

**Forest Heath District Council
St Edmundsbury Borough Council**

**WEST SUFFOLK WASTE
AND STREET SCENE
SERVICES JOINT
COMMITTEE**

22 OCTOBER 2010

JWC10/029

**Report of the Strategic Director (Services) (FHDC)
and the Corporate Director (Economy & Environment)
(SEBC)**

CLEANSING REVIEW

Synopsis:

This report seeks Member approval for the Waste and Street Scene Services Partnership to undertake a comprehensive review of cleansing. This will be a strategic and operational review that aims to make the service higher performing, more consistent and more cost effective. It will also seek to increase joint working and collaboration on cleansing strategy and operations across the two Councils.

Commentary:

1. The quality of the local environment and in particular standards of street cleanliness are a major barometer that the public uses to judge how well an area is being managed and its suitability
2. Place surveys at Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have consistently supported this by indicating that our residents rate the cleanliness of their streets relatively highly against other Council services. The key findings from the Place Survey carried out between Sept- Dec 2008 were:

The percentage of respondents who said that they were *'very or fairly satisfied with keeping land clear of litter and refuse'* was 60.5% for Forest Heath and 65% for St Edmundsbury. The Countywide score for Suffolk was 62% and the score for England was 57%

When asked to prioritise what issues make somewhere a good place to live respondents in St Edmundsbury placed 'clean streets' third behind having low levels of crime and good health services.

3. In terms of our current cleansing performance relative to National Indicators Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury currently perform relatively well and have improved in recent years.

National Indicator	Definition	Actual (2007/08)		Actual (2008/09)		Actual (2009/10)	
		FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC
NI 195	Improved street cleanliness (litter)	6%	10%	4%	5%	6%	4%
NI 195a	Improved street cleanliness (detritus)	20%	24%	10%	12%	15%	14%
NI 195b	Improved street cleanliness (graffiti)	0%	4%	0%	3%	0%	3%
NI 195c	Improved street cleanliness (fly-posting)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NI 196	Improved street cleanliness (fly-tipping)	Not Effective	Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Effective	Very Effective

4. We are faced with rising expectation in terms of our cleansing performance along with an urgent need to cut our costs to meet the emerging spending targets that we have to achieve. In order to meet the difficult objectives of improving performance whilst cutting cost we are proposing to undertake a comprehensive cleansing review.
5. This review will be undertaken as a partnership project between the two Councils and follows closely behind the successful joint waste collection round reorganisation project. We plan to build on the foundations of this project in terms of continuing to work as a single team to successfully deliver this comprehensive review of cleansing by the end of March 2011.
6. A scoping meeting for the project took place on Wednesday the 22 September 2010. At this meeting staff from both Councils discussed cleansing and identified a number of opportunities for improvement. This discussion identified issues that were common to both Councils and it was apparent that similarities far outweighed any differences. Broadly, the major common issues that were identified included:-
 - a) The need to update our cleansing maps and rotas as some of these are now quite old. There is a potential to use Routesmart technology to plan, record and maintain cleansing routes.
 - b) Review the frequency that areas are cleansed. Some areas are being cleansed too frequently and others not frequently enough.
 - c) Maintain consistency in terms of the service levels for cleansing town centres, urban estates and rural areas.
 - d) Consistent policies and methods for collecting and recording data, engagement with partners, inspections, enforcement and educational campaigns.
 - e) Ensuring we have the right equipment to do the job and that staff are adequately trained to ensure they all operate at the highest level of performance.
 - f) Striking the right balance between planning cleansing activity and being agile enough to react to hotspots and incidents.

- g) Review the joint procurement and sharing of major assets like street sweepers.
- h) Investigate more flexible cost effective ways of working to cover a 7 day cleansing operation.
- i) Reviewing our policies for working in partnership with parish council's to undertake cleansing.
- j) The need to audit our dog and litter bin provision along with agreeing a consistent policy for charging 3rd parties.

7. The scoping meeting identified 4 separate work streams within the project, namely:-

- Street Cleansing
- Channel Sweeping
- Dog & Litter Bins
- Strategy & Policy

The attached **Appendix A** shows a table that sets out the project work streams in more detail.

- 8. One of the pieces of learning from the review of the joint round reorganisation projects was that there had been a tendency on that project to double up on work streams with staff from Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury. This time we have identified the most suitable single work stream lead from the pool of officers from both Councils. This should reduce the tendency to pair-up with an officer from either Council and improve the efficiency of management and decision making.
- 9. Subject to member approval the project will be further developed and started immediately. Members will be updated on the progress of the project in more detail at the next meeting of the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee.

Finance/Budget/Resource Implications

- 10. The intention of the review is that cleansing services will be delivered at a lower cost to each Council.

Environmental Impact and Sustainability

- 11. The aim of the project is to have no increased detrimental impact to the environment or sustainability. There is definite scope for positive impact in terms of reduced vehicle miles and increased recycling of materials collected and this will be pursued through the course of the project.

Policy Compliance/Power

- 12. There are likely to be changes to the policies and procedures in each waste department as a result of this review. Those changes potentially impacting on

residents or partner organisations will be brought back to members of the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee for approval.

