



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Executive Board 9th December 2009

Subject: Recycling Improvement Plan

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Recycling Improvement Plan provides an approach to expanding the provision of recycling collections to deliver equality of access to recycling for all residents.

With specific reference to kerbside collected SORT recyclables, there are gaps in current service provision and there has been varying success with both the quantity and quality of material collected in different areas. As a result, although overall SORT kerbside collections are successful, the amount of material collected for recycling has reached a plateau of approx 26,000 tonnes. In some areas filling the gaps is a straightforward matter of resources. In other circumstances however the gaps arise from particular challenges which some areas present, either due to housing type or resident engagement. It has been recognized, therefore, that to ensure the best uptake in recycling, one uniform approach cannot be applied City wide. Although often introduced in a reactive manner, a number of trials of alternative recycling methods have been conducted which, working with local residents and communities, have proven successful, which we will seek to build on.

The plan of improvements now proposed will, based on a set of guiding principles, address equality of access and also scope alternative recycling methods suited to the needs of specific areas. It is intended that this will, after targeted community consultation, identify the most engaging and so high performing solution. This will in-turn lead to, a range of recycling collection schemes being implemented in a staged and programmed manner.

Executive Board will be aware of the improvement in collection service efficiency that has now been agreed with the Unions. In a full year, these efficiencies, together with other improvements, are estimated to save the Council around £2.1m. Achieving these

efficiencies will cover the cost, estimated at £498k in 2010/11 rising to £535k 2011/12, of implementing the Recycling Improvement Plan, both in terms of additional SORT collections and extending garden waste collections to a further 33,000 households.

The overall aim is to provide equitable access, but not necessarily uniform methods of recycling across the City looking to continually improve recycling performance.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Executive Board on recycling performance; outline progress in providing residents of Leeds access to kerbside recycling provision and the success of a number of alternative recycling trials conducted.
- 1.2 For Executive Board to approve the initiation of the Recycling Improvement Plan, with costs being contained within agreed future budgets and contingency sums and to prioritise equality of access within the collection of recyclable waste.
- 1.3 For Executive Board to endorse the aims, guiding principles and programmed approach to give equality, but not necessarily uniform methods, to recycling across the city.
- 1.4 The Executive Board to note the additional costs of extending the garden waste collection service and how these costs could be met, in the future, by driving through efficiency improvements in the Waste Collection Service.

