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Report to the City Council

Recycling of Paper and Green Waste



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Recycling of Paper and Green Waste

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Preface

By Councillor John Lines

Chairman, Street Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee



The importance of recycling waste to the future of this city cannot be over-emphasised. As municipal waste continues to grow and government increasingly penalises use of landfill, the issue must be tackled on a number of fronts.

Whilst the percentage of waste going to landfill in Birmingham is well below the national average, this is due almost entirely to the Energy from Waste Plant at Tyseley, which incinerated 72% of municipal waste in Birmingham in 2002/03. Review Group members received no guarantee that recycling targets would be met. Burning waste is undoubtedly better than burying it - but recycling is better.

Despite a poor start, volumes of waste recycled have increased in the recent past. Kerb-side collection of paper waste is now established across the city and a pilot scheme for collecting green waste will commence in the Spring. The focus of this Review was the current arrangements for the recycling of paper and green waste in Birmingham, and how these could be maximised. In particular, Members identified the need to involve the community to a much greater degree to encourage higher rates of recycling.

It is also timely to learn from the experience of other local authorities and from community-based environmental organisations that are engaged in this field. Furthermore, I and my fellow Members were keen to ensure that the message relating to recycling had carried beyond Environmental Services. There is a role to play in educating children in our schools, and in exploring the use of the planning system in encouraging household recycling.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Lines'.



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1: Summary

- 1.1.1 The focus of this Review was the current arrangements for the recycling of paper and green waste in Birmingham, and how these could be maximised. In particular, Members identified the need to involve the community to a much greater degree to encourage higher rates of recycling.
- 1.1.2 There are challenging targets set by Government to increase the percentage of waste to be recycled. Whilst no financial penalties are attached to failure this year, it is very likely that there will be in coming years.
- 1.1.3 In recognition of this, the Leader of the Council announced in the February 2004 Council Budget meeting:
- Investment in fifteen better recycling facilities;
 - Replacing the number of existing neighbourhood bottle, clothes, paper and glass recycling banks with new style underground storage recycling sites which have minimum bin visibility at ground level and storage of recyclables below ground;
 - Improving fifty unattractive bin storage areas on housing estates to deter flytipping and rodent infestation, as pioneered through NRF funding in Longbridge Ward;
 - Introducing a waste and recycling service suited to the 21st century – perhaps in pilot areas to start with - using wheeled bins where they are practical, to separately collect recyclable materials from other household waste;
 - The setting aside, within this budget, of sufficient one-off revenue costs of £0.235m to introduce such a pilot service across 60,000 properties.¹
- 1.1.4 This Scrutiny Review of paper and green waste adds to this.
- 1.1.5 Firstly, the examination of the Council's operation of waste recycling and kerb-side collection shows that there is a high degree of enthusiasm in the management of the waste function and a focus on improving waste recycling. In developing best practice officers

¹ Press Release: *Council Leader, Cllr Sir Albert Bore, sets out Executive's Budget to the City Council*, 3 February 2004.



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have visited other local authorities to examine a range of recycling operations and have adopted elements where considered to be an advantage to Birmingham City Council. An officer also currently chairs the West Midlands Recycling Forum established to share experience and best practice in recycling. However, there does not appear to be a high enough priority attached to a comprehensive approach and learning from best practice elsewhere. It is hoped that the actions promised by the Leader will go some way to ameliorating this.

