

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 9 September 2014

Report of: Cleansing and Fleet Manager

Title: Recycling Plan - interim review

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 At its meeting on 4 March 2014, this Committee considered the 2014 Review of the Recycling Plan. This new report provides the Committee with an update on progress towards the main actions that were identified in the Review.

2. Recommendations:

- 1) That Scrutiny Committee Community note the progress that the Council has made to date in implementing the Recycling Plan 2011-16;
- 2) That Scrutiny Committee Community support the ongoing actions planned for 2014 that are described in this report.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1 The actions described in this report are necessary to achieve our Recycling Plan targets, maximising the environmental benefits of recycling and increasing income to the Council from the sale of materials for recycling.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

- 4.1 The Council's net spending on waste collection in 2013/14 was £2.22 million. Reducing costs and increasing income from chargeable services and sale of materials for recycling are essential in order to achieve the required savings in 2014/15 and beyond.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

No further comment to those contained in the report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 The Council's main duties and powers regarding household waste collection are contained in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The requirement to offer kerbside recycling collections is contained in the Household Recycling Act 2003 and the Waste Framework Directive makes additional requirements concerning the sorting of recyclate materials for reprocessing.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

No further comment to those contained in the report.

8. Report details:

- 1.1. In the 2014 Recycling Plan Review, the Assistant Director (Environment) outlined a number of planned actions for 2014/15. These actions, and current progress, are listed in Table 1 below.
- 1.2. Two key vacancies have recently been filled and this will enable further progress on the actions listed below. A new Recycling Officer has been appointed whose role will focus on engaging with communities to promote recycling and waste minimisation; this officer will also build upon the strong links already forged with organisations such as the University and Students Guild. A third Waste Operations Supervisor has now started generating more capacity for all 3 supervisors to work in the field with refuse crews to help resolve issues of poor recycling amongst individual households or residential blocks, and other waste problems.
- 8.3 Trade waste – although the total number of commercial recycling customers is increasing slowly at the moment, the new mixed recycling and glass recycling schemes are gaining customers resulting in an upturn in the trade recycling rate for July, as well as being more profitable. 14% of trade waste is now recycled, compared to just under 10% at the beginning of 2014/15. This increase has been brought about by a concerted effort to promote the trade recycling service.
- 8.4 Exeter Energy from Waste (EfW) - since April, Exeter's non-recyclable waste has been delivered to Devon County Council's new EfW facility at Marsh Barton (through its commissioning phase). As well as producing energy in the form of electricity and/or heat output, this reduces our vehicle emissions and costs by avoiding the need for the Council to transport waste outside the city to the Greendale transfer station. Environmentally and financially, recycling remains preferable to incineration at the EfW; therefore the Council and Devon County Council are working together to remind residents to keep recycling. There is a risk that once the EfW is officially opened in October, residents might be tempted to put recyclable materials in their rubbish bin, 'because it all gets turned into energy'; falling for this temptation would be a retrograde step as there is far more financial and environmental value in recycling materials.

Table 1: Main actions for 2014/15 & beyond

ACTION	PROGRESS (August 2014)
Strive to at least maintain the recycling rate as the economic climate continues to affect purchasing choices and companies strive to reduce the weight of their packaging.	The quantity of material collected and recycled from the kerbside recycling and garden waste collections during April-June 2014 was 2,446 tonnes, compared to 2,403 tonnes for the same period in 2013. It is anticipated that our 36% recycling rate will be maintained this year.

