

## Responses to Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why do we have to increase our recycling?**

*A higher recycling target has been set for each Council by Government in response to international legislation, which is linked to the safety of landfill sites. There is no choice about this but, because it is the right thing to do, your Council supports it anyway as stated in it's Corporate Plan – Charnwood Together.*

### **Why can't we do it without a big change, perhaps by collecting green bags weekly or black bags fortnightly, or some other way?**

*Collecting green bags weekly would result in an increase in recycling rate but all the evidence indicates not a big enough increase. So far as we are aware, no Council in the UK collects black bags fortnightly and this is for obvious health reasons. Fortnightly collections of residual waste are always done in a container.*

### **Why are wheelie bins the only way?**

*Wheelie bins are not the only way. However, evidence suggests that one of the best ways of reaching a 36% recycling rate relies on a fortnightly collection of residual waste in a fixed size container. This forces people to seek recycling solutions. The fortnightly collection of residual waste means that a container must be used for public health reasons. A wheeled bin is the obvious choice because of the economy of a wheeled bin collection, which results from the reduction in labour.*

### **Why do we have to move from a weekly to an alternate week collection of general rubbish?**

*For the reasons already stated. It forces people to use recycling opportunities to dispose of more of their waste because they don't have an unlimited alternative.*

### **Why will it cost us about a million pounds extra a year to switch from weekly to alternate weekly collection of general rubbish?**

*The cost is not to switch from a weekly to alternate weekly collection of residual waste but to fund a service that will achieve a recycling rate that will meet the target. The Council is currently investigating a number of options that will potentially meet the target. Cost will play an important part when assessing the relative merits of each option.*

### **What do we do if we can't fit all our rubbish into the black bin?**

*Try to reduce waste at source. Make better use of the recycling and composting facilities. Make better use of the Recycling and Household Waste Sites. Where family size means that it is impossible to manage, additional bin capacity may be allowed provided proof that the family recycles and composts significant amounts.*

### **Won't this lead to an increase in irresponsible dumping in other people's bins or even in gardens or public land?**

*It may but this is usually overstated. Most people in Charnwood are very law-abiding and prosecutions are possible for fly-tipping.*

**Have we looked at all other options? Don't some places use boxes to collect newspaper, glass etc?**

*This is one of the options that the Council is currently investigating. Boxes are sometimes used for collecting separated dry recyclables but we are in partnership with the Leicestershire County Council Recycling Factory, which accepts mixed materials and does not need this level of separation. Evidence suggests that the more separation required, the lower the recycling rate. People respond best to a simple system requiring minimum effort on their part. Adding a box for glass would not increase our rate sufficiently on its own but would require householders to store an additional receptacle within their properties.*

**What's the best percentage that methods that don't need wheelie bins obtain?**

*The best found so far is 29% (Chiltern).*

**Which is the scheme which delivers the best recycling rate without wheelie bins?**

*Chilterns scheme uses 2 boxes (one fortnightly and one 4-weekly), composting at home and via CA sites and a weekly sack collection of residual waste.*

**I live on my own and don't have much rubbish, will I have to have the large tall bin, or can I have a smaller one(s)?**

*Wheeled bins are all the same height to fit the lift on the vehicle. Smaller capacity ones which are narrower and not so deep, therefore lighter and easier to handle, are available.*

**Will we encourage all bins to be stored off the street?**

*We will. We might learn some lessons from Leicester City's approach to this. Wheeled bins became a feature on the streets in Leicester, especially in terraced property areas and the City Council then had to threaten quite heavy fines to try to change this behaviour.*

**Will I have to pay for new ones if mine are stolen or if previous owners/tenants appear to have taken them away? If so how much will this cost?**

*If a bin has gone missing through no fault of your own, we would replace it. We would, however, check out the circumstances and keep a record.*

**How will we help elderly or disabled people wheel their bins to the front on bin day?**

*Not all elderly and disabled people need or want help. We would assess each case on its merits and if appropriate, add the householder on to an assistance list so that the contractor would collect and return the bin.*

**What happens to our old dustbin and our Council green recycling bin?**

*If they are not needed as part of the new scheme, we would offer a collection service, recycle the bins or offer for re-use where possible and dispose of the remainder. We would also suggest alternative uses to the householder e.g. home composters.*

**What will happen if non recyclable rubbish is found in my green bin?**

*If it is serious enough, it would be left with a sticker on it explaining the problem and how the householder can sort it out prior to next collection.*

**Will we still have bottle banks?**

*Yes. Even if a glass collection is part of the new system, there is still likely to be a need for most of them.*

**Why does it cost more to collect a bin from the kerbside once a fortnight, as opposed to from my back gate once a week?**

*It doesn't. It costs more to establish a system that will deliver the required recycling rate. That cost includes the amortised cost of containers and vehicles that are necessary to bring about that massive change in attitudes and habits.*

**I understand that we have to reach 36% household recycling by 2005/6, but will we have to have a new system to meet even higher targets by 2010 and beyond?**

*Quite possibly. The volume of waste is not static – it is ever increasing throughout the economic cycle. Legislation linked to the use of landfill is likely to get more demanding and all Councils will probably be called upon to reduce the use of landfill, especially the organic fraction. That is why it is important to deal with the difficult aspects now and to build in flexibility for the future.*

**What do they do in other European countries that recycle even more than we plan?**

*They seem to be willing to sort more, have put more investment into it over time and they use incinerators more. Incineration is environmentally a less sound, more expensive and a less popular solution in the UK*

## **“QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR” – THE MAIN NEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ARISING OUT OF THE PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Note: If the same or a similar issue has been raised above or in an earlier public meeting, it is not added to the list again.