- 1.1.6 For example, "a waste and recycling service suited to the 21st century" is prioritised. Currently, the City Council's Waste Strategy is largely out of date and while there have been periodic updates when the Council has bid for funds, there does not appear to be a commitment to review the strategy and an action plan *on a regular basis*. It is disappointing that, whilst Birmingham compares favourably to other Core Cities (with the third highest recycling rate of the eight cities), other cities and towns have made significant strides in recycling efforts and Birmingham still has some way to go.
- 1.1.7 Having an Annual Action Plan would give stronger guidance on recycling policies. It would also enable the Executive to review its involvement and dialogue with local communities on how to improve and embed waste recycling into communities. This review found that the Council was not acting upon the lessons gained from the small pilot schemes. In particular, Localisation needs to embrace within its planning processes a commitment to seek a quantum leap in recycling rates by Constituency.
- 1.1.8 Therefore one of the key areas which this review concludes is that waste recycling issues need to be considered as a key part of the Council's localisation agenda, and explicitly referred to in each Constituency's Service Plan and Community Plan.
- 1.1.9 This review recognises that there has been some attempt to increase the funding towards recycling, and the announcement by the Leader of the Council that additional funding would be made available for recycling in the February 2004 Council Budget meeting will make a real difference. However, the current service has only been able to develop to the extent it has by securing Neighbourhood Renewal Funding from the central pot in the last two years. This has been supplemented by winning an extra DEFRA allocation of funding, and mainstream commitments for paper recycling following on from this. However, the Members were disappointed to hear that two bids to DEFRA for £5m of partnership funding and £1.5m of project funding had failed. Initial feedback suggests these awards are driven by the need to reduce landfill (77% nationally in 2002/03, but only 25% in Birmingham, mainly due to the use of Tyseley *Energy from Waste Plant*).
- 1.1.10 The review group feels that it will take a further substantial



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allocation of funds to make a real difference. Whilst the Committee welcomes the additional resources promised in the 2004/05 budget, there is a need to consider further funding priorities to boost this service. This would include exploring how the current phase of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for 2004/5 and 2005/6 could be better used to enhance community involvement in waste recycling and improving collection systems.

- 1.1.11 The danger is that unless a step change is achieved the Council will face penalties from DEFRA in 2005/6 from not meeting the target of 18% recycling.
- 1.1.12 Whilst this review focussed at the outset on kerb-side green and paper waste collections, it was inevitable that other aspects of recycling would be covered. The experience of other local authorities has shown that with ingenuity, glass, cans, clothing and plastics can all be collected from the kerb-side. With the passing of the Household Waste Recycling Act at the end of last year, the City Council will have to address the need to collect two recyclables from the kerb-side. Currently within Moseley and Small Heath, Brumcan (a voluntary sector partner organisation) is collecting glass, cans, textiles and paper, in co-ordination with the City Council. This programme currently collects from 12,000 households and has plans to expand to 24,500 households in 2004/05. However, when set against the "Eco-Homes Standard" set by the Building Research Establishment, which sets standards of three bins as a minimum in residential dwellings, there is a lot to be done to raise in any meaningful way the current relatively low recycling rate in the City.



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2: Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
<p>1. The Birmingham Waste Management Strategy needs to be urgently updated and should include an annually updated action plan to show how the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve the BVPI target for 2005/6;• Achieve the National Waste Strategy targets for 2010 and 2015 set by Government for waste minimisation and recycling;• Assess the viability of further kerb-side collections being introduced for cans, glass and plastics;• Learn from best practice in other local authorities.	<p>Cabinet Member Transportation and Street Services</p>	<p>31 October 2004</p>
<p>2. That consultation be commenced on the Supplementary Planning Guidance on sustainable development (including waste recycling standards) prepared under the Birmingham UDP for all future development schemes. This should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate stronger conditions for planning and developers to build in waste recycling facilities to encourage households to recycle,• Similarly with regard to paper recycling within office developments; and• Encourage all housing developers operating within the City to adopt the same standard.	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>	<p>31 December 2004</p>
<p>3. The City Council should lead by example and should adopt the 'Eco-Home Standard' particularly in respect of waste recycling facilities for all future housing developments for which it is the client.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Housing</p>	<p>31 October 2004</p>



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Community Involvement and Awareness and the Impact of Localisation

