

Subject:	Recycling Incentives & Engagement Campaign		
Date of Meeting:	29 April 2014		
Report of:	Executive Director of Environment , Development & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Jan Jonker	Tel: 29-4722
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Recycling rates in Brighton and Hove have levelled off and declined slightly in recent years. A significant proportion of materials for which a collection service exists are still being disposed of with residual waste. Increasing the capture of these materials through existing services will reduce costs as well as having a beneficial environmental impact.
- 1.2 This report sets out proposals for an incentive and engagement campaign to increase recycling rates.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees to establish a community incentive scheme to encourage residents to recycle more. The scheme would be self funded from savings to the waste disposal budget through increased recycling.
- 2.2 That Committee agrees to an engagement campaign to encourage people to recycle more. The campaign would run for a period of 12 months and be funded from existing budgets and a projected under-spend from the DCLG communal recycling grant funding.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Recycling rates in Brighton & Hove have levelled off in the last five years and declined slightly in the last two years. It is impossible to determine the exact causes, but it is believed to be due to a range of factors including changes in consumer behaviour (people buying fewer papers and magazines with the growth of electronic media), the economic down turn, prolonged cold winters in the last two years resulting in less garden waste to the HWRCs as well as disruption to the service as a result of industrial action during the pay negotiations and the introduction of new rounds.
- 3.2 Nationally recycling rates have levelled off between 2011/12 and 2012/13 at 43%. Recycling rates vary significantly across the country with Ashford Borough Council having the lowest recycling rate at 12% and Rochford Borough Council

having the highest rate at 67%. In the case of Rochford over half of its recycling consists of green waste collected for composting.

- 3.3 Brighton & Hove's recycling rate is low compared to its ONS Nearest Neighbours Bristol, Cheltenham and Bournemouth which all exceed 40%. The main reasons for these differences include that the best performing authorities collect food waste, provide fortnightly refuse collection and/ or garden waste collection. The feasibility of introducing these services in Brighton & Hove has been considered but would result in extra costs to the authority at a time when it is having to make significant budget cuts. The council is therefore seeking to maximise the efficiency of existing recycling services and minimising the total amount of waste produced.
- 3.4 Work to increase recycling rates includes the roll out of communal recycling in the city centre funded by DCLG, continued support for community composting schemes and working with the Food Partnership to promote food waste minimisation and home composting. Cityclean writes to all residents on a kerbside recycling scheme with details about their collection days on an annual basis and information is published in different media including the council tax mail out, local papers and magazines, the website and social media.
- 3.5 Despite this work a significant amount of recycling is still being disposed of as residual waste. Waste analysis in 2007 showed that if all residents recycled all their paper, card, plastic bottles, cans and glass using the existing kerbside scheme the recycling rate would increase to approximately 35%. A recent analysis of a small sample of residual waste showed that these figures had not changed significantly, with the maximum recycling rate being 34% if everyone recycled all the materials for which kerbside collection services are provided.
- 3.6 Many people are still unclear about what they can recycle (in particular what plastics) and why they need to keep glass separate. There is a lack of detailed and up to date information on what other barriers prevent people from recycling in the city.
- 3.7 Recycling is cheaper than residual waste disposal with every tonne of material recycled rather than disposed of to Energy from Waste resulting in a saving of £56 to the council based on 2013/14 prices. To put this into context an increase in the recycling rate from 25% to 30% would result in a saving of £293,000 per annum based on 2013/14 costs. Reducing waste would result in more significant savings of £105 per tonne but minimising waste is more difficult to achieve than increasing recycling rates.
- 3.8 The council could face financial penalties in its contract with Veolia if it does not meet the minimum contractual recycling targets. To date penalties have been avoided as the amount of recycling processed jointly by East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove has been above the minimum threshold. Based on these two points there is a clear financial case to increase recycling rates.