Continue to address and reduce the clinical waste contamination in the MRF, to reduce stoppages and down-time.	Material sorting at the MRF has to be halted every time clinical waste is found in the sorting cabins. Average stoppage time per week has reduced from over 55 minutes in January to 42 minutes in June. However, the quantity of needles and sharps boxes placed in the recycling bins remains a cause for concern and stickers have been placed on communal recycling bins throughout the city to deter incorrect sharps disposal (Appendix 1).
Working more closely with our colleagues in DCC Waste to better encourage waste minimisation reducing the amount of waste being produced, and focus on reducing the larger fractions in landfill waste, especially food waste.	'Carry on recycling' campaign launched in August, reminding householders about the benefits of recycling, using 'conventional' media - some as newspaper ads, bus stop poster as well as social media campaigns (see Appendix 2).
Widen the brief of the Waste Operations Supervisors(WOS) to better assist crews in recycle contamination issues, and waste reduction projects.	A third WOS was appointed in July 2014.
Smarter marketing – a city wide mail out of the rubbish and recycling calendar will have an updated rubbish and recycling leaflet reminding residents of all items that can be recycle.	Achieved – this was included in the March 2014 calendar/leaflet.
Examining the use of new social media to target 'hard to get to groups' and encourage greater recycling, e.g. students.	<p>The initiative with Exeter University will extend our engagement with students via social media and text messaging.</p> <p>Waste Operations managers work closely with the Policy and Communications team to provide timely responses to waste-related tweets and Facebook posts.</p>
To reassure residents that material is sent to reputable processors, we will promote the 'End Destination Charter' on recycling.	Now incorporated into ECC recycling web site.
Ending the free Saturday bulk collections reducing the huge amount of waste to landfill and diverting the materials to other waste stream such as reuse or recycling.	Achieved – very little adverse reaction has been received by the Environment Support Team or service managers. The Street Scene Manager has confirmed there has been no increase in reported fly-tipping as a result of the cessation of this service.

<p>In order to retain resident confidence with the recycling system it is important to maintain service standards –reliability of collections, responding promptly to ‘our fault’ missed collections, providing new or replacement recycling receptacles promptly.</p>	<p>During Apr-Jun we missed 96 out of every 100,000 collections – just under 0.1%.</p> <p>As part of our ‘channel shift’ programme, 24% of missed collections are now being reported via the Council’s web site, which sends the information directly to the relevant crews and keeps the customer updated with progress.</p> <p>The next improvement will be an online facility for ordering new or replacement bins; this will reduce both waiting time and reduce administration costs.</p>
<p>Base education drives on sound information from surveys and collection data including using the information from the residual waste survey.</p>	<p>As an example, feedback from the Energy from Waste site operator indicates a small but significant percentage of waste electrical items occurs in the non-recycling waste stream. The new Recycling Officer will be tasked with encouraging residents to use the available recycling banks for this material.</p>
<p>By careful monitoring of bring-site yields, optimise site locations and raise local residents’ awareness in a targeted way where yields are below the expected norm.</p>	<p>The bottle bank at the M5 services has been removed due to low yield and negotiations to install a new site off Alphington Street at B&Q are underway.</p> <p>A more comprehensive review will be carried out before the end of the year by the new Recycling Officer.</p>
<p>Work closely with Housing Services to overcome barriers to recycling in a number of our blocks of flats, by reviewing collection and storage points, providing micro bottle-banks, and engaging with tenants to understand their particular issues.</p>	<p>New ‘mini bottle banks’ and front kerbside collections now working well in Whipton Barton. Two new bin stores being built at Higher Barley Mount to improve usage and reliability of collection from flats. Lessons learnt from these examples will be used where problems are present elsewhere in our housing stock.</p>

In collaboration with DCC Waste, work with the University and Guild to improve recycling with our student population.	<p>A joint initiative is planned between Exeter University, Exeter City Council and Devon County Council to carry out student-led research and greater engagement with local recycling facilities, especially bottle banks. Due to start in first term of the new academic year.</p> <p>Students on the Move was completed in July. A review of the scheme will be conducted before next July to see how the scheme can be enhanced and encourage greater re-use and recycling.</p>
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9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

Keep My Environment Safe and Healthy – recycling helps to reduce the negative environmental impact of waste.

Run the Council Well – income from recycling credits, chargeable services and the sale of materials for recycling is over £1.5 million.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

The actions planned in this report help mitigate the risks of the Council failing to meet its recycling targets and income derived from such.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

There are no particular impacts on equality groups, health and wellbeing, safeguarding or community safety. Improved promotion of the recycling service, using targeted communications, will promote participation in recycling amongst the whole community.

Increasing recycling conserves natural resources and reduces the environmental impact of manufacturing new goods and packaging.

12. Are there any other options?

No other options were considered within the confines of our existing collection infrastructure and methodology.

Assistant Director Environment: Robert Norley

Background papers used in compiling this report:-
None

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Appendix 1: example of sticker placed on communal recycling bins



Appendix 2: example of Facebook campaign to promote recycling

