

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<i>Update on Fighting Food Waste Project</i>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<i>Cllr Luisa Sullivan</i>
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<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<i>All</i>

## 1. Purpose of Report

To update Environment PAG regarding the approach for the county wide Fighting Food Waste project to be delivered through the Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the update be noted..**

## 2. Executive Summary

The Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire submitted a bid to DCLG's fund for increasing recycling rates and the partnership was awarded £838,600 for its proposed 'Fighting Food Waste' project.

The aim of the project is to encourage more residents to recycle their food waste; this will increase recycling rates and also represents the lower cost option for processing food waste.

A base data gathering exercise has identified that 50% of Buckinghamshire residents use their food recycling service but of that 50%, only a proportion of food waste is being captured.

The Partnership Delivery Team for the project have looked at best practice examples provided by the Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP). WRAP is a national organisation funded by central government to provide waste advice to local authorities and business. In terms of providing effective communications and the preferred approach has been shared with Environment Cabinet Members across the partnership, who have agreed with the proposals.

It is proposed that a communications package containing a leaflet, a roll of caddy liners and bin sticker for the residual bins be delivered to Buckinghamshire residents with wider communications taking place to promote food recycling and food waste reduction. Further data gathering exercises will take place to monitor the effectiveness of the campaign.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendations

The report is provided for information purposes.

## 4. Content of Report

The Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire was awarded £838,600 by DCLG for its proposed 'Fighting Food Waste' project and the purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of that project.

The project brief is to motivate residents across Bucks to make better use of their existing food recycling collections in order to divert more food waste to Anaerobic Digestion. This is a more cost effective method of extracting energy from food waste as compared with the energy from waste facility in the north of the county, and increased participation in the service will result in increased recycling rates for the districts and will also benefit the environment. A series of activities and communications are planned to motivate residents to recycle their food waste and following this, a focus will be placed on reducing the amount of food waste generated within the home, in the first place.

A Project Manager was recruited by the Waste Partnership in September 2016, who works on behalf of the partner authorities to lead the delivery of the project. Senior Waste Officers for each of the Bucks authorities maintain an overview of the project governance arrangements and a Partnership Delivery Team (PDT), with officers from each of the authorities, meet regularly with the Project Manager to work on the project delivery. A meeting with Environment Cabinet Members and their deputies took place on 29<sup>th</sup> March to outline the proposed actions and Members were supportive of the approach.

SBDC acts as treasurer for the fund.

### **Research in to methods of engagement**

The PDT have researched best practice examples for increasing participation in food recycling schemes. WRAP has provided valuable information on food waste participation, ranging from reasons why residents are non users, lapsed users or low users of food recycling collections and also which methods of communication are the most successful for engaging with those target audiences.

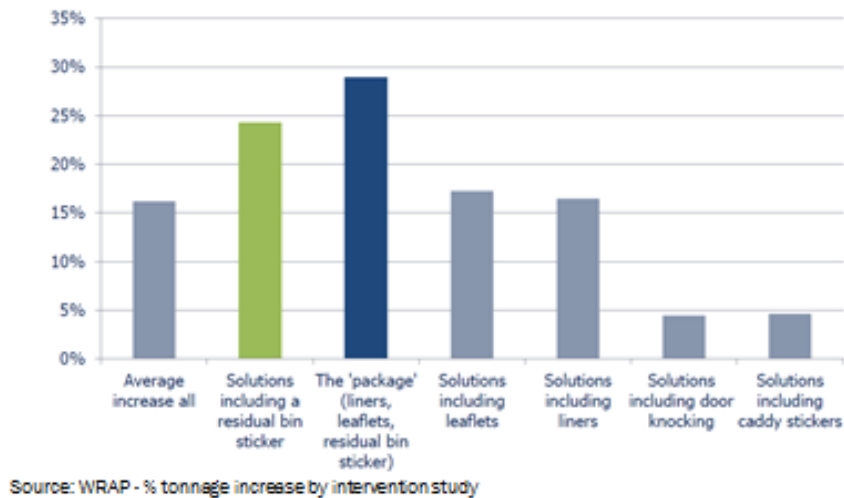
Common themes for low users, lapsed users or non users include:

- Concerns about the messy/smelly nature of food waste
- Would like to have free liners for their food waste caddy

WRAP undertook some pilots with a number of local authorities to establish which communication package was the most effective. The most successful package proved to be the provision of free caddy liners, a leaflet and a residual bin sticker, advising residents to place their food waste into their food recycling bin rather than into the refuse bin. This package was proven to result in an increase in food waste tonnage by almost 30% (see figure 1) and also resulted in a positive impact on participation in recycling collections.