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
4.	<p>Constituency Service and Community Plans should promote recycling by making specific reference to how the constituency will help to meet the Council's recycling targets; in particular by looking to involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and school children within local communities working with local organisations, Residents and tenants associations; The various warden schemes across the City. <p>Consideration should be given to the selection of a pilot constituency for trialling more comprehensive community recycling.</p>	Cabinet Member Transportation and Street Services	31 October 2004
5.	<p>Develop model NRF schemes for those constituencies that wish to allocate resources to improve waste recycling facilities and kerb-side collections facilities.</p>	Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services	31 October 2004
6.	<p>Consideration should be given to preparing a leaflet for householders, which would be distributed to all households. This should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail the facilities local to them for the recycling of paper, glass, shoes, clothing as well as the locations of the Household Recycling Centres; Publicise links to the various community recycling organisations and the opportunities for participation; Be available at the Council's Contact Centre and on the website. 	Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services	31 December 2004
7.	<p>To work with local Allotment Associations, the Birmingham and District Allotment Council, the relevant City Council Departments and local communities living in the vicinity of Allotment sites affected, to allow access to unused plots for local community composting and to increase percentage of Allotments where local community recycling is encouraged</p>	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	30 April 2005
8.	<p>There should be a properly resourced full time support and advice service for schools which would work with school governors who could be champions, develop citizenship on recycling, so that a more pro-active approach to recycling is achieved.</p>	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning	30 April 2005



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9.	The Committee welcomes the Leader's commitment to the installation of underground banks for recycling centres ² and asks that progress on this is reported back to Street Services O&S Committee.	Cabinet Member Transportation and Street Services	31 December 2004
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Waste Recycling Systems

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
10.	Establish a means of continually reviewing in conjunction with Constituency Committees the suitability of kerb-side containers for recycling of paper and green waste, recognising that not all containers are appropriate for some areas and for some building types.	Cabinet Member Transportation and Street Services	31 October 2004
11.	Urgently identify a location for a Household Recycling Centre in the South West of the City, which would address the need for green waste collection as well as other recyclables.	Cabinet Member Transportation and Street Services	31 December 2004
12.	Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Street Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2005 and on a six-monthly basis until completed.	Cabinet Member Transportation and Street Services	31 January 2005

² See paragraph 1.1.3



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3: Background

3.1 Reason for the Review

- 3.1.1 There are challenging targets for the Council set through the Performance Plan and Performance Indicators relating to the recycling of household waste. The Government has set targets for all Local Authorities to be met by 2003/4 and 2004/5. Nationally the Government is looking for 17% recycling rates in 2003/4 and at least 25% in 2005/6.
- 3.1.2 The rates for individual authorities will however vary and for Birmingham these have been set at 10% for 2003/4 and 18% for 2005/6.
- 3.1.3 The Council has introduced kerb-side household collections for waste paper, and is beginning a kerb-side green waste collection in parts of the City.
- 3.1.4 There is also a higher level of interest in the business community from the opportunities for waste to be seen as a "resource" which can be used in other processes and products through effective waste collection systems being put in place. Officers are already working through links with the Midlands Environmental Business Club (MEBC) and the National Industrial Synergy Programme, West Midlands (NISP - WM).
- 3.1.5 Most recently, the Leader of the Council has stated his commitment to "better recycling facilities" and a "recycling service suited to the 21st century".³
- 3.1.6 With the high level of Government interest in, and the Council's on-going commitment to, waste recycling it is appropriate to review the Council's current approach to paper and green waste recycling. It is also important to learn from the experience of other local authorities and from community-based environmental organisations that are engaged in this field.

³ See paragraph 1.1.3.