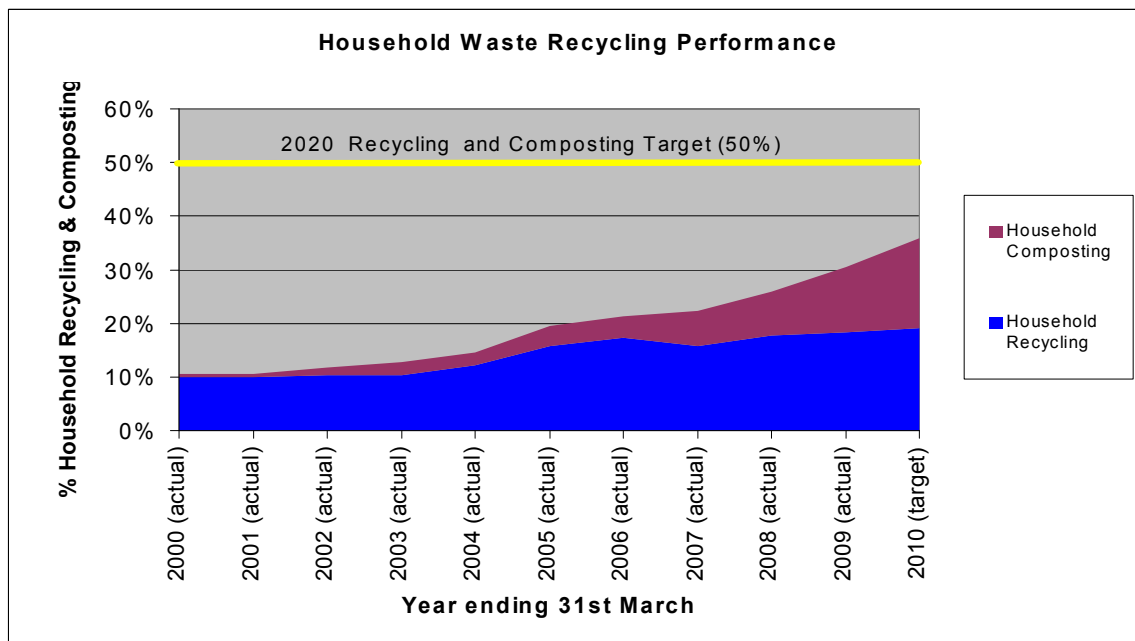
2.0 Background Information

Integrated Waste Strategy

- 2.1 In October 2006, Executive Board adopted the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-2035 with a vision of a zero waste city, whereby we reduce, re-use, recycle and recover value from all waste, and no waste is sent to landfill.
- 2.2 The main drivers for the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-35 are:
 - The commitment of the Council to minimise carbon emissions from its activities, including emissions arising from waste disposal;
 - An increasing cost of landfill tax by £8 per tonne per annum, up to £72 per tonne by 2013/14, which will increase disposal costs by c£1.8 million year on year if Leeds continues to landfill waste at the current rate
 - In September 2007, Executive Board approved updates to the Integrated Waste Strategy to address the statutory recycling targets set out within DEFRA's Waste Strategy for England 2007 and to reflect the Council's commitment to achieving a combined recycling and composting rate in excess of 50% of household waste.
- 2.3 Diagram 1 below shows the extent to which household waste recycling and composting rates in Leeds have been improving over the last 10 years. This rate of growth is the product of continued service developments and public education campaigns, which have had a positive impact on participation in the recycling schemes.
- 2.4 To comply with the Local Area Agreement, Leeds has a target to increase the recycling of household waste to 41.32%, by March 2011. The 30.4% recycling rate of 2008/09 has been achieved by the substantial but not complete city wide roll out of

the SORT kerbside recycling scheme and kerbside garden waste collections alongside Household Waste Sort Site and Bring site provision. Although kerbside recycling has been impacted to some degree by the recent industrial action, Leeds is still on track to achieve a 30% rate for 2009/10 similar to that achieved last year.

Diagram 1



Household Waste Recycling Act 2003

- 2.5 The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 states “that where English Waste Collection Authorities have a general duty to collect household waste from premises they shall ensure, except in some circumstances, that by the end of 2010 they collect at least two types of recyclable wastes separate from the remainder of the waste”. These categories being: paper/card, glass, metal, plastics and composting. The exceptions to collect from premises include: where cost of provision is excessive and where alternative comparable services are to be provided.

Existing Collection and Disposal Methods

- 2.6 The Council currently provides kerbside recycling collections as described below. In addition, there are a number of Household Waste Sorting Sites and Bring sites within Leeds, which offer an additional range of recycling facilities. A strategic review of Household waste Sort Sites and Bring site provision is to the subject of a separate and future report to Executive Board.

Kerbside Collection of Dry Recyclables ('SORT')

- 2.6.1 By the end of 2008/09, 93.4% of the households in Leeds had access to a commingled kerbside collection (the SORT scheme) of four dry recyclable materials – paper, cardboard, some plastics and cans. Most properties have their dry recyclables collected every four weeks. In some pilot areas the dry recyclables bin is collected every two weeks: the resulting improvement in recycling is encouraging and continues to be evaluated.
- 2.6.2 Some 7% (or 22,000) properties* across the city, do not have a form of SORT collection. These properties have generally been high rise, multi-occupancy or in difficult to access and rural locations. A number of these properties initially received green SORT wheeled bins but subsequently have had them removed, generally due to high contamination with non-recyclable wastes. A detailed analysis is to be separately circulated to Elected Members.

- 2.6.3 Of the 93.4% of properties stated in 2.7.1, there are approx 6,100 properties* where the SORT recycling scheme is currently not working well, evidenced by high contamination and low participation.
- 2.6.4 All of the dry recyclables material currently goes to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in South Leeds for separation in to its constituent elements. During 2008/09; 26,099 tonnes were recycled and prestrike, it was projected that 25,000 tonnes would be recycled during 2009/10.

Green Bag scheme

- 2.6.5 Across approx 6,300 properties* of properties stated in 2.7.1, where SORT wheeled bins cannot be accommodated due either to a lack of bin storage space or restricted collection vehicle access, residents have received a door step green bag dry recycling scheme. These collections mirror the monthly frequency of the wheeled bin service.

High Rise Collection scheme

- 2.6.6 Environmental services currently operates a weekly recycling collection for a number of high rise and multiple occupation properties where there is no kerbside SORT recycling route. The scheme was originally implemented through funding received from Defra. The route now covers the city centre, high rise blocks, university accommodation, sheltered accommodation, community centres and hospices throughout the Leeds area and collects mixed recyclables similar to the kerbside green wheeled bin SORT collections and in a separate container, mixed glass. A total of 1,066 tonnes was recycled in 08/9 from this scheme,

Communal collections

- 2.6.7 Another initiative uses the Defra collection round to service Community Recycling Sites. These sites serve a mixture of high and low rise properties in areas with no green SORT route. Each of these sites can provide recycling for 150 – 370 properties. There are two bin types:
- A green mixed recyclables similar to the kerbside green wheeled bin sort collections including cardboard, paper, cans and plastic bottles.
 - A white mixed glass container.