Figure 1

### BIN STICKERS, LEAFLETS & CADDY LINERS



### Baseline data

A baseline data gathering exercise took place in February to measure the current participation of residents across Bucks. The exercise revealed that:

- 50% of residents are currently using their food recycling service
- Of those residents participating, the amount of food waste not captured equated to;
  - SBDC – 30% not captured
  - CDC/WDC – 49% not captured
  - AVDC – 18% not captured

From these results, it is clear that half of residents are not using their food recycling service and those using the service could be recycling more than they are.

### Plastic caddy liners

Currently, residents are advised to use compostable caddy liners to contain their food waste. Compostable caddy liners are expensive and many residents may not be using their food recycling service as they are reluctant to purchase the liners. This assumption is borne out by WRAP's research into barriers to participation.

The technology and processes used in anaerobic digestion plants have developed and AD operators are now happy to receive food waste contained in plastic bags. Operators are able to easily split open the plastic bags prior to processing the food waste and many local authorities now promote the use of plastic bags with their residents for the containment of food waste, as they are cheaper to purchase or residents may choose to use plastic bags they already have in the house; for example, used bread bags.

The use of plastic caddy liners have now been approved by Agrivert, the AD operator which processes our food waste, and as part of the FFW programme, it is proposed that our residents are offered that option. The change will be clearly communicated with residents. They may still use compostable liners if they prefer, but will also have the option to use plastic liners.

### Communications package

The approved communications package, advocated by WRAP, will be provided to residents. This will include:

- Leaflet
- Sticker for residual bin
- Supply of plastic caddy liners



Due to the supply chain lead in times, the communication packages will be delivered out to residents in the autumn, but prior to that, further communications will be developed to launch the new plastic liner message and to provide a clear explanation on the change.

### Wider communications

Other communication mediums will be used to promote the messages:

- Social media- facebook, twitter etc will be used for highly targeted communication bursts, targeting specific age groups or geographical groups within Bucks, with food recycling messages
- Website messages and a revamped Recycle for Bucks website with a Smart Waste Wizard - providing recycling information for residents
- Digital media, including Instagram and Pinterest etc
- School engagement and door knocking in targeted areas (low performing)
- Radio/local press releases

Further data gathering exercises will take place to monitor the impact of the campaign and will also start to link into WRAP's Love Food, Hate Waste (LFHW) messages – for instance

the average family wastes up to £60 in food each month. The PDT will use the data gathering exercises to identify areas where the targeted engagement take place.

**5. Consultation**

*The communications plan for this project was shared with Environment Cabinet Members who are supportive of the approach.*

**6. Options**

No alternative options

**7. Corporate Implications**

*Reports must include specific comments addressing the following implications;*

*3.1 Financial – The Fighting Food Waste project is funded by the DCLG award to the Waste Partnership for Bucks and the Senior Officer Group are monitoring expenditure. SBDC provide the treasury arrangements for the fund.*

*3.2 Legal – The Environmental Protection Act, 1990, sets waste collection authorities (District Councils) a duty to collect waste. The Waste Framework for England & Wales has set national recycling targets of 50% by 2020.*

**8. Links to Council Policy Objectives**

The Fighting Food Waste project supports the objective:

Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

**9. Next Step**

Communications identified for the Fighting Food Waste Project will commence over the coming months and a further meeting with Environment Cabinet Members is planned for the autumn.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	It is a legal requirement that we make available any background papers relied on to prepare the report and should be listed at the end of the report (copies of Part 1 background papers for executive decisions must be provided to Democratic Services )
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