

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Final Report and Recommendations of the Household Refuse Recycling Working Group

Date: 11th March 2019

Author: Democratic Services Officer

Working Group members: Cllrs. Feeney, Paling, Doyle, Weisz. Two members of the Gedling Climate Change Group.

Purpose of the Report

To present the final report and recommendations of the Household Refuse Recycling Working Group.

Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a scrutiny review to examine how to increase levels of householder recycling with a view to increasing the number of people who effectively recycle, and reducing the amount of non- recyclable waste placed in recycling bins. In recent years public awareness of the importance of recycling has increased and the need to reuse and recycle has been recognised as one of the ways to have a positive impact on the environment. Members wanted to examine current recycling performance, strategies that are used to encourage recycling, issues related to contamination of waste and the education and communication strategies used to promote an increase in recycling rates.

Method of Investigation

Background information about recycling nationally and locally

Consultation with the Service Manager for Waste and Transport.

Desktop research.

Discussion about the waste disposal contract with representatives from Nottinghamshire County Council and Veolia.

Visit to the Council's refuse depot. Members of the group had all previously visited the Household Recycling Facility at Mansfield.

Findings

Members learnt that Gedling Borough Council is the waste collection authority for Gedling Borough and has responsibility for kerbside collections and delivering waste to designated disposal sites. As such it has very little influence on what can be collected and recycled. Nottinghamshire County Council is the waste disposal authority; it manages this through a long term Private Finance Initiative contract with Veolia which expires in 2033. The contract envisages a year on year increase in recycling and composting towards a 2020 target of 52%, for the County, which aligns with the EU Waste Framework Directive target of 50% by the same date. The EU Waste Framework Directive also outlines the aim of recycling 65% of municipal waste by 2030.

Recycling methods used by Gedling include kerbside glass collection, kerbside recycling bins and composting. A range of items can also be recycled, or disposed of at household recycling centres including paper, glass, plastic bottles, textiles, engine and cooking oil and green waste. Gedling Borough Council 'bring sites' were removed in 2018 as they were increasingly being used by commercial businesses and encouraged fly tipping.

Gedling has a recycling rate, of 37% which includes green composting waste (brown bin waste), when compared with other Nottinghamshire authorities it is ranked third highest. If the composting waste is taken out of this figure, Gedling has the highest levels of recycling in the county but is still well below the target of 52%. The quality of the material collected for recycling impacts on recycling rates with 20% of recycling waste collected disposed at the Eastcroft incineration and energy recovery facility as it is not of a quality suitable for reuse. Residual waste in the county does not go into landfill but is burnt at Eastcroft.

Veolia encourages recycling. Materials that can be recycled are dependent on Veolia's ability to secure markets, mainly abroad, to dispose of it. The Mansfield Recycling Facility is designed to sort a range of materials including paper, cardboard, some specified plastics, food and drink cans and aerosols. Veolia currently charge Nottinghamshire County Council £120 per tonne if a recycling load has more than 5% contamination. Gedling has the highest rate of contaminated bin waste in the county, varying between 12 and 16%. Figures for June 2018 show this at 16.4%. Contamination can include general waste mixed with recyclable waste or plastic and paper contaminated with food. Any organic waste, food waste, grease or liquids included in a recycling bin can contaminate a full vehicle load. The four main contaminants are food, nappies, textiles and glass.

Currently recycling collection crews lift bin lids to check for contamination and should contamination be found leave the bin with a sticker requesting the resident to remove contaminated items and arrange for a new collection date. Crews do not search through bins and can only inspect the top few items. The Bartec In Cab Computing

system, in refuse collection vehicles, enables the identification of contaminated bins and streets that need additional encouragement to recycle effectively, enabling focused work to take place. Currently this information is available but its use is constrained by the staff time available for analysis and action.

The County Council contract specification currently includes mixed plastics, not all plastics are recyclable and this contributes to confusion regarding what can and cannot be recycled. Plastic that is recyclable is being included in the residual waste bin and conversely plastic items that are not recyclable included in recycling bins adding to contamination levels. The County Council takes a proactive approach to reducing contamination, working with Veolia, district councils and contamination working groups. A countywide Joint Waste Management Committee has been recently considering issues of contamination and is currently developing a countywide rejection policy.

Collection of food waste is not currently viable, specialist vehicles are needed to collect food waste and currently recycling facilities are not available locally. Tonnage of food waste captured tends to be low and the better option is to encourage people to waste less food. The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England published December 2018 has an ambition to eliminate food waste from landfill by 2030.

Working Group Conclusions

Recycling is important and is integral to sustaining natural resources; however some people may not understand the environmental benefits of recycling efficiently; not just separating recyclable items but ensuring that what is recycled is usable and not contaminated by other items included in the bin. Whilst it is acknowledged that the less we recycle the more goes to incineration, there are also other benefits for the environment which are less widely appreciated. Recycling is about reducing waste and recovering the value from waste but it could also be promoted as a mechanism for reducing climate change and supporting other environmental issues. Raising awareness of these concerns could make a good marketing mechanism for promoting recycling, encouraging residents to engage with wider environmental issues.