Community recycling sites have been running successfully in Beeston and Little London.

- 2.6.8 The Defra scheme, detailed above, provides a recycling service to 25,749 properties* at 273 sites.

2.7 Equality of Access

In summary, to address gaps in recycling provision, there are 22,000 properties* that have no form of SORT kerbside recycling provision and 6,100 properties* where the current service is not delivering the required benefit.

Kerbside Garden Waste Collection

- 2.8 A fortnightly wheeled bin collection of garden waste has now been introduced in approximately 182,000 properties*, equating to 55% of the City, although collections are four weekly between December and February. The waste is sent to a number of windrow composting contractors. It has been identified that 22% of remaining households are suitable to be included in routes. 23% are unsuitable to their nature of construction or location.

2.9 Kitchen waste Collection

A pilot scheme is to commence in Rothwell early 2010 that will evaluate over a six month period, a collection service redesign that allows for the collection of SORT fortnightly and a weekly collection of kitchen waste. Following this pilot, a report will be presented for Executive Board consideration on future service provision.

(* figures quoted within the limitation of available data and IT management systems)

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The scope of the recycling improvement is City wide, providing improved access to the collection of recyclable waste and addressing areas where the current recycling service is not delivering the required performance/ benefit.
- 3.2 The Recycling Improvement Plan aims to:
- Give all residents access to kerbside recycling,
 - Improve the flexibility of the current service and provide a recycling solution of which kerbside SORT wheeled bin is just one possible approach,
 - Maximise performance, delivering best value solutions within available funding, and
 - Ensure compliance with the Household Waste Recycling Act.
- 3.3 The guiding principles behind the Recycling Improvement Plan are to:
- i. Address gaps in existing service provision.
 - ii. Recognise areas where the current service is not delivering the required performance / benefits.
 - iii. Adopt a programmed and targeted approach to provide operationally workable recycling provision that delivers high performance in terms of quantity and quality of recyclables collected.
 - iv. Undertake consultation and engagement with the local residents and Councillors.
 - v. Constantly evaluate, and feedback, the results of trials and fine tune the solution if successful or offer another solution if not.
 - vi. Deliver improvements and thus savings through more efficient working practices.
 - vii Roll out garden waste collections to all suitable properties.
- 3.4 Strategically, it is proposed that the Recycling Improvement Plan be prioritised as follows:
- i. Address gaps in current SORT recycling provision, and so comply with Household Waste Recycling Act.
 - ii. Focus efforts to improve performance in the 6,100 properties where the current SORT recycling scheme is currently not working well, evidenced by high contamination and low participation.
 - iii. Roll out garden waste collections to all suitable properties.
 - iv. Review frequencies and design of collection services to meet future needs.

Existing Service Gaps.

- 3.5 Addressing the gaps in current SORT recycling provision to comply with the Household Waste Recycling Act, requires an understanding of the areas involved and what is considered the most appropriate recycling methodology. Work with the operational strategic managers has, to date, provided the following picture:

