



TECHNICAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

REVIEW OF RECYCLING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF WASTE FROM COUNCIL PREMISES AND OPERATIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

I am pleased to present this report of the review of Recycling and Management of Waste from Council premises and operations. The Panel looked at the ways the Council is increasing the amount of recycling and how it reuses materials and supplies, and reduces the amount of consumer goods purchased. The Council is a microcosm of society and it would be remiss not to set the best example for the Council Tax payers of Tameside and indeed it is difficult to find any local authority doing as much as Tameside with internal recycling.



There has been a lot of progress made with regard to recycling. There is however still more that can and should be done, e.g.

- Minimise the amount we use and dispose of, i.e. paper
- Increase use of electronic communication, rather than printed copies

We all, elected members and officers, have to take responsibility for the amount of consumer goods we use and would hope that everyone thinks before they use the resources.

Finally, I would like to thank every one who gave evidence to the Panel and the scrutiny staff for their excellent work in supporting the Panel.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "PJ Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Cllr Peter J Robinson
Chair

2. SUMMARY

The review reports on efforts being made to reduce the financial and environmental impact of waste produced by the Council from its office premises and operations. The review compliments the Panel's previous review of the Council's policies and practices for maximising recycling and minimising waste from domestic and business premises.

This review focuses on three significant areas of waste management – Council premises, District Assemblies and the Engineering Service.

Unrecycled waste produced by the Council (from both premises and operations) is sent to landfill. The Council is about to enter into a new contract for the disposal of waste. Previously, the Council paid a levy of approximately £8million per year to the Greater Manchester Waste Authority for waste disposal. Under the new contract the charge will be made up of three elements. One element of the charge will be according to the weight of waste sent to landfill, estimated at £80 per tonne. There is therefore a significant financial incentive to reduce waste sent to landfill. The other two elements are a charge for the administration/management of the Household Waste Recycling Centres and a charge for Overheads. These are based on a levy which is council tax / population based.

The Council aims to minimise the amount of waste from Council premises sent to landfill by encouraging staff to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' waste as much as possible. New guidelines and practice were introduced in December 2006 alongside the blue-bin scheme which has been running for several years. The Council now provides guidelines and facilities for the recycling of glass, cans and plastic as well as paper. The scheme is lead by the Council's Environmental Services Recycling Team with the support of Facilities Management. The scheme is promoted in all Council premises including outstations, schools, libraries and town halls. Although the amount of waste recycled is twice the amount sent to landfill, it is still estimated that half of the waste sent to landfill could be recycled. In consultation with employees, the review found that whilst the scheme is welcomed by staff, aspects of the scheme could be improved particularly in providing facilities for outstations. There also appears to be a need to improve publicity and information relating to the scheme. Overall, the Panel is encouraged by the level of commitment shown by staff as indicated in the consultation.

The Panel was keen to explore the potential for setting targets for waste minimisation. However, the Panel found that monitoring and setting targets for the level of waste recycled from Council premises was problematic given that internal efforts to minimise waste could result in a reduction in recycling levels.

In terms of Council operations, the Scrutiny Panel found that District Assemblies and Engineers Service are committed to the principle of waste minimisation and have a number of measures in place to both reduce, reuse and recycle waste. For example, District Assemblies reuse and recycle waste generated by grounds maintenance. The Engineers service currently works with Stockport MBC to recycle around 98% of road construction waste generated by routine highway works in Tameside which is then returned and used in maintenance and repair operations.

A number of local authorities which had been awarded Beacon Council Status for Waste and Recycling were contacted in order to compare practices and identify good practice in waste minimisation from Council premises. Tameside appears to compare well with other local authorities although there are some examples of innovative approaches that may be useful to the authority.

The Panel identified a number of recommendations which relate to opportunities to improve the amount of waste reduced, reused and recycled from the Council's own premises and operations.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

Municipal Year 2006-2007

Councillor P Robinson (Chair), Councillor R Welsh (Deputy Chair), Councillors Carter, Downs, Meredith, S Quinn, Roberts, and S Smith.

The Panel was assisted by Mr T Moss representing the Tameside Citizens' Panel.

Municipal Year 2007-2008

Councillor P Robinson (Chair), Councillor R Welsh (Deputy Chair), Councillors Carter, M Downs, A Holland, Meredith, Roberts, S Smith and K Welsh.

The Panel was assisted by Mr T Moss representing the Citizens' Panel.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1. Aim of the Review

The following aim and objectives of the review were approved by the Panel at its meeting held on 19th February 2007 (Minute 55 refers). The Project Plan for the Review is attached as appendix 1.

The aim of the review was:

“To evaluate the Council's policies and procedures for the management of waste from Council premises and operations and how far these policies and procedures contribute to achieving efficiency savings and environmental improvements. The review will focus on three areas of the Council which are the largest producers and handlers of waste: Council premises, services provided by District Assemblies, and services provided by the Engineers Service”.

4.2. Objectives

- A. To identify the Council's current policies and procedures for managing waste from Council premises and operations.
- B. To identify current levels and costs of waste management and to compare these with those of local authorities acknowledged as operating good practice in this area.
- C. To identify good practice in other local authorities which may be of use to Tameside.
- D. To consider the role of elected members and employees in relation to the Council's policies and procedures for waste management on Council premises.

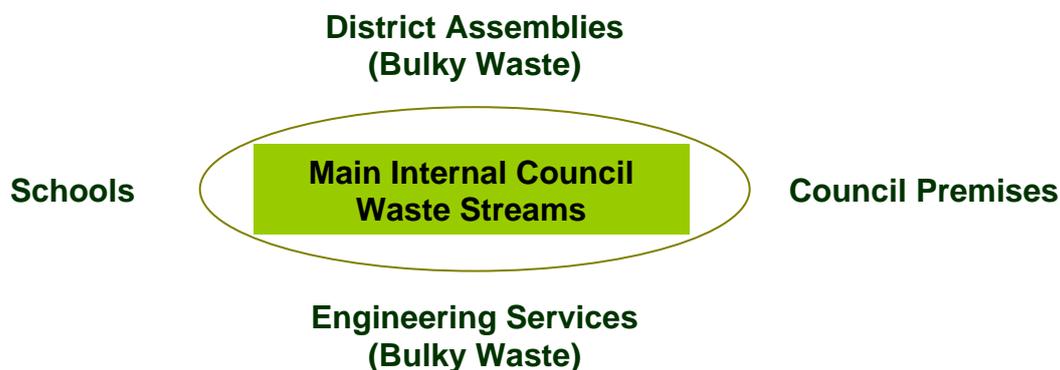
5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1. The Panel met with the Team Leader and Recycling Officer from the Recycling Operations and Waste Management team to obtain an overview of the Council's current policies and procedures.
- 5.2. The Head of District Assemblies and Head of Engineering Operations met with the Panel to discuss the Council's current procedures regarding the management of waste collected by their respective services.
- 5.3. The Panel met with the Service Unit Manager, Facilities Management, to discuss the role of the service in supporting the waste minimisation scheme.
- 5.4. The Cabinet Deputy responsible for the administration of Council buildings met with the Panel to discuss waste minimisation initiatives on Council premises and to discuss the findings of the review.
- 5.5. The Panel met with the Cabinet Deputy for Environmental Services and the Head of Environmental Operations to discuss the progress of recycling and minimising waste initiatives promoted by the service.
- 5.6. The Scrutiny Support Unit toured the kitchen areas in the main Council Offices to record, on behalf of the Panel, the use of the facilities provided to staff for recycling waste.
- 5.7. The Scrutiny Panel received information regarding the levels of waste from premises and operations.
- 5.8. The Panel received information regarding the new guidelines for encouraging staff to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' and how the scheme is promoted.
- 5.9. On behalf of the Panel, the Scrutiny Support Unit contacted ten Beacon Councils for Recycling and Waste to compare practices and identify good practice in waste minimisation from Council premises.
- 5.10. The Scrutiny Panel commissioned the Scrutiny Support Unit to consult employees. A self-completion survey, available online and in paper format, was devised which sought colleagues' view on the Councils policies and practices for waste minimisation.

6. BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

- 6.1. For a number of years, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council has been considering ways to reduce energy consumption and improve waste management. Key incentives in doing so include reducing costs, improving environmental performance and demonstrating best practice. The Scrutiny Panel has already conducted a review of waste minimisation from households and businesses.

- 6.2. The Council recognises that internal waste derives from one of the following four areas all of which can be reduced with the co-operation of staff:



- 6.3. This review focuses on the waste minimisation from **Council premises and operations** (excluding schools).
- 6.4. Waste from Council buildings and operations is categorised as follows:
- Waste from Council Premises ie. paper, plastic, cans, food, polystyrene, furniture, pallets, etc
 - Bulky Waste ie. waste from District Assemblies (eg grounds maintenance) and Engineering Services (eg. road surfacing). Bulky waste also includes household refuse but this is not considered for this Review.
- 6.5. The Executive Leaders' State of the Area Address on 21st November 2006, confirmed that the Council is absolutely committed to the reduction of waste from its premises and operations. The Council has produced a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan as the vehicle for achieving efficiency savings and reducing environmental impact. Within the Strategy, the Council has identified waste management as an area of potential financial savings and as a way to address the environmental impact of Council activities.
- 6.6. This Review seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's waste management policies and practices and aims to ensure that systems are in place which will enable the Council to monitor its internal waste management systems by setting reasonable targets for the future.

7. LEGISLATION¹

- 7.1. Recycling and waste management in the UK is driven by legislation which largely derives from European Union directives.
- 7.2. The key directive is the Waste Framework Directive, however the Landfill Directive (Council Directive 1993/31/EC) is particularly important to local authorities as it requires them to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.
- 7.3. In order to achieve this objective, the government has set targets for Waste Disposal Authorities to achieve. The Council believes that it should lead by

¹ Source: <http://www.letsrecycle.com/legislation/index.jsp>

example and, therefore, as well as encouraging residents and businesses to reduce their residual waste and maximise their recycling, it intends to examine its own practices in reducing waste from its own premises and operations.

- 7.4. In addition, Tameside MBC could be charged hefty penalties for landfilling its waste if it does not meet these targets. These penalties could ultimately be passed to the borough's residents, by way of increases in Council Tax.

8. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR MINIMISING WASTE

- 8.1. In 2006/07, the council paid a levy of approximately £8million to Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority for the disposal of its residual waste. This financial arrangement will change at the start of the new PFI Waste Disposal Contract.
- 8.2. Under the terms of the new 25 year waste disposal contract, the Council will be charged to dispose of its residual waste on a "tonnage" basis. The charge per tonne has yet to be calculated and will depend upon the type of material being collected and whether it is sent to landfill or is recyclable. Other elements of the charges under the new contract are a charge for the administration of the Household Waste Recycling Centres and a charge for Overheads. The basis of these charges will be on a council tax / population base.
- 8.3. Under the terms of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme, Tameside will be allocated a landfill allowance figure. This scheme will have a significant impact on the Council's procedures for the disposal of waste. If managed correctly, the Council could save significant sums of money. Alternatively however, if not managed appropriately, the Council could be liable for costly penalties. Inevitably, any additional costs would be passed to the Council Tax payer.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL INCENTIVES FOR MINIMISING WASTE

- 9.1. Just prior to the commencement of this Review, it was estimated that 50% of the waste sent to landfill from the Council's main offices could be recycled.
- 9.2. To help reduce carbon emissions, the Council needs to stop sending its recyclable waste to landfill sites. The only way in which this can be achieved, is by reducing, reusing and recycling its waste. The Panel notes that the Council has adopted a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan, which aims to ensure that the reduction of carbon emissions is considered in management decisions regarding all processes engaged by the Council, and welcomes this initiative.
- 9.3. In May 2005, Tameside MBC was one of twenty-six local authorities selected to participate in the third phase of the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. (The Carbon Trust is an independent company funded by Government whose role is to help the UK move to a low carbon economy by helping businesses and the public sector to reduce carbon emissions now and capture the commercial opportunities of low carbon technologies).
- 9.4. One of the overall objectives of the Programme is "to take an organisation wide approach, ensuring that carbon emissions are automatically considered in all management decision-making processes across all Council's operations".

- 9.5. The Council has recently approved its “Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan” which sets out a number of current and proposed projects the council is undertaking that support energy and waste reduction.
- 9.6. The Council’s Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan (which will be overseen by a new Energy Panel established by the Council) has highlighted that the following initiatives are currently being undertaken within the Council owned buildings and operations in order to reduce internal waste and increase internal recycling:
- Full audits of the councils own internal waste streams
 - Publicity campaign to improve recycling levels within our own office environments.
- 9.7. Two significant areas in which improvements can be made to reduce waste which are supported by the Council are household waste and council waste, the latter being the focus of this review.

Conclusions

1. There is a clear need for the Council to make every effort to work with staff to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill from Council premises and operations for environmental and financial reasons, and to avoid passing increased costs on to Council Tax payers.

10. MINIMISING WASTE FROM COUNCIL PREMISES

- 10.1. In response to legislation, the Council has endorsed initiatives to reduce waste disposal costs from waste arising from Council buildings and operations.
- 10.2. The Council believes that its own internal waste can be reduced with the help of its staff. In December 2006, the Council introduced new guidelines for recycling and waste minimisation in council buildings.
- 10.3. These guidelines were publicised around the Council including on the intranet bulletin board and in the kitchen areas (see appendix 2).
- 10.4. The new guidelines and facilities were as follows:
- A black bin is provided for non-recyclable waste to be sent to landfill.
 - A green bin is provided for plastic, glass and aluminium waste.
 - All colleagues are instructed to place all paper waste in a blue bin. (Although a blue bin scheme has been operating in Council buildings for several years this has not previously been enforced).
- 10.5. Additional information has also recently been posted due to some confusion amongst staff about which materials can be disposed of using the new facilities (see appendix 3).
- 10.6. A tour of kitchen areas by Scrutiny Support Staff found that facilities in many kitchen areas were being used incorrectly whilst others seemed to be used properly.

- 10.7. The receptacles are emptied by the caretakers and material is separated in the Loading Bay. The Head of Facilities Management informed the Panel that this places additional demands on caretakers' time and that the provision of multi-compartmental waste bins would help to alleviate the need for the caretakers to separate waste.
- 10.8. The scheme is a joint initiative between Environmental Services and Facilities Management. During the course of the Review however, the Panel became uncertain of the different responsibilities of these Services Areas with regard to recycling and the management of waste and how the service areas worked together to identify opportunities for continual improvement.
- 10.9. This scheme is encouraged at outstations, schools, libraries and town halls, however the scheme is not stringently applied at these venues. The Panel was informed that recycling facilities are made available if requested but not supplied as the norm and therefore, opportunities for recycling could be limited.
- 10.10. Within Tameside MBC, kitchen waste appears to be the only recycling scheme that has not been implemented. All kitchen/canteen waste from Council premises is sent to landfill. Although the Council currently does not have the capacity to compost food waste, the Panel was informed by the Head of Environmental Operations that new facilities will be provided by the PFI contractor that will allow the recycling/composting of kitchen waste.
- 10.11. The Scrutiny Panel is informed by the Head of Environmental Operations that trials for composting food waste are taking place in two or three authorities in North Manchester which involves the shared use of facilities including an 'in-vessel composter' which efficiently produces the high temperatures required for composting. It is likely that In Vessel Composters will be commissioned during 2009.
- 10.12. The Panel was informed by the Head of Environmental Operations that opportunities for composting may arise when the new waste disposal contract comes into force as the Waste Disposal Authority will have access to the composting facilities mentioned above.
- 10.13. The Head of Environmental Operations felt that the waste minimisation scheme operating on Council premises would benefit from increased resources allocated to facilities and collection.
- 10.14. Comparisons by the Scrutiny Support Unit with other Local Authorities have shown that Bexley Council composts all its kitchen waste and resells the compost to residents of the borough.
- 10.15. Recycling at Bexley Council has been recognised as 'outstanding' by the Audit Commission and was consequently awarded with Beacon Status for Waste and Recycling. Amongst other things highlighted by Ministers in their decision making for Beacon Status, was "*the excellent internal recycling scheme in Council buildings and offices*". The internal recycling scheme includes promoting the purchase of recycled goods, e.g. street signs, Fleece jackets for recycling team and Waste Audits.
- 10.16. The Panel was also informed by a member of the Recycling Team that this Council has a policy for the reuse of office furniture, although there was some doubt whether or not this policy was being enforced.

