

CABINET - 18 DECEMBER 2003

Report of the Head of Technical Services

REVIEW OF REFUSE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING SERVICE

Purpose of the Report

1. To report on the progress made in identifying the options that are available to the Council to increase its recycling and composting performance to meet the targets set in Charnwood Together.
2. To present the results of the public consultation exercise that has been based on six possible options for improvement.
3. To suggest how the results of the consultation exercise can be reflected in a package of measures aimed at meeting the recycling and composting targets.
4. To seek Cabinet's guidance on how it wishes to proceed with the implementation of a scheme to meet the targets.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Cabinet indicates how it wishes to proceed to meet the recycling and composting targets set in Charnwood Together.
2. That Cabinet recognises the need for additional funding for this process when considering next year's revenue budget allocations.

Reason(s)

1. To allow action to be taken to enable the chosen scheme to be introduced during 2004/05.
2. To provide sufficient funds to implement the chosen scheme.

Policy Context

Increasing the percentage of waste recycled to 36% by 2005/06 is one of the priorities contained in the "A sustainable environment" section of the Borough Council's Corporate Plan for 2003-2007. This is in line with the recycling and composting targets set by the Government. The Borough Council has also committed to increasing the amount of waste being composted by the same target date under the Leicestershire Public Service Agreement (LPSA). An additional 1,225 tonnes of garden waste will have to be collected and composted by the Borough Council to meet the LPSA commitment.

Background

The Cabinet last considered how it might meet its recycling and composting targets for 2005/06 in May 2003. Since that time the following actions have been taken to establish a range of options that it might consider and ascertain how the implementation of these options might be received by the public: -

- Discussions have taken place with the Council's Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing contractor, Onyx UK Ltd, to explore three options for performance enhancement based on the expansion of the existing mixed dry recyclable system.
- Officers have investigated the effects of introducing a free garden waste collection scheme across the borough.
- An independent specialist consultant, Indecon Ltd., has been employed to review the outcome of the exercise detailed above and suggest other practical alternatives that the Council might also consider.

- A consultation document has been produced, which encapsulates the outcome of all these actions, to form the basis of a public consultation exercise.
- A consultation exercise has been carried out to seek feedback from the public, local environmental and community groups, Town and Parish Councils and a representative sample of Charnwood residents.
- A scheme, comprising a package of recycling measures, has been produced for member consideration. It takes account of the comments and concerns raised in the consultation exercise. It combines elements of the consultation options to meet the Council's recycling targets at a cost in the mid range of those options.
- An additional option has been produced to take account of the feedback from the consultation exercise.

This report brings together the outcome of all these actions to facilitate the decision process.

The Consultation Exercise

At the core of the consultation exercise was a document that detailed the outcome of the research work that had been carried out by Onyx UK Ltd, Indecon Ltd and Charnwood officers. It was published on the Council's web-site after amendment following consideration by the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee and a meeting of all Charnwood members. A table, summarising the characteristics of the six options detailed in the Consultation Document, is presented in Appendix A.

The consultation exercise consisted of the following approaches: -

- Public meetings at nine locations across the Borough in combination with the budget consultation exercise.
- "Drop in" sessions at the Town Hall on two consecutive Saturday mornings.
- Meeting with representatives from local environmental and community groups specifically to discuss recycling and composting issues.
- Issue of a questionnaire to the Citizen's Panel (1038 households) and a random sample of 1942 households in association with a budget questionnaire.
- Establishment of a dedicated recycling e-mail address.
- Direct correspondence with Town and Parish Councils.

Results of the Public and Community Consultation

The Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee considered a report from the Head of Technical Services on the 16 December 2003. All Cabinet members will have received copies of that report. It should be noted that the Scrutiny Committee report did not include the results of all the public consultation meetings and a verbal update was given at the meeting. The update information will have been circulated to Cabinet before the 18th.

During the consultation exercise it was made clear that the options were only a guide to how the targets could be met and that the final scheme might be a mixture of some the elements of the options. As a result of the consultation process it has become apparent that a combination scheme could be generated to overcome many of the public's concerns whilst still meeting the targets. Details of such a proposal are presented in Appendix B. Members might also wish to look at the appendices to the report to Scrutiny Committee, which summarise the findings of the consultation exercise. It is estimated that a recycling/composting rate of approximately 36% would be achieved at an additional annual cost of approximately £860,000. The success of this scheme meeting and exceeding the targets would be dependent on the public's participation in the garden waste collection element of the scheme. It has been assumed that only 30% of people would use the scheme based on an annual charge of £26. This is considered a conservative estimate and, if more people were to participate, the composting rate will increase and the overall cost of the scheme will reduce.

Conclusion

To meet the 2005/06 targets, action needs to be taken during 2004/05 and it is considered that the chosen scheme must be in place and working by late 2004 to be successful. The need for a comprehensive and thorough publicity/information campaign is vital to the success of the chosen scheme as is the improvement and expansion of the existing network of recycling bring sites.

Background Papers:

Item Date Description

- 1 16/12/03 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Item 5
- 2 04/11/03 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 50
- 3 23/09/03 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 40
- 4 04/09/03 Report to Cabinet – Recycling Performance Enhancement Cardboard Collection and Mobile Recycling Sites Minute 103
- 5 04/09/03 Report to Cabinet – Future Approach to Refuse Collection and Recycling Minute 105
- 6 12/08/03 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 26
- 7 01/07/03 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 15
- 8 27/05/03 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 4
- 9 22/05/03 Report to Cabinet – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 6
- 10 24/04/03 Report to Cabinet – Leicestershire's Public Service Agreement (PSA) Minute 365
- 11 04/02/03 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 82
- 12 14/11/02 Report to Cabinet – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 188
- 13 13/08/02 Report to Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Minute 25