

**TO: ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
2 DECEMBER 2003**

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY OF RECYCLING

FROM: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the findings of Councillors following their individual scrutiny of recycling.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It was agreed by the Committee on 7th October that areas of recycling within Warwick district would be investigated by Councillors (in pairs) and that they would report their findings back to the Committee at this meeting.

- 2.2 The areas and the Councillors responsible for their investigation are as follows:

Garden Waste - Councillors Mrs Blacklock and Gill.

Problems - including the areas and cases where recycling could be problematic - Councillors Copping and Smith.

Public participation - including the public's view on the progress which the Council had made – Councillors Hatfield and Sandhar

Contractors - considering the performance of the contractors in providing the garden waste and paper recycling schemes - Councillor Mrs Compton and Councillor Davies.

- 2.3 The findings of the Councillors for Garden Waste, Problems and Contractors are detailed at appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report. A verbal report will be made to the meeting on Public Participation.

- 2.4 It was also requested at the October meeting that a report be submitted to this meeting on the recycling of plastics in the District. This is a separate report on the agenda.

3. OUTCOME REQUIRED

- 3.1 Members are requested to consider the next step in the scrutiny of recycling and how they want to prepare their report for submission to the Executive in February.

Nigel Roberts
Strategic Director

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Minutes 7th October 2003

Areas in District Affected: All wards.

Executive Portfolio Area and Holder: Environment Services – Mrs Begg

For further information about this report please contact:

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Garden Waste Recycling

We interviewed the 2 officers, R Dobbs and H Parkinson, and visited the waste Recycling facility at Bubenhall where we observed the process and spoke to the manager, Gareth Swain.

- There is no doubt about the success of the scheme, overall.
This is due to –
 - 1 good advance publicity
 - 2 careful trialing, in Whitnash
 - 3 efficient and enthusiastic contractors
- success can be measured by
 - a. the uptake: an estimated 95% of green bins are in regular use and about 80% of those eligible are put out to be emptied on any given day
 - b. the minimal amount of unwanted/inappropriate material in the bins. People clearly understand the purpose of the collections and the contractors commented on the high quality of the bin contents.
- Green waste recycling is making the district Greener and cleaner in 2 ways:
Removing and composting the waste so that it reduces in bulk, no longer looks or smells offensive and actually gains value and
After only 8 weeks of natural composting, the end product is used to cover adjacent land fill, (where general waste is buried) as the final layer in restoring the landscape and converting the land into a usable and productive resource.
- Issue for the future
 - *Capacity: both contractors are able to expand the service they provide. ECT, the collectors, are a national experienced company and were easily able to bring in more vehicles when demand exceeded expectations this year. WRG, the recycling company, have created a new facility which is currently running at 50% potential. They are very keen to expand it to 100% i.e 15,000 tons per year.
 - *Public Expectations: given the on-going success of the scheme, is it right to deny participation to half the households in the District when there is no reason to doubt they would respond as well as the existing beneficiaries?
 - * Finance: the government is inviting bids for the capital cost of new bins. We have missed the deadline for 2004 but it is possible to bid for 2005. WDC would have to budget for the operational costs, up to £300,000 annually.

CONCLUSION

We were unable to identify any problems and feel the public should be given more feedback about achievements so far.

A Blacklock and B Gill
November 2003

Scrutiny of Recycling – Problems

Scrutiny undertaken by Councillor Roger Copping and Councillor Roger Smith of the problems encountered under the new Kerbside Recycling Services Contract.

- Initial meeting was held between Councillors Copping and Smith, Heather Parkinson (Recycling Officer) and Richard Dobbs (Waste Strategy Officer) to discuss the best way forward
- E-mails were sent out to all District Councillors asking for information on problems which they had come across with the recycling service, or which had been reported to them by residents.
- Six replies were received in total, a summary of the responses is given below:
 1. The services for both green waste and red boxes both suffered initial teething problems but these had largely now been resolved
 2. Some residents had problems handling the bins and boxes – again these initial problems had largely been resolved but officers were looking at wheels to go on the boxes and alternative containers. Assisted collections for elderly and disabled residents were already in place
 3. Councillor Mrs Hodgetts raised the wider question of whether the Council should collect garden waste door to door rather than encouraging residents to compost at home.
 4. Residents who were not on the green waste scheme had expressed annoyance at the perceived inequality – particularly given the continuing charge for collecting garden waste in those areas not covered by the wheeled bin scheme.
- There were also issues with red box recycling from flats – some properties which previously had been using bulk bins had seen these removed at the start of the new Contract and not replaced with an alternative. New banks are currently being trialled at three locations across the District and funding has been applied for from DEFRA to supply banks to all blocks of flats District-wide. A decision on the funding bid is expected by mid-January, 2004 at the latest.

Contractors

I have had a telephone interview with Max Ahern Contract Manager at ECT - main points –

24,000 Households participate in the Green Scheme since March 2003 52,000

Households participate in Red Box Scheme since April 2003 Approx. 75% uptake of households in areas covered.

Red Boxes - paper collection - much more popular than the Plastic Bags.

More people have asked for Green Bins than the contract covers

Problems - Kerb side collection - some people think it is a back door collection as with refuse.

Some people do not adhere to what exactly should be put in bins.

Yellow Pages - these have been mixed up with ordinary newspapers and have had to be manually sorted.

Overall he considers that the scheme as so far delivered across the District is an overwhelming success, with Green Waste up take very good.