Performance Management Implications

13. Cleansing performance is well measured and reported through National Indicators 195 and 196. Members may be asked to decide on resource limited options in terms of reducing a current level of service in order to reallocate or reduce resources. Any such options will be brought to the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee for approval.

Legal Implications

14. All legal implications of the joint contract for hazardous waste collection and disposal are managed by SCC as delegated authority for the Suffolk Waste Partnership.

Human Rights Act and Diversity Implications

15. Currently there are no known human rights and diversity implications as all residents will be offered the same service matched to the type of area that they live in.

Crosscutting Implications

16. There may be crosscutting implications resulting from this project in terms of working with partners or impacting upon them through any changes to our cleansing regime we adopt. These will be monitored and reported to members.

Risk Assessment

17. There is a balance to be struck between maintaining or improving current levels of performance and the cost of our cleansing operations.

Council Priorities

18. Forest Heath

- Community engagement and communication; and
- Street scene and environment.

St Edmundsbury

- Raise standards and corporate efficiency; and
- Secure a sustainable and attractive environment.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 19. Members are recommended to:-**
- 1. Approve a project to undertake a comprehensive review of cleansing services.**
 - 2. Receive a detailed project update at the next meeting of this committee and make decisions on any options brought forward that may have implications in terms of an impact to residents, businesses or partner organizations.**

Document attached

Appendix A – West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Partnership – Cleansing Review

Nigel McCurdy
Strategic Director (Services)
14 October 2010

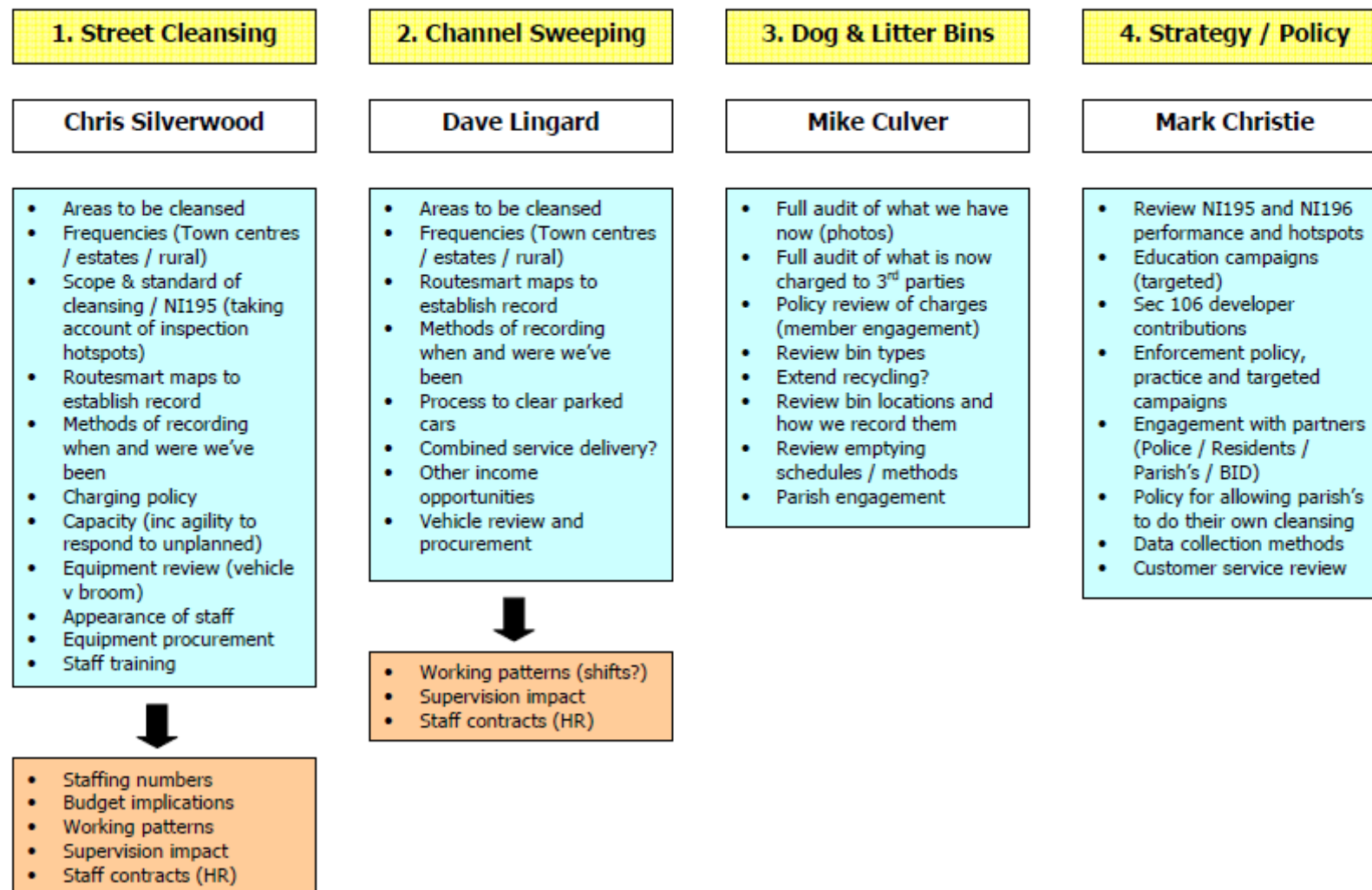
Sandra Pell
Corporate Director (Economy and Environment)
14 October 2010

