

Report to: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **29th January 2008**
Report of: **Executive Member for Liveability**
Subject: **Consideration of the Extension of the Green Waste Kerbside Collection Service**
Ward: **All**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the extension of green waste collection in the District, from 16,000 households to approximately 32,000 households.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 There is public interest and support for extension of green waste collection services in the District. Regular requests for extension of the green waste scheme are made through envirovcall, at Area Forums and through correspondence. At the "Talking Rubbish" workshops on 16th and 17th July 2007 attended by 28 residents the following results were found:

Future of Green Waste	Service should be scrapped	Service should be maintained at existing levels	Service should be extended if finance can be found	Don't know
Workshop 1	0%	25%	67%	8%
Workshop 2	6%	25%	44%	25%

Caution should be exercised however in extrapolating these figures to a District wide basis as the numbers involved are very small.

- 2.2 At the time of writing, Senior Officers from the Council are working with colleagues from Durham County Council and Districts in the revision of a Waste Management Strategy for the County, to take into account the new, and more ambitious targets in the England Waste Strategy 2007. Whilst this Strategy will be subject to Member approval, early indications are that the kerbside collection of garden waste for composting will make a contribution to reducing quantities of biodegradable municipal waste being landfilled. This may help to avoid considerable financial penalties to the waste disposal authority, if it fails to meet its targets.

2.3 The Scrutiny Management Board have taken an active interest in the potential for green waste extension in the District, and have received verbal update on progress.

3. Key Decision

3.1 This is a key decision. The Council's Executive will take into consideration the views from this Scrutiny Committee as part of its formal consideration to the scheme.

4. Background

4.1 On 1st February 2005 Members approved the introduction of fortnightly kerbside green waste collection to 15,000 homes in the District. Experience from this first year allowed the scheme to be extended during 2006 to cover 16,000 homes, which is the maximum capacity that the vehicle and crew can cope with.

4.2 The District Council has made considerable strides in improving its recycling and composting rates, and during 2006/7 achieved 34%, the third best in the North East. This success has been attributable to a number of factors, including residents recycling more, increased use of "bring" sites, plastics and cardboard recycling in part of the District, waste treatment through aerobic digestion, and the green waste collection service. Based on 2006/07 figures, the contributions to the overall recycling rate are as follows:-

Glass, paper etc taken to bring sites for recycling	1%
Metal recovered from white goods collection service	0.75%
Kerbside collection of green waste from 16,000 homes for composting	4%
Kerbside collection of glass, paper and cans for recycling	8.6%
Recycling and composting by aerobic digester	19.8%
Percentage of the total waste that is recycled or composted	34%

The impact of new refuse policies together with the introduction of District wide plastics and cardboard recycling through the new kerbside collection contract on the 1/4/08 will likely improve this performance still further.

4.3 There is an opportunity to extend the green waste collection service to the remaining 16,000 households in the District that have sufficient garden space that are currently not covered by this service. In 2005 the introduction of the new service to part of the District was funded largely through the charge for certain special collections which reduced service requests sufficiently to enable a vehicle and crew to be realigned to green waste collection.

- 4.4 Two years on, partnership working is being developed with Crate (a Hornden based recycling/reuse charity) to increase the range and quantity of items they collect for restoration and reuse. This is reducing demand on the special collection service. In addition, the introduction of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations during 2007 has required manufacturers to take responsibilities for appliances, including the collection disused appliances when new ones are delivered. This has resulted in a drop in requests for white goods collections to the Council. The introduction of cardboard and plastic collection at kerbside for recycling from 1/4/08 may reduce the workload of the residual collection crews.
- 4.5 The extension of the green waste service, partnership working with Crate and the introduction of plastic and cardboard recycling may reduce demands on the residual and special collection services. This will be monitored with a view to maintaining value for money by ensuring that resources are efficiently aligned. Local Government reorganisation may also provide a further opportunity to improve the cost effectiveness of services.

5 Position Statement and Option Appraisal

- 5.1 The potential impact of extending the green waste collection service has been evaluated against a number of performance criteria. This has enabled the identification of favourable and adverse impacts, which are summarised as detailed below. Research shows that authorities that have been awarded beacon status for their recycling services provide a garden waste collection service to the majority of their residents and this helps achieve high levels of performance against the range of relevant indicators. **Appendix 1** gives examples.