**20/11/03 Anstey**

**Why can't the targets be met by building on the existing system supported by a big investment in education?**

*The evidence from other high performing Councils around the UK and from independent consultants, as well as our own experience tells us that the target is not achievable in this way. It is recognised that education and awareness raising will play an important part in whichever solution is adopted.*

**Is the collection point likely to change from backdoor to kerbside?**

*All the financial estimates are based on householders bringing containers to the edge of their property (unless they are physically unable to do so). Back door collection would add approximately £400,000 to each of the options.*

**Do all areas of the Borough have the same recycling collection service at the present and do they all perform the same?**

*All areas have the same service at present. There are variations in performance in terms of participation, quantity and quality.*

**What evidence is there for schemes of this type settling down well?**

*The evidence for schemes of this type settling down over time is generally positive.*

**Does the Council have a preferred option?**

*Not yet. The consultation is still in progress and all options are being considered.*

**Would the selected scheme be implemented Borough-wide or piloted?**

*Owing to the limited time allowed to reach the target, the selected scheme would not be piloted but would necessarily have to be phased in across the Borough because of the scale.*

**Would new vehicles be required?**

*In some options new vehicles would be required e.g. kerbside sort. The refuse vehicles currently used are designed to enable any necessary new equipment to be retro-fitted.*

**Would a standard scheme be applied over the whole Borough?**

*Generally yes. The vehicles need to be equipped in a common way in order for it to be economically viable. It has to be an essentially uniform system with any flexibility at the margins.*

**Supermarkets should be made to contribute to the cost of recycling because much of the waste is excess packaging?**

*There's not much the Council can do locally to influence supermarkets but we do lobby nationally through our membership of LARAC.*

**What would be the write-off period of the wheeled bins if they were used?**

*The write-off period would be 10 years for leased equipment such as bins. The costings are based on leasing bins but the decision between purchase and lease still has to be made.*

**How accurate are the figures?**

*The costs and recycling rates attached to the various options are indicative and useful for comparison purposes. Further work would be needed before these were definitely finalised.*

**25/11/03 John Storer House, Loughborough**

**Why collect glass and garden waste when bottle banks and the Recycling & Household Waste Sites are well used?**

*By collecting these materials we can involve people who cannot or will not take them to "bring centres". A garden waste collection gets you to the target but we have concerns about the impact on R&HWS and home composting.*

**If a garden waste collection is included in the selected scheme, would it be optional?**

*Probably. Not all properties have a garden, or want or need a regular garden waste collection.*

**Can anything be done about dry battery recycling – there are schemes in some parts of the UK?**

*At the moment, the Council's priority is to select the best option and get it implemented. Attention will be given to these other important issues as soon as possible.*

**Is there any provision planned for recycling trade waste?**

*No. All of our targets are related to household waste but we do refer enquiries to organisations which offer trade waste recycling services.*

**Isn't there a need for greater consistency of materials and reliability of emptying of recycling centres?**

*Yes. All the options incorporate improvements to recycling centres and rely on increased performance from them.*

**Isn't there a need for awareness raising such as dual litter bins and paper bags rather than plastic bags in the market?**

*Probably. The link between public and private behaviour sounds interesting.*

**I take it that cardboard is currently excluded from the green sack because of the limitations of the MRF?**

*Yes but that should be resolved in the medium term.*

**What would Option E yield without the garden waste collection but with glass in the box(es)?**

*An interesting suggestion, we'll look into it.*

**Have you considered the composting of kitchen waste?**

*Since the Foot & Mouth crisis, this material is excluded from composting collections as we know them. The emphasis for kitchen waste is therefore on home composting including the possibility of modifying redundant green bins for the purpose. Further development of centralised composting may include an in-vessel system which would allow the collection of kitchen waste.*

**Have you considered a seasonal garden waste collection?**

*The evidence from Melton and other Districts is that useful weights of garden waste can be collected all year round.*

**Are we paying the price of our own success – Government seems to have just doubled every District’s previous performance?**

*We think that ultimately all Districts will have the same targets. It’s probably better to achieve it now than leave it until later.*

**Has Autoclaving (a high temperature and pressure treatment of waste) been considered?**

*That would be a matter for the County as Waste Disposal Authority but we will put the suggestion and the local contact forward.*

**What is the timetable for consultation?**

*The decision will be made at a special Cabinet meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2003. Ideally representations should be made by 8<sup>th</sup> December but suggestions will be fed into the decision making process up to and including the meeting.*

**How long will the Borough remain a beautiful one with wheeled bins on the streets and can the recycling centres be beautified, perhaps by the Parks Department?**

*We will encourage householders to keep any containers on their property and recycling centres will be improved in all options.*

**26/11/03 Mountsorrel**

**Who cares if we miss the targets which we are trying to meet just to gain favour with the Government?**

*The targets are real and failure to meet them can result in financial penalties, which would have to be born by the tax payer, the prospect of an externally imposed management team and Charnwood being named and shamed as an environmentally irresponsible Borough and all the financial and other implications of that.*

**Why don’t we just incinerate the lot?**

*The Borough Council is responsible for the collection of waste and delivering it as directed by the County Council which is responsible for the disposal of waste. The decision to landfill or incinerate residual waste is therefore the responsibility of the County Council although the County and all the Leicestershire Districts and the City co-operate in an active partnership. Incineration is costly and unpopular and the opportunity to recycle materials is largely lost.*

**29/11/03 Loughborough Town Hall**

*There’s a need to work with the University to inform the student population.*

*Preference for wheeled bins because they keep animals out and reduce litter. Boxes would need lids to keep contents dry.*