- 10.17. The Head of Environmental Operations believes that targets similar to those set for household waste as contained within the Waste Strategy 2007 would help to reduce internal waste although these targets could be set much higher.
- 10.18. Setting targets is problematic however given that a campaign to promote the reuse of material would not only reduce the amount sent to landfill but also the level recycled. Measures have also been introduced to try and reduce the amount of materials purchased, e.g. paper.
- 10.19. The Head of Environmental Operations also felt that there was scope to develop a 'green' procurement policy. The Scrutiny Panel is aware that the Council's procurement policy does not feature environmental considerations.

Conclusions

2. The Panel welcomes the Councils efforts to begin reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill before the start of the new contract when charges will reflect the amount sent to landfill.
3. That the introduction of new guidelines for the reduction and recycling of waste in Council buildings be welcomed, but that a more positive message should be promoted indicating what must be recycled as well as non-recyclable items.
4. Multi-compartmental waste bins may help to alleviate the need for the caretakers to separate waste which can be time-consuming.
5. The role and responsibilities of Environmental Services and Facilities Management in the joint scheme for recycling and waste minimisation are unclear and the Panel is concerned that opportunities for more joint working are not being taken.
6. The Panel is concerned that the Councils outstations may not be fully included in the waste minimisation scheme.
7. Opportunities for extending the waste minimisation scheme to include composting appear to be on the horizon.
8. The Panel notes that currently there is not a separate budget provision for recycling within Council premises in relation to either the Environmental Services or Facilities Management work in this area. Increased recycling of this nature will help decrease the cost of landfill and enhance the income received from the sale of recyclable materials.
9. The Panel notes with concern that unwanted office furniture may not always be disposed of in accordance with the Council policy.
10. Although it is desirable to set meaningful targets, there would be difficulty in monitoring those targets effectively.

Recommendations

1. That reducing and reusing material are encouraged as much, or more than, recycling.

2. That the Council investigates external markets for recyclables and proposes new innovative and marketable ways in which unwanted or waste items can be used to generate money for the Council.
3. That consideration be given to charging Service Unit Managers for the amount of waste sent to landfill as an incentive for reducing the amount of waste reduced.
4. That the duties and responsibilities of Environmental Services and Facilities Management in relation to recycling and waste minimisation in the Council's premises and operations be clearly defined.
5. That the Council pursues opportunities to introduce composting as part of the waste minimisation scheme.
6. That if the opportunity arises, consideration be given to additional budget provision to fund existing and extended recycling activities in Council premises.
7. That the Council policy for the disposal of unwanted office furniture be enforced.
8. That consideration be given to the establishment of a partnership with a local charity to which any unwanted furniture can be taken, in order to sell and raise vital funding.

11. STAFF FEEDBACK

- 11.1. As part of this review, the Panel commissioned the Scrutiny Support Unit to consult staff and councillors about their views and experiences of reducing, reusing and recycling waste at work.
- 11.2. The full consultation report is available online at www.tameside.gov.uk/scrutiny or from the Scrutiny Support Unit.
- 11.3. The overall aim of the survey was to identify current levels of activity, potential barriers to waste minimisation and to identify possible improvements.
- 11.4. A total of 382 responses were received of an estimated 4,500 staff and councillors. This represents 8% of staff and councillors.
- 11.5. Slightly more responses were received from colleagues in outstations than in the main council offices in Ashton. It was encouraging that the survey was able to cover such a large number of external colleagues, however, it should be borne in mind that this might have an impact on the overall results as many outstations later reported a lack of facilities which may affect feedback in other areas such as satisfaction with facilities.
- 11.6. The survey reminded council staff that the Council wants to minimise waste for two reasons. Firstly, the council wants to reduce, reuse and recycle waste in order to cut down the demands on the Earth's resources and the pollution caused by producing materials and getting rid of waste at landfill sites or incinerators. Secondly, the Council is charged for sending waste to landfill and also spends a considerable amount on office materials. Reducing, reusing and recycling waste helps the council make the savings required by central government.
- 11.7. The survey confirmed that Council staff were more likely to be aware of the environmental reasons than the financial reasons for minimising waste (92% and

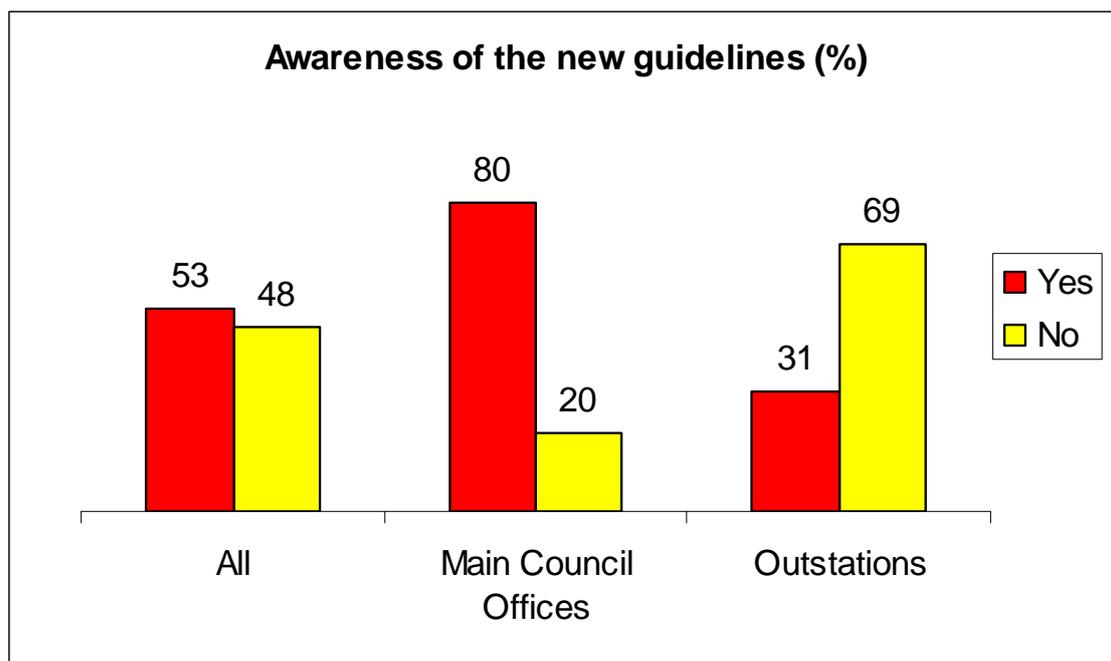
63% respectively). Furthermore, staff from within TAC were more likely than staff in outstations to be aware of both reasons (see Chart 1).