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3.2 Terms of Reference

3.2.1 The objectives for the review were set as follows:

- Understand the nature of the Council's performance on recycling, in particular how the Council performs in relation to other local authorities and what contribution the recycling of paper and green waste makes to the Council's targets;
- Examine the measures underway to improve participation in recycling paper and green waste: are the measures underway likely to mean that we achieve our targets; what schemes do other local authorities use to deliver greater participation; and what is the estimated cost/benefit of adopting further schemes to improve participation;
- Examine further options for increasing participation, including the scope for generating employment opportunities through recycling schemes.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 A Review Group was established, chaired by Councillor John Lines, and comprising Councillors Mike Nangle and Talib Hussain. The Review Group received evidence in three sessions as follows:

- On 10th November 2003 evidence was given by officers from:
 - The City Council's Waste Disposal Operations Manager from the former Environmental Services Department on the Council's policy for encouraging paper and green waste recycling;
 - Onyx Waste on the operation of the Tyseley Waste Disposal Management facility;
 - Kappa Paper on the recycling of paper waste;
 - City Council Leisure Services on green waste recycling.
- On 25th November evidence was received from officers from:
 - The City Council's Planning Service on current planning guidance for waste recycling encouragement;
 - The Black Country Housing Association on the



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steps taken to build waste recycling facilities into housing schemes supported by the Association;

- The West Midlands Regional Office of the Environment Agency on the government and the Region's current waste management strategy.

- On 1st December evidence was received from:
 - CSV Environment on community involvement in waste recycling activities in Birmingham;
 - The City Council's Waste Management Service and the Education Service on the involvement of schools in the encouragement of the waste recycling.

3.3.2 Additionally, the Review Group made visits to two local authorities which have high waste recycling rates:

- On 27th November to Daventry District Council, which while it is a small authority of 30,000 households has a high waste recycling rate of 43% (2001/2), to examine the waste management function and community support for the scheme;
- On 8th January to Colchester Borough Council, which is a small authority with a long experience of kerbside waste paper collection. Colchester has recently trialled variations in its waste collection procedures and will be installing a new set of waste collection vehicles which will better separate out the different waste streams.

3.3.3 The intention was to visit authorities that had taken a strong lead in recycling. Whilst translating activities from these authorities to one the size of Birmingham is not a simple matter, it is important to recognise that lessons can always be learnt from other authorities and approaches.



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4: Context

4.1 The National Context

- 4.1.1 The Government has a National Waste Strategy, which was issued in 2000. This set down a vision for managing waste and resources better. Key elements of the approach in the National Waste Strategy are:
- To tackle the quantity of waste produced;
 - That where waste is created it should be put to good use, through recycling, composting or using it as a fuel;
 - A major review of its National Waste Strategy through the Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit.
- 4.1.2 At the time the National Waste Strategy was produced, only 9% of household waste was recycled and a further 8% was recovered. As a result, the Strategy set challenging targets for household waste recycling as follows:
- To recycle or compost at least 25% by 2005;
 - To recycle or compost at least 30% by 2010;
 - To recycle or compost at least 33% by 2015.
- 4.1.3 In November 2002, the Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) reported on progress on the National Waste Strategy in "Waste Not, Want Not". While the report acknowledged that progress was being made to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, it also set down some additional principles for further discussion. In particular, it recommended that the "waste hierarchy" of *waste minimisation, re-use, recycling and composting, energy recovery with heat and power through incineration, landfill with energy, and landfill* should be pursued.
- 4.1.4 The PIU report also recommended that a robust funding strategy should be introduced by government to address the first steps in the waste hierarchy, namely "Waste Minimisation" and "Recycling".
- 4.1.5 This Scrutiny review is concerned with the recycling aspects in relation to household waste and does not address the first part of the waste hierarchy.