CONTACT OFFICERS

Keith Marley
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Appendix A - West Suffolk Waste & Street Scene Partnership – Cleansing Review

Project Objectives: Doing more or the same with less
 Improved consistency (within service and across the partnership)
 Integrated partnership service delivery





Forest Heath
District Council



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Defra Review of Waste Policies - Call for Evidence

A response from Forest Heath District Council & St Edmundsbury Borough Council

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October 2010

Executive Summary

- Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) are two neighbouring districts in the West of Suffolk.
- The two Councils formed a partnership through a joint Committee in 2008 which delivers Waste and Street Scene Services to a combined population of over 166,000 residing in over 78,000 households.
- Customer satisfaction and participation rates remain consistently high. Complaints about using our alternate week 3-bin collection system are statistically non-existent.
- Despite our high recycling rates (currently SEBC is over 51%) our costs are among one of the lowest (SEBC currently at £44 per household and falling).
- The districts are predominantly rural with the main towns being Bury St Edmunds in SEBC and Newmarket in FHDC.
- The districts also contain ex GLC London overspill high density housing areas in Haverhill and Brandon.
- Services are delivered through the Councils in-house teams that are managed through a single management team of officers from the respective Councils.
- Waste collection services are delivered through a 3-bin alternate weekly collection service. Each household has a blue 240 litre wheeled bin for commingled recyclable materials, a brown 240 litre bin for compostable waste and a black 240 litre bin for residual waste.
- Blue bin material is recovered at a Material Recycling Facility near Ipswich which is operated through a consortium of 6 of the Waste Collection Authorities in Suffolk.
- Brown bin material is composted at a local in-vessel composting plant on the border between our two districts.
- The systems are extremely well established and were adopted following extensive trials that were funded by Defra. The brown bin



was introduced in 1992/3 and the blue bin alternate weekly collection from 2002/03.

- Through this system SEBC was the first Council in the UK to exceed 50% recycling of household waste back in 2004.
- The Councils were awarded Beacon Status in 2000/1 and 2005/6 for waste services.

1. Introduction

1.1 Our Area

Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council form Western Suffolk, at the centre of a triangle created by Norwich, Ipswich and Cambridge. The joint area runs north east from Haverhill, near the Essex border, covering Bury St Edmunds to the Norfolk border and then westerly covering Newmarket, Brandon and Mildenhall near the Cambridgeshire boarder.



The two authorities span an area of approximately 1030Km² with a residing population of approximately 166,000 people within 73,000 households.

The age profile of both areas is higher than the average. (Suffolk County Council District Profile April 2010).

The most common ACORN categories in Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury are "Comfortably Off" and "Wealthy Achievers" (Suffolk County Council District Profile April 2010). However, although deprivation levels in West Suffolk are generally low, several of our wards are in more deprived areas, of which some are indeed within Suffolk's most deprived areas as identified by The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in April 2004 (and later revised in June 2004).

Both areas are largely rural, with average population densities of 165 heads per km² compared to the national average of 383 heads per Km² (Office for National Statistics, 2008) and as such, both authorities are partners with the SPARSE rural services network. However, the districts do include areas of high density housing which is mainly confined to ex GLC London overspill estates predominantly in Brandon and Haverhill but also with pockets in Mildenhall and Lakenheath.

1.2 The History of Our Waste Collection Services

Our 2-tier system of Local Government in Suffolk comprises 7 Waste Collection Authorities and the Waste Disposal Authority at Suffolk County Council. In 1990 these authorities came together to form the Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP). This group was established to focus on waste issues and develop a waste strategy for Suffolk that recognised the need to work together and share best practice for how waste was managed in Suffolk.

In October 2003 the SWP published its Joint Municipal Waste Strategy setting out how the Local Authorities will embrace the principles outlined in the National Waste Strategy and aim to recycle or compost at least 60% of municipal waste.

In parallel with the work of the SWP, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury embarked on a programme of trials which would result in the waste collection and recycling

system we operate today. This started in 1993 (with SEBC trialling an alternate weekly collection of black bin one week and brown bin compostable kitchen and garden waste the next) and concluded in 2006 when nearly all households were on the current 3-bin alternate week collection system (a small number being on sacks but the same collection regime).