Chart 1



11.8. Just over half of respondents were aware of the new guidelines for Recycling and Minimising Waste in Council buildings before receiving the questionnaire. However, employees in the main Council Offices, Ashton, were much more likely to be aware of the new guidelines than those in outstations (see Chart 2).

Chart 2



11.9. Furthermore, around 40 comments indicated that staff lacked information about minimising waste at work or needed further encouragement. The following are a sample of comments:

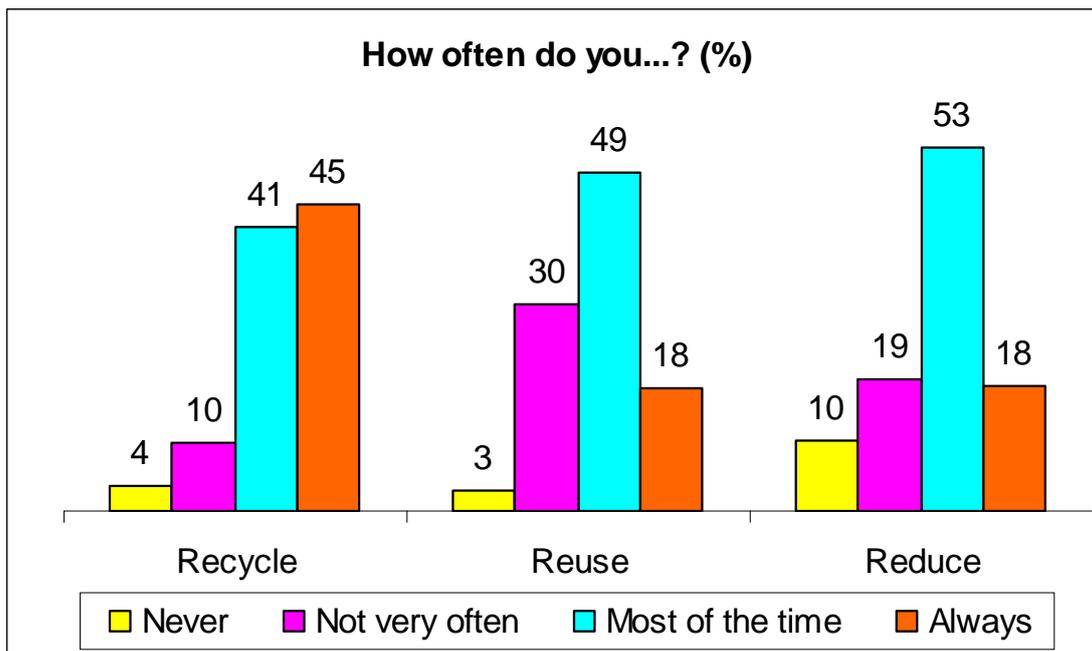
“Guidelines for how to dispose of different types of waste need to be clarified and publicised more widely”

“Paper recycling works well but there is too much confusion about other materials”

“I think the facilities are fine but inadequately used due to poor education about what goes where, what can/can’t be recycled. The ‘posters’ clarifying this which have recently been posted near the recycling boxes help, but I think regular refreshers might help”

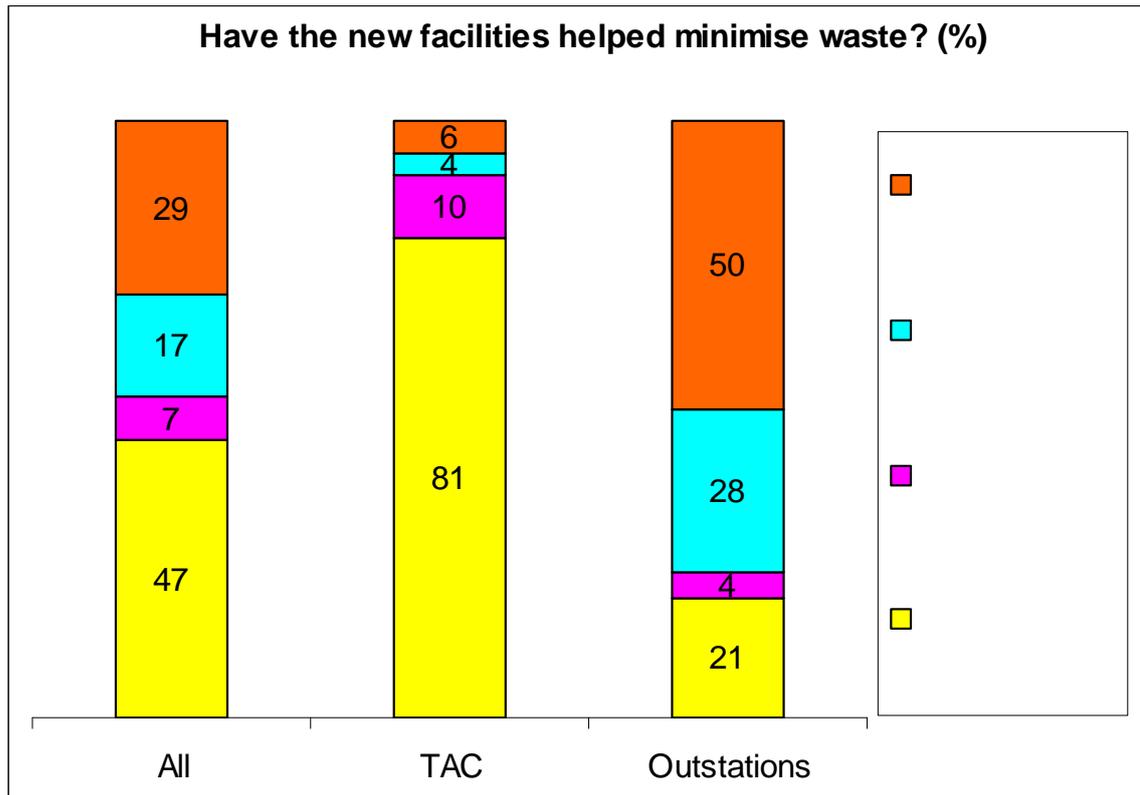
11.10. Overall, the majority of respondents were likely to reduce, reuse or recycle at least most of the time, if not all of the time. Of these three ways of minimising waste, recycling was the activity that people were likely to do the most frequently, followed by reducing waste and then reusing waste (see Chart 3).

Chart 3



11.11. Although less than half of the staff who responded to the survey felt that the new facilities had helped them minimise waste, these figures reflect the lack of awareness of facilities or lack of facilities reported by outstation staff. It is a more positive picture when looking at the responses from within the main Council Offices where 4 out of 5 respondents said that the facilities had been useful. In the outstations however, only 1 in 5 respondents said that the facilities had helped them, not surprisingly since almost half said they did not have the facilities and over a quarter were not aware of any such facilities (see Chart 4).

Chart 4



11.12. The lack of facilities at outstations shown in Chart 4 above was also reflected in comments from colleagues in outstations which demonstrated the extent to which colleagues use their own initiative and use external or personal facilities due to a lack of facilities at work:

“It would be useful if outstations had the same facilities as the Council Offices. At the moment we can recycle paper and tins. We would benefit from facilities to recycle plastic, glass and also cardboard”

“Please note that this outstation has no facility to recycle waste. It all has to be taken to bins at local supermarkets”.

