



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 4 June 2024

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Twin Stream Update

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the roll out of the twin stream project and the timelines for the reintroduction of contamination monitoring process for the dry mixed recycling (DMR) bins.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Notes the contents of the report and the revised action plan for the reintroduction of the contamination monitoring process for the Dry Mixed Recycling waste stream.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any
exempt or confidential
information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate
priorities? Sustainable South Kesteven

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The costs of the project are predominantly covered by Lincolnshire County Council, however, if the contamination rates cannot be reduced there is a possibility that any future costs in relation to this project would need to be sourced from South Kesteven's budget. However, this is a small risk and will be kept under review.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The report is for noting and there are no significant legal or governance implications arising from the report. It is important for Members to be aware of the revised action plan highlighted at Table 1.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.3 The rejection of bins can lead to an increased risk of physical and verbal abuse towards operatives. Measures have been put in-place to address this and it will be monitored throughout the project.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Emergency Planning and Health & Safety Lead

Climate Change

- 1.4 Reducing waste and maximising the quality of recycling waste is a key component of ensuring that the waste collection service align with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and their commitment to addressing this.

Completed by: Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 In July 2019 the LWP commenced a trial to collect paper and card separately from the dry mixed recycling (DMR) collections in North Kesteven, Boston and South Holland. The trial was a success, contamination was reduced, and resident engagement was positive. Following the success of the trial, the LWP agreed to roll-out the twin stream recycling scheme across the county by 2024.
- 2.2 The benefits of the scheme include –
 - Improving the quality and volume of paper and card recycled,
 - Reducing contamination – the separated paper and card is higher quality and therefore it can be made into a higher quality product which can be recycled multiple times,
 - Improved DMR quality – as with paper and card, the higher quality the recyclate, the more it can be recycled in the future.
- 2.3 The twin stream rollout in South Kesteven began in Autumn 2023 with a programme of resident education and bin deliveries. The first paper and card collections took place in week commencing 5th February 2024; this collection was a resounding success. In March, 85.3% of residents presented a purple lidded bin for collection, of those presented only 0.74% were rejected due to contamination; this equates to a successful collection rate of 99.26%.
- 2.4 Alongside the new paper and card bin roll out, it was agreed that the contamination issue in the DMR bin would be addressed. SK's contamination rate was around the 30% mark, and it was agreed this would be addressed. Alongside proactive educational campaigns, a 'tag and take' exercise was undertaken to highlight to resident's the problematic items in their recycling waste; this included paper and card.
- 2.5 The DMR rejections began on the 19th February, however, there were a number of identified issues including –

- Up to 25% contamination rate on Day 1 and 2 – resulting in 7,000 rejected bins,
- Aggression and violence towards operatives delivering the service – a notable example being where the police were called after a bin was thrown by a resident at the crew and vehicle.
- Education campaign – multiple complaints from elected members and residents that they were unaware of the changes, suggesting that the education and ‘tag and take’ campaigns weren’t as successful as had been hoped.

2.6 Due to the escalation of the issues, it was agreed that rejections would be paused from Wednesday 21st February.

2.7 Although the initial rejection plan was paused, it was acknowledged that the Council would need to investigate the challenges and adapt the original plan to ensure it would be better suited and targeted to the needs of the residents.

2.8 To address the issues that occurred on the last attempt, a project group has been established which is made up of SKDC officers, LCC representatives and Cabinet representatives. The group assessed what could be done differently and decided that a data-driven, phased approach would be best. The new phased approach will be rolled out in three stages, details on each stage are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Phased Approach to DMR Rejections

Date	Action	Additional information
Phase 1 - W/C 13 th May	<p>‘Oops’ tagging of bins contaminated with paper/card and plastics. These have been identified as the main contaminants.</p> <p>Copy of tag available in Appendix 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tags are advisory only. • The tags are brightly coloured to grab the attention of residents. • Communications will be released in the run up to the tags and throughout the week. • Additional staff training has been organised to prevent inconsistent application.
Phase 2 – W/C 10 th June	Rejections will re-start. The criteria will be more relaxed (a common-sense approach will be applied – if the recycling is clean, dry and items of contamination are limited, the bin will be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data will continue to be collected and analysed to ensure resources are targeted effectively. • Training will continue to ensure consistency.

	taken) and there will be higher tolerances for paper/card.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional support will be provided to Parish Councils and community groups to help cascade the message.
Phase 3 – ongoing collections through summer	Rejections will continue with a targeted, data driven approach. The aim is to bring down contamination over the course of the summer using information to support the roll out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional resources will be focussed in areas where the data suggests they are needed. The project group will meet regularly to assess and ‘tweak’ the plan as it is rolled out to ensure the plan is flexible to the needs of residents.

2.9 Phase 1 of the action plan is now complete, and feedback has been gathered on the use of the advisory ‘Oops’ tag. In general, the tag has been well received and generated discussions around contamination. However, some issues were highlighted including –

- Inconsistent use of the tag – it was identified that although most crews were using the tag as trained, there were some tags which were not being ticked to inform the resident of what the items of contamination were. Furthermore, there were reports of areas where very bin was tagged without being checked for contamination. These issues were addressed as soon as they came to light, however, to ensure this doesn’t happen with rejections the operatives will receive additional training in this area.
- Misunderstanding around soft plastics – it has been highlighted that some residents don’t understand the terminology ‘soft plastics’.
- General confusion around what can go in the silver bins – many residents have voiced confusion about what can go in each bin.

2.10 To address these issues and ensure wherever possible the confusion of residents is mitigated; the project group are continuing to explore how communications with residents can be improved over the course of the summer to ensure the information they need is readily available. Alongside the more relaxed rejection criteria, as outlined in Table 1, vulnerable residents will receive more support if required and Members can pass any concerns to the portfolio holder for action.

2.11 In addition, an All MemberBriefing has been arranged for Tuesday 4th June to update all members prior to the rejection process restarting.

2.12 As per the timetable in Table 1, this project will run throughout the summer with the aim of driving contamination down and the project group will feedback on progress to this Committee as required.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 This report is for noting only.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The alternative is to do nothing; however, contamination rates were at 30% prior to the introduction of these changes and in line with the commitment made with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP), alongside SKDC's commitment to climate action, doing nothing is an unviable option.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 To provide the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the action plan which has been agreed with LWP, the Cabinet representative and Officers.

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 – Oops Tag