Table 1: The history of the roll-out of our waste collection system

Year	Target	Collection Schemes	Collection Frequency	FHDC Recycling Rate	SEBC Recycling Rate
1990-01	25% by 2000	Black wheeled bin Bring sites	Weekly	2%	2%
2000-01	25%	Black wheeled bin Brown wheeled bin (32k) Paper collection (24k) Bring sites	Weekly Fortnightly Fortnightly	28%	26%
2003-04	33%	Black wheeled bin Brown wheeled bin (39k) Paper collection (24k) Bring sites	Weekly Fortnightly Fortnightly	34%	35%
2004-05	40% by 2005-06	Black wheeled bin Brown wheeled bin (39k) Blue wheeled bin (43k) Bring sites	AWC AWC AWC	48.58% (46.11% 2005/06) (46.01% 2006/07)	50.06% (48.62% 2005/06) (50.00% 2006/07)

1.3 Compostable (Brown Bin) Waste Trials

From November 1993 to January 1995 defra funded trials were carried out in SEBC involving a twin bin system, collected alternate weekly using a compostainer type wheeled bin (240/140 litre) and standard wheeled bin (240 litre and 140 litre). These trials also included using split bins collected on a weekly basis and home composting in rural villages. There were 4 trial areas and each of these trials involved groups of around 500 properties in rural and urban areas recycling their garden and green kitchen waste.

The results of these trials indicated that on average over 7kgs was diverted using kerbside collection compared to 2.5kgs through home composting. The trials also indicated that households could not manage the alternate weekly collection between compostable and residual waste indicating that a dry recyclable collection was needed before alternate week collections could be introduced.



A home composting trial was also undertaken in the village of Ixworth where the weights of the waste were measured before every house was given a composting bin and again throughout a year long trial encouraging the use of the bin.

All brown bin material is taken to an in-vessel composting plant for processing which is near the village of Lackford close to our shared border. The current tonnages of brown bin waste sent for composting each year are 6,000 tonnes for Forest Heath and 12,500 tonnes for St Edmundsbury.

1.4 Dry Recyclable (Blue Bin) Waste Trials

Between April and August in 2002 we conducted 6 trials for the collection of dry recyclables (paper, card, plastics and metals). The 6 trials included 4 using pink sacks and 2 using blue bins. They also included full waste analysis and customer satisfaction surveys.

Table 2: Summary of bin and sack collection trials carried out

Trial	Location	Type	Recyclables	Black	Brown
1	SEBC	Sack	Week 1	Week 2	N/A
2	SEBC	Sack	Weekly	Weekly	Week 2
3	SEBC	Sack	Week 2	Week 1	Week 2
4	SEBC	Sack	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1
5	FHDC	Bin	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1
6	FHDC	Bin	Week 2	Weekly	Week 1

The findings of these comprehensive trials showed that alternate weekly collection of black, blue and brown bins provided the:-

- Best waste diversion from landfill;
- Highest participation levels;
- Most cost effective scheme to implement; and
- Highest levels of householder satisfaction.

An alternate week collection works!

The introduction of the blue bin scheme has seen recycling rates increase from under 30% in 2002/3 to over 50% by 2006/7. St Edmundsbury was the first council in the UK to exceed a 50% recycling rate.

1.5 Fine Tuning the Service

Further improvements to the service have been made since the 3-bin system was fully rolled out in 2006. These include:-

- The sale of additional blue sacks to allow residents to recycle more than 240 litres each fortnight;
- An innovative kerbside battery collection utilising a pink hook on the blue bin;
- Ongoing communication, monitoring and ultimately enforcement activity (rarely needed); and
- A comprehensive collection round reorganisation in June 2010.

1.6 Customer Satisfaction, Communication, Costs and Awards

A comprehensive satisfaction survey carried out in 2007 revealed that:-

- 87% of residents were satisfied with the black bin service;
- 87% of residents were satisfied with the kerbside recycling service;
- 82% of residents were satisfied with the recycling service overall; and
- 80% of residents were satisfied with the collection service overall.

Communication and education has been key to our success and this has been achieved through presentations to schools and community groups, roadshows, council magazines, newsletters bin stickers and door knocking.

The cost of waste collection per household in St Edmundsbury has fallen from £51.98 back in 2004/5 to £44.44 in 2009/10.

We were awarded Beacon Status for waste collection services for 2000/1 and again for 2005/6.

2. Answers to Specific Defra Questions

2.3 General

- **Nations ambitions** – reduce waste arisings and collection tonnes and the cost to tax payer through reducing the use of virgin materials in manufacturing, extend producer responsibility and adopt modern and enforced regulation, promotion of waste prevention.
- **Contribution of waste management** – Move towards a landfill ban? More emphasis on commercial and industrial waste reduction and recycling. Extended use of EfW and AD technology.
- **Do local authorities have the right responsibilities** – In our two tier Local Government structure we have a Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) comprising the one Waste Disposal Authority and seven Waste Collection Authorities. In 2003 the SWP adopted a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy which sets out the strategic framework for the management of municipal waste in Suffolk until 2020. This arrangement has worked well and driven high performance waste services in Suffolk. Residents care passionately about their waste collection services and it important that these services are delivered and managed locally. However, there is scope to improve the strategic management of waste in the County and streamline decision making. To this end we are currently looking at adopting a Joint Committee for the management of waste across Suffolk. The terms of reference and responsibilities of any new Joint Committee are still under discussion but this underlines the longstanding and close partnership working between Authorities in the County.
- **Illegal waste activity** – Higher penalties, more effective enforcement and sanctions, better facilities for small businesses to take their waste to (open HWRC's to small businesses and extend opening hours).
- **Balance regulation** – Waste is one area where regulation is necessary and statutory targets and legislation have driven change in the industry and within Local Authorities. There could be room for the Environment Agency to work more proactively with industry in an advisory capacity rather than being a reactive enforcer.

