



Waste Contamination Working Group

Monday 25 March 2013, 1.00pm

Tenants Resource Centre, Grantham

Present: Councillor Jeff Thompson (Chairman)
Councillor Ray Wootten
Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Officers: Carol Drury (Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer)
Alex Jarvis (Admin Assistant – Legal & Democratic)

Mark Taylor (Head of Environmental Services)
Pat Swinton (Waste and Recycling Service Manager)
Gwen Came (Enforcement Co-ordinator – Waste and Recycling)

ACTION NOTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received for Councillor Jean Taylor, Councillor Kelham Cooke, Councillor Breda Griffin, Councillor John Nicholson and Councillor Nick Craft.

2. Substitutes

3. Declarations of interest

No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared.

4. Waste and Recycling – New contract and contamination

Effective marketing and educational strategies to target residents were discussed such as sending households a recycling wheel with the correct recycling information on which could be kept by households and referred to as and when required. The group were informed that this could be an expensive way to reach the public and it was questioned if this would be effective. As part of this campaign, offenders can be easily identified by workers looking in individual's bins and if there are visibly incorrect items in the recycling bin, leaving the contaminated bin behind and not emptying it.

It was acknowledged there could be issues with people who have illnesses or tenants that move in and out of properties frequently so they may not necessarily be able to comply with the rules due to incapacity or lack of knowledge as different areas have different recycling rules. It was suggested that if aware of issues the authority could possibly take away an offender's grey bin as a last resort and that action should be taken as it is no doubt an issue for the offender's neighbours.

It was noted that there is currently a trial testing to see if giving occupants of multiple occupant residencies black bins and giving each occupant a clear bag to recycle with if they wish to recycle would help, as this enables workers to easily see if there is any contamination in the clear bag. The group discussed the possibility of encouraging individuals to use the black bin if in doubt as the penalty for putting the wrong items in the recycling bin has a negative financial impact on the authority.

It was suggested that a combined approach which would inform and educate residents about recycling and recognising that for a transitional home set-up something permanent is needed.

The authority has not had a recycling promotion in 7/8 years since the bins were first introduced therefore this is an opportunity to start from the beginning. Ideas such as promoting recycling in Skyline, SK Today and on the side of council lorries which could reach the public. A document detailing 16 ways to promote the right educational message about recycling was distributed amongst the group with the added suggestion that the authority utilises community events to go and meet the public which could especially help those who struggle with speaking English or are illiterate. It was discussed that some residents may have recently moved to the district and not be familiar with the area. As different districts apply different recycling rules this could mean a number of residents are not fully informed.

It was confirmed that there is no legal target for recycling. The group discussed that they do not want to encourage people to put all their rubbish into black bins and want to educate people about how to recycle properly. It was noted that the issue is

individuals putting waste such as nappies and food in their recycling bins. It was acknowledged that the campaign won't bear instant results and that North Kesteven council is currently looking at the possibility of enforcement as the next stage if offenders persist. It was confirmed that if able to identify a known offender the waste team can visit the offender, educate them and speak about any issues. If several attempts have been made and the offender visited by the team but they continue, the council can remove their grey bin. If that offending resident decides to comply with the rules they may have their bin returned to them. If offenders can be identified, a 'three strikes' policy can be adopted. The group agreed that the programmes educating those who do not follow the correct procedure should be positive and a way of helping the individual. It was agreed that there should be a proactive approach in approaching known offenders before they offend three times and are then unable to recycle as if grey bins are removed this places a high reliance on black bins with the possibility of littering which will further affect the neighbourhood. Each individual situation will be assessed. It could be that to give an offender an extra black bin to reduce the contamination into the grey recycling bin.

As part of the educational campaign across the district, different marketing strategies were looked at during the meeting. This includes an informative wheel that will allow residents to be fully informed of what can be recycled. The group discussed that the wheel could include what can be and what can't be put into the recycling bin and on the back of the wheel information regarding self-recycling sites. Officers mentioned that it could be useful to speak with local supermarkets to let them know about the recycling campaign and check what banks they operate on their premises to give residents that information. It was acknowledged that it can be difficult to judge when recycling goods such as recycling magazines with unrecyclable front and back covers and this should be focused on to help residents make the correct choices.

The ultimate achievement is for the service plan to have a formal waste policy and bring all ideas into one document where enforcement is included as an option. Cabinet support is required to further back up the message with an overall comprehensive policy document that recognises although enforcement is an option it will not be the best way to solve the most complex issues.

It was confirmed that approximately 100 out of 23,000 bins are left behind in North Kesteven. North Kesteven council employed a third party to conduct an audit after receiving the contractor's bill as they were unsure it was correct but found that the figures from both the contractor and the third party were extremely similar. South Kesteven can also independently verify figures to satisfy that the contractors are charging the correct amount for contaminated waste if there is any uncertainty. The contract is from August 2013 – March 2015.

If offending residents leave their bin out on the day waste lorries pick up missed bins, it will go into landfill.

It was mentioned that in the case of younger offenders it may be a lack of education regarding recycling. It was confirmed that the Waste and Recycling Team have already been in contact with local sixth forms and visited primary schools. The group discussed how in the South Kesteven district all waste is deposited into the waste lorries and then sorted at a recycling centre which is a process that people may not be aware of, therefore limiting their knowledge about the entire process and this should be addressed. A competition for schools to design a video or performance has been launched to show as part of the campaign.

The group explored the issues around certain marketing strategies such as distributing stickers to residents as these could go out of date, if there is a new contractor in the future their recycling rules may differ and once the information is being given to residents in permanent form it could be challenging then altering this. There should be a realistic view of how individuals will process the information the campaign gives them. Minor incorrect objects in bins are not an issue as the 5% contamination allows for this. It is the huge amount of residual waste that must be tackled.

As household sizes can vary, the group looked at the issue of families with several young children and how these families in particular can generate a lot of waste. The black bin wastes was addressed in the meeting with the suggestion that teams could visit households and see what is generally put into these bins, give households additional bags and food caddies in an effort to reduce what is in black bins.

It was agreed that there needs to be a consistent approach through-out the entire process with 3 key elements guiding the process:

1. Quality recycled waste is the ultimate goal.
2. Follow a targeted approach towards offenders that is proactive and positive with enforcement as an option if offending can be proven and no other actions are solving the issue.
3. For repeat offenders, consider removing grey bins and if necessary replacing with black bins.

A list of communications of education of ways to reach the public regarding recycling was distributed amongst those at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 2.25pm.