“All re-cycling done at this base is due to the efforts of the staff as we are away from TAC”

“Although at home I try to recycle everything at work its difficult. We have got our own recycle bins (Not supplied by Council)”

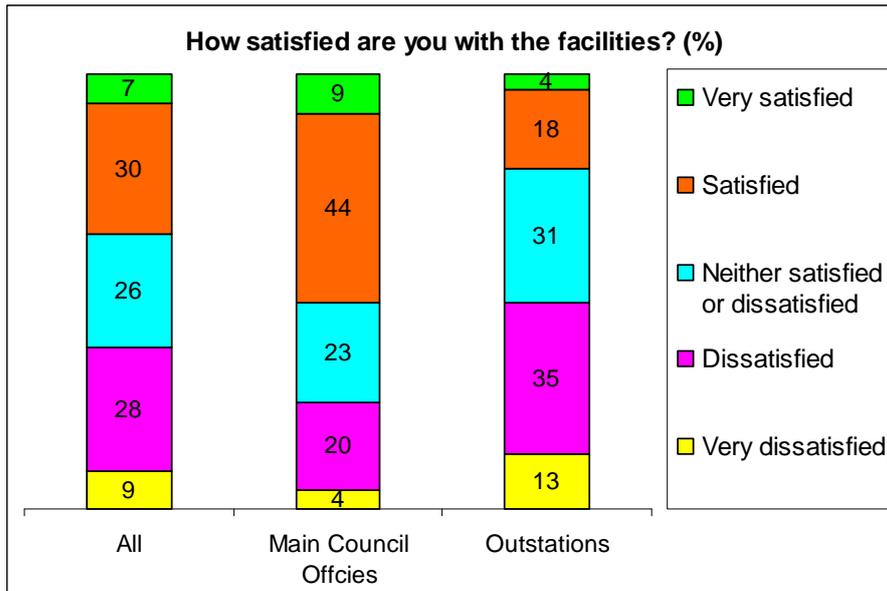
“We have had to sort out our own recycling bins + collection.”

“Most items recycled are done by staff under their own initiative.

11.13. Respondents were equally happy and unhappy with the facilities for minimising waste (37% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and 37% were satisfied/very satisfied; the remaining did not express an opinion either way).

11.14. Again however, respondents from within the main Council Offices were more likely to be satisfied than the outstations (see Chart 5).

Chart 5



11.15. Staff also commented on existing services, mainly within TAC. Many comments were positive about the way in which the Council aims to reduce waste. Most positive comments were from within TAC:

“Having double sided as the default print setting for the MFD should help to reduce the amount of paper used”

“Green box and blue bin schemes work reasonably well”

“Introducing the “Audit” on staff waste bins has been a really good idea & I think has made more staff think about what they would just automatically throw in their bins and therefore, recycle more”

“Recycling bottles cans and paper facilities are good”

11.16. Some comments indicated dissatisfaction with the cleanliness of the facilities in the kitchen areas in TAC, which relates to comments about staff awareness about the correct way to use the facilities (e.g. importance of washing out containers):

“Within the small kitchens in TAC, sometimes the smells which come from the recycling bins can be quite sickening”

“The kitchen bins are always full and smell terrible. People also constantly put things in the wrong bins”

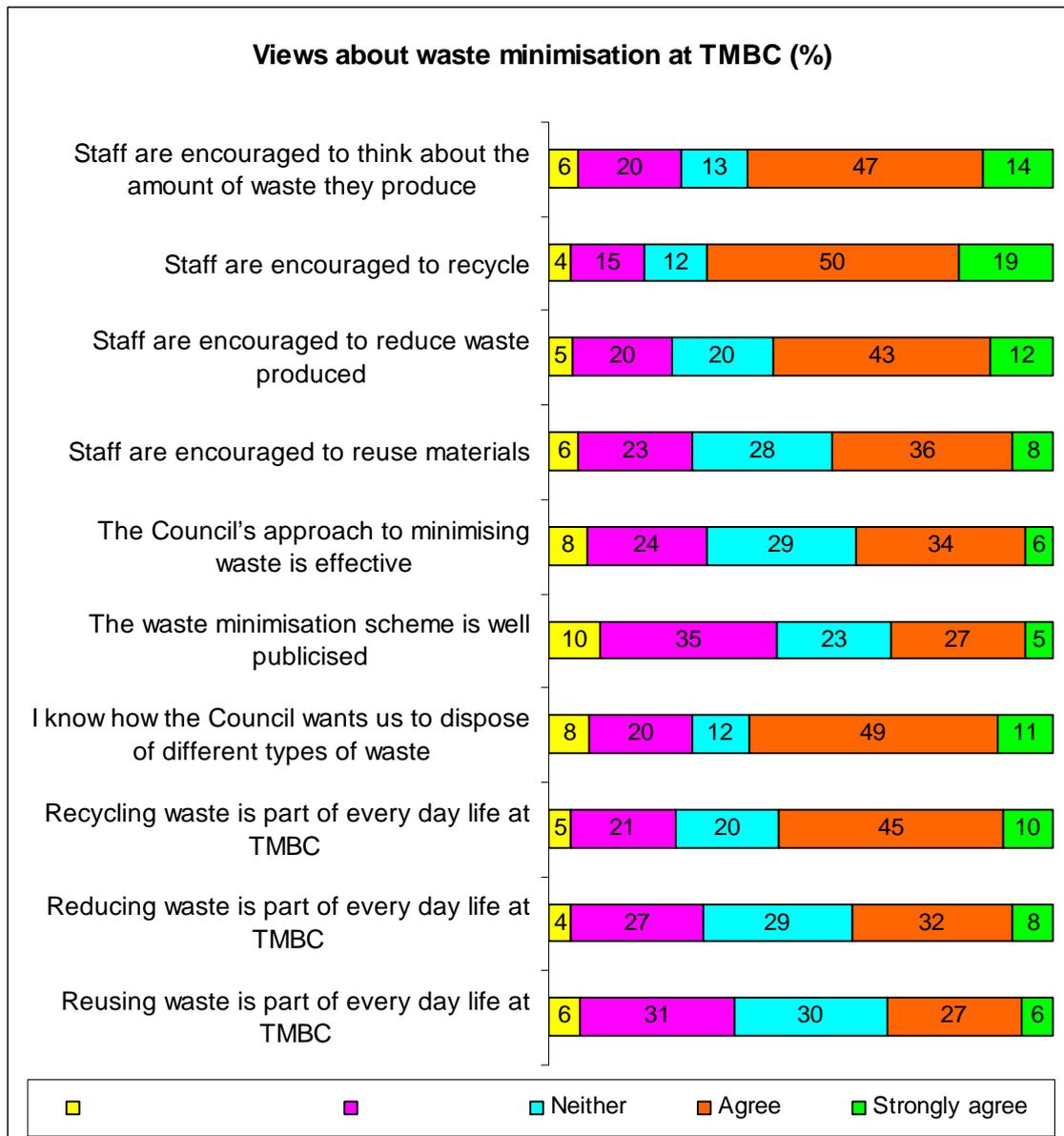
11.17. Overall, responses indicate that employees feel that recycling is encouraged more than reusing or reducing waste. Recycling is considered to be ‘part of every day life at TMBC’ more than reusing or reducing waste, although just around half or less

respondents felt that these activities were common practice at TMBC (see to Chart 6).

11.18. Just over a third of respondents felt that the Council's approach to minimising waste was effective; just under a third felt it was not effective and the remaining were non-committal (see Chart 6).

11.19. Although 60% felt that they knew how the Council wanted them to dispose of waste, more employees feel that the scheme is not well publicised than feel that it is publicised well (see Chart 6).

Chart 6



11.20. Verbatim comments also gave an indication of employees' views on waste minimisation at work. Respondents' comments indicated concern about the level of waste produced at work. The majority of comments on waste produced and suggestions for minimising waste related to paper based waste. Many comments were complaints or suggestions relating to paper communication mainly internal memos and internal envelopes, the amount of paper produced to service meetings, the number of paper copies of the Wire that may be produced unnecessarily, the number and length of paper based forms and questionnaires and unnecessary

printing in general. Comments also indicated a desire to increase electronic communication and make better use of IT to cut down on paper usage. Examples of comments relating to paper-based waste included:

“Stop printing reams and reams of documents for meetings and provide hypertext links on email agendas for delegates to access prior to meetings and read on line.”

