

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY – 4 MARCH 2014

QUESTION FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDER
UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.20

Question from Cllr Mitchell for the Portfolio Holder – Environment, Health and Wellbeing

The figures in the table below are a comparison of Exeter's recycling/waste performance against 15 other local authorities listed by CIPFA as having similar population and characteristics to Exeter. Five of those authorities are out-performing us in both the amount sent for recycling and within the amount of waste sent for disposal. Have we made contact with those authorities to learn from their best practice and if not would you be willing to ensure we do so?

Percentage of household waste sent for recycling or composting

Warwick	57%
Cheltenham	45%
Ipswich	45%
Carlisle	45%
Oxford	45%
Taunton	45%
Deane	
Lincoln	44%
Cambridge	43%
Watford	40%
Colchester	40%
Gloucester	38%
Worcester	37%
Exeter	35%
Preston	35%
Wyre Forest	32%
Rushmoor	26%

Waste reduction: Non-recycled waste sent for disposal (kg per household)

Warwick	345
Taunton	
Deane	390
Ipswich	416
Oxford	421
Worcester	432
Exeter	442
Colchester	459
Cheltenham	459
Carlisle	459
Lincoln	482

Gloucester	486
Cambridge	498
Watford	500
Preston	506
Wyre Forest	529
Rushmoor	592

Answer

Of those 12 LA's that have better recycling rates than Exeter's (35%), all but 4 have a food waste collection service, which Exeter does not have – we only collect dry co-mingled recyclates from the front-gate, with glass being taken to recycling bring banks. Of these 4 that out-perform Exeter, have similar collection techniques, but do something different from Exeter which may account for a difference:

- *Lincoln (44%) provides a door-step collection of glass;*
- *Ipswich (45%) limit residual bins to 180 litre, provides a free brown bin composting scheme for garden waste, pet sawdust, kitchen peelings, fruit, tea-bags, as well as a bulky garden waste collection service (this is paid for, and is for bundled and tied prunings, etc);*
- *Carlisle (45%) – free garden waste collection, together with a kerbside collection of glass;*
- *Worcester (37% and most similar in collection method to Exeter) – a policy of 190 litre residual bin per household as opposed to 240 litre bin, and in addition a kerb-side collection.*

The amount of glass in Exeter's residual bins is 4%, which compares favourably with others such as Teignbridge DC that has a kerb-side collection of glass and still has 3% of glass in its residual bin. Garden waste accounts for 11% and food waste 35% in Exeter's grey bins.

What is known to happen with the introduction of any new collection of recyclate (e.g. glass) is that the public responds favourably and there is a knock-on effect with better recycling of other recyclates – i.e. it increases participation in recycling generally. The effect of robustly limiting the size of the residual bin to a size smaller than 240 litre is thought to bring about behavioural change, making people take more care in the amount of residual waste they produced and recycling more (conversely 240 litre was the de facto standard when wheelie bins were first introduced, resulting in a big increase in volumes of waste being generated as people filled the bin). In Exeter we have recently introduced 180 litre bins as the 'standard' for 3-4 person households, which is the biggest category of household size in Exeter. The proportion of 180 litre bins in Exeter is relatively small at present, as 240 litre bins are being replaced incrementally when a bin is replaced, or a new home is occupied.

There are learning points to glean from our comparator LA's and officers will be examining how good practice elsewhere can be transposed to Exeter.