

Bath & North East Somerset Council

PROJECT TITLE:	Food Waste Recycling Collections Date started: 4 October 2010	8 November 2010
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DEPT / SERVICE AREA:	Environmental Services – Waste Services	
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1.0 PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING NOTE

This briefing note is to bring the Safer & Stronger Communities O&S Panel up-to-date with the implementation and initial outcomes of the food waste recycling collections from 4 October 2010.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 Collections started as planned on Monday 4 October, with a high tonnage of food waste collected from that first day - about 20 tonnes per day on average and this is continuing as the weeks pass. This is about 1.3kgs per household overall as our forecasts. Estimates from crews and supervisors are that around 50% of residents are taking part, which is very encouraging and we send our thanks to those residents for responding as they have.

2.2 The more residents who use the new collections, putting out as much food waste as possible on a regular basis, the more cost-effective and efficient the scheme. The results of the first few weeks are very encouraging but we are confident that there's even more food waste our residents can put out in their new containers.

2.3 The food waste is being transported on a daily basis to New Earth Solutions in-vessel composting plant at Sharpness in Gloucestershire in sealed bulk containers from May Gurney's depot in Keynsham. It's reported that contamination levels have been low - ie residents have been using liners or newspaper, not plastic bags, which adversely affect the composting process. The process takes only a week before a high-nutrient compost is produced for use on agricultural land. Further information can be found at www.newearthsolutions.co.uk.

2.4 The vast majority of the delivery of start-up packs of the two sizes of containers plus a roll of 52 compostable liners plus full instructional leaflet took place from 20th Sept to 1st Oct. May Gurney continued to make deliveries of start-up packs to houses with multiple flats and other households as requested. Some households have asked for additional bins; others have opted to share the larger outside container between flats or small households.

2.5 The waste collection day was changed at the same time from Friday to Monday for approx 1,200 households in Odd Down, Bathavon South and West wards as part of a rebalancing exercise for the refuse, recycling and garden waste collections.

2.6 Calls to Council Connect increased for a few weeks during the container delivery and start of collections as anticipated and planned for; however these were answered promptly through close monitoring of levels and successful deployment of resources including the extra temporary staff who had been brought in. All call-centre and face-to-face staff were thoroughly briefed on the details of the project start-up and new service and were able to answer most queries at first point of contact.

2.7 There have been a number of additional missed collections during the first few weeks as to be expected in a service change of this scale for a variety of reasons such as collection times changing and different rounds for crews; again these were managed efficiently through the Waste Services / Council Connect reporting process. Additional resources were also employed by May Gurney to return for these effectively and promptly.

3.0 COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 Our Communications team have worked hard at many roadshows, events and talks to groups in the build-up to raise awareness amongst the public and this has been much appreciated by those people they've talked to. 70 roadshows with contact with over 6,755 people have been done so far since March and 79 talks (1,401 people).

3.2 They are continuing to arrange talks and roadshows, so if any groups are interested, they can make contact via Council Connect. There will also be ongoing awareness-raising activity as part of our normal comms, such as Christmas leaflets, to maintain the progress and success of the food waste collections.

3.3 Our food waste communications plan included a phase of general awareness raising via press releases, Connect magazine (several editions) and other channels. This was followed throughout September and into October with more intensive activity, including the mailout to every household of an introductory leaflet (based on a WRAP template) and this was also made available via Parishes, community and residents groups and Council contact points. Specific advertising was also carried out in the press, on local radio, bus stop posters, posters on bus backs and inside, and on various Council vehicles.

3.4 All Council staff were informed via the normal internal comms methods, such as the Intranet and Core message email as many staff are also residents. They were asked to help spread the message to residents and help to identify any cross-service impacts.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

4.1 We need to work with May Gurney to continue the successful bedding in of the collection service, and to ensure that it is operating as effectively as possible. We are monitoring the collections so that prompt and efficient action can be taken to resolve any issues and address any residents' queries.

4.2 A programme of door-knocking in specific areas is being carried out, currently focussed on the students coming back to live off-campus for their second and third years, with over 1,175 properties already visited. There will be ongoing communications and this will be key to increasing the number of households taking part and ensuring that any drop-off is minimised.

4.3 The continuing communications will also help to address any issues such as contamination through the use of plastic shopping bags instead of compostable liners or newspaper. Our food waste web-FAQs include details of supermarkets and local shops where people can get more of the liners.

4.4 A second phase of food waste recycling collections will be to explore and develop the options for the households that we have not been able to offer the service to at the moment. These are mainly blocks of flats with Mini Recycling Centres (MRCs) and the city centre streets which use green sacks for their dry recycling collections.

4.5 We have seen the decoupling of waste growth from increasing housing numbers in recent years and our complex waste model is being reviewed and revised to re-base future projections accordingly. At the moment, the forecast participation and tonnage to be collected from these food waste collections has been integrated into the waste data model for future years up to 2019/2020, running at approx 5,350 tonnes per year, based on 1.3kgs per week per household on average. Currently our recycling rate is forecast to go up from about 44% this year (with 6 months of food waste) to nearly 65% in 2019/20.

5.0 RISK and BUDGET MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk register was compiled for the project and on a regular basis. This covers this bedding-in period so that we can ensure that the service operations are fully embedded and all customer service queries and issues are resolved promptly and efficiently.

5.2 External funding (£460,000 in total) was secured from WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme). Claims and reports are being made on a timely agreed basis to ensure that this full income stream is realised by the end of the financial year.

5.3 The project budget, which included the WRAP funding and the Council's allocation (£400,000), is being monitored closely with Finance colleagues. This includes set-up and collection costs, capital spend and repayment, treatment and haulage, and related savings being made in areas such as refuse collection operations and tonnages.

5.4 These food waste collections are a key part of the financial drive to divert waste from landfill (avoiding the cost of Landfill Tax) as well as for environmental reasons such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Being biodegradable waste, the tonnage diverted contributes to the Council's compliance with the LATs (Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme).