

Scrutiny Report

Improving recycling through effective communication and education

Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)

May 2013



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Introduction and Scope

Introduction

1. Whilst recycling has become a part of everyday life for many people, it is recognised both locally and nationally that further action is still required to divert waste away from landfill.
2. Recycling remains a key priority for the Council and Scrutiny has continued to monitor the Council's progress in implementing the Leeds Integrated Waste Strategy 2005-2035, which sets out its aims to reduce the impact of waste management on the environment and significantly reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.
3. In December 2011, the Executive Board reaffirmed the vision and key principles of the Integrated Waste Strategy. Linked to this, it agreed to revise the Council's household waste recycling targets to achieve a combined recycling and composting rate of greater than 55% of household waste by 2016 with a long term target to exceed 60%.
4. Scrutiny remains committed to assisting the Council achieve its recycling targets. During 2009/10, an in-depth inquiry into recycling was conducted by the former Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board. Based around the principle that 'one size does not fit all', the main focus of this inquiry was to explore the different options available for collecting recyclables, taking into account the diverse range of communities and housing types that exist in Leeds.
5. In moving forward, we recognise that further work is now needed to encourage greater participation in the recycling options already available. We

therefore set out to explore which communication methods would be more fruitful within different areas of the city and particularly for those areas in need of a more targeted education campaign. We acknowledge that effective communication is also paramount in successfully delivering any planned operational changes and particularly in introducing new schemes. Our review therefore focuses on improving recycling through effective communication and education.

Scope of the review

6. In undertaking this review, we agreed to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
 - the general principles for effective communication with the public in successfully delivering planned operational changes;
 - the outcome of the bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government Weekly Collection Fund;
 - the Council's strategy for preparing residents ahead of the phase 1 roll out of alternate weekly collections and also food waste expansion;
 - the Council's current methods of communication with the public on the existing range of recycling options available in Leeds;
 - the use of existing demographic profile data to determine preferred communication and service channel preferences across the city in relation to recycling methods;
 - potential improvements to existing communication materials with staff and the public to help reduce



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contaminated waste and missed collections;

- examples of best practice within comparator authorities;
- Evidence arising from the Scrutiny Board's public listening exercises across 3 specific areas of the city.

7. In undertaking this review, we acknowledge the commitment of staff in driving forward improvements in this particular area of work. We are very grateful to everyone who contributed and openly shared their views and ideas with the Scrutiny Board.

Anticipated Service Impact

8. The recommendations arising from this review focus on improving the Council's use of communications to help encourage greater participation in the wide range of recycling options already available in Leeds.
9. The desired outcomes linked to individual recommendations are summarised later in the report.

Equality and Diversity

10. The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to identify work and activities that help to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK.
11. Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this review. The evidence submitted and the topics debated have not highlighted that a particular equality group are treated less fairly
12. Where a Scrutiny Board has made recommendations and these are agreed, the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity and where appropriate an equality impact assessment will be carried out.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Utilising the Council's website as a key education and communication tool.

13. As part of our review, we considered how the Council currently communicates with the public on the existing range of recycling options available in Leeds and how this can be improved.
14. In doing so, we recognised that a key source of information about the refuse and recycling service should be the Council's website. Following the re-launch of the website in July 2012, we are pleased to note that the home page now provides a clear link to this particular service area.
15. The statistics indicate that the web based information linked to the service is increasingly being accessed, highlighting the popularity of this particular communication tool. In view of this, the service should be using the website to promote the importance of reducing waste and to provide clear and accessible information regarding recycling options in Leeds and advice on how to reduce waste. However, it was evident during our review that further work is needed to develop the web based information.
16. In particular, the rationale for reducing waste and promoting recycling in Leeds should be a prominent feature on the website. As well as providing operational information, this communication tool should be used to help educate residents about what happens to recyclable materials. In doing so, this may also help to address any misconceptions or mistrust associated with the Council's recycling service. It should also be used to highlight existing recycling initiatives and partnerships, such as the work undertaken with schools to promote awareness-raising.
17. The facility for residents to search for their refuse collection dates is clearly visible on the website. In welcoming this, we emphasised the importance of ensuring that such information is continually monitored for accuracy. We were also pleased to learn that this facility is being developed further to enable residents to search for their current collection dates through postcode identification only.
18. Whilst the website does provide guidance in terms of what should go in which bin, this is only accessible via the 'problem with your bins' link on the website. We believe that such guidance needs to be more visible as a key source of information rather than be associated with problem solving solutions.
19. In acknowledging that not all recyclable material is collected at the kerbside, the website could also provide a useful A-Z guide of key recyclable materials and the options available for recycling them i.e. via the green bin; household waste recycling centres, the mini recycling centres; charity shops; supermarkets; battery collections sites. We noted that such an approach is used by York City Council in trying to encourage residents to search for all available options as an alternative to landfilling.



