

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Municipal Waste Management Strategy Consultation
Summary and Action Plan**

DRAFT May 2009

Introduction

On average, every resident produces 436 kg of waste per year and in total the council collects 114,000 tonnes of waste per year. The cost of dealing with this waste is approximately £21 million per annum which is paid for by the tax payer.

In recent years we have transformed how we deal with waste in the city, not only to meet statutory requirements but to ensure efficient use of your money:

- 98% of properties now have a recycling service and our recycling and composting rates are over 28%, up from 10% in 2000 to 28.5% in 2009
- The weight of waste we each produce has declined steadily from 443 kg per person in 2002/03 to 436 kg per person in 2008/09
- We have contained most of the waste in the city with wheelie bins, communal bins and Binvelopes, which has cleaned up our streets considerably
- Service users are much more satisfied with the waste collection service overall, levels of customer satisfaction have increased from 46% in 2002/03 to 77.5% in 2007/08.

We have also entered a long term contract to develop facilities to reduce our reliance on landfill, manage our waste more sustainably and ensure long term secure waste services for the city.

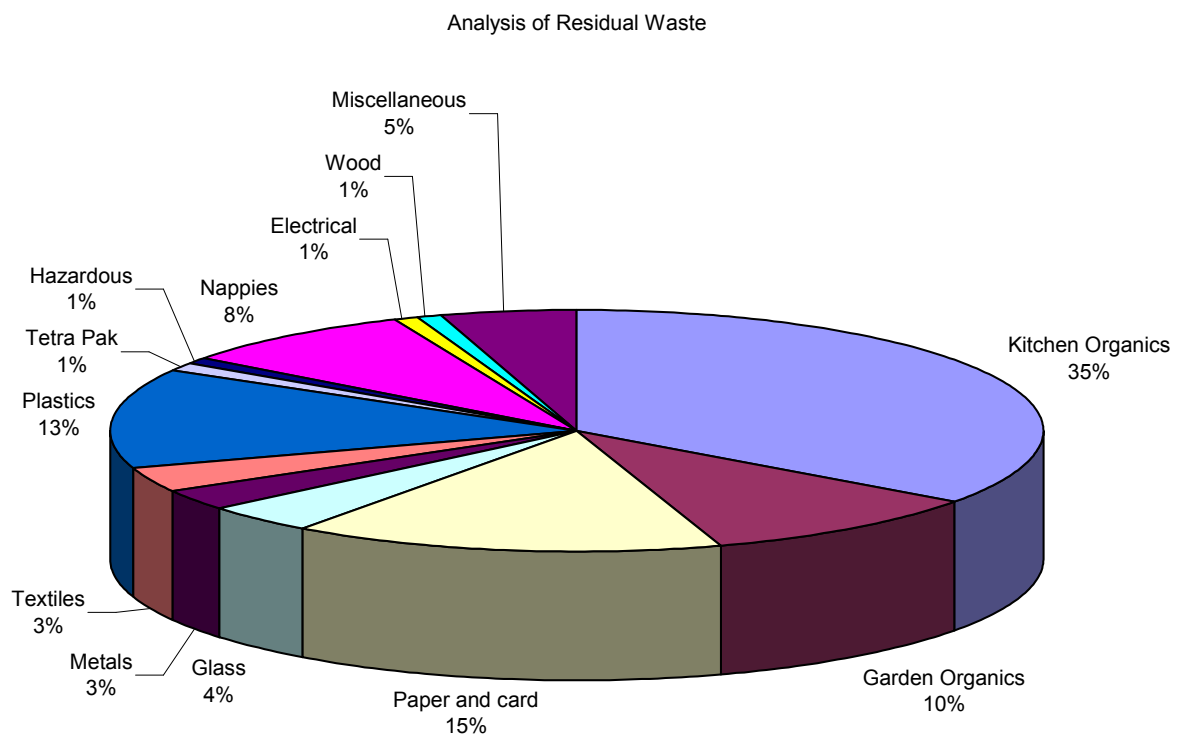
Despite these improvements we know we can still improve further.

We can not continue sending most of our waste to landfill:

- Our local landfill site will close by 2010, with no new sites planned in the area

- We will have to pay fines to the European Union, which could run in to millions of pounds, if we do not reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill
- We have a responsibility to protect our environment and grow the economy, and how we deal with waste is key to this.

