

TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL  
17 JULY 2012

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**RECYCLING AND WASTE MINIMISATION**  
**Chief Officer: Environment & Public Protection**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel have requested an update in relation to our waste and recycling performance. This is to include the 2011/12 full year landfill figures, the first quarter figures following changes to brown bin arrangements and details of the re3 partners work with Green Machine at Longshot Lane on recycling/use of paint.

**2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Review of Performance

- 2.1 Waste and recycling performance continues to be affected by several factors many of which are outside our control. The single largest influencing factor is the state of the economy. Nationally and locally overall tonnages are down. This is attributed to us all 'consuming' less, us becoming less wasteful and further advances in the application of technology when it comes to the materials being used.
- 2.2 Performance over the year (2011/12) was no longer subject to statutory waste national indicators. We are no longer being monitored against each other. However, there are targets in the re3 contract that are aligned with the government waste strategy target of 50% recycling by 2020. This target must be achieved nationally or there will be consequences under EU law.
- 2.3 Looking back at our own performance (Annex A) the 2011/12 landfill figures show a continuing decrease in landfill and an increase in recycling. The most significant figure is in respect of waste minimisation. The kilograms per household (figure 3) have steadily decreased over the last 3 years. We are all producing less waste. Our landfill tonnage/percentage reduced significantly the year) before when Lakeside Energy From Waste came on stream (figure 1).

Brown Bins

- 2.4 The take up of the current offer of a free year of garden waste collections for residents who purchased brown bins before 5 December 2011 has proven very popular. Almost 13000 of the estimated 14500 users have registered. A further 141 have joined the scheme in the first quarter of this year and they have paid the annual collection fee of £26 in addition to buying a bin for £32. Since Monday 2 July we have stopped collecting bins from householders who have not registered and as a result more are coming forward. We estimate that this will result in a further 1000 bins being registered. We are currently planning for how best to take the scheme forward into next year and collect the fee due.
- 2.5 Members will recall that our fee was based only on the cost of collection; residents can still dispose of garden waste free of charge if they take it to Longshot Lane. The

initial evidence suggests that there has not been a significant increase in the number of BFC residents who are doing this although tonnage seems to be up but this could well be as much due to the weather conditions as anything. A survey will be undertaken in the autumn to test user satisfaction of the site and re-establish the proportions of waste taken into Longshot Lane by Wokingham and Bracknell Forest residents. This informs the allocation of costs between us.

#### Recycling and Waste Minimisation Promotions

- 2.6 There are several ongoing local reuse initiatives in respect of the waste going into the household waste recycling centres. The service commissioned through Green Machine is an example whereby the Re3 Partnership buys into a Community Interest Company in a number of ways. Green Machine has provided our foil recycling facility for several years. It has just launched an initiative in relation to paint reuse. Each year Bracknell Forest residents alone are thought to be disposing of an estimated 47 tonnes of paint and chemicals at Longshot Lane. The processing of this as a waste is expensive and often results in perfectly good paint being needlessly destroyed. Green machine take reusable paint from both Longshot Lane and Smallmead, process it by mixing like colours to create full tins of paint and then they sell the paint to the community for a minimum donation of £1 per litre. The success of the scheme is now very much reliant on us being able to promote their facility in Longshot Lane as a source of cheap good quality paint. There is no doubt that many residents on low income and local groups can benefit from this new initiative.
- 2.7 In February 2012, we had a 'WEEE amnesty day' at Bracknell Leisure Centre and Sandhurst Sports Centre. Residents were encouraged to bring their small waste electrical and electronic equipment to us for recycling to save them a trip to Longshot Lane. This event was very successful and we collected 647 kg of small electrical items that may well have otherwise ended up in green bins. If we can we will be looking to repeat this at some time in the future.
- 2.8 Enabling local collection is key and there are soon to be 2 new glass recycling sites with underground banks opening at new developments at Jennett's Park and Wykery Copse. These facilities are high quality and high profile. A site is also in the planning stage for The Parks and we are hoping to find a suitable site for glass banks somewhere near Bullbrook neighbourhood shops to serve new developments in that area.
- 2.9 A bid has been made for government reward and recognition funding which if successful will enable the development of a unique recycling reward scheme in the borough. There are many schemes in existence that give away retail vouchers via the internet to residents for participation in recycling schemes. We are looking to introduce a scheme that is directly linked to use of council services using our existing E+ card. The decision on the bid is expected this month.

#### Contamination of Blue Bins

- 2.10 Officers and staff from SITA have been working hard to reduce contamination in blue bins and green boxes. This contamination has decreased from 16% to around 13%. However, we are aware that a problem can occur in properties that share communal bins. Generally due to lack of ownership of the bins they have a higher rate of contamination. We are working with Bracknell Forest Homes on a pilot project in Bullbrook to find the best way to encourage residents to recycle correctly. We carried out an analysis of the waste in the bins at a block of flats in that area and found that 20% of the contents of the blue recycling bins were contaminated with

incorrect materials. In addition 20% of the waste in the landfill bins could easily have been recycled in the blue bin or at a recycling site. This pilot project will involve talking to the residents and working with local schools to educate and encourage more individual responsibility for recycling.

- 2.11 The new waste collection contract has enabled council officers to work more closely with SITA to achieve their target of holding at least 8 road shows per annum out in the community promoting recycling, waste minimisation and reducing contamination. In addition waste officers continue to give talks to community groups and schools on all aspects of waste.