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20. We understand that the Council has previously worked with the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) in producing communication materials based on best practice research and effective design principles. This included the introduction of the 'Recycle for Leeds' branding, which is based on the Recycle Now nationally recognised brand.
21. Such design principles were adopted in communicating service changes as part of the Rothwell recycling collection trial in 2009 and proved very successful. We are therefore surprised that the same design principles had not been applied to the website. It is evident that the web based information needs to be more eye-catching as well as informative. Linked to this, more use of symbols may also help to provide an easy reference guide that can be used by everyone, including children and also residents who speak little English.
22. We noted in particular that the Recycle for Leeds brand does not feature anywhere on the website. In moving forward, we believe that such branding should be actively promoted on all forms of communications linked to the refuse collection service and also made visible on refuse collection vehicles.

Recommendation 1
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that the Council's web based information relating to the refuse collection service reflects effective design principles and is accurate, easily accessible and provides comprehensive guidance on how to reduce, re-use and recycle waste in Leeds.

Recommendation 2
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods actively promotes the Recycle for Leeds brand on all forms of communications linked to the refuse collection service and is also made visible on refuse collection vehicles.

Reducing levels of contaminations

23. We considered how communications with staff and public can be improved to help reduce contaminated waste.
24. Crews are not required to immediately report incidents of contaminated waste. However, crews are expected to place a sticker onto any contaminated bin. In doing so, the onus is put on the resident to address this contamination and then wait until the next scheduled collection date.
25. We learned that these stickers do not offer an explanation of why the bin has been contaminated. Many residents will therefore seek an explanation via the Council's contact centre.
26. The Council's contact centre is usually the first point of contact for resident enquiries/complaints about the refuse collection service. Customer Service Officers report that the most common types of contaminations are due to either general waste in the recycling bin or bins contaminated with building materials.
27. To help educate residents, we believe that an appropriate approach needs to



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be developed that will enable crews to indicate to a resident the outline reasons why their bin is contaminated. If the resident still contacts the contact centre, Customer Service Officers would be able to prompt residents to look for the reasons provided by the crews before advising on what action needs to be taken.

28. However, we recognise that this has been a longstanding issue and therefore it is imperative that such an approach is viable and has the full support of the crews that would be required to operate it consistently.

Recommendation 3
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing an approach enabling crews to indicate to a resident the outline reasons why their bin is contaminated and what actions they need to take.

29. Customer Service Officers report that bins are often contaminated with building materials, especially when a customer has moved out of an ALMO property and contractors have attended to complete repairs before a new customer moves in.
30. Details of the council's refuse collection service therefore needs to be better communicated to contractors who work on behalf of the Council or an ALMO when repairing properties. Conditions surrounding the disposal of waste linked to ALMO property repair work could also form part of future service contracts.

31. In terms of awareness-raising, we also believe that existing processes linked to the tenancy management systems of ALMOs could be better utilised to help provide clarification to new tenants about the recycling options available to them, how these are to be used and details of collection dates.

Recommendation 4
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on working with the Chief Executives of the Leeds ALMOs to ensure that existing tenancy management systems are used to provide clarification to new tenants about the recycling options available to them, how these are to be used and details of collection dates.

Recommendation 5
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on working with the Chief Executives of the Leeds ALMOs to ensure that contractors undertaking repair works within ALMO properties are fully aware of the council's refuse collection services and their responsibilities associated with the disposal of waste.



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Addressing missed bin collections

32. To encourage greater participation in a service, the reliability of that service is paramount.
33. Improving the reliability of the refuse service therefore remains a key priority for the Council. It is identified as one of the key performance indicators within the Council Business Plan, with particular focus on reducing the number of missed bin collections.
34. The Council has set an aspirational performance target of 50 missed bins / 100,000 collections. As a Scrutiny Board, we have continued to regularly monitor the overall performance of the service against this target. In doing so, we have also monitored performance in relation to the different waste collection types i.e. residual, SORT and garden waste.
35. We do appreciate that performance levels need to be considered within the context of providing an increasingly complex service for residents that is being delivered at more than £1m less cost per annum. As such, we are pleased to note that there is a continuing performance improvement trend.
36. However, we also understand the frustrations of residents that do undertake their role to meet service requirements but fail to receive the standard of service expected of the Council. In particular, we recognise that there are still hotspot areas that repeatedly encounter missed collections. We have therefore already acknowledged the need to undertake further scrutiny of this particular issue.
37. As part of this review, we considered how communications with staff and public could be improved to help reduce levels of missed bin collections generally.
38. In doing so, we acknowledged the continuing efforts of the service to strengthen communication links between crews and management staff. In particular, we were pleased to learn of a recent decision to align Team Managers to particular areas of the city to promote greater consistency in the management and delivery of the service.
39. Another significant efficiency measure being progressed by the service is the introduction of an electronic Integrated Waste Management System to replace the outdated paper based communication systems currently being used by the service. This includes the provision of in-cab technology within refuse collection vehicles that will enable crews to immediately report any problems or service failures for the management staff to address.
40. Linked to this, we did acknowledge the general frustration of Elected Members in their efforts to also try and inform managers of any service failures, including missed collections, particularly as they occur so that appropriate immediate action can be taken. This was considered to be a key issue when linked to any service failures during a weekend. Further clarity is therefore needed so that Elected Members are confident about