Incentive Scheme

- 3.9 As part of the communal recycling scheme it was agreed to implement an incentive campaign. The proposals in this report seek to extend the scheme to all residents. The scheme would consist of a community fund. The funds raised would be directly linked to the increase in the percentage of material recycled over and above the baseline recycling rate for 2013/14 (expected to be 25%). A city-wide increase in recycling rates of 1% would amount to approximately £16,000 for the community recycling fund in addition to £43,000 worth of savings to the waste disposal budget. The calculations would be based on ring fencing £15 for every additional tonne of waste recycled from the disposal budget to the fund. The proposed scheme is low risk as it is funded from savings to the waste disposal budget as a result of increased recycling rates.
- 3.10 The fund would be open to any charity or formally constituted group to bid in to with proposals that would in some way benefit the city. Projects could include facilities for local groups, funding for events, restoration or improvement of buildings or public spaces. Funded schemes would be publicised to encourage people to recycle more.
- 3.11 It is proposed that the fund would be administered by the Sussex Community Foundation. Sussex Community Foundation already administers grants and would charge a commission of 10% of the funds raised to administer the scheme. It is proposed that approximately half the funds would be available as small grants of up to £1,000 the remainder would be available as larger grants of up to £5,000. The grants would be awarded on an annual basis and it is proposed to set up a cross-party member group to assist in the awarding of grants. The scheme would run for a trial period of two years.
- 3.12 The incentive scheme would be supported by an engagement campaign which is detailed in Section 5 below.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Nationally there are many different types of incentive campaigns to encourage people to reduce their waste and recycle more. These range from schemes provided by commercial companies such as those adopted by Windsor and Maidenhead to locally developed schemes. These types of schemes have been evaluated for Brighton and Hove but would be high cost and high risk and require more complex data collection on the amount of recycling each participating household does.
- 4.2 Reliable data on the effectiveness of incentive schemes is limited because many schemes are introduced as part of a service change making it impossible to isolate the effects of the incentive scheme and authorities have differing baselines and demographic properties.
- 4.3 Recent research carried out by Eunomia looking at incentive schemes implemented without a service change showed that 25% of people surveyed stated that an incentive would encourage them to recycle more. 42% of respondents said that community incentive schemes would encourage them to recycle more while 46% said that personal incentives would offer greater encouragement. While this suggests a slight preference for personal reward schemes they are significantly more complex and difficult to implement which is

why a community based approach is suggested. Feedback gathered as part of the research suggests that an effective communication campaign is critical to driving performance gains. The research showed that performance of five schemes compared varied significantly, with the average increase in recycling rates of 8%.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 The incentive scheme would be supported by a high profile engagement and communication campaign. The aim of the campaign would be to:

- Raise the profile of the recycling service and why people should recycle
- Emphasise key messages about how to use and access the service
- Promote the incentive scheme as an additional reason to recycle.

5.2 The detailed content of the campaign would be informed by feedback from resident focus groups to identify what prevents people from recycling and what would encourage them to recycle more. The focus groups have been commissioned in advance so the results can be used to help inform improvements to the service and the design of the campaign.

5.3 The campaign would seek to achieve high levels of recognition by residents through distinctive high profile coherent branding and effective use of communication methods including signage on refuse and recycling collection vehicles, social media, community groups, schools, local press and the web. The existing annual mailing of recycling calendars would also be incorporated in to the campaign.

5.4 The campaign would be funded from the existing communications budget and an under spend on the DCLG communal recycling grant of £35,000.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In Brighton & Hove recycling rates have levelled off and declined slightly in recent years. Large service changes to increase recycling rates such as food waste collection combined with fortnightly refuse collection would result in extra costs to the authority and are not considered viable in the current economic climate.

6.2 A significant amount of materials which can be recycled through existing services are still being disposed of with residual waste. An incentive scheme combined with an engagement campaign is proposed to encourage people to recycle more using existing services.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1 It is proposed that the cost of the incentive schemes will be funded from anticipated contract cost reductions generated from increased recycling rates. The cost to the council of recycling household waste is cheaper than being disposed of to Energy from Waste; an increase in recycling rates will therefore

result in cost reduction to the council. The estimated cost reductions generated from increased recycling rates are detailed within the main body of the report. The net savings associated with increasing recycling rates do fluctuate with the market values for materials. Prices for recycled materials are currently high. It is proposed that the proportion of income ring-fenced to the incentive scheme is reviewed annually to take into account any significant reductions in material prices.

It is proposed that the engagement campaign would be funded from existing communication budgets and a projected under-spend from the DCLG grant awarded to the council to support the communal recycling scheme.

Revenue costs of officer time associated with the implementation and administration of the incentive schemes will be met from existing City Infrastructure revenue budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford

Date: 18/03/14

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Council has power to offer incentive and engagement schemes using the general power in s111 Local Government Act 1972 which allows authorities to do anything incidental, conducive or calculated to facilitate the discharge of their functions.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 18/03/14

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The design of the campaign would consider equalities in terms of its targeting and design. It will be subject to an equalities impact assessment.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The campaign and incentive scheme are aimed at increasing recycling rates using existing collection services to reduce costs and improve environmental performance.