5.2 Favourable impact:

i) **Increased satisfaction with recycling services (BV 90b).**

The Council receives a significant number of requests to extend the green waste collection service into other areas of the District and whilst these are not quantifiable the indication is that satisfaction with recycling services would be significantly increased if this service were extended.

ii) **Reduced household residual waste (NI 191).**

Residual waste is the waste that is put out by residents in the green wheelie bin for disposal, which is not then recycled nor treated by the aerobic digester. It is estimated that between 8-10% of residual household refuse (outside green waste collection areas) is green waste.

The kerbside collection of green waste will ensure that this is removed from the residual waste stream and will improve performance against this indicator.

iii) **Increased Household Waste Composted (part of NI192).**

It is estimated that extending the green waste collection service would increase composting performance by a further 4%. Whilst the aerobic digester contribution gives a strong likelihood that the District of Easington would meet the 2010 recycling/composting targets of 40%, the new Council must consider performance across the whole county.

The current countywide performance for recycling/composting is 32% which indicates that a significant improvement is required before 2010 to hit the 40% target.

The proposed increase in composting rates from the extension of this service will be a contribution towards the new council achieving its targets by 2010.

Other districts are also considering introducing or extending green waste collection services within their respective districts and Durham County Council are initially supportive of these proposals.

iv) **Reduction in Municipal Waste Landfilled (NI193) and Biodegradable Municipal Waste Landfilled.**

As a member state the UK must conform with the European Union Landfill Directive which sets targets for us to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste placed in landfill. The Government has converted these targets to individual allowances that will apply to each Waste Disposal Authority, including the new Council. Currently County Durham landfills around 184,500 tonnes of municipal waste each year. The new council is faced with a target to reduce this to 163,300 tonnes a year by 2010. Government policies aim is to make landfilling economically unattractive to encourage councils to invest in alternative collection and recycling schemes instead. This means that the new Council will be faced with escalating costs for the landfilling of waste. In 2007/08 landfill tax is paid to the government at a rate of £24 per tonne of waste landfilled. The Waste Strategy for England 2007 sets out the intention to increase landfill tax by £8 every year until at least 2010/11 (i.e. to £48). In addition there is a significant penalty of up to £150 per tonne for exceeding the landfill allowance. Services which reduce the amount of bio degradable waste (in this case garden waste) going to landfill, will ultimately help our residents to avoid paying these significant taxes and penalties to the government and invest money in improved services instead.

It is estimated that extending the service will increase the total tonnages of green waste being collected across the whole district to around 3,200 tonnes per year.

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The cost of the different ways of disposing 3,200 tonnes of this material is shown in the following table;

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aerobic digestion (tax free)	£251,520	£262,580	£273,043
Landfilling including tax and transfer station costs.	£174,000	£203,500	£233,148
Composting cost	£67,328	£70,021	£72,821

NB. Assumes a 4%RPI: Collection costs are not taken into account.

The lack of a clear countywide waste disposal strategy at this stage makes it difficult to predict whether Durham will be levied these fines however Durham County Council are currently considering budget increases of £1M a year to cover the increasing costs associated with landfilling. These costs are not accounted for in the assessment of financial implications in 6.1 below but represent a significant risk.

5.3 Adverse Impact:

i) Increase in cost per household of waste collection.

Whilst 5.2 iv, above shows the savings that will be made in disposal costs, the increased collection costs outlined in the financial implications section 6.1, show that there will be a net increase in the cost per household for waste collection services. Whilst no longer part of the national indicator set, it is estimated that at a worst case revenue cost increase of £139,000 during 2008/09, this will raise the cost per household by £3.30 to £52.00 per household.

Contributions from Durham County Council would reduce this cost and there is an opportunity to reduce costs by developing partnership working with Crate and reviewing the impact on the resource requirements for the special collection and residual waste collection services in line with the local government review process.

5.4 Impact not established:

i) CO2 reduction from Local Authority Operations (NI185).

Whilst the transport associated with green waste collection will undoubtedly have an adverse impact on CO2 emissions, this will to some degree be offset by the avoidance of green waste to landfill.