2.4 Waste Prevention

- In order to encourage behavioral change to reduce our waste, local authorities need to carry out specific actions for the purposes of minimising the quantities of waste produced as this message often becomes 'diluted' within our well established recycling communications and operations.
- National campaigns however that are aimed at conveying the message, such as WRAP's Love Food Hate Waste currently only require voluntary Local Authority participation.
- In general and on a national scale, waste minimisation messages are becoming more embedded within our society largely through media coverage.

It is important however that the media support Local Authorities in the delivery of a local approach.

- Waste Prevention is more targeted at the producers of waste in the first instance which we believe is more effective than Local Authorities delivering messages to the consumer at the disposal stage of the product life cycle.
- As such, extensions to the packaging regulations and producer responsibility obligations (e.g. for paint) along with better product labelling and reducing initiatives that encourage shoppers to over consume (e.g. BOGOF's) will have a large impact on the total arisings of household waste created.
- The reclassification and alignment of waste streams, for example household and commercial and industrial waste would also remove barriers allowing for similar prevention and minimisation communications to be conveyed to both sectors. This would also help in the monitoring of waste prevention as this should be undertaken at all disposal outlets.

2.5 Preparing for Reuse

Our compost goes to a facility at Lackford near the border between our district. The facility is in the process of BSI PAS 100 certification and the compost is produced to a high standard specifically for use as an agricultural soil improver.

The compost is applied to land often less than 5 miles from the Composting Facility and scientific research carried out on the use of source segregated compost in agriculture demonstrates the following key benefits:

- Increase in water retention
- Improved soil structure
- Reduction in cultivation passes (reduction in energy costs)
- Improved soil fauna and flora levels
- Higher yielding crops.

Other areas which can help reuse are:

- Reducing barriers to reuse in C&I and C&D could include opening-up HWRC's for materials that can be re-used and recycled. Extending affordable recycling services to businesses.
- Best placed to increase reuse – charities, social enterprises, LA's, commercial waste operators, producers and retailers (e.g. furniture stores).

2.6 Recycling

Recycling schemes should be simple to use and understand

Recycling has now become a mainstream activity with more people claiming to recycle than ever before. Recent research from WRAP¹ indicates that the vast

¹ "Barriers to recycling at home"; WRAP/MEL Research, 2008

majority of recyclers (90%) claim to be 'happy to be doing their bit for the environment' and 69% say they feel 'good about themselves' when recycling.

Innovation has formed a significant part of the planned joint working between FHDC and SEBC on the belief that securing public participation and satisfaction is key to the overall success. Both FHDC and SEBC have used evidence based decision making prior to the implementation of waste recovery schemes to test affordability, public acceptance and practicality and performance. This has involved consultations with residents, compositional household waste stream analysis and extensive investigations into kerbside collection.

This is reflected in the positive relationship between user satisfaction and service performance. Specific examples of this include:

- In 2006, Hyder Consulting were appointed by WRAP to undertake a monitoring study² of levels of resident participation in the kerbside recycling schemes of the councils within Suffolk. Resident participation was monitored at just under 10,000 households, over three phases to allow participation rates to be calculated. The results demonstrate how successful Suffolk has been in engaging their residents in the scheme, with Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury demonstrating participation rates of 86% and 90% respectively.
- As part of a major Suffolk project measuring and improving customer awareness and behaviours, significant improvements were witnessed in both levels of satisfaction and awareness. Specific results from Forest Heath include:
 - Blue bin set out rates and participation rates of 90%, sustained throughout the campaign;
 - Improvements in scheme practicality among users of the blue bin scheme from 77% in 2004 to 94% in 2005;
 - Increases in satisfaction with the frequency of blue bin collection and overall blue bin satisfaction (3% and 2% respectively) from the pre and post analysis;
 - Increases in satisfaction with the frequency of brown bin collection and overall brown bin satisfaction (3% and 4% respectively) from the pre and post analysis;
 - A 25% increase in residents commitment to recycling;
 - A slight reduction in blue bin contamination (demonstrated through the compositional waste analysis); and
 - A 47% coverage of households within the district, with a resident contact rate of 31%
 - High levels of satisfaction with the practicality of the three bin scheme, as outlined below in table 3

² "Suffolk waste participation survey"; Hyder Consulting, 2006.

Table 3: Practicality of twin bin/three-bin kerbside schemes

Very/Quite Practical	July 2004	April 2005	Change
Babergh D.C.(with brown bin)	88%	95%	+ 7%
Babergh D.C. (no brown bin)	87%	82%	- 5%
Forest Heath D.C.	77%	94%	+ 17%
Ipswich B.C.	77%	82%	+ 5%
St Edmundsbury B.C	84%	83%	- 1%
Combined Study Area	82%	86%	+ 4%

- Ongoing research suggests that both FHDC and SEBC are maintaining high levels of service participation and satisfaction.
- In terms of recycling productivity and efficiency, post implementation research³ in the performance of waste collections across Suffolk demonstrated that the capture rates for dry recyclables are higher in the schemes that use alternate weekly collection of recyclables and residue.
- Capture rates for different wastes are high with paper ranging between 87% in Forest Heath to 94% in Babergh. Table 4 shows the capture rates (as wt % of arisings) that each scheme is currently achieving for each targeted material.