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whom to contact in reporting such problems in the future.

Recommendation 6

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that clarification is provided to all Elected Members regarding appropriate contacts to report service failures relating to the refuse collection service, including missed bin collections, so that appropriate immediate action can be taken.

41. When a missed collection is linked to a service disruption under normal circumstances, we understand that the service is expected to address this within 48 hours. However, we acknowledge that this may not be achievable under other circumstances i.e. severe weather conditions. We therefore identified a need for the service to categorise certain circumstances/scenarios that may impact on its ability to complete collection rounds as scheduled and the associated actions to be undertaken by the service and residents i.e. looking at normal circumstances; minor disruptions; and severe disruptions. Once established, this needs to be effectively communicated to all relevant staff and the public via the council's website and contact centre.

Recommendation 7

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods clearly categorises certain circumstances/scenarios that may impact on the ability of the refuse collection service to complete collection rounds as scheduled and the associated actions to be taken by the service and residents i.e. service expectations under normal circumstances and during minor and severe disruptions.

Once established, this needs to be effectively communicated to all relevant staff and the public via the council's website and contact centre.

Making more use of Social media and SMS communication tools

42. During our review, we made particular reference to the potential use of social media, such as Twitter, to try and alert local residents of any service disruptions or failures, including missed collections, that have occurred and what action will be taken to address this.
43. Reference was also made to the positive feedback arising from the Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging approach introduced in Headingley to remind students when to put their bins out. We also recognised that this is a very economical way of getting information out to residents.
44. In utilising this facility, we understand that outbound service messages would



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need to be owned by the relevant directorate, similar to the approach adopted with the Council's web based information. Whilst the Environment and Neighbourhoods directorate has officer support dedicated to its web facility, no resources have been identified to pursue this particular facility. However, if the SMS text messaging approach in particular has the potential to be wide reaching and productive then there is merit in pursuing this further as a key communication tool.

45. Overall, the directorate should be more proactive in analysing the potential benefits of utilising social media and SMS texting as communication tools to facilitate interactive information sharing, particularly to deliver service reminders and notifications of service disruptions directly to residents.

Recommendation 8
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods analyses the potential service benefits of utilising social media, such as Twitter, and SMS texting as communications tools to deliver service reminders and notifications of service disruptions directly to residents.

Dealing with escalated problems as they arise

46. In making enquiries, customers continue to be encouraged to use self-serve options, particularly with the introduction of Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) technology within the

contact centre, but also through on-line channels.

47. We learned that Customer Service Officers within the contact centre are allocated into specialist service areas, which means that certain staff will be trained to deal with refuse related calls. As such, emphasis is placed on making sure that enquiries are dealt with effectively to avoid repeated calls. The contact centre also has the facility to use an automated message during periods of major disruption to the service to help filter some of the enquiries.
48. Whilst the contact centre does have call recording facilities, the sheer number of recordings can exceed the ability to review and analyse manually. Speech analytics technology was therefore introduced. This powerful software tool enables the Council to better understand what customers are saying by being able to interrogate large numbers of call recordings for common phrases/repeat words. Such data also assists in providing more targeted and tailored coaching to the Customer Service Officers to enable them to deal with enquiries effectively.
49. We are aware that Seibel is the customer relationship management solution used by the contact centre. Linked to this, if a resident is reporting a repeat incident, this will get picked up by Customer Service Officers. We understand that when there is a third repeated incident reported within a certain period of time, that issue will be escalated directly to the refuse collection service.



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50. During our review, we discussed how escalated and complex issues linked to specific residents could be addressed more efficiently. We noted that a possible option is to have an operational supervisor from the service located at the contact centre. This will enable them to have a direct conversation with the resident to address any complex matters and prevent recurring problems. We therefore felt that there would be merit in pursuing this option further.

