

Kerbside Recycling

Director/Head of Department: Keith Parker Head of Leisure and Environmental Services
Report Author: Janice Carrol

Recommendation: That members note the progress to date of improving access to and participation in kerbside recycling services in the Borough.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 A report detailing the progress of the kerbside recycling service was considered by the Environmental Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2007. The recycling service had been operating in-house for only 5 months at that time and although a significant amount of activity had been reported with positive results, members requested a further update at this time. This report outlines progress made on the kerbside recycling service since that time.

2. PROGRESS

2.1 On 24 April Executive endorsed the findings of the independent report commissioned by the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to evaluate the in-house kerbside recycling service. The evaluation carried out by consultants appointed by WRAP, concluded that the in-house service delivery option provided Best value for Copeland.

2.2 Although the Executive's endorsement of the in-house service provider gave the Waste team the authority to take a longer term view of this additional service, it coincided with the departure of two of the three key Waste Management Officers, one of whom had in effect been the council's Recycling Officer. The consequent lack of experienced officers within the Waste team has restricted the team's ability to make significant improvements to the service. Despite the resource issues, due to the additional resources available through the Cleaner Safer Greener, South Whitehaven Waste Projects and the WRAP funded Cumbria-wide Waste Awareness Campaign a number of activities have been carried out, and are detailed in the following paragraphs. Although these projects have

focused on certain areas in the Borough the lessons learnt from undertaking these activities can be applied across the Borough.

3. **RECYCLING SURVEY**

3.1 In February 2007, 5000 postal questionnaires were sent out to households in the South Whitehaven area to determine householders attitudes to recycling and to the kerbside recycling scheme. Return envelopes were sent out with the survey and a draw was made from the returned questionnaires for 3 cash prizes. By 12 March 1026 responses had been received. The number received was very close to the target of 1100 and was accepted as a valid sample.

3.2 The main results of the survey were:

- Of those responding, **74%** said that they thought recycling was very important to them, and another **22.3%** that it was fairly important.
- **75.1%** said that they recycle even if it requires additional effort, and **20.3%** that they recycle, but only if it does not require additional effort.
- **42.6%** said that they recycle everything which can be recycled and **47.3%** said that they recycle a lot, but not everything which can be recycled.
- About 24% of those who responded said that they have stopped using the recycling service, most of them saying either that they were **not aware of a kerbside collection in their area**, or that they **did not have enough storage space**.
- When asked what would persuade them to start recycling again most common answers were related to **more frequent collections, a better local service, collection of a wider range of materials, and incentives to recycle** (such as money off council tax).
- The most popular materials which respondents said they would recycle at the kerbside if they could were **plastic and cardboard**. (72.8% said they would use a kerbside plastic recycling service, and 59.7% a cardboard recycling service)

3.3 The results of this survey were used to inform what information was provided to residents as part of the summer doorstepping activities detailed in the following paragraph.

4. **DOORSTEPPING/RECYCLING RANGERS**

4.1 Two separately funded education projects came together during the summer of 2007 to ensure the maximum number of properties across the south Whitehaven area were visited and provided with information packs on how to recycle.

- 4.2 The WRAP funded Cumbria-wide campaign involved targeting recycling information to different groups of residents based on the ACORN socio-demographic classification system in a way that is deemed most appropriate to the target group. Part of the work in Copeland centred on increasing participation in recycling in the group known as the “blue collar” category and the Woodhouse area was selected as the target area. Face-to-face or Doorstepping activity was the method selected for this group to raise awareness.
- 4.3 As the Cumbria work was consistent with work planned for the South Whitehaven Education and Awareness Project, the Recycling Ranger employed by Cumbria County Council to carry out the Doorstepping work worked alongside the two temporary Recycling Rangers employed through the South Whitehaven Waste Awareness project thereby increasing the number of visits made.
- 4.4 During June, July and August over 5500 households were visited by the Rangers. They spoke to over 2800 residents and left service information leaflets if there was no response after a second visit.
- 4.5 Although the main objective for the Doorstepping Exercise was to provide information to encourage and support residents recycling, residents comments were noted and presented by the Recycling Rangers in a final report. Feedback from the Recycling Rangers highlighted the following:
- A demand for plastic and cardboard collections
 - A request for more recycling points and more materials recycled
 - A request for more frequent collections from recycle points
 - Increased education needed for householders. Many people were not aware of what services are available to them, and how to use the boxes correctly.
- 4.6 On a positive note many people highlighted the fact that the household waste left in their black bin has been much reduced since they started recycling. There were also several comments that education work in schools has reached home, many young people have talked about what they have learned in assemblies and classroom workshops

