

<b>21 September 2010</b>		<b>ITEM 7</b>
<b>Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>RECYCLING AND WASTE SERVICE – REVIEW OF THE THREE BIN ROLL OUT PROJECT</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> <b>Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny- Three Bin Roll Out Review Group</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non key	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Andrew Murphy – Head of Environment		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Bill Newman – Director for Sustainable Communities		
<b>This report is Public</b>		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To consider and comment on the success of the three bin roll out project and to assess the impact on performance of the scheme. To assess whether further efficiencies are possible.		

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that the review group be created to appraise the three bin scheme. This was a response to a request made by the Committee when the roll out of the scheme was initially approved.

The terms of reference for the task group were:-

- To work with officers to review the actual roll out of the scheme
- To assess the impact of the scheme on performance
- To further assess if more efficiencies can be made within the service

This report outlines the progress made since the roll out of the scheme began in August 2009

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.1 That the Committee note and discuss the conclusions drawn from the review**

**2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 The implementation of the three bin roll out took place between September 2009 and December 2009. The introduction of three bins gave increased capacity for recycling by replacing the blue box (for mixed dry recyclables) with a blue bin and by replacing the garden waste bag with a brown bin which could also be used for kitchen waste for the first time. Collection of kitchen and garden waste frequency was also increased to weekly from fortnightly. There was a deliberate decision made to roll out the bins at this time of the year as volumes of green waste would be relatively low at this time so that the Recycling and Waste Team could iron out any operational problems before tonnages became very high.
- 2.2 The roll out was led by a dedicated Project Manager, who managed a team of five officers made up of one Administrator and four Door Steppers. In addition to this a dedicated telephone line was set up, and four additional call handlers were taken on through the Vertex Contract to deal with the volume of calls that the scheme would generate.
- 2.3 The project involved the sequential delivery of 110,000 bins and the subsequent sequential introduction of additional collection rounds.

**3. PROJECT REVIEW:**

- 3.1 The Review Group considered the scope of the project and concluded that the project was given sufficient resources and was delivered on time and within budget.
- 3.2 The Review Group looked at performance of the service before and after the three bins were introduced and noted that recycling and composting increased during from 32% in 2008/09 to 37% in 2009/10. The amount of waste sent to landfill in 2009/10 reduced by 10,813 tonnes compared to the previous year. These significant improvements can be attributed directly to the introduction of three bin service which gave residents additional recycling capacity and encouraged them to recycle more and landfill less.
- 3.3 This has meant significant cost savings through Landfill tax and potential Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) penalties of £150 per tonne. In 2009-10 Thurrock Council saved £40 per tonne in Landfill tax for each tonne that was recycled (instead of being landfilled) which has saved £432,520.00 in disposal costs. Recycling also has further (environmental) benefits.

- 3.4 The diversion in material from the residual waste bin where it would have been sent to landfill to the new blue bin had a positive impact on the recycling rate.
- 3.5 The cost of collection per household is a performance indicator that is measured by the service. Value for money in waste collection is a difficult to compare with other councils as councils provide different services collecting differing materials using different methods and at different frequencies. However, the review group noted that the introduction of the new three bin service increased the costs of the service due to the addition of increased capacity and additional collections.
- 3.6 The figures for the cost of collection per household rose to £85.58 per household due to the variation order signed with Veolia to carry out the additional collections which involved more vehicles and crews. The target for this year is to reduce the cost to £84.00 per household through collection round rationalisation.
- 3.7 There is an opportunity for the overall collection budget and hence this indicator to be reduced as more efficiencies are found within the service. The Recycling and Waste Team are currently rationalising the collection rounds to ensure the maximum efficiency is achieved from the existing service. This will be in place by October 2010. However further efficiencies can be achieved if changes are made to the actual collection service that the residents receive, which will allow the service to reduce the number of vehicles and resources required to carry out the rounds.
- 3.8 The Review Group looked at customer contact during the project and concluded that overall public reaction to the scheme was positive.
- 3.9 During the roll out the public was contacted by 14% of households about the new service and 63% of these were general enquiries. During the same period the council received 365 complaints in comparison to 180 the year before. Whilst the level of complaints has increased, 180 of these occurred in December when there was a period of heavy snow and collection was suspended for a period.
- 3.10 To put this level of contact into context the project involved the delivery of 110,000 bins and an increase in the number of collections as the kitchen and garden waste collections increased from fortnightly to weekly. Therefore the number of annual collections rose from 8,250,651 to 8,567,984, which meant that the level of complaints actually increased from 0.002% to 0.042%. This needs to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the service continues to improve.
- 3.11 The Review Group concluded that contamination in the blue bin (mixed dry recyclables) was an issue for the Council.
- 3.12 Whilst recycling rates have risen, problems have occurred through increased contamination levels within the blue bin. By providing the public with a bin

rather than a box, it is more difficult to identify contamination when the bin is collected. The major contamination problem is caused by the placing of black bags containing refuse in the blue bin. This is causing major issues with the recycling reprocessor and this could have major budget implications for Thurrock Council as an additional contract payment is due for removal and disposal of contamination.

- 3.13 In order to combat this, promotional work with the public has begun and crews have begun to reject bins that contain contamination. The council has had to ban the use of plastic bags within the blue bins (as this masks the contamination). The success of these measures will be reviewed in October 2010 to see if any improvements have been made

#### **4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 4.1 This report has been produced by the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Review Group for presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 5.1 Recycling and waste reduction has a direct impact on Thurrock's community priorities to ensure a safe, clean and green environment and to provide and commission high quality and accessible services.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **6.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Andrew Murphy**  
Telephone and email: **01375 654768**  
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There are no financial implications arising directly from this report

##### **6.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Andrew Murphy**  
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There are no Legal implications arising directly from this report

### 6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Andrew Murphy**  
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There are no Diversity and Equality implications arising directly from this report

### 6.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None

## 7. **CONCLUSIONS**

7.1 The Review Group came to the following conclusions after examining the three bin roll out:-

- a) that the project was given sufficient resources and was delivered on time and within budget
- b) the success of the project can be seen through the significant increase in recycling and the reduction in waste being sent to landfill
- c) the cost of the service has increased due to the introduction of three bins and additional collections but that work is being done to reduce those costs
- d) further work needs to be done to look at reducing service costs
- e) overall, public reaction to the three bin roll out was positive
- f) contamination in the blue bin is an issue that needs to be addressed

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:**

- None

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- None

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