Recommendation 9
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods pursues that an operational supervisor from the refuse collection service is located at the contact centre to work with Customer Service Officers in immediately addressing escalated and complex issues linked to specific residents.

Development of a 'social contract'

51. Whilst local authorities have a duty of care to handle waste responsibly, they are also required to comply with a wide range of waste and recycling legislation.
52. As local authorities strive to provide efficient and cost effective refuse collection services, they are also reliant on individuals to handle their own waste responsibly. Linked to this, local authorities also continue to encourage people to reduce levels of waste and use available alternative options to landfilling.

53. During our review, we discussed the underlying principles and potential benefits of establishing a social contract with residents. Whilst such a document would assist in clarifying the responsibilities placed upon the Council, it would also recognise the vital role and key responsibilities of residents in helping to achieve an efficient and cost effective refuse collection service.

54. Whilst we support the proposed introduction of a social contract, we would emphasise the importance of this being a clear document that staff and residents can refer to easily and absorb quickly. We would therefore be keen to continue monitoring the development of this approach.

Recommendation 10
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods pursues the introduction of a social contract setting out the key responsibilities of the Council and residents in delivering an efficient and cost effective refuse collection service. This should be a clear document that staff and residents can refer to easily and absorb quickly.

Ensuring the accuracy of customer data

55. It was reported that data cleansing problems had been a key factor linked to previous distribution errors. In view of this, we noted that efforts continue to be made by the service to ensure that data is holistically accurate through the



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range of systems and databases still required.

56. Data accuracy is essential to the overall management of the service and therefore it is vital that such data continues to be cleansed periodically and managed effectively by the service.

Recommendation 11
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that customer data utilised by the refuse collection service continues to be cleansed periodically and managed effectively by the service.

Sending reminders about temporary revised schedules

57. It was noted that from the end of 2013, only one calendar will be distributed to all residents indicating their future collection dates. This will therefore include Christmas schedules. However, we felt that additional reminders about Christmas schedules should still be made but recognised that such messages could be delivered through more cost effective communication channels than the traditional approach of using printed materials. This links back to our earlier comments about the effective use of the Council's website and also utilising other available communication channels, particularly social media communication tools.

Recommendation 12
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that residents continue to receive separate reminders about operational changes to refuse collections linked to the Christmas period and in doing so, explores the use of alternative communication channels to the traditional approach of using printed materials.

Communicating planned service changes to Ward Members

58. In relation to any planned service changes, we emphasised the need for timely and effective communication with crews to ensure that such changes are clearly understood. We were therefore pleased to note that earlier lessons had been learned and that more extensive communication links with crews are in place.
59. However, we also reiterated the importance of communicating regularly with relevant Ward Members and giving them sufficient notice of any planned service changes. In doing so, Ward Members can offer reassurance to residents if kept informed of developments.

Recommendation 13
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that relevant Ward Members are identified as key stakeholders as part of any planned operational change to the refuse collection service.



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Moving towards alternate weekly collections

60. We acknowledge that the intention of the Council is to implement alternate weekly collections of recyclable and residual waste citywide. By March 2014, this enhanced service for the collection of recyclables will have been rolled out to 150,000 or 44% of properties in Leeds. Further rollouts will occur in the following financial year with the intention that 80% of households will ultimately be in receipt of this service. Not only is this development expected to lead towards a reduction in the Council's waste disposal costs, but it will also contribute towards increasing the overall level of recycling across the City.
61. At the time of our review, we acknowledged that preparations were underway to commence phase 1 of the Council's roll out of alternate weekly collections (AWC). As part of this phase, around 50,000 homes will be the first to switch to this scheme. This includes properties in Kippax and Methley, Garforth and Swillington, Morley North, Morley South, Ardsley and Robin Hood.
62. As part of this scheme, we noted that 3,500 households would also receive a food waste collection service as adopted in Rothwell.
63. Weekly food waste collections remains a key part of the Council's plans to enable the city to recycle 55% of waste by 2016. However, we acknowledge the substantial cost associated with the introduction of this additional weekly collection of waste. As such, we were very disappointed to learn during our review that the Council's bid for £13.9 million as part of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Weekly Collection Fund had not been successful.
64. We understand that the DCLG had received 130 bids to the £250 million Weekly Collection Support Scheme fund. These totalled £345 million and so the scheme was over-subscribed. The feedback received had indicated that the Council's bid, in predominately proposing to add a weekly organic waste collection to a predominantly fortnightly residual waste collection, was categorised as third in the 'collection hierarchy'. It therefore became apparent that the DCLG evaluation criteria had strongly favoured a weekly residual waste collection pattern. However, we learned that the evaluation weightings were only published by DCLG after its announcement of the outcome of the bid evaluation process.
65. As the bid had aimed to secure funding for food waste collections, this had meant that the phased roll out of this service would now need to be reassessed in line with available budget provision.
66. As part of our review, we discussed the proposed communication strategy for the commencement of the phase 1 roll out of AWC. In doing so, we had raised the following points:
 - The importance of reassuring residents that moving towards an alternate weekly collection is not a reduction in service – weekly



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collections will still continue but different types of waste will be collected on different weeks.

