

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Schools Waste and Recycling Collection Update</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Officer Management Team - Director of Services</b> <b>Prepared by - Head of Environment</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on actions taken to improve school waste and recycling collections following the new waste and recycling collection service from February 2014.

## 2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This matter is related to the following local and national policy objectives:
- South Bucks Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan Key Theme - Sustainable Environment - protecting our heritage, protecting our future.
  - Council priority to continue to improve the street scene and cleanliness of the district as a key public services coordinator
  - The current Joint Waste Management Strategy for Bucks policies, including “securing a long-term strategy for the management of wastes for which the member authorities are collectively responsible”.
  - The Council’s recycling/composting target of 60% by 2025 as part of the Joint Waste Management Strategy for Bucks. The national target of 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020. There are no longer District specific targets.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Waste from schools is classed as ‘Schedule 2’ waste which means it is similar in nature to household waste but Waste Collection Authorities can charge for collection but not disposal costs.
- 3.2 South Bucks District Council provides the following collection service to schools;
- Weekly refuse collection from 1100L bins - £126 hire charge and £160 collection charge both *per bin per year*
  - Weekly or fortnightly recycling collections - no hire or collection charges made
- 3.3 Prior to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 recycling collection options for schools were a weekly paper and card collection from 1100L bins and a fortnightly collection of plastic bottles and cans from 240L bins. There are 32 (1 x nursery, 4 x infant, 4 x junior, 16 x combined, 7 x secondary) schools in South Bucks District, not all use South Bucks District Council for refuse or recycling collections, table 1 below demonstrates the number of schools using which service;

Table 1. Schools using SBDC waste collection service

Refuse	Paper/Card	Mixed Cans/Bottles
24	30	10

- 3.4 The new waste and recycling service was rolled out to households in February 2014, this saw a change in how recyclable materials are separated and collected from the kerbside i.e. paper and thin grey/white card must now be kept separate and brown cardboard,

glass, tins/cans, plastic packaging, foil and cartons can now go into one mixed recycling bin. It was therefore appropriate to bring schools collections in line with the new service.

- 3.5 Under the new contract an income is received for paper whereas mixed recycling goes to the Biffa Materials Recovery Facility for a gate fee (however this is currently being renegotiated). If paper is contaminated with brown card it has to be emptied as mixed recycling therefore it is imperative that materials are correctly sorted at source to maximise income and to get best value from the collection contract.

#### 4 4. Discussion

- 4.1 Schools were advised that from 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 refuse (weekly) and mixed recycling (fortnightly) collections would take place on the local domestic collection day and that paper would continue to be collected weekly on a Wednesday.

- 4.2 The key change and challenge for schools was that paper and brown card must now be separated. Schools were notified of the forthcoming changes at the beginning of February 2014 and all recycling bins were relabelled to reflect the new collections, additional bins were provided if necessary and an extra 6 x 1100L and 3 x 360L bins were delivered.

- 4.3 As a result the total number of bins out in schools at present is;

Refuse	Paper	Mixed Recycling
70 x 1100L 2 x 360L	51 x 1100L 3 x 360L 2 x 240L	26 x 1100L 3 x 360L 6 x 240L

This brings in an annual income (2014/15) from the refuse bins of £20,020 (£8,820 hire charge and £11,200 collection costs).

- 4.4 Once the new collections started it became evident that there were problems arising with contamination from schools that did not seem to improve despite continued contact. Therefore in order to get a better understanding of the issues and barriers the Recycling Assistant joined the crews on the bulk paper round for the last four weeks of the school term (9<sup>th</sup> July '14 to 30<sup>th</sup> July '14) and recorded the following information;

- Number, size and type (i.e. refuse, paper, mixed) of each bin
- How full each bin was, and
- The levels of contamination

- 4.4 The following issues were identified;

- Paper bins are highly contaminated with brown card
- Most schools have a bulk bin for paper and smaller bins for mixed recycling. This could be encouraging school staff to put cardboard into the larger paper bin because of its size.
- Some schools were confused about the different collection days for paper on Wednesday and refuse and mixed being on a different day.

- 4.5 Where contamination was found, the Recycling Assistant spoken with the school during the collection to reiterate how important the sorting of materials is. In some schools an improvement was seen almost immediately, whereas for others the contamination level remained the same. In these instances the Recycling Assistant has written to the school with photos of the contamination (see appendix A).

- 4.6 In order to overcome these issues and ensure recycling is separated correctly and collections take place efficiently the following actions were taken in preparation for the start of the new school year in September;

- Wherever possible bins have been re-labelled so that large 1100L bins are for mixed recycling and the smaller 240L bins are for paper only.
- Additional 'no brown card' labels have been added to paper bins (appendix B)
- Wherever possible the paper collection has been moved to a fortnightly collection on the same day as the mixed recycling.
- All schools were provided with a personal schools service information pack detailing their collection days and recycling service (Appendix C).
- Schools are being added to the crews PDA's so that contamination or access issues can be reported on Biffa Net.

4.1 Schools by nature need lots of communication and support as there are often a number of people using the bins i.e. caretaker's, teachers, students and often outside clubs using the schools facilities. In order to help schools get the most out of the recycling collections the Council will also offer the following;

- Recycling boxes and posters to help them to sort materials correctly in the classroom
- An assembly to promote the new recycling system both at school and at home

4.2 Free food waste collections will be introduced to schools from January 2015. Information was included in the schools pack and the Recycling Assistant will work closely with all schools to ensure that they are ready for the new service.

4.3 The provision of food waste bins, caddies and 240L paper bins will be met from existing stock. In addition the claw back of 1100L bins that are no longer required will ease the budget required to purchase new 1100L bins for flats. The income from refuse container hire and collection will not alter initially unless schools require additional capacity, however ultimately the aim is for schools to recycle more and reduce refuse which will then allow them to reduce waste management costs by hiring fewer bins.

## 5. Resource and Wider Policy Implications

5.1 Correct separation of recyclable waste from schools will reduce missed/non-collections and maximise the potential income from paper.

5.2 The provision of information packs, bins and boxes can all be accommodated for within existing budgets.

5.3 Potential risks are as follows;

- Schools continue to contaminate paper in which case it may be necessary to remove paper collections entirely and provide only mixed recycling. Communication and a good working relationship with schools should avoid the need for this.

## 6. Recommendation

6.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

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<b>Background Papers:</b>	Previous Reports on this matter.