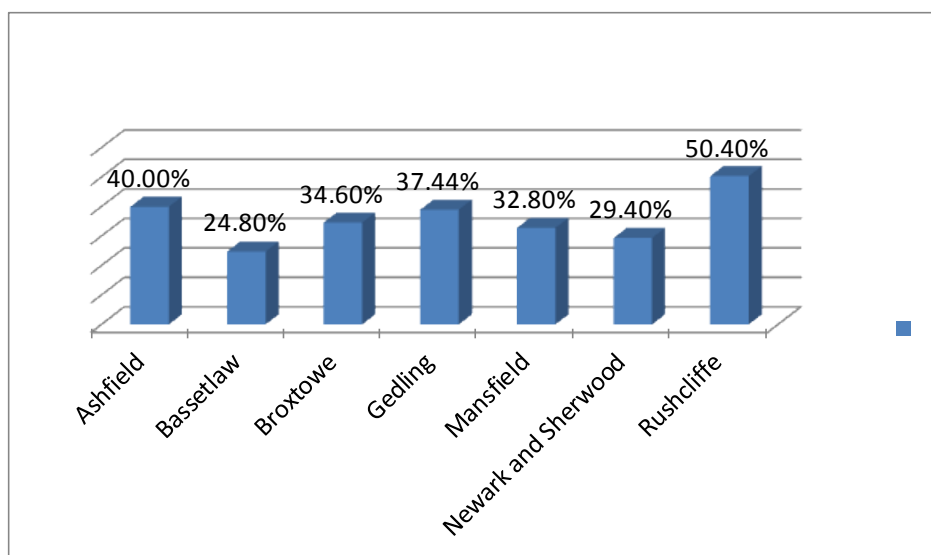
the web based system known as Waste Dataflow. This waste data reporting process is undertaken by all UK local authorities to government.

The following graphs show the recycling, composting and refuse rates for the seven WCAs for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

2016/17



2017/18



Dry recycling and composting collection percentages are separated out for 2016/17 in the table below and it is encouraging to note that Gedling had the highest dry recycling rate at 24.60%.

	% Household - waste sent for recycling/composting/reuse	Household - waste sent for recycling/composting/reuse (tonnes)	% Household - waste sent for dry recycling/reuse	Household dry recycling/reuse (tonnes)
Ashfield	41.00%	19917	21.00%	10223
Bassetlaw	21.10%	8976	19.30%	8186
Broxtowe	39.90%	16432	21.90%	9014
Gedling	37.00%	16517	24.60%	11059
Mansfield	34.60%	15092	17.70%	7700
Newark and Sherwood	31.90%	14344	22.40%	10062
Rushcliffe	50.40%	23137	22.40%	10282

The separated dry recycling and composting collection figures for 2017/18 for the 7 WCAs has not yet been released by DEFRA.

1.2 Recycling method of collection

The following table provides a percentage split of recycling collection methods employed within Gedling.

Recycling percentages 2017/18	
	Of overall collections
Kerbside Glass	5.93 %
Kerbside Bins	17.69%
Bring Sites	0.77%
Composting	13.05%
Total	37.44%

As detailed in the table above the former Bring Sites only contributed less than 1% towards the Councils recycling rate and most of this can be recycled through the kerbside recycling collections.

The Bring Sites were removed in early 2018 for efficiency reasons as they were becoming increasingly difficult to manage and became financially unviable. The sites were frequently used by local businesses as a free means of disposing of their commercial waste. At every single site, contamination was a significant problem and a number of sites were regularly treated as a rubbish dump. People would see the containers and fly-tip large volumes of waste around the area where the containers were located. On a weekly basis, the containers for electrical items were broken into as were the clothing banks.

1.3 Recycling Contamination

The MRF is designed to sort the following materials from kerbside collections;

- Household newspaper and magazines
- Cardboard
- Plastic bottles, margarine tubs and yoghurt pots
- Food and drink cans and aerosols

The facility was purposely designed to accept a waste stream that met the facility process requirements and was designed to contain less than 5% by weight of contaminants.

Veolia currently charge Nottinghamshire County Council £120 per tonne if a recycling load ejected from the refuse vehicle has more than 5% contamination.

Since 2009 contamination levels have increased consistently each year reaching an average level of nearly 12% in the most recent contract across the 7 Nottinghamshire WCAs. The current County average performance to the end of June 2018 is 10.7%, the breakdown by WCA is shown in the table below:

WCA Input Analysis	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	YTD(year to date)
Ashfield DC	9.5%	11.8%	11.8%	11.2%
Bassetlaw DC	10.4%	8.1%	11.7%	10.3%
Broxtowe BC	9.0%	10.8%	10.1%	10.0%
Gedling BC	11.3%	12.5%	16.4%	13.0%
Mansfield DC	8.8%	9.5%	11.3%	9.8%
Newark & Sherwood DC	9.0%	11.1%	11.3%	10.5%
Rushcliffe BC	10.0%	8.3%	12.1%	10.0%
County Average	9.8%	10.5%	11.9%	10.7%

It is clear from the data that the council needs to work to decrease contamination rates significantly. The council recycling collection crews currently lift the bin lids to check for contamination and if contamination is found they will leave the bin and place a sticker on the bin asking the resident to remove the contaminated items marked on the sticker and contact the council to arrange a new collection.

An initiative was undertaken earlier in 2018 with Veolia operatives and Gedling Borough Council to use Veolia staff to inspect recycling bins for contamination and if contamination was found the operatives would engage with residents to help with recycling education.

Earlier this year the countywide Joint Waste Management Committee (JWMC) considered the issues around high levels of contamination in the dry-recyclable collections.

The JWMC consists of members and officers from all of the 7 WCAs, Nottinghamshire County Council and Veolia.

It was agreed at JWMC that a countywide rejection policy would be beneficial to drive improvements in quality and would demonstrate consistency across all districts and boroughs.

Officers were tasked with drafting a working document that would drive improvements in the quality of the dry recyclables being collected at the kerbside.

The document outlines that education, rejection and enforcement at the kerbside are the most effective methods of changing resident behaviour. This document is still in draft form with the final version to be approved at a future meeting of the JWMC

Once the final version and processes have been agreed at a future JWMC, this document will be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

The principles below highlight the proposed measures and form part of the draft document which are aimed at reducing the level of contamination within the recycling bin:

- Recycling bins should be checked by the collection crews before being emptied. The check involves a visual inspection by lifting the lid to view the contents of the bin. Operatives are not expected to search through the bin.
- Collection crews are not to accept recycling side waste in plastic bags.
- Collection crews should endeavour to reject any bins, which in their judgement, contains more than 5% contamination. The reference point for this judgement will be a bin that upon a visual inspection contains several items which do not conform to the input specification.
- Contaminated bins are not to be collected but should be tagged or a sticker placed on them to identify that the bin does not contain only target recyclables. The tag or sticker should show the relevant Waste Collection Authority contact details.

- Collection crews and/or residents should report contaminated bins so that the Waste Collection Authorities can engage and provide the 'Recycle for Nottinghamshire Guide' which explains clearly the target recyclables which should be placed in the recycling bin.
- Dependent upon individual Local Authority policies Waste Collection Authorities should permit one 'fresh start' collection which will be collected as residual waste.
- If a second contamination event occurs within a reasonable time frame the Waste Collection Authority should engage with the resident and endeavour to visit the property with a view to understanding the reason why a second contamination event has occurred. If a visit is not possible the Waste Collection Authority may utilise alternative methods to interact with the resident.
- Following this interaction a decision should be made on whether the recycling collection service should be withdrawn.
- If appropriate a section 46 notice may be issued to the resident.
- A suite of templates for Communications materials (eg bin stickers, leaflets and bin tags) provided by Veolia may be utilised and distributed by the Waste Collection Authorities to ensure a consistent message is provided to all residents within Nottinghamshire
- A contamination working group consisting of at least one representative from each partner authority will meet monthly to work collaboratively and share ideas and good practice on reducing contamination at the Materials Recovery Facility, Warren Way, Forest Town, Mansfield, NG19 0FN.

2. Plastic Clever Council Initiative

In January 2018 a motion was passed at the full council meeting that Gedling Borough Council will become a 'single-use plastic clever' council taking immediate steps to phase out the use of 'single use plastics' within all of the council's facilities where it is reasonable to do so and develop a robust strategy that encourages and enables the borough's institutions, businesses and residents to adopt a similar approach.

In addition it was agreed that the council support Amy and Ella Meek of Arnold, to raise awareness about the damaging global impact of plastics in our oceans. Amy and Ella founded the campaign 'Kids Against Plastics' in 2015 to promote a better understanding about the environmental effects of single-use plastics. As well as picking up litter from the country's coastlines, Amy and Ella have been encouraging cafes to become 'plastics clever', including in their home town of Arnold in raising awareness of this important environmental issue across the borough and in encouraging local businesses and other partners to pledge their commitment to reduce single-use plastics.

Within the council our Officer/Member working group has developed a plan of action to deliver the commitments made by council in the short, medium and long term. An updated action plan has been completed which is attached at Appendix 1.

This identifies the detailed tasks to be considered across four theme areas, these being:

- Assessment of single use plastic use by the council.
- Assessment of single use plastics use by partners and contractors, seeking support to commit to support similar actions.
- External communications campaigns run to highlight these issues to influence behaviour of businesses and residents.
- Assess single-plastic use at council events and venues/ facilities and look for suitable alternatives.

Good progress has been made with regard to many of the actions with the plan, for example:

- Internal article produced on single use plastics to highlight issue and encourage departments to look at ways to reduce use of single use plastics.
- Audit completed of single use plastic and items removed at the Civic Centre and depot.
- Source branded reusable cups and bottles for staff usage.
- Review completed of procurement activity in terms of plastic cutlery, stirrers, milk sachets etc. in civic meeting rooms.
- Deposit recycle bins in offices and kitchen areas in all council buildings.
- Raise and discuss our plastic friendly intentions at the Gedling Business Partnership Forum.
- Press release on council progress.
- Social media campaigns.
- External communications on what are recyclable plastics and what are not by use of the bin reminder system.
- Use the 'Kids Against Plastic' promotional material.
- Stand held at the Arnold Carnival to promote the anti-plastic message. The Meek family shared a stand with council officers from Waste Services.

A budget of £20,000 has been allocated to undertake the actions within the action plan.

The 2018 staff conference has an environmental theme including presentations on the Plastic Clever Council, the work of Amy and Ella Meek, a David Attenborough plastic seas video, a practical exercise/ interactive sessions and presentation from Veolia on recycling.

Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that Members note the information in this report.

Alternative Options

3.1 The alternative option is to maintain current levels of performance in relation to recycling and contamination but this is not recommended. This approach would have a detrimental impact on the environment and wellbeing of residents in the borough.

The Council could choose not to pursue actions within the plastic clever council action plan and maintain the status quo however this would be damaging for the natural environment and damaging for the reputation of the council.

Financial Implications

4.1 None

5.1 Appendices

Appendix 1

Please see attachment;
Plastic Clever Council Initiative Action Plan.

Background Papers

6.1 None.

Recommendations

THAT CABINET: note the contents of this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

To provide members with an update on recycling rates, work being undertaken to reduce bin contamination and the actions within the Plastic Clever Council Plan.