- The need for regular consultation with relevant Ward Members once the route mapping exercise was complete.
- That plenty of notice needs to be given to residents prior to the commencement date and all residents should be offered support throughout the lead in process if they are concerned about being unable to manage their waste accordingly.
- Despite AWC being a widely accepted collection model amongst other authorities, some residents may continue to be averse to this new service and will need to see it working effectively from the outset to be convinced otherwise. The Council's approach in addressing and responding to any missed collections would therefore be vital.

67. We were pleased to note that the communication strategy for the Phase 1 roll out would follow the same model used for the Rothwell recycling collection trial. The approach would therefore include introductory communications to residents, followed by service roll-out communications backed up with on the ground 'Waste Doctor' support.

68. During April 2013, we received details of the information packs that were to be circulated to residents prior to the commencement of the scheme.

69. Linked to our earlier comments about the service needing to adopt the design

principles used on such communication materials to its web based information, we have appended a copy of one of the information booklets used for the phase 1 roll out to further illustrate this point.

Utilising more tailored communication approaches

70. We learned that the Council's Corporate Communications Team had considered the resources available for providing a tailored and effective approach to resident communications based on demographic information. In doing so, the team identified a software package being trialled within the Council's Business Intelligence Unit, called 'Mosaic Public Sector', which is designed to aid understanding, based on demographic information, of the most effective methods for communicating information to the public.

71. We noted that this approach will allow the Council to establish where each audience is likely to be on the waste hierarchy, what messages they are likely to respond to and how to deliver them. The traditional approach to city-wide messaging involves printed material to every household. The demographic profiling will therefore help the Council to create an evidence-based mix of marketing materials which can be targeted to audiences receptive to those channels, replacing expensive print with more effective communications channels, in turn reducing the even more costly avoidable contact to the Council's contact centre.



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72. In welcoming a move towards more tailored communication approaches, it was our original intention to test out such communication assumptions during our review by targeting 3 areas of the city based around current recycling participation levels. However, during our review it became apparent that such communication assumptions should be tested in helping to drive forward the Council's strategy of implementing alternate weekly collections of recyclable and residual waste citywide.
73. In acknowledging that the phase 2 roll out of AWC is due to commence in November 2013, we agreed that it would be more prudent for Scrutiny to work closely with the service in evaluating the responsiveness of residents to the communication materials/channels used during phase 1 so that any lessons learned about such communication assumptions can be applied during phase 2.
74. We will therefore be undertaking this piece of work during August/September 2013 and will be reporting on our findings in due course.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendation Summary

Desired Outcome: That the council's website is used to promote the importance of reducing waste and provides clear and accessible information regarding the options available for recycling in Leeds and advice on how to reduce waste.

Recommendation 1 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that the Council's web based information relating to the refuse collection service reflects effective design principles and is accurate, easily accessible and provides comprehensive guidance on how to reduce, re-use and recycle waste in Leeds.

Desired Outcome: That the Recycle for Leeds brand is widely recognised across the city.

Recommendation 2 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods actively promotes the Recycle for Leeds brand on all forms of communications linked to the refuse collection service and is also made visible on refuse collection vehicles.

Desired Outcome: That reasons associated with a contaminated bin are indicated clearly on the bin for the resident to correct and not repeat in future.

Recommendation 3 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing an approach enabling crews to indicate to a resident the outline reasons why their bin is contaminated and what actions they need to take.

Desired Outcome: That the residents within ALMO properties are made fully aware of the council's refuse collection services at the start of their tenancy.

Recommendation 4 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on working with the Chief Executives of the Leeds ALMOs to ensure that existing tenancy management systems are used to provide clarification to new tenants about the recycling options available to them, how these are to be used and details of collection dates.

Desired Outcome: That all contractors undertaking repair works within ALMO properties are fully aware of the council's refuse collection services and their responsibilities associated with the disposal of waste.

Recommendation 5 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on working with the Chief Executives of the Leeds ALMOs to ensure that contractors undertaking repair works within ALMO properties are fully aware of the council's refuse collection services and their responsibilities associated with the disposal of waste.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendation Summary

Desired Outcome: That Elected Members are fully aware of whom to contact to report service failures relating to the refuse collection service so that appropriate immediate action can be taken.