- 3.5.1 There are an estimated 5,500 properties*, that are considered relatively easy to address, where residents have expressed a willingness to recycling and/or properties are on an existing SORT route.
- 3.5.2 There are an estimated 5,500 properties*, where it is considered that some difficulties would need to be overcome either through education/ awareness or consultation with residents to determine the most suitable approach. These properties include areas where access constraints require an alternative collection vehicle to be sourced.
- 3.5.3 There are more difficult issues to address for some 11,000 properties* where a significant education and awareness resource would need to be deployed due to, for example, previous contamination issues, or a high density of transient population, or space for further wheeled bins being at a premium.
- 3.6 It is proposed that, where local demographics indicate that kerbside SORT wheeled bin /bag collections are the most suitable option, residents are provided, in a co-ordinated manner, with information, education and wheeled bins/bags, prior to allocating properties onto collection rounds within existing vehicle fleet capacity. Noting that the existing capacity is based on current participation levels, and that this may change as education and awareness increases participation.
- 3.7 Where it is considered that some basic education / awareness and consultation activity is required, this would commence upon allocation of the resource, which may need to be externally provided. The aim being to provide recyclable collections to the majority of these properties in April 2010.
- 3.8 Where access constraints require an alternative collection vehicle to be sourced, the roll out of the recycling service will be subject to the acquisition of a suitable collection vehicle and route development.
- 3.9 Where there are more difficult issues to address, the approach will be to identify successful solutions and trials and look to apply these to areas of similar demographic make up. The process will require local consultation with residents and Councillors, in these specific areas, on the potential options, looking to identify by consensus the solution to be implemented. The service acknowledges that implementation of recycling in hard to reach areas, areas of low participation and areas with a high proportion of transient population will require a longer lead in time and increased resources to engage with residents and deliver a successful solution. However the aim remains to provide access to recycling for all residents by December, 2010.
- 3.10 The detailed programmed approach and prioritisation to address the gaps in existing service provision will need to take account of :
- i. The complexity of the options to be implemented and the infrastructure required:
 - ii. The lead in time required to engage with local Councillors, consult residents on options and gain agreement to proceed.
 - iii. The possibility that linking in to other areas and initiatives, particularly within Regeneration or Area Management could release alternative funding streams to cover some implementation costs. This may impact on the increase or decrease the lead in time, in certain areas, depending on funding availability or conditions attached.

Improving deficient performance

- 3.11 Targeted awareness raising and monitoring will be required across the 6,100 properties where the current SORT recycling scheme is currently underperforming, to understand and then address the high contamination and low participation currently seen.

Roll out Brown bin garden waste collections to all suitable properties

- 3.12 It is estimated that there are 33,000 more properties that would be suitable for a kerbside garden waste collection service. Extending the provision of this service will require investment in containers, additional vehicles and crews. Extending this provision alone would not enable the authority to comply with the Household Waste Recycling Act. The garden waste composting contracts are currently being re-procured and the authority will need to ensure there is sufficient local treatment capacity available prior to rolling out this scheme any further. It is expected that this procurement will be completed by Summer 2010 and that the roll out would be planned once the location and capacity of all facilities are known.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 The Recycling Improvement Plan contributes to the Integrated Municipal Waste Strategy and Council Strategic Objectives. (Outcome 1a)
- 4.2 The Recycling Improvement Plan will be incorporated into the governance of the Waste Solution Programme.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

Current Budgets

- 5.1 To deliver the current level of service, the waste collection and disposal services include budget allocations of

	Collection (£k)	Disposal (£k)**	Total (£k)
Kerbside Residual*	10,514	10,421	20,935
Kerbside SORT	2,378	460	2,838
Kerbside Garden	2,083	681	2,764
High Rise	151	9	160
Food Pilot	151	23	174
Bin Leasing / Financing	1,291	-	1,291
Depot costs inc. Managers / Call Centre / Overheads	3,735	-	3,735
Waste Sorting Sites	3,719	2,151	5,870
Other Disposal e.g. Street Arisings	-	611	611
TOTAL	24,022	14,356	38,378

* includes all residual type collections e.g. Bin yards, Medi Waste

** Household Waste only and includes £700k contingency

- 5.2 As the recycling continues to improve then there will need to be a review of the budget profiles to reflect actual service delivery.
- 5.3 The Waste Management budget include revenue of £440k for waste education and communication to residents and the current capital programme has an overall bin replacement program of £5.3m. Of this, £3.0m remains and is currently allocated at approx £0.5m per year for the next 6 years. A proportion of these spends has been used replicating previously failed attempts to re-introduce SORT recycling into certain areas, rather than seeking an alternative approach.

Potential Costs/Savings

- 5.4 To complete the SORT rollout, in line with current collection frequencies, to those properties not currently on a route and those on a route but who do not participate would cost an estimated £334k, as detailed below. This is a very basic and initial estimate and will need some detailed refining to reflect the need for a tailored recycling solution in some of the estimated 22,000 properties identified as not currently on the scheme. There will be some offsetting disposal costs savings and use of existing budgets to mitigate the £334k gross cost.
- 5.5 This gross cost estimate, includes: the capital cost of the bins £459k, to be funded through additional prudential borrowing of £59k. A cost estimated at £50k of some additional infrastructure to provide a number of communal sites. £225k would be needed to provide the required additional collection vehicle suitable for rural and hard to access area, a driver and two collection operatives. General education and awareness is approximately £150k, based on £3/household and focused consultation based on £5/household, for the more difficult areas and areas where the current service is not delivering the required benefit. It is intended that these education and consultation costs would be prioritised from the existing Education and Awareness budget referred to in 5.3.