The working group acknowledge that Gedling Borough Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Veolia are proactive in encouraging recycling. Gedling Borough is constantly promoting the need for, and how to, recycle through a variety of mechanisms, including articles in the contacts magazine, the bin reminder social media, the Council website, vehicle signage and is continually seeking new ways to engage people to think about what they put in their bin.

Residents need simple, clear strategies and messages to encourage recycling. Different strategies work with different social groups. Clearer labelling on products by

manufactures to encourage recycling could improve contamination rates. New stickers that can be attached to all bins could be issued. Members also felt that the reissuing of a data recycling wheel that has clear and easy to follow recycling instructions would encourage more people to recycle. Recycling wheels have been issued in the past and they enable users to spin to indicate which bin common household refuse items should be placed in.

Children and Young people are the adults of tomorrow and it is essential that they are aware of sustainability issues from a young age and that they value recycling and know why it is important. Members felt this could be further advanced by encouraging school governors and school councils to become involved in recycling in schools.

Members recognised the need to increase both the quantity and quality of recycled materials collected. However they acknowledged that there may not be the processes in place or the markets available to utilise recycled waste. They considered government intervention to minimise packaging and encourage manufacturers to design products that last longer as necessary.

Members noted, although outside the remit of the scope for the working group, that trade waste is currently not separated and Members felt that separation of this could lead to a noticeable increase in the overall recycling rates.

Recommendations

The working group made a number of recommendations as follows. They considered the recommendations at I. to be a necessity

- I. Funding should be made available to employ an officer to assist in increasing recycling rates. This role could include
 - Travelling with crews to carry out a proactive role with residents when contaminated bins are located
 - Using available performance-data effectively to prioritise areas with low recycling or high contamination rates to provide targeted communications to residents.
 - Improving communication and education campaigns by making the additional costs associated with dealing with contaminated recycle waste more explicit . Publicise statistics relevant to Gedling regarding contamination rates and the effect this has on recycling targets.
 - Work with children and young people to introduce sessions in schools, youth clubs and other similar organisations to achieve a better understanding of their attitude to minimising waste, reuse and recycling, and to improve their engagement.
 - Provide information on activities the Council is taking on wider policy issues such as waste reduction/single use plastic.

- Review the Council's website so that it encourages residents to reduce waste, re-use and recycle effectively including what can and cannot be recycled and importantly the implications of getting it wrong.
 - Provide new parents with information about the correct way of disposing of disposable nappies. This could be done through work with health service providers.
- II. Officers look further into electronic surveillance systems on all new waste vehicles to enable the viewing and recording of waste being deposited into individual residents' bins.
- III. Issuing an updated recycling wheel to all residents.
- IV. Promote the recycling message on paper communications from the Council e.g. envelopes, inside the envelope with the Council tax bill.
- V. Ensure that waste and recycling are part of the landlord's registration scheme requirements and that landlords are required to display information on waste collection and recycling.
- VI. Use Council premises, such as leisure and community centres, to improve communication with residents and to provide information ensuring that they recycle correctly themselves to promote a good example.

Overview and Scrutiny Review Scoping Report

Review Title: Waste Management and Recycling

Chair of the review group: Councillor Feeney

Working Group members: Councillors Paling, Doyle, Truscott and Weisz. Gedling Climate Change Members Helen Wyke, Carolynne Watson.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Barnes

Corporate Director: David Wakelin

Lead Officer: Helen Lee

Reason for the review

To consider how to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by increasing levels of recycling.

Specific focus of the review

Understand current recycling performance.
Examine the current strategies to encourage recycling.
To understand operational and cultural barriers to recycling.
To understand specific issues in relation to the quality of recycling, in particular levels of contamination and how this can be improved.
To consider alternative or additional educational or communication strategies which may increase rates
To consider measures to increase levels of recycling amongst those who already recycle.
To find out how well Gedling Borough Council establishments recycle.
To examine why trade waste is not separated in to recyclable and non- recycle waste.

What we hope to achieve?

Make recommendations that will increase recycling rates and decrease the amount of waste going to landfill.

Information required from whom.

Mark Hurst, Service Manager, Waste and Transport.
Representatives from Notts. County Council
Veolia
Rushcliffe Borough Council

How we will get the information.

Invite representative to discuss with the working group.

Public Involvement.

None planned.

Equalities issues.

There should be no adverse effect on the groups which fall within the protected categories as defined in the Equalities Act 2010.

Timescales for the review

Action		Date
Approval from O & S	The formal process prior to commencing the review	23 July 2018
Drafting the scoping document		1 October 2018
Meeting and evidence gathering meetings	Visit to the refuse depot	15 October, 26 October 2018 14 and 16 January 2019
Drafting the recommendations and report		14 January
Report to Overview Committee		11 March 2019
Report to Cabinet		
Response to Overview (within 28 days)		
Six month update		

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