

Recycling in Swindon - Motion at Council

CABINET

Date: 21st March 2012

Author: Cabinet Member for StreetSmart and Parks and the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director, Environment, Regeneration and Community

Parish / Wards Affected: All

Purpose

- To inform Cabinet of the proposed steps the Council will take in order to increase recycling rates. This is in response to Motion 9d at Council on 22nd November, 2011.

Recommendation

Cabinet is requested;

1. To note the historic performance and the excellent progress that Swindon has made in achieving its current recycling rate and low levels waste per household sent to landfill.
2. To request that the StreetSmart Service Delivery Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart and Parks, produce an action plan to increase recycling in Swindon, in accordance with the Municipal Waste Management for Swindon, within four months.
3. To advise Full Council of the contents of this report in response to the Motion submitted to the Council meeting on 22nd November 2011.

1 Reasons

- 1.1 At Council on 22nd November, 2011, Councillor Claire Ellis moved, and Councillor David Wren seconded, that:

"This Council recognises the achievement of the people of Swindon in increasing recycling from 13% eight years ago to 50% today. However, we call upon all households in Swindon to recycle all the materials possible in their recycling boxes and sacks and thus further reduce the recyclable waste placed in wheelie bins. Our challenge is can we increase recycling to over 60% and thus do more for the planet and save landfill tax payments.

This Council requests that the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart and Parks report to Cabinet in the next six months on the steps the Council will take in order to increase recycling rates."

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Richard Fisher on 466461 or Email refisher@swindon.gov.uk.

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- 1.2 This report outlines the steps the Council will take to aim towards 60% recycling rate as soon as practicable.
- 1.3 There are significant economic and environmental benefits to diverting waste from landfill through savings in landfill tax, gate fees and potential income from recyclable material. The activities in this report supplement those recommended by Cabinet on 15th February, 2012, for energy recovery from residual waste.

2 Detail

Waste Strategy and Current Position

- 2.1 Since the introduction of the Municipal Waste Strategy for Swindon in 2006, significant investment has been made into increasing the recycling and composting rate through kerbside collections. This resulted in the achievement of 50% recycling and composting in 2010, in line with the Council's Promise 49. Historic performance for recycling, composting and amount of waste produced is shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Along with other authorities, the Council measures its performance against other waste disposal authorities who provide data to the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers. The last period was 2010/11 when 54 authorities returned information. Points of note are:
 - 2.2.1 Swindon has the third lowest residual waste per household - 473.97kg against an average of 589.44 kg per hh.
 - 2.2.2 Swindon has the ninth highest household waste recycled and composted at 50% - the average was 42.86%

Performance Improvements

- 2.3 Even though the standards reached are excellent, a study completed in 2010 showed that as much as 55% of what is left in the residual waste (wheelie bins and blue sacks) could still be recycled in the current collection system. Materials such as paper and plastic are still present in large amounts.
- 2.4 This 55% equates to 22,000 tonnes of waste going to landfill that could be recycled with our current scheme. If all of this was achieved, our overall recycling rate would be 73% and could save up to £1.8M each year (net of any charges), with the opportunity for an income from the materials recycled.

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- 2.5 Any performance improvements are likely to take some time to achieve. In some households, there will be 'quick wins' where they already understand recycling systems and are merely not fully aware of the full scope of the service we offer and the materials that can be recycled. However, there are households where more change will be needed to embed a culture of recycling. Therefore, the improvements will be made over some time and this will be incorporated into any action plan.

Steps to take

- 2.6 To achieve a 60% recycling rate, the Council needs to work with the communities to improve the existing service. There are some key steps to consider prior to an overall action plan being produced. The following actions could be considered in accordance with the Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Swindon:
- 2.6.1 To focus the existing resources available appropriately, the Council will update the information it last obtained in 2009/10 on the levels of recycling performance around the Borough. This will identify areas of recycling where improvements can be made;
 - 2.6.2 We will work with the Ward Members, Locality Leads and communications to identify the barriers that exist which prevent communities from recycling more; and,
 - 2.6.3 Work with the communities to help them to recycle more, using the most appropriate method for them.
- 2.7 The information obtained from these initial steps can then be used to develop a detailed action plan for further improvements to Swindon's recycling rate.
- 2.8 These community-specific steps can be complemented by a Borough-wide campaign to highlight the excellent performance that the residents of Swindon have made so-far and identify the aspiration to achieve 60% recycling so that those households already participating are aware of our push.

Alternative Options

- **Only promote broadly:** The Council's marketing and communications budget for recycling is limited and any broad promotions would be low-cost and unlikely to have significant impact to achieve the improvements desired. Evidence from other waste collection authorities has shown that promotion schemes have a limited return, even where investment is made in professional advertising schemes incorporating television and radio. Appropriate, targeted, investment is the most sustainable and could have the biggest impact. It can be

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complemented by a Borough-wide campaign to highlight generic aspects but should not be used in isolation.