Recommendation 6 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that clarification is provided to all Elected Members regarding appropriate contacts to report service failures relating to the refuse collection service, including missed bin collections, so that appropriate immediate action can be taken.

Desired Outcome: That both staff and residents understand the expectations placed upon them in addressing missed bin collections.

Recommendation 7 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods clearly categorises certain circumstances/scenarios that may impact on the ability of the refuse collection service to complete collection rounds as scheduled and the associated actions to be taken by the service and residents i.e. service expectations under normal circumstances and during minor and severe disruptions.

Once established, this needs to be effectively communicated to all relevant staff and the public via the council's website and contact centre.

Desired Outcome: That where appropriate, social media and SMS communication tools are used to facilitate interactive information sharing with residents relating to the refuse collection service.

Recommendation 8 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods analyses the potential service benefits of utilising social media, such as Twitter, and SMS texting as communications tools to deliver service reminders and notifications of service disruptions directly to residents.

Desired Outcome: That escalated and complex problems linked to particular residents in relation to the refuse collection service are addressed efficiently by the service.

Recommendation 9 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods pursues that an operational supervisor from the refuse collection service is located at the contact centre to work with Customer Service Officers in immediately addressing escalated and complex issues linked to specific residents.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendation Summary

Desired Outcome: That a social contract is put in place to outline the responsibilities placed upon the Council and residents in achieving an efficient and cost effective refuse collection service in Leeds.

Recommendation 10 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods pursues the introduction of a social contract setting out the key responsibilities of the Council and residents in delivering an efficient and cost effective refuse collection service. This should be a clear document that staff and residents can refer to easily and absorb quickly.

Desired Outcome: That the customer data utilised by the refuse collection service is periodically cleansed and effectively managed by the service.

Recommendation 11 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that customer data utilised by the refuse collection service continues to be cleansed periodically and managed effectively by the service.

Desired Outcome: That cost effective measures are adopted in effectively reminding residents of operational changes planned during the Christmas period.

Recommendation 12 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that residents continue to receive separate reminders about operational changes to refuse collections linked to the Christmas period and in doing so, explores the use of alternative communication channels to the traditional approach of using printed materials.

Desired Outcome: That Ward Members are regularly consulted on the developments of any planned operational changes to refuse collection services that affect their areas.

Recommendation 13 – That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that relevant Ward Members are identified as key stakeholders as part of any planned operational change to the refuse collection service.



Appendix 1

The information booklet used for the Phase 1 roll out of alternate weekly collections (including a food waste collection) is attached overleaf.

NEW recycling and waste collection service



Important information on changes to your waste collection service.

From week commencing 29 April 2013 we are changing the way we collect your waste making it much easier for you to recycle.

This new service aims to make it easier for you to recycle your waste and vastly reduce the amount of rubbish going to landfill.

Your household will continue to receive a weekly collection of waste, we will just be collecting different types of waste on different weeks and in separate containers.

This leaflet constitutes a formal notification of a change to your refuse collection service as required by the Environment Protection Act 1990, section 46

Why are we making these changes?

We are committed to increasing recycling rates in Leeds. It isn't just better for the environment - reducing the amount of waste which goes into our black bins means we have more money to spend on the services you need. The waste from black bins that goes to landfill cost the city £9.2m in tax last year. This figure is set to grow by £1.5m a year unless we reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Saving money isn't the only reason why we are introducing the new bin service. In consultation we carried out on the waste strategy, residents told us they would not need their black general waste bin emptying every week if their recycling bin was emptied more often. Also in a trial we undertook in 2010 residents felt the new fortnightly collections were about right and regular enough for their needs.

The benefits

- Reducing the amount of waste buried in landfill
- Making it more convenient for households to recycle
- Allowing your food waste to be taken away and composted
- Reducing CO₂ and harmful gases which contribute to global warming
- Protecting the environment by making sure more materials are recycled
- By reducing the amount of waste going to landfill, the new service will help us reach our longer term recycling and composting target of 60%



How the service will work.

You will have:

- A green bin/bag for paper, card, cans, aerosols and plastics
- A black bin for general waste
- A black food waste bin for outside and a smaller kitchen caddy for inside.
- A supply of compostable cornstarch liners.
- A brown bin for garden waste – if you already have one

One week we will empty your food waste bin and your black general waste bin/bag. The following week we will empty your food waste bin and your green recycling bin/bag. Your green recycling bin/bag, black general waste bin/bag and food waste bin will have the same collection day on alternate weeks.