Methane emissions from biodegradable waste in landfill accounts for 40% of all UK methane emissions and 3% of all UK greenhouse gas emissions. Methane is 23 times more damaging a greenhouse gas as carbon dioxide.

The benefits of composting rather than landfilling garden waste may therefore offset the extra CO2 emissions from the extra vehicle.

The use of green waste as a compost could further add benefits by promoting carbon sequestration through plant growth.

6. Implications

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The estimated net cost of implementing the scheme amounts to around £320,000.

One off or non-recurring costs

Of this sum £210,000 will be required to purchase 17,000 wheelie bins in the current year, 2007/8, in readiness for the growing season.

It is proposed to meet this cost from general fund savings in the current year.

Year on year running costs

Future running costs are estimated to be £110,000 per annum and these are detailed in the table below. There is the potential that Durham County Council may contribute to these costs, in recognition of the savings accrued through less biodegradable waste to landfill. This is not confirmed or quantified at this stage and is subject to further discussion between respective Officers. Provision for the running costs of the scheme were included in the Medium Term Financial Plan agreed last February.

Detail	£
Staffing costs: - Additional Crew	84000
Transport::Lease/maintenance/vehicle running costs	<u>55,000</u>
Sub Total	139,000
<u>Less:</u> Contributions from Durham County Council.(say)	<u>29,000</u>
Net Cost	<u>110,000</u>

Staff appointments would be made on a temporary basis pending development of a service level agreement with Crate and to enable a review to be made of the resource impact on other collection services in line with local government review.

Savings in waste disposal costs

Joint working with Durham County Council has identified significant benefits in both financial and environmental terms in extending the green waste service which will improve biodegradable waste diversion helping achieve LATS targets and avoid paying significant landfill tax increase forecast for the coming years.

In order to support the extension of the green waste service the County Council has indicated it may be willing, subject to approval, to contribute the difference between their current composting gate fee costs for green waste which are £21.04 per tonne and the cost of the recycling credit which is currently £44.73 per tonne.

Negotiations are in hand to confirm and quantify any contribution by the County Council and at present a conservative estimate of £29,000 is used in the above projection.

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All risks are within the corporate appetite. There is a risk that the new council may be faced with fines of £150 per tonne for not hitting LATS targets, and schemes such as this will help to reduce that risk.

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Home composting is recognised as the best environmental option for dealing with green waste, and accordingly the Councils efforts in promoting this in the District will continue, for instance the provision of low cost composting bins. It is however recognised through consultation, that the bins alone would not be sufficient to respond to the volume of green waste produced.

Subject to Members views on the proposal, the details of the extended green waste collection scheme would be widely promoted to residents, in order to maximise the take up.

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This will improve performance against a range of performance indicators and help deliver LAA targets and statutory requirements. The corporate plan and transition plan give a commitment to increasing the recycling of waste.

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Procurement arrangements conform with corporate policies and procedures.

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The scheme has been evaluated against a number of environmental performance indicators, and the overall effect assessed as favourable.

The positive impact that it makes in relation to reducing biodegradable waste to landfill is an important factor influencing the long term viability of this scheme.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That Community Services Scrutiny Committee consider the proposal of extending the green waste collection service to approximately 16,000 more properties within the District of Easington.

Councillor George Patterson, Executive Member for Liveability

Background documents referred to:

Waste Strategy for England 2007

Executive 1st February 2005 Kerbside Green Waste Collection

Executive 24th July 2007 Revision of Policies for Refuse Collection

Appendix 1, Abstracts from websites of authorities with Beacon status for recycling.

Lichfield District Council

Well done to our residents - together we recycle nearly half of all the rubbish the District produces! We provide an easy-to-use recycling scheme to all our residents. Every week we collect your recyclables that you leave out in your green boxes. On alternate weeks we collect either your black bin that contains non-recyclable household waste or your brown bin that contains compostable materials such as grass clippings and leaves.