5.6

	2010-11 (£000)	2011-12 (£000)	2012-13 (£000)	2013-14 (£000)
Collection	334	334	334	334
Net Disposal Savings	(89)	(107)	(124)	(142)
Net Cost	245	227	210	192

- 5.7 ** Disposal savings assume performance on the new properties would be in line with current SORT collection schemes. Savings also reflect known landfill tax rises of £8 per tonne per annum rises till 2013/14.
- 5.8 Average performance from the additional 22,000 properties would add an estimated 0.3% to the NI192 (Domestic Recycling and Composting indicator) in a full year
- 5.9 The cost of extending garden waste roll out would require additional funding to be allocated. Assuming 33,000 more properties would receive the service, this would require an estimated additional 2- 2.5 crews at an approximate cost of £565k in a full year. Bin Purchases would be £650k, capital cost, to be funded through prudential borrowing at an additional £84k per annum.

5.10

	2010-11 (£000)	2011-12 (£000)	2012-13 (£000)	2013-14 (£000)
Collection	365	647	647	647
Net Disposal Savings	(112)	(339)	(387)	(437)
Net Cost	253	308	260	210

** Disposal savings assume performance on the new properties would be in line with current garden collection schemes. Savings also reflect known landfill tax rises of £8 per tonne per annum rises till 2013/14.

- 5.11 Average performance from the additional 33,000 properties could add an estimated 1.9% to the NI192 (Domestic Recycling and Composting indicator) in a full year.
- 5.12 Together, the SORT 'completion' and further roll out of Garden would also save around 7,000 tonnes of LATS allowances in a full year.
- 5.13 Executive Board will be aware of the improvement in collection service efficiency that has been now been agreed with the Unions. In a full year, these efficiencies and other improvements are estimated to save the Council around £2.1m as itemised in the table below.
- 5.14 Achieving these efficiencies would not only cover the cost of completing equality of access to service provision in terms of SORT, as well as extending the garden waste collection service to a further 33,000 households, but also provide scope for further expansion of recycling in line with the Council's Waste Strategy.

	Full Year (£000)
Route efficiencies	(1,900)
Improvements in Attendance to Council Average	(257)
Transport Savings – spare fleet and repairs	(100)
Additional ½ hour Drivers OT	150
Additional Pay Budget for current vacant posts and employees on the 'new rate'	320
Revised Mix of Cover Arrangements	(86)
Bin Replacement / Management	(100)
Christmas Arrangements	(100)
Total Annual Efficiency	(2,074)

The rationalisation of the existing Saturday refuse collection rounds will provide additional capacity from Jan 2010. It is anticipated, in line with the principles of the Recycling Improvement Plan, stated in 3.3 and 3.4, that the release of this additional capacity will also provide the opportunity to consider increased frequencies of SORT collections, in certain defined areas, where this delivers high performance in terms

of quantity and quality of recyclables collected.

Resource Implications

- 5.14 The implementation of the Recycling improvement plan, will initiate a large number of workstreams. A key limiting factor being the capacity to undertake the level of consultation required. It is anticipated that this is time limited and the resource required to undertake the targeted consultation would be externally sourced.
- 5.15 It is anticipated that a Project Manager and a Project Support Officer be allocated to the Recycling Improvement Plan to ensure that the recommendations and implementation is carried out, funded out of current budget allocations.
- 5.16 Overall the accuracy and ability to interrogate waste data down to area level will need to be improved in-order to provide the necessary performance monitoring and feedback. A data-analyst post is in the process of being recruited and can assist to address this need.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Recycling performance continues to improve. To provide access to recycling for all residents there is a need to both extend existing provision and provide alternative methods of recycling in certain targeted areas.
- 6.2 A program of improvements is proposed, which based on a set of guiding principles and following community consultation and engagement, will determine the most suitable area specific recycling method and thus maximize recycling performance. This program will require a degree of prioritization in order to manage the number of potential schemes
- 6.3 The additional costs of extending the garden waste collection service and providing equality of access to SORT should be noted and that they can be funded through the agreed collection service efficiencies. Furthermore, the efficiencies provide scope for further expansion of recycling in line with the Council's Waste Strategy.

7 Recommendations

It is recommended that Executive Board:

- 7.1 Approve the initiation of the Recycling Improvement Plan.
- 7.2 Endorse the aims, guiding principles and programmed approach to give equality of access, but not necessarily uniform methods of recycling across the city.
- 7.3 Note the additional costs of extending the garden waste collection service and how these costs can be met, in the future, by driving through the agreed efficiency improvements in the Waste Collection Service.

8 Background Papers

None