We have analysed the household waste we generate in Brighton & Hove. The composition of the waste we throw away, and do not recycle or compost is summarized in the figure below.



If everyone recycled all the materials for which we provide a collection service our recycling rate would increase to 37% overnight. This would result in a huge saving to the council tax payer. Disposing of a tonne of waste to landfill cost £86 per tonne

in 2007/08, including landfill tax. If we sent too much waste to landfill the EU would impose fines of £150/tonne taking the total cost to £236/tonne. The cost of recycling on the other hand was approximately £53 per tonne.

Approximately a third of what we throw away is food – most of which is still usable. We know this is the result of more fast food, super market shopping and a rise in single person dwellings. If we wasted less food not only would our household bills go down, the costs to the council and the environment would also be significantly reduced.

To address these problems we have developed a draft waste strategy, which sets out a plan to deal with our household waste more sustainably and effectively in future.

This is the consultation summary of the strategy which outlines the main policies and action plan. We are interested in your views on our proposals and have included a questionnaire. Please take the time to complete the questionnaire and return it to us in the envelope provided.

How Did we Develop the Strategy?

In order to further improve our performance we looked at the best performing councils in the UK and other good practice worldwide. We then narrowed our search down to ensure it was relevant Brighton & Hove.

Based on the research, we developed a number of options based on environmental, operational, social and financial criteria using a model developed by the London School of Economics.

During the development of these options we consulted with three focus groups consisting of residents from across the city, and other organisations including the Environment Agency, representatives from the community sector and from the business sector.

The strategy has been subject to an independent sustainability appraisal, which assesses the social, environmental and economic consequences and identifies options addressing these.

Objectives

The proposed objectives of the strategy are to:

- Reduce the overall volume of household waste generated and maximise re-use, recycling and recovery
- Send as little waste as possible to landfill to avoid fines and other costs such as *landfill tax*
- Ensure we comply with all laws relevant to waste management, and that we as the council enforce laws relating to waste fairly and consistently
- Protect the environment and enhance the quality of our local environment
- Ensure services continue to improve and represent value for money for council tax payers.

Table 1: Proposed Targets for the Strategy

Target	Current Performance (2007/08)	2012/13	2015/16	2020/21
Recycling & Composting	28.5%	32%*	40%	45%
Energy Recovery	11%	56.1%	55%	53%
Landfill	60.6%	11.6%	5%	2%
Kg household waste produced per person (all waste incl. recycling)	436	415	402	383
Kg residual waste per person not reused, recycled or composted (NI 192)	-	310	270	225

How Are We Going to Get There?

Based on the research we have drafted nine policies which will govern how we manage our waste in line with the objectives of the strategy. These policies are set out below.

- A detailed 3 year plan setting out what we will do when against each of our policies
- A longer term plan which requires further research, evaluation and consultation. The plan will be influenced by developments in national policy, legislation, the development of recycling infrastructure and markets and technology.

A copy of the action plan is attached to this document as Appendix 1.

Policy 1: Waste Minimisation and Prevention

Effective waste minimisation requires action from all, for example, for manufacturers to ensure items are more durable or re-usable, moving away from disposable items. It also requires retailers to reduce packaging of their products and consumers to change their behaviour, for example by buying products with less packaging, and re-use items where possible.

Key policies to be adopted in relation to waste minimisation are:

- Engagement with local retailers to reduce packaging. Work with trading standards on excessive packaging and plastic bag distribution reduction
- Stepping up promotion of re-usable nappies and offer subsidised starter packs of reusable nappies
- Promote home composting, and provide subsidised home compost bins/digesters for garden and food waste
- Encourage households to reduce the amount of waste they generate for example by limiting the size of the residual waste container where possible, to encourage households to fully use the recycling service, compost at home and take reasonable precautions to minimise their waste
- Adopting a 'No-Extra Waste Policy' by not collecting waste which does not fit within the container provided (for example, not collecting bags left next to or on top of bins)
- Not collecting garden waste with residual waste, to encourage home composting
- Promote and campaign towards the reduction of food waste by supporting the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) campaign 'Love Food Hate Waste' and working with the Food Partnership

Policy 2: Increasing Rates of Re-use

Charities and the community groups play a significant role in collecting and refurbishing items (i.e. furniture) making them suitable for re-use and delaying disposal. Brighton & Hove is home to many charities engaged in re-use activities. The work of these organisations complements the objectives of the council of reducing the amount of waste sent for disposal as well as providing a resource for residents.