Borough of Rushcliffe

This is Rushcliffe Borough Council's first Beacon award, and we are keen to share our experiences and successes with other councils. Over the past few years we have learned a great deal about recycling -and if other councils are able to emulate our successes, more of the country's waste will be recycled or composted, rather than taken to landfill sites. Rushcliffe's recycling rate is one of the best in the country - in 2005/06 we recycled or composted 49.9% of your waste. Almost every household in the borough has three bins: green for garden waste; blue for plastic bottles, paper, card, and cans; and grey for everything that can't be recycled.

East Hampshire residents 'a beacon for recycling'

East Hampshire District Council has been awarded Beacon Council status for its excellent work in reducing waste and encouraging recycling.

Its innovative work in this field was recognised at the seventh annual Beacon Council Awards Ceremony, hosted in London on Monday 20 March by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Garden waste collection service

We provide a service for collecting your garden waste from the kerbside. The fortnightly kerbside collections are on the same day as your recycling, but by a different vehicle.

Peter borough City Council Waste & recycling scheme awarded Government Beacon Status

Recycling initiatives operated by Peterborough City Council have been awarded government Beacon Status, which recognises excellence in service provision that can be imitated and shared with other local authorities.

Peterborough and Cambridgeshire (RECAP) partnership has attained Beacon Council Status for its work in reducing the amount of rubbish dumped into landfill sites and for the innovative way that councils have worked together and with the community.

The partnership has seen the recycling rate across the area increase from 22 per cent in 2001 to 43 per cent compared to a current national recycling rate of 23 per cent. Kerbside collections of green waste and dry recyclables have been introduced throughout the area.

Wealden makes the Top Ten for recycling

WEALDEN's recycling efforts have earned it a Top Ten position in the Government's league table for waste management.

Wealden is ranked ninth in the national league table which monitors the recycling and composting efforts of over 390 local authorities drawn up by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Wealden has moved up two places from last year, and has now secured a place in the recycling Top Ten out of over 390 local authorities for 2003-2004.

Crown (Composting and Recycling our Waste Now) is a three bin segregated waste collection service. It operates across approximately two thirds of the Wealden District in the more built up areas. Households within the scheme are issued with the following containers:

Wheeled bin for garden waste and cardboard

Blue box for mixed paper, mixed cans and aluminium foil

Wheeled bin for remaining waste

The pattern of collections is carried out on an alternate weekly basis, with the bin for green waste and blue kerbside box emptied one week and the refuse bin the next (both on the same day of the week). This segregated collection pattern allows a greater proportion of household waste to be recycled or composted.

Bath and North East Somerset

As a Council, we have adopted a vision of zero waste and were awarded Beacon Status in 2000 for our waste and recycling services.

Cardboard and garden waste is collected every fortnight to be made into compost.

Garden waste is collected by paying for our wheeled bin service or by purchasing individual paper sacks that are biodegradable and suitable for composting.

If you just wish to put cardboard out on its own free of charge, please pack it flat and put it inside a cardboard box or tie with string. Please do not use plastic carrier bags.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council is recognised as a high performer in recycling and in 2004/05 we were the first authority to break the 50 percent mark for recycling.

St Edmundsbury's three-bin system involves the collection of recycled items from two bins (compostable materials and dry recyclables such as paper, plastic and cans) one week with the rest of the rubbish (such as food, pet waste and disposable nappies) the next week. The garden waste and vegetable peelings are composted and turned into soil improver which is sold to individuals and organisations such as landscaping companies. The dry recyclables are sorted at Great Blakenham, sold on the global market and turned into items such as newspapers, traffic cones, fleeces, street signs and park benches.

Daventry District Council was awarded Beacon Status by central Government, in March 2006, in recognition of its outstanding performance in waste & recycling.

Virtually every household within Daventry district receives a refuse and recycling service. Each house should have:

- A brown bin for garden waste and cardboard
- A red box for newspapers, pamphlets and textiles
- A blue box for food tins, drinks cans, glass, aerosols and plastic bottles
- A grey bin for the rest of the rubbish

London Borough of Bexley

Bexley has been one of the highest recyclers in London for many years. This success is underpinned by its comprehensive urban cutting-edge recycling services, the Council's corporate processes that drive performance, and use of imaginative ways to ensure that all sections of the community are actively engaged in recycling.

Refuse and Recycling Arrangements for houses are:-



Paper and cardboard



Glass



Plastic and tins



Garden waste



Residual waste