

Report to: **Executive**  
Date: **6 February 2007**  
Report of: **Executive Member for Liveability**  
Subject **'Park-it' recycling scheme and improvements to recycling banks.**  
Ward: **All**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 This report is to seek approval to implement two separate recycling initiatives.

## **2. Consultation**

2.1 The Director of Finance and Corporate Services, the Monitoring Officer, Premier Waste Management and Durham County Council have been consulted in drafting this report.

The Working Executive meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2006 informally discussed and welcomed the two proposals. The Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee was consulted and support the recommendation of this report.

## **3. Background**

3.1 The council has agreed that certain environmental BVPIs will be key indicators of our performance which include;

- BVPI 82 (a) which measures recycling rates including from the kerb-it scheme recycling banks, and
- BVPI 82 (b) which measures composting rates including the green waste scheme and soil conditioner from the aerobic digester.

There has been significant improvement in recycling performance within the District in recent years as shown in the table below.

Year	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
BVPI 82 (a) RECYCLING	5.39%	6.93%	11.76%
BVPI 82 (b) COMPOSTING	3.84%	6.71%	15.15%
Total recycling and composting	9.23%	13.64%	26.91%

Despite these improvements BVPI 82 (a) performance which relates to recycling rates alone is still in the bottom quartile.

Envirocall receive a significant number of calls from residents who are concerned about the lack of recycling arrangements for materials other than glass, cans and paper within the District particularly plastic and cardboard.

3.2 It is proposed that members consider two new recycling schemes that are intended to increase recycling rates and increase the range of materials that can be recycled within the District.

## 4. Position Statement and Option Appraisal

### Introducing the pilot 'Park-it' scheme for the collection of plastic and cardboard

4.1 Premier Waste Management Ltd. have obtained DEFRA funding to develop a pilot scheme to recycle plastic and cardboard and are asking a number of local authorities in the area to participate. This has involved building a further digester tower at Thornley to process the household waste collected in connection with the 'Park-it' scheme. This Council has been asked to select a pilot area of around 5,000 homes in which the scheme will operate. Durham City are trialing the scheme at 6,500 households and South Tyneside at 7,500 households. The 'Park-it' scheme will operate in addition to the 'Kerb-it' scheme not instead of it.

4.2 Participating Councils will adapt their refuse collection arrangements in the pilot areas so that residents will be asked to put waste plastic containers and cardboard into a strong plastic bag for collection by the council together with wheelie bin waste.

Residents will be required to put the bag into the wheelie bin and put it out for collection each week. The bags containing the plastic and cardboard would be emptied into the refuse collection vehicle along with the rest of the household waste.

The sacks are strengthened to survive compaction and are therefore known as 'survival bags'. The refuse collection vehicle would take the combined waste to Coxhoe Waste Site instead of Thornley, and here the contents would be tipped out. The survival bags would be manually removed from the household waste and the plastic and cardboard separated for recycling.

Premier Waste would then load the household waste into another refuse collection vehicle and transport it back to Thornley where it would be processed by the new aerobic digester to produce a soil conditioner. The additional amounts of soil conditioner produced would be used to fertilise willow coppices that produce bio-fuel for power generation. Premier Waste advise that this will result in 86% of the household waste in the pilot area being recycled.

4.3 The performance targets relating to recycling are very challenging and will continue to increase in future years. Most Councils will be faced with introducing step changes in service delivery to increase recycling rates and to keep costs down. Derwentside have introduced a twin bin alternate weekly collection scheme which has had some success and is achieving up to 40% recycling rates.

However, there is some objection nationally to alternate weekly collections due to the length of time food waste is stored prior to collection and this can be unpopular with residents. The 'Park-it' scheme is potentially a viable alternative that enables high recycling rates to be achieved while maintaining a weekly collection programme.

4.4 Premier Waste will operate this scheme as a pilot for 14 months commencing in May 2007. During this period Premier Waste would supply the bags and the council would be responsible for their distribution. The Council will face extra transportation costs in taking the waste to Coxhoe instead of Thornley and will need to negotiate a

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settlement with the workforce for this additional journey. The extra cost could be met from DEFRA grants during the pilot period in 2007/08. The future availability of the grant is uncertain beyond then.

- 4.5 If we introduce this scheme into a pilot area of 5,000 households it is estimated that an additional 4,300 tonnes of waste would be recycled each year which would be 10% of the waste arising. If our recycling performance from other streams remained the same this would therefore add 10% to our combined recycling/composting performance.
- 4.6 It would be proposed to trial the Park-it scheme in areas of the west of the District as few of the villages in the west are included in the green waste scheme and running the trial in the west will minimise any additional travel by the refuse collection vehicles which will be required to take refuse to Coxhoe instead of Thornley Waste Transfer Station. It is estimated that the total additional distance travelled per week will be around 70 miles. The villages that will be included in the Park-it scheme are Thornley, Wheatley Hill, Wingate, Station Town and Deaf Hill.
- 4.7 The introduction of the scheme will require a substantial programme of education for residents and this will be agreed in conjunction with Premier Waste and our Communications Unit. Premier Waste Management Ltd will fund the Education programme.
- 4.8 It is considered that the Council has two options regarding this pilot scheme as follows;
  - i) That we wait for further clarity on the county wide waste strategy and seek to develop refuse collection and recycling services that are compatible with other Districts and the County Council's long-term waste disposal plans.
  - ii) That we agree to participate in this trial to test whether the Park-it scheme is a viable alternative to the twin-bin alternate weekly collection system and to gain the benefit of increased recycling rates during the trial period.