“People need to be encouraged not to hand out so much paper as part of training courses, etc. Course notes should instead be available online”

“When training people to use computers or photocopiers more emphasis should be placed on how to print off just what you need and think about adjusting margins to accommodate that one line that goes onto another page or using the print preview to see what is being printed!”

“Not sending out questionnaires in paper format and using e-mail instead”

“Audit needs to review processes to allow electronic filing, we still require to print and store paperwork all because it has a physical signature on the bottom. A bit of software to enable electronic signatures would be great”

11.21. A further area of concern for colleagues was the amount of waste produced from the staff canteen in the form of non-recyclable disposable packaging. Comments included:

“Set an example, do not use non-recyclable food wrappings in the canteen for example”

“Provide cutlery and crockery in the canteen instead of items that cannot be recycled”

“All food containers from the canteen should be made from recyclable material”

“I think we should work with the canteen. Soups are in unrecyclable containers. The salad boxes are recyclable but I do not see a lot of people washing them out and then re-using them”

“Too much waste created by take-away food containers and cutlery and no viable alternative. I know some staff take their own plates to the canteen but this isn't always possible when we're in and out all the time – perhaps an improvement would be to supply re-usable containers for a small charge?”

11.22. A number of colleagues were already, or were interested in, composting waste.

“I take my compostable food waste home to put in my compost bin”

“Could we have a composter to put fruit/food waste as people do at home, i feel guilty putting an apple core/banana skin in a bin”

“I take our teams compostable waste home”

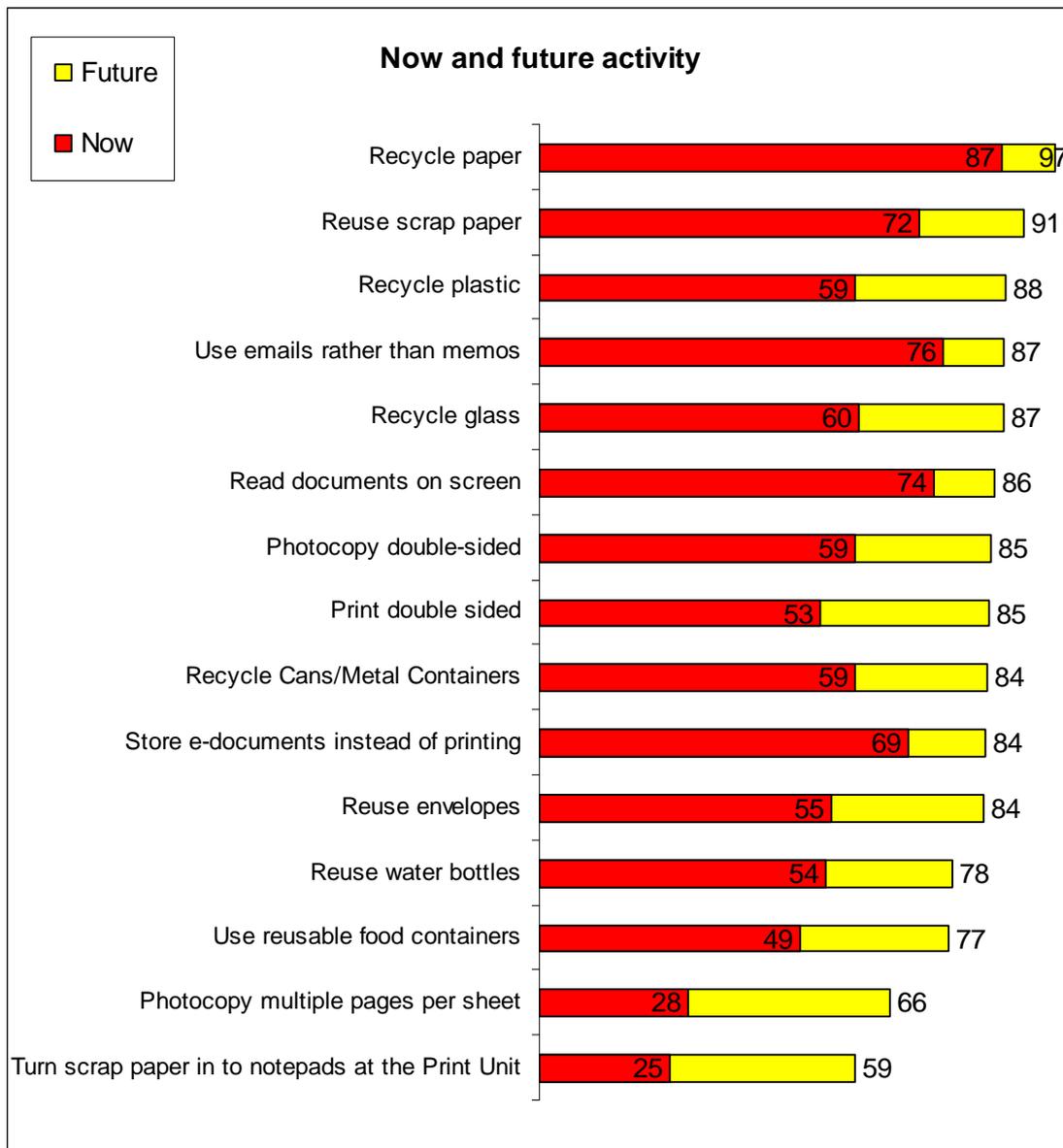
“Would it be feasible to collect organic waste in the kitchenettes for composting? There must be several tons of teabags alone being binned in TAC every year! If not, how about encouraging people to take it home for their composters?”

11.23. When asked about the ways in which they minimise waste now and in the future, in all categories future activity was expected to increase. For all but one activity, over 65% of respondents expressed an intention to carry out some form of waste minimisation (see Chart 7).

11.24. Respondents were more likely to recycle paper and reuse scrap paper both now and in the future but they are least likely to photocopy multiple pages per sheet and turn scrap paper in to notepads at the Print Unit now and in the future (see Chart 7).

11.25. The activities carried out most often, now and in the future, are as follows:

Chart 7



Conclusions

11. The Panel thanks staff for their comments and suggestions
12. There is considerable difference between levels of awareness of Council policy and access to facilities amongst colleagues working in the main Council Offices and in outstations.
13. There appears to be a need to increase awareness of the financial reason for waste minimisation, particularly amongst outstations.
14. There is already a high level of waste minimisation activity amongst staff.
15. Responses indicate that more could be done to encourage colleagues to reuse and reduce waste and not just to recycle.
16. Staff are concerned with the level of waste produced by the Council particularly paper-based waste.
17. Feedback through the verbatim comments in particular demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm and personal initiative for minimising waste even where the Council has not yet been able to provide suitable facilities.
18. Despite the previous publicity regarding the disposal of different types of waste, there appears to be a need to improve communication amongst colleagues about waste minimisation procedures relating to the new facilities and to raise awareness about which materials can be recycled.
19. As well as guidance on use of the facilities, there may also be a need to promote waste minimisation in general and the reasons for the Council's policy.
20. There appears to be some work-related practices which could be addressed to reduce waste produced, particularly paper-based activities.
21. The Panel notes employees' comments and concerns regarding food packaging in the Council's Canteen.
22. The Panel finds that the waste minimisation scheme can be improved with greater involvement of staff

Recommendations

9. That Service Unit Managers be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all staff understand their responsibilities regarding waste minimisation, and actively encourage their staff to recycle their waste where possible. This would be helped by improved and positive signage at recycling points and the production of a staff handbook on recycling.
10. That Service Unit Managers receive additional support in helping to educate staff about the scheme.
11. That the ideas and suggestions of staff be encouraged and shared across the authority, perhaps with a regular feature in the Wire.
12. That the efforts of staff be acknowledged

13. That the waste minimisation scheme responds to the feedback from staff and considers the ideas and suggestions made by staff.
14. That facilities to outstations be improved.
15. That communication about waste minimisation with outstations be improved.
16. That the Council supports staff initiatives which aim to reduce waste as far as possible by providing facilities or adapting working practices when opportunities arise.
17. That the production of the Wire be mainly in electronic format, except for those employees who do not have access to a computer.
18. That Service Units are given the option to continue to receive one copy of the Wire per person or to request a reduced number in response to the wishes of the Unit.
19. That the production of internal questionnaires be in electronic format only, except for those employees who do not have access to a computer.
20. That consideration be given to a "house style" for all council documents which takes account of paper saving initiatives, eg. smaller margins, double sided default printing.
21. That an Environmental Purchasing Policy be introduced to include "the most green alternative", biodegradable cleaning supplies and recyclable packaging, where appropriate.
22. That the staff restaurant justify the use of disposable containers instead of traditional tableware, considering a whole cost approach.