#### Other Influences

- 2.12 Changes to legislation and guidance in waste happen frequently. Not all affect the way we work directly but some do. Most recently the Environment Agency issued guidance on recovery of street sweepings. This has meant we can no longer compost our street sweepings. In the short term this will result in a loss of around 600 tonnes per annum to our composting tonnage. We are working with our waste disposal contractor WRG to find a solution that avoids taking such waste to landfill.
- 2.13 Of indirect benefit perhaps but the impact of legislative changes in respect of packaging is also having an effect on what we as consumers throw away. Plastic, glass and cans are becoming ever lighter and newsprint is getting even thinner but just as strong. Such legislative change also helps create a value to the material as companies who don't achieve their targets have to buy credits. In the budget in March new targets for the 'producers' were announced in respect of plastic packaging. This will increase from 32% in 2012 to 52% in 2017. In 2010, 24.1% of plastic packaging nationally was either recovered or recycled. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of UK infrastructure/technology to process plastics, resulting in disproportionate shipping costs relative to their weight/volume.
- 2.14 The introduction of new forms of packaging is also problematic at the moment. There is an increase in the use of 'pouches' as an alternative to tins and glass in particular. These can not yet be sorted from the waste stream neither can they be recycled. In addition the greater use of bio-degradable plastic is causing concern as again the material can not be extracted mechanically from the waste stream. Through the re3 partnership the Council is hoping to work closely with our local major retailer Waitrose to help find solutions to deal with these emerging issues.
- 2.15 These and other challenges will no doubt to continue to be test our thinking as to how best to deliver our waste service. As things move on society will need to consider what we provide not as a waste service but a recycling one. In the meantime we will continue to extract recyclate material where there it is sustainable to do so.

### **3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 Not applicable to this report.

#### **4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 Landfill tax is currently £64 per tonne and is going to increase by £8 per year up to £80 per tonne in 2014/15. It is not yet confirmed what will happen after 2014/15 but the landfill tax is likely to continue to be increased. The Council has to continue to encourage and develop initiatives to improve recycling along with its re3 partners.

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##### Document Reference

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**Bracknell Forest Council's performance over the last 3 years**

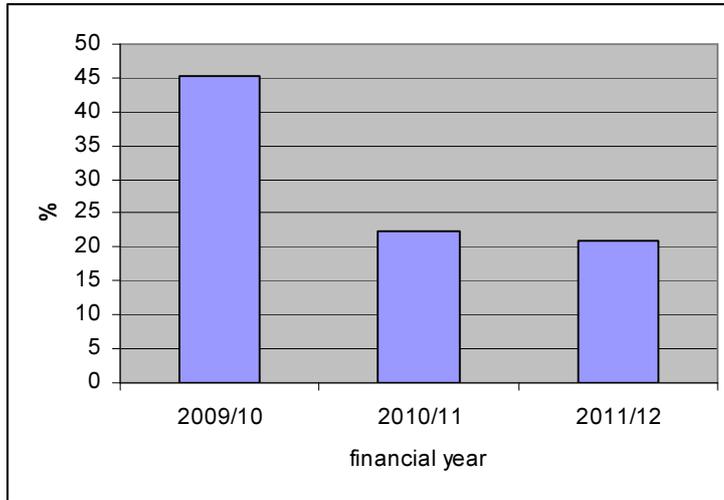


Figure 1: Percentage of Bracknell Forest's waste land filled in the last 3 financial years.

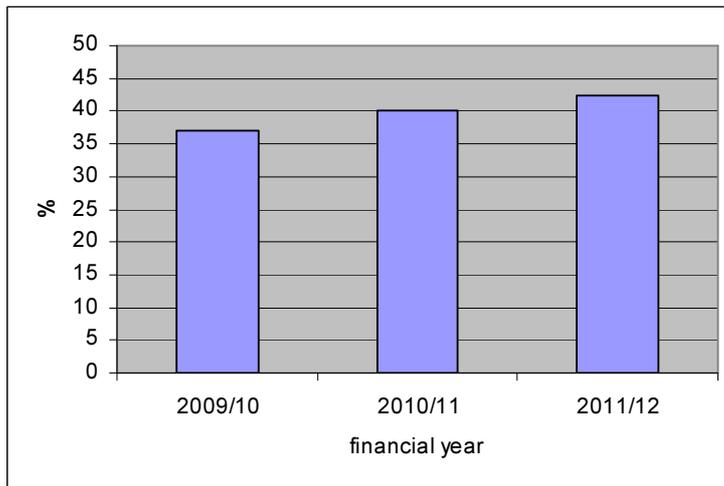


Figure 2: Percentage of Bracknell Forest's waste recycled or composted in the last 3 financial years.

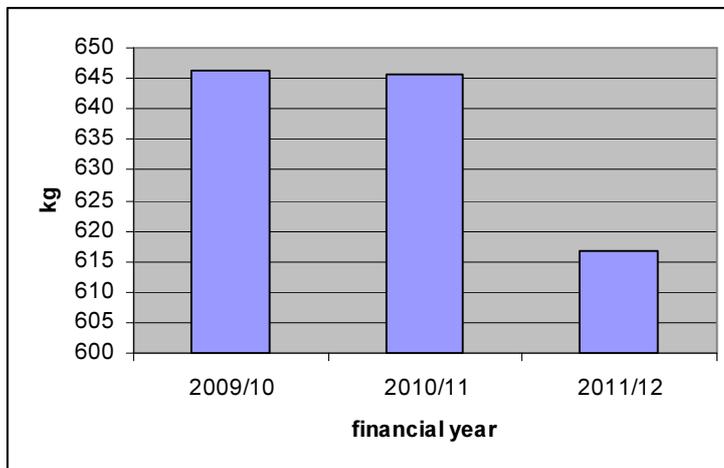


Figure 3: Kilograms of waste per household in Bracknell Forest for the last 3 financial years.