5. PARTICIPATION MONITORING

- 5.1 The report considered by the OSC in February detailed the results of an initial participation monitoring survey carried out in the south Whitehaven area in October/November 2006. Using the same nationally accepted monitoring methods, a further 2 surveys have been undertaken in the same streets in the South Whitehaven area in addition to a further 3

smaller surveys in areas across the Borough. The table below summarises the findings of all 6 surveys to date.

Area	Time period	Total participation (%)	Sample size (number of properties)	Worst street in sample participation	Best street in sample participation
South Whitehaven	Oct-Nov 2006	33.70%	1217	23.60%	57.70%
South Whitehaven	Apr-May 2007	44.90%	1217	23.60%	63.40%
South Whitehaven	Sept-Oct 2007	44.95%	1217	23.60%	63.40%
Distington	Sept-Oct 2007	49.37%	535	5.56%	73.33%
Frizington	Jul-Aug 2007	28.33%	240	8.80%	45.80%
Millom	Sept-Oct 2007	48.61%	360	35.63%	85.71%

5.2 The results, although improving over time in South Whitehaven are extremely disappointing overall and are showing significantly lower participation than the 70% overall average or 80-95% achieved in area with alternate week refuse collections. A further study is planned for the South Whitehaven area in January and other areas of the Borough will be surveyed as resources allow.