12. MINIMISING WASTE FROM COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Engineering Service

- 12.1 Engineering Services is responsible for all the major road schemes in the borough and the subsequent waste arisings generated from these schemes. The Panel was informed that the Service makes rigorous attempts to use recycled products for its schemes and estimates that it uses 60% recycled products and 40% primary quarried materials.
- 12.2 Currently, the Engineering Service produces approximately 15,000 tonnes of waste per annum. Local performance indicators are used to measure the highway material waste which is recycled. In 2006 98.4% of highway road waste was recycled. To date in 2007 this figure is 99.5%.
- 12.3 Recycling carried out by Engineering Services relates to the waste generated from routine highway works, and an agreement has been made with Stockport MBC to process the waste by crushing and grading for use as subsoil for roads. For every 5,000 tonnes of the waste arisings that are disposed at Stockport's site, approximately 3,000 tonnes are bought back by Tameside at a significantly reduced rate, having been processed. This is then reused on roads, the savings of almost £3.00 per tonne against the cost of 'virgin' stone are made.

- 12.4 The remainder of the waste (which amounts to approximately 10,000 tonnes) is taken to landfill. This waste is constituted as follows:-
- 1,500 tonnes of Engineering Services waste from boxes, pallets, etc
 - 5,500 tonnes of District Assembly waste from mechanical street sweeping and the Street Scene service
 - 3,500 tonnes of waste from the Skip service, which provides skips for Bereavement Services, Markets and Allotments.
- 12.5 Existing concrete kerbing and flagging on housing estates and cul-de-sacs is being replaced by recycled plastic kerbing and flagging, which although is more expensive, does not chamfer and has a potentially longer life expectancy.
- 12.6 Consideration is being given to the cessation of the skip service which is no longer financially viable to the Engineering Service.

District Assemblies

- 12.7 The District Assemblies collect, in total, around 10,000 tons of waste per year. This waste is made up of 'green waste' from grounds maintenance; waste from town centre sweeping and waste from the 'Street Force' crews.
- 12.8 Out of the figure of 10,000 tonnes, the amount of waste sent to landfill is between 6,000 and 7,000 tones per year. This figure includes:
- 5,000 to 5,500 tonnes of waste are tipped at the Engineering Services depot at Tame Street for 'bulking up' and transferring to Bredbury Waste Transfer Station – in the main this waste comprises of Street Cleansing Waste which is collected from mechanical sweeping activities;
 - 1,000 to 1,500 tonnes, not included in the waste for "bulking up" is taken directly to the landfill site in Bredbury, Stockport – this waste includes rubbish collected by the Street Force Crews, eg. fly tipping; mixed waste collected from litter bins and litter collected by manual activities, eg. Clean Sweep Team.
- 12.9 Litter collection by the Street Force Crews includes mixed waste collected from street cleansing activities and from litter bins. The majority of this waste is landfilled as it is contaminated and cannot be reused. The Street Cleansing Service ensures that money can be saved by removing the water contained in the waste in order to reduce the weight.
- 12.10 Recycling this waste is problematic due to the labour intensive tasks involved in collecting and separating each item. Many companies however, are now producing multi-compartment containers for collecting rubbish in town centres and this could be considered.
- 12.11 100% of green waste from the Arboricultural Unit is recycled or reused. This also includes waste from Denton Nursery, and green waste which is collected from the council's parks and is used for composting (unless contaminated by dog fouling);

Conclusions

23. That the introduction of multi-compartment containers would help alleviate labour intensive tasks involved in collecting and separating each item.
24. At the time this report was being compiled, the skip service was being reviewed to ascertain its financial viability.

Recommendations

23. That the introduction of multi-compartment containers for collecting rubbish in town centres be considered.
24. That if the Engineering Service skip hire facility is no longer regarded as viable for the whole Council, then it should be terminated as soon as possible.

13. BOROUGH TREASURER'S COMMENTS

- 13.1 Currently the Waste Disposal budget is held within Environmental Health. However, consideration needs to be given to incentivise the minimisation of waste from Council operations. This could be achieved by transferring some budget provision from the Waste Disposal budget to service areas - those areas would then be charged the price per tonne for each tonne that is disposed of through the waste stream. There would then be an incentive to minimise waste, maximise recycling and make financial savings against their waste disposal budgets. The mechanics of making this work will be progressed.

14. BOROUGH SOLICITOR'S COMMENTS

- 14.1 The Council will face legal targets and duties with regard to waste minimisation and recycling waste arising in Tameside as a whole. It is important that it is seen to participate in this by reducing the quantity of waste it generates itself from its own activities. The recommendations in this report should help to achieve this. However, it is important to ensure that paper containing confidential information is recycled securely and that recycling is proportionate in terms of the costs and benefits.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 That reducing and reusing material are encouraged as much, or more than, recycling.
- 15.2 That the Council investigates external markets for recyclables and proposes new innovative and marketable ways in which unwanted or waste items can be used to generate money for the Council.
- 15.3 That consideration be given to charging Service Unit Managers for the amount of waste sent to landfill as an incentive for reducing the amount of waste produced.

- 15.4 That the duties and responsibilities of Environmental Services and Facilities Management in relation to recycling and waste minimisation in the Council's premises and operations be clearly defined.
- 15.5 That the Council pursues opportunities to introduce composting as part of the waste minimisation scheme.
- 15.6 That if the opportunity arises, consideration be given to additional budget provision to fund existing and extended recycling activities in Council premises.
- 15.7 That the Council policy for the disposal of unwanted office furniture be enforced.
- 15.8 That consideration be given to the establishment of a partnership with a local charity to which any unwanted furniture can be taken, in order to sell and raise vital funding.
- 15.9 That Service Unit Managers be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all staff understand their responsibilities regarding waste minimisation, and actively encourage their staff to recycle their waste where possible. This would be helped by improved and positive signage at recycling points and the production of a staff handbook on recycling.
- 15.10 That Service Unit Managers receive additional support in helping to educate staff about the scheme.
- 15.11 That the ideas and suggestions of staff be encouraged and shared across the authority, perhaps with a regular feature in the Wire.
- 15.12 That the efforts of staff be acknowledged
- 15.13 That the waste minimisation scheme responds to the feedback from staff and considers the ideas and suggestions made by staff.
- 15.14 That facilities to outstations be extended and improved.
- 15.15 That communication about waste minimisation with outstations be improved.
- 15.16 That the Council supports staff initiatives which aim to reduce waste as far as possible by providing facilities or adapting working practices when opportunities arise.
- 15.17 That the production of the Wire be mainly in electronic format, except for those employees who do not have access to a computer.
- 15.18 That Service Units are given the option to continue to receive one copy of the Wire per person or to request a reduced number in response to the wishes of the Unit.
- 15.19 That the production of internal questionnaires be in electronic format only, except for those employees who do not have access to a computer.
- 15.20 That consideration be given to a house style, for all council documents, which takes account of paper saving initiatives, eg. smaller margins, double sided default printing.
- 15.21 That an Environmental Purchasing Policy be introduced to include the most green alternative, biodegradable cleaning supplies and recyclable packaging, where appropriate.
- 15.22 That the staff restaurant justify the use of disposable containers instead of traditional tableware, considering a whole cost approach.