Table 4 Capture rate (wt %) for targeted dry recyclables and organics

Material	Babergh	Forest Heath	Ipswich	St Edmundsbury	Suffolk Coastal
Newspaper	94%	87%	89%	88%	67%
Magazines	95%	94%	88%	95%	72%
Recyclable paper & card	84%	65%	76%	70%	-
Plastic bottles	75%	59%	77%	77%	-
Plastic packaging	41%	30%	52%	47%	-
Steel cans	60%	44%	55%	51%	-
Aluminium cans	73%	59%	68%	63%	-
Green waste	-	97%	-	97%	90%
Kitchen non-meat	-	22%	-	34%	-

Source: Composition of Kerbside Household Waste Arising in Five Local Authorities in Suffolk”; Waste Research Limited, June 20004

³ “Composition of Kerbside Household Waste Arising in Five Local Authorities in Suffolk”; Waste Research Limited, June 20004

- As part of the overall trend in waste collected in FHDC and SEBC, since the introduction of the AWC, the quantity of waste diverted from landfill has increased considerably and the total amount of household waste collected has reduced.

We are confident that as part of our approach we have addressed specific barriers to recycling and our achievements and those of our residents are consistent with the recent WRAP guidance⁴ concerning overcoming the barriers to recycling.

The service we provide is responsive to balancing the needs of the resident and the need for effective participation in the waste collection services:

- Provision of assisted collections for vulnerable groups, particularly those with restricted mobility.
- Reliable and responsive in-house operational collection services with minimal missed bin rates and kerbside vigilance to assist in the minimisation of bin contamination problems.
- Provision of information in various formats to reflect both the diversity of understanding within the local community and the different preferences for accessing information.
- Provision of community wide collections for a wide range of materials including paper, card, plastic, metal cans, uncooked kitchen waste and garden waste.
- Provision of adequately sized wheeled bin containers and sacks to enable users to maximise diversion but to continue to be able to manage their waste effectively.
- The provision of variable bins sizes to cater for households with restricted storage and access and those with larger or smaller numbers of inhabitants.
- Provision of reusable sacks and kitchen caddy's to enable residents to store waste in the home.
- Provision of simple, clear information and instruction to all residents to ensure that waste is sorted appropriately and placed out for collection on the correct day and schedule. The effectiveness of the message is reflected in the high participation rates.

The design of waste collection in Suffolk using the AWC model has encouraged participation in recycling and composting by restraining the extent to which recyclable waste can be put into residual waste bins and at the same time releasing resources of money, resources and equipment to provide high quality recycling services. Our approach has not led to a reduction in the total collection capacity provided to individual households and is consistent with recent WRAP guidance.⁵

⁴ "Barriers to recycling at home"; WRAP/MEL Research, 2008

⁵ "Alternate Weekly collections guidance"; WRAP, 2007

Recycling schemes should be cost effective

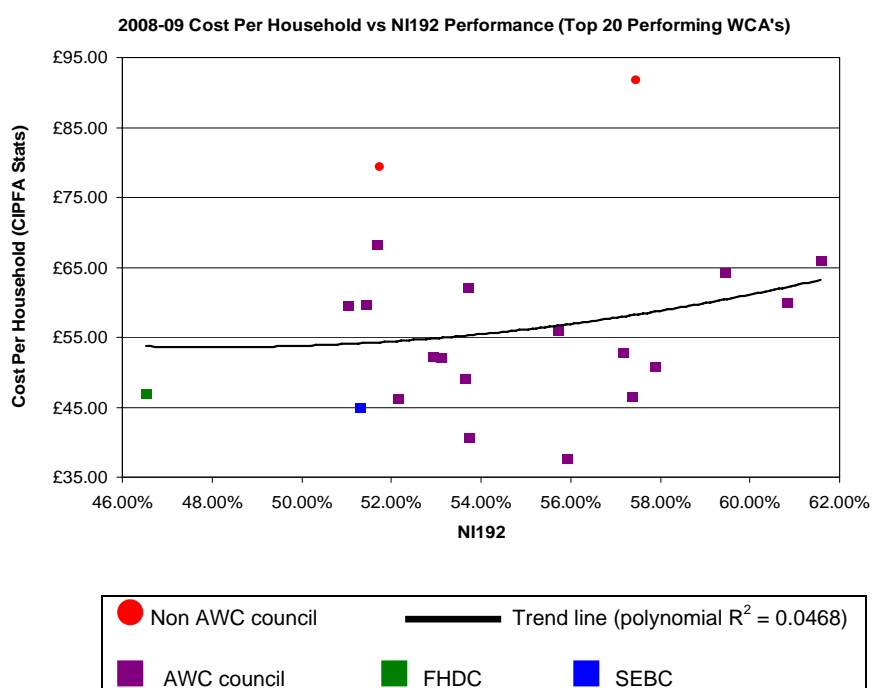
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council was the first English Local Authority to achieve a recycling and composting rate of 50% in 2004/05. Ever since we have continued to achieve this level of recycling and composting, for example we have most recently achieved a rate of 51.30% in 2008-09, ranking 19th in comparison to all other English Waste Collection Authorities.
- We believe however that this success is further underpinned by a relatively low annual service cost per household. Indeed in the same year, our cost per household was £46.99, one of the lowest when compared to the other 20 highest performers.
- Having reviewed the services provided by the highest performing collection authorities it should also be noted that for what we collect, we were the highest performing authority (i.e. all higher performers collect additional waste streams at the kerbside).
- In addition to this, yet to be audited results for 2009-10 indicate that our cost per household has reduced even further, to £44.44 with a recycling and composting rate of 50.10% making us one of the lowest costs per percentage point recycled at 88.7 pence.
- In 2008-09 FHDC achieved a recycling and composting rate of 46.53%, ranked 50th in comparison to all other English Waste Collection Authorities. Their cost of collection was £61.49 per household. In addition to this, yet to be audited results for 2009-10 indicate that the FHDC cost per household is £46.21 with a recycling and composting rate of 45.91%.