## **Improving Recycling Banks**

- 4.9 The Council has 42 recycling banks which comprise 1,100 litre wheeled refuse container being sited in car parks, etc. across the District. These are available for residents to take bottles and paper to for recycling. The recycling banks contribute around 0.9% to our recycling rate. We pay a private contractor £5 per visit to each recycling site to collect material which totals £5,460 per year. These sites are run down and have poor signage and although being well used they are in need of improvement and some of the locations are not appropriate.
- 4.10 The Council has been awarded a Waste Performance Efficiency Grant from DEFRA of around £79,000 per year during 2006/07 and 2007/08 which is to be used for improving recycling and must be spent 50% capital and 50% revenue. It is proposed to use this money to upgrade the Council's recycling banks and resite ones that are in inappropriate locations. Those that are in inappropriate locations are detailed in appendix 1.

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It is also proposed to introduce plastic recycling banks at selected locations on a trial basis.

Upgrading of the recycling banks would involve a programme for refurbishing the containers and improving the signage. It is also proposed to provide attractive casings around the recycling containers at the Council Offices complex as a pilot with a view to extending the use of casings to other sites subject to further Government funding.

The containers at this site are currently within the compound at the rear of building 5 and are to be moved into a more accessible position in the top car park.

- 4.11 It is anticipated that this will make the recycling sites more attractive to use which may increase recycling rates within the District and improve customer satisfaction.

## **5. Implications**

### 5.1 *Financial*

The Council has been awarded a Waste Performance Efficiency Grant from DEFRA of around £79,000 per year during 2006/07 and these proposals will ensure that this money is spent on improving recycling as is intended.

If the Council continued the Park-it scheme beyond the pilot period we would have to pay for the plastic sacks, estimated at £100,000 per annum if we used this system across the District or £15,000 per annum if we restricted it to the pilot area.

If operated across the whole District the distribution costs would be in the region of £5,000 to £20,000 depending on whether we carry out the work internally or contract it out and the total cost would depend on whether the sacks are delivered weekly, monthly, quarterly or half yearly. The cost of the Park-it scheme during the 14 months of the pilot will be minimal and limited to additional costs of transferring the refuse to Coxhoe and there is no obligation to continue the scheme beyond the trial period if members chose not to.

### 5.2 *Legal* None

### 5.3 *Policy* None

### 5.4 *Risk Implications*

There are a number of risks associated with the Park-it pilot scheme as follows;-

- The pilot period is short term in comparison with other recycling schemes and the future beyond the pilot period is uncertain. It may cause confusion if the scheme were withdrawn after 14 months. The future of the scheme beyond the pilot can be explored further at the present time. An effective communication strategy will be developed to minimise this risk. The scheme can be discontinued simply by not distributing further sacks and effective communication of the reasons.

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- There will be extra costs in the longer term in purchasing and delivering the refuse sacks which will be managed through planning existing budgets and will not require growth. Extending the scheme beyond the pilot will require further research and approval.
- Residents in parts of the District not covered by the pilot Park-it scheme may be dissatisfied at not having a plastic and cardboard recycling service. This will be managed by seeking to introduce plastic recycling at selected recycling banks.

## 5.5 *Communications*

Detailed publicity material will be distributed widely prior to the scheme being introduced. An education and advisory programme will be developed in conjunction with the Communication Unit.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### 6.1 *Corporate Plan and Priorities*

The improvement of recycling performance is an important factor in achieving top quartile performance in key BVPIs, and in delivering Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities. The above measures are likely to increase BVPI 82 performance by 10%.

### 6.2 *Procurement*

None

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 That approval be given for the introduction of the pilot 'Park-it' scheme and refurbishment or resiting of the recycling sites as detailed in section 4 of this report.

### **Documents and publications used in drafting this report;**

- i) DEFRA consultation document on review of waste strategy and targets
- ii) Government Strategy Waste 2000
- iii) County Durham Waste Strategy.
- iv) Local Government White Paper

## **Appendix 1**

### **Bring Sites**

Proposed sites to be resited to improve accessibility for public use.

<b>Premise</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b><u>Village</u></b>
Dawdon Social Club	Princess Road	Seaham
Masonic Lodge	North Road	Seaham
The Edenhill Pub	Yoden Road	Peterlee
Shotton Hall Banqueting Suite	The Village	Old Shotton
The Royal George	The Village	Old Shotton
Breathless Bar	Middle Street	Blackhall
Hardwick Hall Manor Hotel	Hesleden Road	Blackhall
Colliery Club and Institute	Seaside Lane	Easington
The Derby	Seaside Lane	Easington
Workmens Club	Wordsworth Avenue	Wheatley Hill
Castle Eden Golf Club	Stockton Road	Castle Eden
The Village Inn	Gregson Terrace	Murton
Comrades Club	Station Road	Horden
Comrades Club	Back Potto Street	Shotton