

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

INQUIRY INTO RECYCLING

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is clear that more people are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental threat posed by the vast quantities of waste that is produced each year. Leeds City Council continues to improve its performance for the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and is already on course to meet and exceed its 2009/10 year end target of 33.94%. Whilst recycling has become a part of every day life for many people, it is recognised both locally and nationally that further action is still required to divert waste away from landfill. One of the key aims set out within the Leeds Integrated Waste Strategy 2005-2035 is to achieve a combined recycling and composting rate of greater than 50% by 2020.
- 1.2 Recycling continues to be an area of interest for Scrutiny. The former City Services Scrutiny Board conducted an in-depth inquiry into Recycling back in 2004/2005 and more recently the Young People's Scrutiny Forum conducted an inquiry which was focused around 'Protecting our Environment'.
- 1.3 Scrutiny has also 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.
- 1.4 However, in June 2009 the Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board received a referral from the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services to conduct a further inquiry into Recycling which focuses on improving the long term recycling infrastructure for Leeds.
- 1.5 Whilst acknowledging that over 90% of residents have access to kerbside recycling, it was highlighted that there is significant scope for improvement by improving the recycling infrastructure and making recycling facilities more accessible to everyone. Based around the principle that 'one size does not fit all', the focus of this particular Scrutiny inquiry will be to explore the different options available for collecting recyclables, taking into account the diverse range of communities and housing types that exist in Leeds, but also the aim is to produce high quality material streams to encourage the long term development and sustainability of secondary material industries.

- 1.6 Whilst the potential for collecting more materials as part of the kerbside collection was raised as a particular issue, it was highlighted to the Scrutiny Board that a full options appraisal is currently being undertaken for food waste collections and that the outcome of this particular work will be reported separately to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board. It was noted that a full options appraisal is also required to determine the most effective and best value for money collection method for glass. The Scrutiny Board also acknowledged that the Leeds Integrated Waste Strategy Action Plan was in the process of being updated and will therefore be brought to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board for consideration.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

- 2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- Details of the current range of recycling facilities/methods available across the city (including kerbside collection, drop-off sites and Waste Sorting Sites) and the advantages and limitations of each;
- Identifying specific areas across the city which do not have access to appropriate and convenient recycling facilities;
- The challenges presented by different property types, particularly flats, back to back properties, terrace housing and any other property types that have limited access to recycling facilities;
- The range of materials currently recyclable at household waste sorting sites and bring sites and whether there is scope to expand the range (including more reusable materials). Also, to consider the potential for more locations across the city for bring sites.
- Examples of other recycling facilities/methods used outside of Leeds and the potential cost implications for adopting these across the city;
- Regional and national approaches towards recyclable collection methods, with specific reference to the role of DEFRA and WRAP (The Waste & Resources Action Programme is a not-for-profit company supported by funding from DEFRA, the DTI and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is working to promote sustainable waste management by creating stable and efficient markets for recycled materials and products)
- The relationship between Environment and Neighbourhoods and City Development to ensure that future recycling service proposals are reflected in planning policy and guidance;

- The role of the Council in ensuring that developers are making adequate provision for recycling within their planning proposals.

3.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member

3.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.4 the views of the relevant Director and Executive Member have been sought and incorporated where appropriate into these Terms of Reference.

4.0 Timetable for the inquiry

4.1 The Inquiry will take place over a number of sessions. These sessions will involve working group meetings and site visits which will provide flexibility for the Board to gather and consider evidence that will aid the discussions during the public Board meetings.

4.2 The length of the Inquiry is subject to change.

5.0 Submission of evidence

5.1 Dates for the working group meetings are to be arranged.

5.2 Session one – November 2009

To consider evidence in relation to the following areas:

- Details of the current range of recycling facilities/methods available across the city (including kerbside collection, drop-off sites and Waste Sorting Sites) and the advantages and limitations of each;
- Identifying specific areas across the city which do not have access to appropriate and convenient recycling facilities;
- The challenges presented by different property types, particularly flats, back to back properties, terrace housing and any other property types that have limited access to recycling facilities;

5.3 Session two – January 2010

To consider evidence in relation to the following areas:

- The range of materials currently recyclable at household waste sorting sites and bring sites and whether there is scope to expand the range (including more reusable materials). Also, to consider the potential for more locations across the city for bring sites.
- Examples of other recycling facilities/methods used outside of Leeds and the potential cost implications for adopting these across the city;

- Regional and national approaches towards recyclable collection methods, with specific reference to the role of DEFRA and WRAP (The Waste & Resources Action Programme is a not-for-profit company supported by funding from DEFRA, the DTI and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is working to promote sustainable waste management by creating stable and efficient markets for recycled materials and products)

5.4 **Session three – February 2010**

- The relationship between Environment and Neighbourhoods and City Development to ensure that future recycling service proposals are reflected in planning policy and guidance;
- The role of the Council in ensuring that developers are making adequate provision for recycling within their planning proposals

5.5 **Session four – April 2010**

- To agree final report

6.0 **Witnesses**

6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
- Director of City Development
- Executive Member for Environmental Services
- Head of Waste Management
- Chief Officer, Environmental Services
- Representative from DEFRA
- Representative from the Waste Regional Advisory Group (WRAG),
- Representative from WRAP

7.0 **Site visits**

7.1 As part of the inquiry, the following site visits will be undertaken by Board Members:

Martins Material Recycling Facility (MRF)
 Sample of Household Waste Collection sites across the city
 Other leading local authorities in recycling, for example, Manchester

8.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements

- 7.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 7.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.

9.0 Measures of success

- 8.1 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.