In 2005/6, 19 of the top 20 local recycling councils in England were operating an alternate waste collection service.⁶ Using the most recent audited information (2008/2009), outlined in figure 1 below, we can draw the following conclusions:

- 18 of the top 20 local recycling councils in England were operating an alternate waste collection service.
- In terms of providing value for money, both FHDC and SEBC are achieving an above average service in terms of the relationship between service cost and performance in relation to the top 20 recyclers

⁶ "Refuse Collection - Fifth Report of Session 2006–07", House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, July 2007.

Figure 1 -: Relationship between service cost and recycling performance



We have had virtually no complaints about our alternate week recycling scheme

- In the last 12 months Forest Heath have only received 2 complaints specifically about the Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) service.
- Over the same 12 month period St Edmundsbury have only received 4 complaints specifically about the Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) service.

Our own experiences supports recent research⁷ demonstrating insufficient linkages between AWC and any significant health impacts for residents, or that any health impacts are likely to be significantly greater than those associated with weekly collections.

Alternate weekly collections encourage people to recycle more

- Our three bin system stimulates the separation of waste types which is often carried out with active and engaged waste management practices in the household.

⁷ DEFRA Waste Implementation Programme, *Wycombe District Council: Health impact assessment of alternate week waste collections of biodegradable waste*, A report by Cranfield University and Enviros Consulting Limited: February 2007

- Furthermore, being easy to use, our co-mingled AWC dry recyclable collection encourages participation.
- In addition to the evidence we have identified locally, WRAP (Alternative Week Collections, Guidance for Local Authorities (July 2007)) stated that appropriately specified and well run AWC schemes can help deliver changes in behaviour by:
 - raising awareness of the volumes of waste generated, prompting the segregation of materials for recycling and composting; and
 - prompting an overall reduction in waste arisings at the kerbside. The reduction is likely to be brought about by residents changing their habits regarding the amount of material they manage via other means (e.g. home composting) or by changing shopping habits to reduce e.g. food and packaging waste.
- Recent case studies of LAs that have introduced AWCs (York, Rochdale, Kettering and Corby) have highlighted that they have all had a significant increase in dry recycling rates and an improved capture rate of individual recyclates.

Voucher schemes – effective tool to encourage more recycling or expensive gimmick?

- Our experience shows that people will do the right thing if the system is simple and the messages are clear.
- We are in favour of achieving high landfill diversion through an effective kerbside recycling and composting collection, together with a good network of bring sites. It has been our experience that residents who are provided with these services will be more open to positive behavioural change, which can be improved through a continuous education and feedback program. For example we provide feedback to residents when engaging with communities (as above) and on our websites and leaflets.
- Introducing schemes that are financially driven could increase waste crime and negative behaviour. Areas that need to be considered are;
 - Residents using other people's bins/boxes;
 - Residents stealing other people's bins/boxes;
 - Increased contamination in the recycling scheme;
 - Fly-tipping; and
 - Waste tourism (taking waste to neighbouring authorities).

Co-mingled can provide just as high quality recyclables as kerbside sort

A consortium of 6 Waste Collection Authorities in Suffolk manages a contract with Viridor to operate the Masons Material Recycling Facility (MRF) at Gt Blakenham near Ipswich. 45,000 tonnes of the consortiums co-mingled dry mixed recyclables are sent to this pioneering facility for sorting. The quality of the materials from this MRF helped protect the consortium from the worst impact of the recent downturn in material prices where high quality output materials commanded the highest demand from the marketplace. Contamination rates into the MRF are comparatively low (around 6%) which reflects the high participation in the scheme that we operate.