- 15.23 That the introduction of multi-compartment containers for collecting rubbish in town centres be considered.
- 15.24 That if the Engineering Service skip hire facility is no longer regarded as viable for the whole Council, then it should be terminated as soon as possible.

Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel

REVIEW OF RECYCLING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF WASTE FROM COUNCIL PREMISES AND OPERATIONS

February 2007

AIM OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW EXERCISE

To evaluate the Council's policies and procedures for the management of waste from Council premises and operations and how far these policies and procedures contribute to achieving efficiency savings and environmental improvements. The review will focus on three areas of the Council which are the largest producers and handlers of waste: Council premises, services provided by District Assemblies, and services provided by the Engineers Service.

OBJECTIVES

- A. To identify the Council's current policies and procedures for managing waste from Council premises and operations.
- B. To identify current levels and costs of waste management and to compare these with those of local authorities acknowledged as operating good practice in this area.
- C. To identify good practice in other local authorities which may be of use to Tameside.
- D. To consider the role of elected members and employees in relation to the Council's policies and procedures for waste management on Council premises

VALUE FOR MONEY / USE OF RESOURCES

Waste management has been identified as one area of the Council where efficiency savings can be achieved. Maximising recycling and minimising waste sent to landfill sites can reduce costs to the Council and contribute to environmental improvements.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

To ensure that all recycling facilities are available to all members of staff and elected members

TIMESCALE

This review is expected to be complete by end July 2007

DETAILED ACTION PLAN (in broadly chronological order)

Action	Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
(1) Meet with Officers from Environmental Operations to discuss waste management on Council premises	A, B	By end January 2007	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(2) Meet with Officers from Facilities Management to discuss waste management on Council premises	A, B	By end January 2007	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(3) Meet with Officers from District Assemblies to discuss the management of waste by District Assemblies	A, B	By end January 2007	Dave Nicholson	COMPLETED
(4) Meet with Officers from the Engineering Services to discuss the management of waste by the Engineers Service	A, B	By end January 2007	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(5) Finalise Project Plan (receive input from Head of Environmental Operations)	All	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 19 th February 2007	Scrutiny Panel	COMPLETED
(6) Gather information on policies and procedures for waste management adopted by the Council	A	Briefing Paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 19 th February 2007	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(7) Gather information on the level and cost of waste and recycling	B	By end February 2007 Briefing Paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 19 th February 2007	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(8) Gather information on the level and cost of waste and recycling by other local authorities	B	By end February 2007 Briefing Paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 12 th March 2007	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(9) Gather any available information on performance targets from other	A	By end February 2007 Briefing Paper for Scrutiny	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED

Action	Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
local authorities or public sector bodies		Panel Meeting 12 th March 2007		
(10) Gather information about best practice in other local authority areas (potential for site visits)	C	By end February 2007 Briefing Paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 12 th March 2007	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(11) Meet with Officers from District Assemblies and Engineering Services	All	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 12 th March 2007	Scrutiny Panel	COMPLETED
(12) Meet with Officers from Facilities Management	All	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 2 nd April 2007	Scrutiny Panel	COMPLETED
(13) Meet with Officers from Environmental Operations	All	First Scrutiny Panel Meeting of municipal year 2007/08 (to be arranged)	Scrutiny Panel	COMPLETED
(14) Consult TMBC employees and Elected Members about waste management in particular about recycling policies and procedures	D	Feedback at first Scrutiny Panel Meeting of municipal year 2007/08 (to be arranged)	Dave Nicholson; Muna Clough	COMPLETED
(15) Meet Cabinet Deputy to discuss findings	All	Second Scrutiny Panel Meeting of municipal year 2007/08 (to be arranged)	Scrutiny Panel	COMPLETED
(16) Consider draft report	All	Third Scrutiny Panel Meeting of municipal year 2007/08 (to be arranged)	Scrutiny Panel	COMPLETED
(16) Consider final report	All	Fourth Scrutiny Panel Meeting of municipal year 2007/08 (to be arranged)	Scrutiny Panel	COMPLETED



Recycling of waste from TAC

As Tameside Council is asking all residents of the borough to recycle their household waste, it is extremely important that council staff also set a good example and attempt to recycle as much office waste as possible.

Your participation is vital to the success of this scheme and is very much appreciated. Please see below for information on how to recycle within TAC.

Paper

- All paper waste should be recycled in blue bins.
- Please remove all metal/plastics, such as paper clips, binders, envelope windows, etc. (paper containing staples in are ok to place in the blue bin)
- You can dispose of paper waste in large blue bins. These bins will be provided, and collected when full, by completing an [e-form on the Intranet A to Z](#), or by contacting the loading bay on 342 3001.
- You can also dispose of paper waste in small blue/brown bins which fit under, or near your desk. These can be emptied into the nearest large blue bin. Small blue bins can be supplied by contacting The Recycling Team on 342 3758.
- The large blue bins are emptied each week from the loading bay, and the paper is recycled.

All recyclables should be washed of any contents before being recycled

Plastic bottles, Plastic film/bags, Cans, Tins, Glass Bottles

- All such items should be rinsed and placed into the green containers, which are located in all brew rooms/kitchens.
- The containers are emptied each Saturday by the caretaking staff, and the contents are recycled from the loading bay.

Cardboard

- Cardboard boxes and packaging should be left at the goods lift on any landing level.
- The cardboard will be collected by the caretaking staff during the working day, and bundled in the loading bay.
- Cardboard is collected daily from the loading bay for recycling.

Food waste, Food containers, Food Packaging

- All items such as apple cores, orange peel, banana skins, tea bags, yoghurt pots, left-over food, food containers, food packaging, and the like should be disposed of in the large waste baskets which are located in all brew rooms/kitchens.
- Please do not put sharp objects, such as broken glass, etc, in these baskets.
- This waste is disposed of with the general waste. Future recycling initiatives will target recycling of this waste when facilities are available.
- [Items that cause confusion](#)

Old crockery, broken pots, broken glass

- Such items should be placed into a cardboard box, or envelope, and labelled to clearly identify the contents.
- Contact the loading bay caretaker on **342 3001** to request collection and disposal.
- Please do not put any such items into the general waste bins, or other waste recycling bins.

Even though recycling waste is good, minimising it is even better. Reducing the amount of rubbish you make can be a lot easier than you think.

What can I do?

- Simple and obvious, but don't print out emails
- Do not order multiple copies of magazines
- Always print doubled sided for internal documents
- Avoid plastic cups and other disposables by using glasses and coffee cups instead
- Re-use envelopes where possible
- Use scrap pieces of paper and write on both sides

Confidential Waste Bins (Red Bins)

If you have any enquiries about the Haughton's Waste Paper Bins that are used within the Council Buildings please contact Margaret Connell on extension 3899.

More information about Confidential Waste Services available to the public can be found at <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/confidentialwaste/index.html>

We need your help in making our working environment a much greener place!
This is a jointly run initiative by The Recycle Team and Facilities Management.

www.tameside.gov.uk

HOME WEBSITE INTRANET SEARCH CONTACTS FEEDBACK PERSONAL LOG OFF

Waste Collection - Items that Cause Confusion

We don't accept these items in the recycling containers

These items should all be placed in the black kitchen refuse bin

		
Salad Boxes	Polystyrene Food Boxes	Polystyrene Soup Cups and Plastic Lid
		
Crisp Packets	Yoghurt Pots	Plastic Cutlery
		
Paper Towels	Tetra Pack Cartons	Vending Cups

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