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**Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods**

**Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)**

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry into Recycling - Existing Collection and Disposal Methods**

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**Electoral Wards Affected: All**

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 In line with session one of the Board's Inquiry into Recycling, this report outlines existing collection and disposal methods for recycling materials for the consideration of Board Members.

**2.0 Existing Collection and Disposal Methods**

2.1 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.

Kerbside Collection of Dry Recyclables ('SORT')

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

- 2.4 Of the 93.4% of properties stated above, there are approx 6,100 properties\* where the SORT recycling scheme is currently not working well, evidenced by high contamination and low participation. 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 currently it is projected that 25,000 tones will be recycled during 2009/10.

#### Green Bag scheme

- 2.5 Across approx 6,300 properties\* of properties stated above, 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 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

- 2.7 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.

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

### **3.0 Equality of Access**

- 3.1 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.

#### Existing Service Gaps.

- 3.2 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, provided the following initial picture, and work in ongoing to provide a more detailed understanding.

- 3.3 There are an estimated 5500 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.
- 3.4 There are an estimated 5500 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 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.

#### Kerbside Garden Waste Collection

- 3.6 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.

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

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Board is requested to note the contents of this report.

#### Background Papers

None