We encourage our residents through educational programmes to use the recycling system correctly. We use a system of red and yellow stickers to advise them when there is contaminating material in their blue bin. This is followed-up by home visits and further educational material as necessary. Sample checks on materials help us to identify the areas of higher contamination to allow us to target our education programmes more effectively.

The simplicity of our single stream co-mingled scheme, which utilises one 240 litre bin for recyclables, is popular with our residents, produces high quality materials and is cost effective. Our domestic waste scheme utilises 3 collection vehicles passing each property every 2 weeks. More complicated kerbside sort schemes involving a range of different containers, collection methods and compartmentalised vehicles raises significant questions about public acceptability, health and safety and operating carbon footprint.

We remain unconvinced with claims made by WRAP (Choosing the Right Recycling Collection System – June 2009) that downplay the negative public acceptability and Health and Safety issues associated with kerbside sort schemes. We continue to support to position set-out by the Health and Safety Executive in its comprehensive report on the study of kerbside sort recycling schemes and their impact on waste operatives (HSL/2006/25). The conclusion of this report suggested that:-

'Previous research suggests that the use of wheelie bins reduces the risk of manual handling injury compared to handling non-wheeled containers. Therefore, where possible it would be more appropriate to use wheeled bins for the collection of recyclables'.

Community engagement

- We jointly undertake several events throughout the year, of which some are together with the wider Suffolk Waste Partnership. At these events not only do we advise on our operational collection service but we also offer advice and provide resources to further our public's engagement with waste minimisation and reuse.
- We carried out a very successful 'Zero Waste Week' in March 2008 which resulted in large public participation, and following competition to reduce household waste, the identification of a waste minimisation champion. We have also since carried out targeted campaign work on littering and are currently focussing on a new project, 'Suffolk Streets Ahead' together with the Suffolk Waste Partnership. This will focus efforts on the residents of one

identified round area to engage with, offering advice on how to reduce their waste sent to landfill.

- In addition to this we regularly engage with various community groups such as the British Legion, Probus, Women's Institute, Parish Councils, Charitable Groups and Youth Clubs. These sessions, although predominantly educational, provide an open forum for issues to be discussed which improves our public's relationship and engagement with us, helping to promote local pride and ownership of their waste management practices.
- We also recognise, along with Waste Education Officers at Suffolk County Council that schools education with regards to what is accepted for recycling and composting through our schemes is of great importance as this can promote both correct behaviour within school but also at home and into the wider community.
- Our experience shows that if the system is simple people will understand it and recycle more of their waste.
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Case Study – The Perfect Bin Campaign

Part A: Achievement:

The Perfect Bin Scheme in 2006 was a project undertaken by the Suffolk Waste Partnership funded by Defra.

The main objectives of the scheme were:

- To reduce the amount of blue bin contamination
- To engage with the community
- To raise awareness about recycling and the blue bin scheme

The scheme was mainly aimed at encouraging school children to get involved with recycling and to make sure they understand what can and cannot be recycled through the blue bin scheme. To achieve this, the project focused on schools in the district with catchment areas that were known to have high rates of blue bin contamination.

The scheme involved an educational assembly, showing the materials being sorted and placed correctly into the recycling bins loose and clean. The children were given bin recording 'hangers' on which they could diary their home recycling habits. They were then encouraged to present their household recycling bin as the 'perfect bin', by putting their hanger on their bin. Collection crews checked participant's bins to make sure they only contained recyclable waste and if the bin was deemed to be 'perfect', then the child's details were entered into a prize draw.

As a result of the scheme ten youngsters from Lakenheath Primary school and five students from Riverside Middle school received prizes, which were presented at each school by the Chairman of the Council.

Part B: Outcome / Impact:

The scheme received a large amount of positive promotion and publicity; therefore, the project not only raised awareness within the schools of what can and cannot be recycled, it also raised awareness across the community. We are confident that this awareness will lead to an increase in the amount of waste being recycled.



Bring sites and bottle banks

As part of the development of waste collection services in FHDC and SEBC, the provision of cost effective and accessible opportunities to participate in recycling has been important. For this reason, both councils provide have maintained and promoted local recycling facilities for a wider range of material, particularly glass and textiles. Specific points to note include:

- There are 111 multi-material recycling centres provided throughout West Suffolk for the convenient capture of household waste along with five Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- In excess of a 50% increase in the quantity of glass and textiles recycled at local recycling centres since the start of the alternate weekly collection scheme (see appendix 1). Over 80% of residents in FHDC and SEBC also claim to currently recycle glass⁸
- Ongoing independent customer consultations with local residents have demonstrated an increased awareness and use of local recycling centres.
- Over 90% of residents consider themselves to be committed recyclers and over 66% continue to visit local recycling centres at least once a month.

The bigger picture on recycling

⁸ "Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Suffolk – Consultation"; Linda Jones and Partners, 2007.

- Better consistency across the country would be helpful (e.g. messages, systems and bin colours).
- Waste should not be politicised and be taken out of this arena.
- 'Emphasis' on businesses using recycled materials can only be made on economic grounds – only the market or legislation will dictate.

2.7 & 2.8 Energy Recovery & Disposal

Responses to these sections will be made on a countywide basis by Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Waste Partnership.

Appendix 1