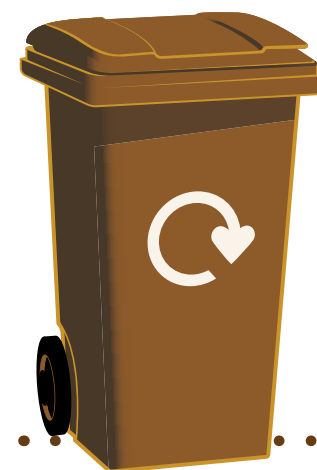
Your brown garden waste bin will be emptied on either week 1 or week 2 depending on your collection week and may have a different collection day to your other bins.



Your black general waste bin/bag and food bin



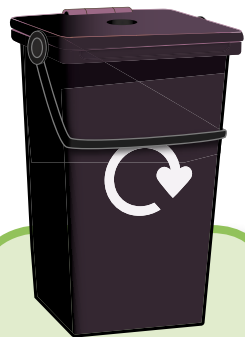
Your green recycling bin/bag and food bin



Your brown garden waste bin will be emptied on either week 1 or week 2 depending on your collection week between March and November and may have a different collection day to your other bins. The service is suspended throughout December, January and February.

New Food Waste collection service

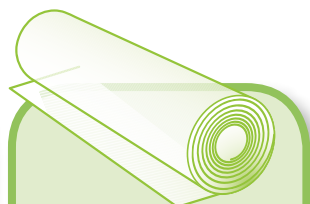
You will have a black food waste bin for outside, a smaller silver kitchen caddy for inside and a supply of compostable cornstarch liners.



Black food waste bin for outside



Kitchen caddy for inside



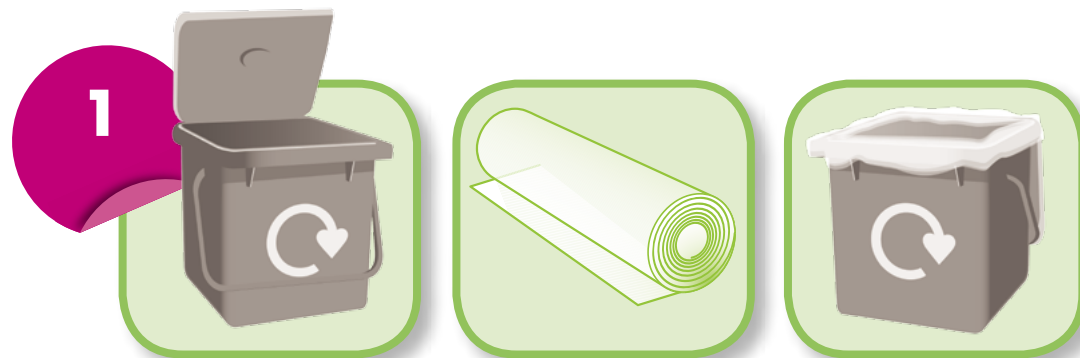
Compostable cornstarch liners

The kitchen caddy should be used to put food waste in each day. The contents of your kitchen caddy including the liner needs to be transferred to your outside food waste bin for collection. The outside bin should be put out for collection every week on your collection day, at your collection point by 7am with your other bins.

What happens to your food waste?

Your food waste is taken to a special processing plant where it is turned into compost. The compost is used by agricultural, horticultural and land-based industries, for example as a soil improver in agriculture and as a topsoil in land restoration.

How to use the kitchen caddy?



Line your caddy with a compostable corn starch liner, or newspaper and fill it with food waste. **Do not use plastic bags**



When it is full, tie the liner or wrap food in paper and place in your food waste bin.

Remember to:

- Always keep the lid closed on both the outside food waste bin and smaller kitchen caddy to avoid pests.
- Put your outside food waste bin (not your kitchen caddy) out for collection every week on your collection day.
- Tie your compostable cornstarch liner or wrap food waste in paper to keep your outside food waste bin clean.
- Keep your kitchen caddy clean by rinsing or wiping with kitchen towel.

What can I put in my kitchen caddy?

You can put any cooked or uncooked food in your caddy. You can even scrape uneaten food straight into your caddy.

Yes please



- All dairy products such as cheese and eggs (including shells)
- Breads, pastries and cakes
- Cooked and uncooked food
- Meat, fish & poultry (including bones)
- Out of date food
- Pasta, rice & beans
- Teabags and coffee grounds
- Uneaten leftovers from dishes and plates including uneaten take away food
- Vegetables and fruit (including peelings)



No thanks



- Packaging of any sort
- Plastic bags or wrapping
- Pet waste

How to use your Green bin/bag



The green bin is for your recycling.

