

## Warwickshire Waste Partnership – 15 June 2010

### Project to Increase the Number of Households Participating in Recycling in the Boroughs of North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy on behalf of the Officers Group

##### Summary

The report summarises the progress made on a project to increase the number of households participating in recycling in the boroughs of North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth.

##### Recommendation

That the Warwickshire Waste Partnership notes the work taking place between the partners and receives further updates through the life of the project.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Statistics for both dry recycling levels and residual waste levels across the five Warwickshire waste collection authority areas were compared at the half way point during the financial year 2009/10. It was found that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough and North Warwickshire Borough were performing below the level of the other three authorities. A decision was made, during the service planning process between the partners, that additional funding and support would be needed by the two boroughs, to help them improve their performance over the next 12 months.
- 1.2 In previous years, the other three authorities have received help from the County Council to put in place their alternate week collection infrastructure and communications campaigns.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Of the five waste collection authorities in Warwickshire, three have introduced alternate week collection methods over the past few years: Rugby, Stratford and Warwick. These three authorities currently perform better than the remaining two, in terms of both dry recycling rates and residual waste levels. The following table demonstrates averaged rates for the five waste collection authorities and the average for the county, for data from Q1 to Q3 inclusive 2009/2010.

Authority	Average household dry recycling rate	Total residual household waste per household (kg)
North Warwickshire	9.57%	610.50
Nuneaton and Bedworth	16.31%	485.15
Rugby	25.04%	360.29
Stratford	25.52%	296.06
Warwick	21.20%	313.48
Warwickshire	22.64%	451.91

- 2.2 The elevated performance of Rugby, Stratford and Warwick can be attributed, at least in part, to these authorities moving to an alternate week collection method. Additionally, when these changes were made over the past few years, large scale communications campaigns were employed to explain the changes and encourage full participation. The authorities received assistance with these campaigns from Warwickshire County Council staff.
- 2.3 Currently Nuneaton and Bedworth collect both residual waste and dry recycling on a weekly basis. North Warwickshire collect residual waste weekly and dry recycling fortnightly. Until this year, very little assistance has been given to the boroughs to support increasing participation in recycling, increasing recycling levels or decreasing residual waste.

This new assistance is in the form of funding and additional help from the Waste Projects Team. It is envisaged that the funding will be spent in three areas, namely:-

- (i) A temporary member of staff for each authority until 31 March 2011, to coordinate the project.
- (ii) Two full dry recycling participation surveys across all households in both boroughs. One at the start and one at the end of the funding period.
- (iii) A targeted communication campaign to encourage participation.

### **3. Progress Update**

- 3.1 Warwickshire Waste Projects Team have met twice with representatives from the two boroughs to initiate the project. This group will continue to meet regularly. Additionally the two project co-ordinators will work closely together sharing ideas.
- 3.2 A job specification for the Project Co-ordinator posts has been written. Each borough is currently in the process of recruiting. The posts will be offered as a possible secondment opportunity as we recognise the short duration of the funding.
- 3.3 Work has started on setting up the baseline participation survey. We will be following the best practice methodology set out by WRAP. Both boroughs use the same contractor for their dry recycling collections: Palm Recycling. Palm have sent details of all of their recycling collection rounds and establishing the logistics of the survey is underway. Agency staff will be used to assist with the participation surveys.

- 3.4 The data from the baseline participation survey, coupled with that from the Project Transform composition analysis, will be used to develop targeted promotional work to increase participation in recycling, and to encourage waste minimisation and increase levels of recycling. The Waste Projects Team will support the two Project Co-ordinators in doing this and envisage the work to include targeted leaflets, local authority newsletters, local PR, roadshows, work with community groups and competitions. The campaign will look to examine and address any barriers that prevent householders from recycling.
- 3.5 In September, North Warwickshire plan to introduce collections of cardboard and plastic food containers and bottles. It is hoped this new service will automatically produce an increase in recycling participation, due to the promotional work that will be involved. It will be legitimate for the project co-ordinator to be involved in the roll out of the new recycling provision. (Nuneaton and Bedworth already collect these two waste streams).
- 3.6 We have general agreement that the main participation survey and therefore the target will refer to dry recycling only. However, participation data for green waste collections will be gathered by the two Project Co-ordinators when the main survey is complete.

#### **4. Success Criteria**

- 4.1 North Warwickshire estimate that their recycling participation level is at about 35% to 40%. On this basis, we have put forward a target of a five percentage point increase in participation rate.
- 4.2 Nuneaton and Bedworth had a sample participation survey carried out in January 2009, which suggested their recycling participation rate is higher. This is backed up by their higher recycling rate and lower residual waste per household. A five percentage point increase from a higher starting baseline may not be totally realistic, but we have set this as a provisional target for swing in participation.
- 4.3 When the initial participation data is in, we will take advice from WRAP over what increase in participation target is fair and achievable, it may be different for each authority.

#### **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1 The current re-deployee pools in the two boroughs are small, and there have been no forthcoming suitable applicants for the two project co-ordinator posts. The posts will be promoted internally for two weeks with the option of secondment. The posts will then be promoted within Warwickshire and according to the borough council's terms until they are filled.
- 5.2 The baseline participation survey is being planned so that it can be underway very soon after the borough project co-ordinator is in place. Each area will be surveyed over 3 collections. Nuneaton and Bedworth's recycling is collected weekly and the survey will, therefore, take 3 weeks to complete. North Warwickshire, however,

operates a fortnightly recycling collection which will increase the time it takes to complete the survey to 6 weeks.

- 5.3 The baseline participation survey data will determine further promotional campaign activity. This will be the coordinators' key task until into 2011.
- 5.4 The final participation surveys will take place in February and March 2011.

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**Background Papers:** None

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