

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Streetscene, Public Protection and Community (Introduced by the Executive Member for Streetscene Services)	Executive Cabinet	19 November 2015

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF RECYCLING COLLECTED FROM HOUSEHOLDS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. For Members to note the issues with quality of the recycling materials collected from households across the Borough.
2. For Members to agree the actions proposed to improve the quality of the recycling collected.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

3. To approve the proposed actions to improve the quality of recycling materials.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. Following sampling of the dry recycling (blue bin) waste delivered to the processing facility at Farington concerns have been raised about the quality of the material. Contamination levels of between 5 to 39% have been recorded, the target is less than 5%.
5. If the quality of the material does not improve it could mean loads are rejected and lead to additional costs being incurred by the Council. An action plan which includes a communication programme, working with our waste management contractor, Veolia and a trial of collecting paper and cardboard together is proposed.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

6. To take the necessary steps to improve the quality of the recycling collected from households.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7. To not improve the quality of the recycling collected would lead to a reduction in our recycling rate and potentially additional costs for collection and disposal.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	✓	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	✓	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

BACKGROUND

9. Chorley residents are asked to separate their plastic bottles, cans and glass for recycling in a 240-litre blue bin which has a 40-litre black pod insert for paper. A 55-litre green box is provided for cardboard. Lancashire County Council (LCC) carried out random sampling on the co-mingled dry recycling (blue bin) that Veolia deliver direct to Farington Waste Technology Park (FWTP). This is a requirement of the new Materials Recovery Facility Regulations and is an ongoing exercise.
10. LCC officers requested a meeting with Chorley Council in September 2015 to discuss the high levels of contamination found in material sampled between October 2014 and June 2015. Contamination levels of 5% or less are acceptable; of the 40 samples none had contamination levels of 5% or less. Contamination is classed as any material FWTP cannot readily sort for reprocessing, these are non-target materials. The main materials contaminating the loads are paper and cardboard and non-target plastic e.g. yoghurt pots, black plastic trays, plastic toys, film. Total contamination varied between 5.39 to 38.93%, this compares unfavourable to other Districts in Lancashire. There was no correlation between individual collection rounds and high or low levels of contamination.
11. High contamination levels result in increased collection and reprocessing costs and reduce the value of materials destined for recycling. The increased reprocessing costs are incurred by LCC but the reduction in our recycling rate, if material goes to landfill carries a reputational risk and could result in a financial risk if LCC passed any disposal costs on to us. LCC have requested an action plan to improve the quality of the recycling material delivered to FWTP.

COMMUNICATIONS

12. Our current collection system has been in place for six years. Most residents believe they know what can be recycled in their blue bin and even if it contains some non-target material it has been emptied. Another factor which may account for the high levels of contamination is annual population turnover, 15% is typical for an area and with house building levels high in Chorley this figure is likely to be higher. These residents may not be aware of what materials we collect for recycling and how they need to be separated.
13. If Veolia crews find a blue bin that is grossly contaminated they will inform their supervisor who will check it and then speak to the resident or drop a leaflet through the door explaining why it could not be emptied. The bin is not emptied but usually the missed bin vehicle returns within a few days to empty it. This material goes through the Materials Recovery route rather than being separated into recyclable elements.
14. A number of actions have been identified in conjunction with the Council's communications team to improve the quality of the recycling collected. These messages will be positive to reinforce correct practise. These include a Right Stuff, Right Bin week using social media to highlight to residents what materials we can accept for recycling, stickers for new or replacement bins detailing what materials go in that bin and changes to the annual waste collection calendar. These actions will take place over the next six months.

15. The use of enforcement powers has been considered against those households who are contaminating their recycling. This is a very resource intensive process and potentially could result in negative publicity. Legislation changed in June 2015 making the enforcement process lengthier and the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice the only route. Depending on the results of future sampling the potential use of enforcement action will be reviewed in 2016.

WORK WITH VEOLIA

16. The collection crews play a critical role in identifying contamination at the kerbside. A number of actions have been identified in conjunction with Veolia management to improve the quality of the material collected. These include toolbox talks where crews are reminded again of the importance of keeping paper and cardboard separate from the comingled dry materials, recycling crews to tour FWTP to see how the waste is reprocessed and the importance of keeping quality high and increased checks on blue bins.

COMINGLING OF PAPER AND CARDBOARD

17. The high levels of paper and cardboard recorded demonstrate there is an issue with paper spilling out into the body of the blue bin as well as the durability of the black pods meaning they need replacing frequently. If the black pod has been damaged or lost some residents have not requested a replacement and mixed their paper with the other materials in the blue bin.
18. Veolia have been asked to assess the feasibility of collecting paper and cardboard together, co-mingled in the same vehicle. Residents would be told they could mix their paper and card together and would need to leave the black pod by the side of the blue bin for collection. This is to ensure productivity of crews remains as current. Once the current stock of pods is used up they would not be replaced and residents would be given another 55l green box as a replacement. Veolia are expected to trial this collection method in discrete areas over the next few weeks. If successful residents would be notified and it would be rolled out across the Borough early in 2016.
19. In the longer term other options for the collection of co-mingled paper and cardboard from households could be considered.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

20. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

21. The costs associated with communicating and educating the public in order to improve the quality of recycling collections can be found within existing budget resources.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

22. There are no comments in relation to this report.

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR OF STREETSCENE, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jo Oliver	5737	5 November 2015	***