To improve rates of re-use the council is committed to improving partnership working with the voluntary sector as well as increasing re-use through other means i.e. working with supermarkets to increase the use of reusable bags.

Policy 3: Increasing Recycling Rates

Many materials that can be recycled, and for which there is a collection service (paper, card, cans, plastic bottles, and glass) still end up being thrown away as residual waste. In 2007/08, the city's recycling rate in Brighton & Hove was just over 28%. **If everyone recycled all the materials that we currently collect our recycling rate would be approximately 37%¹.**

With the cost of waste disposal increasing as a result of landfill tax, and EU penalties, recycling is not only an environmental necessity but also a financial one. The cost of recycling one tonne of waste is £53, compared to the cost of £86 of disposing it to landfill. People who do not recycle are in effect being subsidised by those who do. In order to minimise cost increases associated with waste and recycling we need to make sure everyone does what they can.

Key policies in relation to dry recyclables are:

- Develop an on-going, high profile and effective communication campaign to increase levels of paper, card, glass, cans, plastic bottles and household batteries that are recycled. This will include work with all sectors of the community, including young people and schools
- Trial the provision of incentives to encourage householders to recycle more
- Continue the policy where households which continually fail to recycle despite having access to recycling services, will as a last resort, face fines up to £75
- Review markets and opportunities for increasing the number of materials collected for recycling
- Ensure recycling services are both financially and environmentally sustainable
- Assess the feasibility of communal recycling in the city centre. The city centre has a high turn over of population and many properties do not have a lot of storage space which has resulted in relatively low participation in recycling services in these areas. On completion of the feasibility study residents will be consulted on the proposals
- To introduce extensive recycling facilities across the city centre for streets and beach waste
- Extend the number of materials recycled at high and low rise flats to include cardboard and plastic bottles
- Extend the number of materials recycled at bring sites to include cardboard and plastic bottles.

¹ Based on information taken from Household Waste Compositional Analysis Report – Comparative Report, Network Recycling August 2007.

Policy 4: Increasing Composting Rates

Food Waste

Food waste makes up a third of residual waste, and when disposed to landfill rots to release methane – a potent greenhouse gas. It is therefore an important material to consider as part of the strategy.

Implementing food waste collection will be expensive because of the need to purchase a new fleet of special food waste vehicles as well as issuing all householders with food waste bins. This investment does have the potential to pay for itself provided enough residents use the service, reliable commercial markets exist for the resultant compost and is operated alongside an alternate weekly collection of refuse. Food waste collection is not particularly wide-spread, even in countries with the highest recycling and composting performance.

To start to assess the sustainability of different food waste collection options an initial independent 'Life Cycle Analysis' has been commissioned. Results suggest that in terms of carbon savings alone there is no basis to distinguish between direct incineration and separate food waste collection with Anaerobic Digestion (AD). AD is a technology to process organic waste and produce a fertiliser and generate electricity.

The results also show that based on the full set of environmental impacts, incineration in an Energy from Waste facility with no separate food waste collection has the least overall environmental impact².

Modelling environmental impacts of any activity depends on a wide range of variables and further work is required to fully evaluate the

² Beyond Waste Revised LCA Results 01.05.09.

environmental impacts of different options for managing food waste. Either way, environmentally and financially the best way to deal with food waste is to reduce the amount we produce in the first place.

Recently 17 councils across the country have taken part in trials of food waste collections. The trials found that the amount of food waste collected was variable, with higher rates of collection in those areas with fortnightly refuse collection. Collections from flats and houses of multiple-occupancy were relatively low³.

Before deciding on whether to implement food waste collections Brighton & Hove propose to carry out further research in to food waste collections.

At present there are no facilities within close proximity to Brighton & Hove suitable for processing food waste. A facility to compost garden waste will be opened in East Sussex in 2010, which can potentially process a small amount of food waste. Planning permission would be required to increase the tonnage of food waste processed at the site.