- **Food waste collections:** The single significant material remaining in the residual waste is organic catering waste (i.e. food waste). This can be composted to produce a soil improver or anaerobically digested to produce methane, for energy recovery, and a digestate as a low-quality soil substitute. This option is continually reviewed. However, it would require additional collection rounds, or investment in new vehicles for all services. The savings from landfill, based on the capture and participation rates in other areas, would not offset the costs of collection and it is expected there would be a net revenue impact of £1.2M per year. It would only increase the recycling rate by around 2.5%age points.
- **Primary focus on energy recovery rather than increasing recycling:** Cabinet approved amendments to the Municipal Waste Management Strategy as part of a report presented on 15th February, 2012. This approved the use of waste-to-energy for the disposal of the Borough's residual waste. Improvements in recycling could be seen as detrimental to an energy recovery plant but there are a number of benefits, both to the plant and the overall Strategy:
 - The reduction of inert material, such as glass and metals, is beneficial to the process as it reduces the amount of separation needed and also reduces the risk of inert material (which has no energy value) being in the eventual fuel produced;
 - Although less than landfill, there is a cost to processing waste through a waste-to-energy facility. In contrast, additional recycling can provide an income using infrastructure already in place;
 - Any capacity in a waste-to-energy facility freed by reduced throughput could be used by Swindon Commercial Services Limited to process commercial and industrial waste; and.
 - There are proven environmental benefits to recycling over energy recovery, by reducing the use of raw resources and reusing materials. Considering recycling over recovery is part of the waste hierarchy, which legally recognises those environmental benefits.

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- It is proposed that the initial actions are funded through the existing marketing and communications budget held by SCS as part of the Contract Sum for StreetSmart Services. This has been consulted with the relevant service manager at SCS and is within scope of their existing contractual requirements.
- If recycling collections increase significantly, there will be an implication on the capacity of the collection rounds. Additional recycling collection vehicles may

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be required but these costs may be offset from reduced refuse collection services or increased recycling income.

- There is the potential, albeit unlikely to be swiftly achieved, of significant savings from landfill costs as outlined in the report.
- Any significant reduction in tonnage delivered to landfill has an impact on the waste disposal contract held with Hills Waste Solutions Limited. This may incur a financial penalty; however, this penalty would be offset by the greater savings in landfill tax and any income from recycling.
- The detailed action plan will include a cost-benefit-analysis of any proposed activity to ensure that the costs of carrying out the plan are offset by the benefits of improvements in recycling.

Legal / Human Rights Implications

- All legal and human rights implications have been taken into consideration in preparing this report. It is considered that the report's recommendations are compatible with Convention rights.

Other Implications

- A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed for this specific decision because it is covered in the DIA for the overarching Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This identified that issues of disability and race should be clearly considered in future developments. These considerations are clearly identified in the report.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies:

- This area of work forms part of the One Swindon approach for 'I Like Where I Live' and as part of the One Planet Living Zero Waste principles.

Consultees

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.
- The Managing Director of Swindon Commercial Services Limited
- Board Director, Localities

Background Papers and Appendices

- Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Swindon. 2006 - 2020
- Swindon Borough Council: Composition of Household Residual Waste Streams (Entec UK: September, 2010)

Key Decision / Decision in Forward Plan

- This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan for March 2012.

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Appendix 1:

Historic waste management performance:

Description	BVPIs									
	82a	82b	82c	82d	84a	84b	86	87	91a	91b
	Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent for recycling	Percentage of household waste sent for composting or anaerobic digestion	Percentage of household waste used for energy recovery	Percentage of household waste that is landfilled	Household Waste Collection	Household Waste Collection % Change on Previous Year	Cost of household waste collection per household	Cost of municipal waste disposal per tonne	Kerbside collection of recyclables (one recyclable)	Kerbside collection of recyclables (two recyclables)
Units	%	%	%	%	kg/head	%	£/hh	£/tonne	%	%
2005/06	19.92%	7.82%	0.03%	72.24%	458.00		£43.79	£35.87	100%	89.10%
2006/07	22.52%	9.61%	0.03%	67.98%	476.40	4.02%	£49.40	£38.22	98.90%	87.30%
2007/08	22.82%	11.97%	2.64%	62.57%	481.23	1.01%	£67.10	£43.82	100%	100%
2008/09	25.98%	14.40%	4.51%	55.25%	462.70	-3.85%	£77.39	£46.94	100%	100%
2009/10	31.86%	14.81%	0.01%	53.44%	444.50	-3.93%	£72.11	£51.40	100%	100%
2010/11	32.69%	17.01%	0.01%	50.29%	425.84	-4.20%	£77.42	£53.16	100%	100%

Description	NIs		
	191	192	193
	Residual Household Waste per Household	Percentage HH waste sent for Re-use, Recycling or Composting	Percentage of Municipal Waste Sent to Landfill
Units	kg / hh	%	%
2005/06	Not available		
2006/07	706.97	32.10%	66.20%
2007/08	677.98	34.80%	62.20%
2008/09	598.00	40.20%	53.20%
2009/10	505.23	47.50%	50.90%
2010/11	473.97	50.00%	52.50%

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