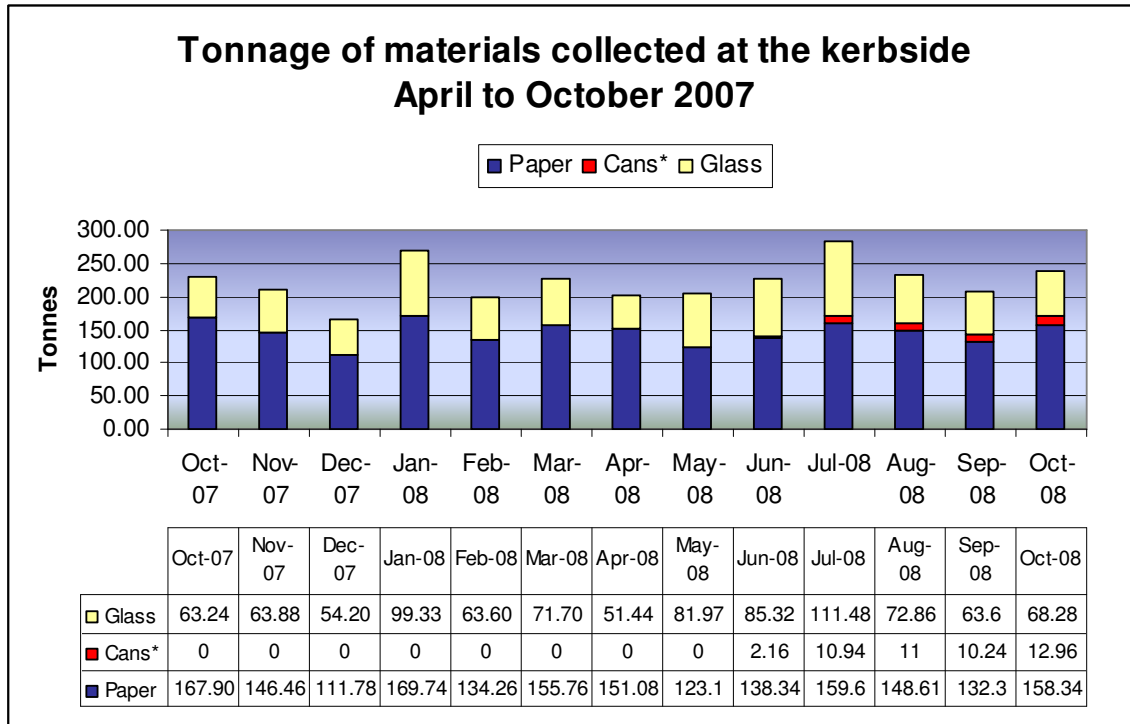
6. NEW RECYCLING VEHICLE/PLASTIC & CARDBOARD COLLECTIONS

6.1 Since the service came in-house in 2006, material has been collected for recycling in 2 large purpose built “kerbsider” collection vehicles supported by a third smaller box van used to access the more restricted areas such as narrow lanes etc. The box van was used as an interim measure and was not ideally suited to the service. Fortunately and securing the existing kerbside collection service for South Whitehaven, a suitable purpose built smaller “kerbsider” collection vehicle has now been purchased through the Cleaner Safer Greener Funding. From Monday 26 November this new addition to the fleet will be used to collect plastic and cardboard from a limited number of properties (1200) in South Whitehaven in addition to taking on the work previously done by the box van.

6.2 The new service involves plastic bottles and cardboard being collected from 2 re-usable bags on the same day as the black box service. Depending on how quickly the new service settles in it is possible that the plastic and cardboard service may be offered to a few hundred more properties before the end of March.

7. COLLECTION PERFORMANCE

7.1 Despite a significant amount of additional boxes being issued and at least 500 more properties being added to the service the amount of material collected at the kerbside since the service was taken in-house has remained fairly consistent as can be seen from the graph below.



7.2 On average 100 recycling boxes per month have been issued, these have mainly been due to boxes being damaged or missing, to new properties and where one box is not enough for the residents recyclable materials.

7.3 The budget for the kerbside recycling scheme for 2007/7 was based on collecting 4320 tonnes of recyclable material, or 160 kilograms per property serviced. Although this figure is higher than had been achieved by Doorstep Collections, similar collection services elsewhere are achieving 200 kilograms or more per property per annum. Achieving the target performance would leave a small shortfall between expenditure and income (recycling credits and material sales) of £19k.

7.4 After the first half of the year it is clear that the target tonnage for 2007/8 of 4240 tonnes will not be achieved. At the end of September 1354 tonnes had been collected for recycling at the kerbside, this is 766 tonnes less than the target. Based on the actual performance to date the shortfall in income to the end of the year is expected to be around £82k. To ensure the service continues and that the cost of the shortfall does not fall on this Council, revenue support of the £82k has already been sought and approved by the Cumbria Waste Partnership for 2007/8 and the same amount will also be available to us for 2008/9.

8. PLANNED INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

- 8.1 New Copeland liveried kerbsider vehicles have been specified in the Council's new fleet contract with Translinc, which started on 22 October. Due to the time taken to build these vehicles being around 4 months interim hired vehicles are currently being used until the new vehicles are delivered in January. The new Corporately coloured vehicles will provide an opportunity to "re-launch" the kerbside service with the Copeland branding.
- 8.2 Copeland along with Carlisle and South Lakeland Council's has agreed to pilot a new WRAP recycling crew training exercise. The Council's supervisors will be trained to deliver a series of tool-box training sessions which is intended to give recycling crews a better understanding of wider waste issues as well as local issues, good and bad environmental practices, dealing with conflict and engaging with the public. It is hoped that the training will lead to the crews becoming ambassadors for the Council's recycling services.
- 8.3 An innovative new changeable advertising panel system is going to be fitted to a number of the Council's waste vehicles to enable environmental and other messages to be displayed by the vehicles as they travel through the Borough. It is anticipated that all refuse and recycling vehicles will be fitted with the display panels by the end of January 2008. The artwork for this initiative is being developed jointly by the Waste and Cultural Services teams thereby avoiding expensive artwork charges.
- 8.4 The Waste team are currently working with the waste prevention team from Cumbria County Council to develop waste education material and awareness campaigns to target specific areas where participation in recycling is poor.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Despite a disappointing performance to date on kerbside collections, the Council's recycling rate at the end of the first half of 2007/8 was a staggering 40%. Due to the reduced tonnages of green waste collected for composting in the latter half of the year this figure is expected to be around 34% for the full year.

List of Appendices None

List of Background Documents: None

List of Consultees: Corporate Team

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	None
Impact on Sustainability	Recycling has a positive impact on sustainability.
Impact on Rural Proofing	None
Health and Safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None