Yes please



- **Mixed paper** - Computer paper, newspapers, telephone directories, catalogues, glossy magazines envelopes, junk mail.
- **Cardboard** - Cereal boxes, egg boxes, soap powder boxes, brown cardboard boxes and glossy card.
- **Aerosols** - Deodorant, air freshener, hairspray, shaving foam cans and spray polish aerosols.
- **Food and drink cans** - Food tins, drinks cans and pet food cans.
- **Plastic bottles and bags** -
Plastic bottles or items that display any of the following symbols:



No thanks



- Glass of any kind
- Mirrors
- Hazardous waste such as needles/syringes
- Electrical goods
- Light bulbs
- Chinaware
- Children's toys
- Textiles
- Polystyrene
- Food waste
- Garden waste

How to use the Brown bin



If we are able to provide you with one, you will already have a brown garden waste bin which is collected fortnightly March to November. The service is suspended throughout December, January and February.

Yes please



- **Flowers and plants**
- **Grass cuttings**
- **Hedge clippings**
- **Leaves**
- **Twigs/small branches**
- **Windfall fruit**
- **Weeds**

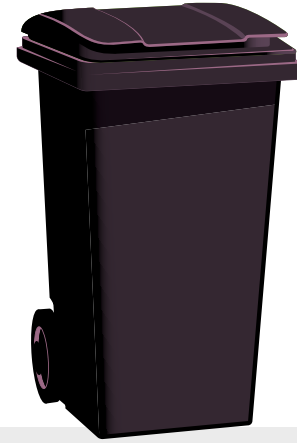


No thanks

- Food waste
- Metal
- Paper/card
- Pet waste and cat litter
- Planks of wood and timber

- Plastic including bags
- Soil/turf or compost
- Stones and rubble
- Hazardous waste such as needles/syringes

How to use the Black general waste bin



The black general waste bin is for the rest of your household waste that cannot go in your green recycling bin/bag, food waste bin or brown garden waste bin and will be collected fortnightly.

As part of the new service we can no longer collect excess bags of waste which are not in the bin. In some exceptional circumstances, like when severe weather has disrupted normal collections, we will be able to relax this rule. When we do, we will announce this in the local media and on our website.



No thanks

- Hazardous waste such as needles/syringes
- Electricals
- Garden waste

Please help us by:

- Keeping the lid closed on your food waste bins to help avoid pests.
- Tying your compostable cornstarch liner to keep your food waste bin clean.
- Putting your bins out by 7am on your collection day and put them away again after they have been emptied.
- Rinse out plastic bottles and cans before putting them in the green recycling bin/bag.
- Squash containers where you can safely do so before putting them in the green recycling bin/bag.
- Fold and flatten card and paper before putting it in the green recycling bin/bag.
- Taking any excess waste to your nearest household waste sorting site.

If you do not have all recycling bins or you are experiencing problems we have staff available to answer questions about the new service and to provide practical support to residents to help you to recycle more, so please let us know.

Contact

www.leeds.gov.uk/newbinservice
email: refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk
Tel: (0113) 222 4406

 leedswastedocs

 @leedswastedocs

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or another language please contact us on (0113) 222 4406.



Evidence

Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

- Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods to the Scrutiny Working Group regarding recycling communications. 13th December 2012.
- Summary report of key points arising from sessions 1 and 2 of the Scrutiny review.
- Discussion document on a social contract with residents.
- Highlight report for Elected Members in the AWC Phase 1 area.
- Basic design principles. Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP). March 2010.
- Case study evidence from the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) on other local authority recycling schemes.
- Communication materials linked to the Rothwell recycling collection trial.
- Communication materials produced for the phase 1 roll out of alternate weekly collections.

Witnesses Heard

Susan Upton, Chief Officer, Waste Management
Ben Grabham, Service Manager, Refuse and Waste
Liz Behrens, Strategy and Development Manager, Environmental Services
Kim Regan, Communications Officer - Planning, Policy & Improvement
Gareth Wilce, Communications Manager – Executive Support
Paul Broughton, Chief Customer Access Officer
Matthew Lund, Senior Policy and Performance Officer

Dates of Scrutiny

Scrutiny Board Meeting – 12th November 2012 – agree terms of reference
Scrutiny Working Group Meeting – Session 1 – 3rd December 2012
Scrutiny Working Group Meeting – Session 2 – 13th December 2012
Scrutiny Working Group Meeting – Session 3 – 23rd January 2013
Scrutiny Working Group Meeting – Session 4 – 4th March 2013

Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)
Improving recycling through effective communication and education
16th May 2013
Report author: Angela Brogden



www.scrutiny.unit@leeds.gov.uk