For these reasons our policies in relation to food waste are to:

- Encourage householders to reduce the amount of food waste they produce
- Carry out further research and review the feasibility of food waste collections by 2011.

³ Evaluation of the WRAP separate food waste collection trials, written by Resource Futures, September 2008.

Garden Waste

Free garden waste collections lead to an increase in the total volume of waste put out for collection (rather than just resulting in garden waste being diverted from residual waste⁴) and increased costs for the council because it reduces the incentive to compost at home.

Experience elsewhere in Europe has shown it is extremely difficult to encourage home composting where the garden waste collection is free. In the UK where garden waste collections are charged for, collected quantities tend to be much lower than in cases where free collections are in place.

Our policies in relation to garden waste are:

- To continue to promote home composting and provide subsidized compost bins
- Promote chargeable collection for materials that can not be collected at home.

Policy 5: Residual Waste

The way in which services are provided for residual waste collection affects waste minimisation, recycling rates and composting rates.

Many authorities in the UK have introduced fortnightly refuse collections (or Alternate Weekly Collections) to encourage residents to minimise their waste and recycle more. Due to the high density of housing in Brighton & Hove and no immediate plans for separate food waste collection and there are no plans to introduce fortnightly collections of residual waste. The frequency of refuse collection will remain the same.

⁴ Managing Biowastes from Households in the UK: Applying Life Cycle Thinking in the Framework of Cost-Benefit Analysis, Enomia, May 2007.

A number of countries charge residents for the amount of waste they put out for collection rather than charging for collection and disposal through taxation, this has been seen to have positive impacts on waste minimisation and recycling rates.

Charging for waste collections presents significant social, logistical and technical issues which would have to be overcome as well as investment in administrative systems. There are no plans to introduce charges for refuse collection. The service will remain free at the point of use.

An effective way to reduce the amount of waste each household produces is by limiting the volume of waste collected each week to provide sufficient capacity for waste that can not be recycled or composted. Introducing wheelie bins is the best method of enforcing this as each household has an individual bin. In areas where wheelie bins have been introduced recycling rates have increased significantly.

Key policies to be adopted in relation to residual waste collection are:

- The continuation of current refuse collection frequencies, at least weekly
- No charges will be introduced for refuse collection
- All waste as far as practicable will be contained, rather than relying on black sack collections
- Where practicable the volume of residual waste per household will be limited to encourage waste minimisation, home composting and recycling

Policy 6: Effective and Clear Communication

In order to achieve higher recycling rates through optimising current services, increasing home composting and other activities, a strong communications campaign is at the forefront. Service users cannot be expected to understand changes unless they are communicated effectively. A detailed communications plan will be developed to support service changes and development.

Policy 7: Enforcement

As detailed previously, we need to recycle more for financial as well as environmental reasons. As part of the strategy we will focus on improving our customer service and communication so that as far as possible everyone is aware of the services we provide and how to use them. In line with our existing policy on enforcement, and our powers under the Environmental Protection Act we will inform people of our services and why it is important to recycle. Where people refuse to recycle despite having access to the services and information we will issue them with warnings and as a last resort take enforcement action. This is to ensure that our services are fair and that people make the effort to recycle do not end up subsidising those that are not willing to recycle.

A number of local authorities have introduced electronic chips on refuse and recycling containers to monitor how much refuse and recycling each household puts out. The action plans sets out robust plans to encourage householders to recycle even more and manage their wastes more sustainably. Tagging bins would require significant investment in technology and administrative systems and we are confident that we can improve our performance without this level of monitoring.

Policy 8: Waste from Businesses and Other Organisations

Whilst the council's primary responsibility is for waste from households, how waste from businesses and other organisations is managed has an effect on the cleanliness of the city's streets, the local environment and the economy. We will continue to work with businesses and the trade waste industry to work towards more sustainable trade waste services and cleaner streets.

Policy 9: Service Quality and Value for Money

We are committed to providing a high standard of service to our customers which presents value for money. We will strive to continuously improve our service and report on the quality of our service against published standards.

Action Plans

Each policy is supported by a clear action plan. The action plans are set out in the following section.