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- 4.1.6 The PIU review recommended that the government should “boost recycling by developing the infrastructure needed for increased recycling (including national kerb-side collection, focusing on organics, and bring more sites and civic amenity sites designed for re-use and recycling). This would raise recycling rates to at least 45% by 2015”. It should be noted that this target is higher than that set in the National Waste Strategy 2000.
- 4.1.7 The PIU report also recommended that “local authorities need to set a strategy for managing municipal waste locally; allocate sufficient resources to waste; and provide an appropriate level of infrastructure to support:
- Home composting (focusing on organics first);
 - Kerb-side recycling (focusing on organics first);
 - more sites and better civic amenity sites for re-use and recycling;
 - More practical support and advice for local people;
 - Minimising and recycling the authority's own waste;
 - Buying and specifying composted and recycled products;
 - Dissemination of the national communications strategy in the context of local needs.”
- 4.1.8 Arising from the National Waste Strategy and the PIU Review, the Government has actively encouraged local authorities to improve and extend kerb-side collection services. Birmingham has sought additional funds from DEFRA to enable investment in facilities which will extend these facilities.
- 4.1.9 As an aside to this review, it is also instructive to note (see Appendix 1) the range of waste directives which are currently in the pipeline for implementation. The majority of these affect producers of goods and materials. The intention is that in the future:
- Goods will optimise and reduce the amount of material which can no longer be recycled when the product has reached the end of its life;
 - Producer responsibility will be introduced for the “end of life” of products; and
 - The quantity of wrapping will be minimised and environmentally friendly attributes increased.
- 4.1.10 The Government is currently consulting on a number of EU directives, including End of Life Vehicles and the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Directives. These directives should have an impact on the domestic waste stream in due course in reducing the steady increase in the volume of household waste which is currently growing at around 3% per annum.



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4.2 The Regional Context

4.2.1 In the West Midlands, the Regional Waste Strategy was produced in June 2001 as a draft document. It has not yet been formally approved by the West Midlands Regional Assembly and the Regional Planning Partnership. The draft Strategy restates the national targets. The relevant policies related to recycling (in draft policies SP6A, SP6B, SP6C, SP6D, SP6E, SP6F and SP6G) within the strategy are set down in Appendix 2. In essence these state:

- Local authorities should work closely together and create stronger links with industry and commerce and the waste management industry to explore opportunities for economies of scale;
- Local authorities should establish advice services and education and publicity campaigns to promote household recycling and composting;
- In their development plans require major developments to provide for in-house or on-site recycling and treatment of wastes;
- Local authorities should actively encourage community recycling schemes using recycling credits and that with the waste management industry give favourable consideration to the proposals to use landfill tax credits to increase the amount of recycling within the region.

4.3 The Birmingham Context

Birmingham City Council Waste Strategy

4.3.1 The City Council's Waste Management Strategy was produced in January 2000. The Strategy has since been updated with a supplementary "Vision Statement" in 2002/3. This "Vision" has recently been further updated. It is understood however that these documents will be reviewed with a view to it being approved by Cabinet during 2004. The Strategy described the waste recycling service provision at that time as being as follows.

4.3.2 There are Public Waste Disposal (PWD) Sites at

- Tameside Drive (Castle Bromwich);
- Lifford Lane (Kings Norton);
- Norris Way (Sutton Coldfield);
- Holford Drive (Perry Barr);
- James Road (Tyseley);



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- Lifford and Perry Barr Transfer Stations;
 - Castle Bromwich Ash Reprocessing Plant.
- 4.3.3 This is supplemented by over 300 recycling centres located around the city for the collection of glass, paper and card, cans, and textiles. At that time kerb-side collection of waste paper was undertaken in the north and south of the city called "Paperchase" from 70,000 properties.
- 4.3.4 The facilities used for municipal waste are:
- Tyseley Waste Disposal Ltd (a joint company owned by Onyx and the City Council) which became operational on 17th January 1994 under a 25 year contract ending in 2019. This contract operates and runs the waste collection and incineration into energy plant at Tyseley;
 - Three privately owned landfill sites located outside the City boundary, at Packington (SITA), Wilnecote (Biffa) and Hailstones (Edwin Richards, Rowley Regis).
- 4.3.5 The Strategy outlined the steps to be taken to increase the recycling rate.

Birmingham City Council Recycling Targets

- 4.3.6 The Government has set recycling targets for Birmingham within the Best Value (BV) regime. These targets are detailed in targets:
- BV82a (total tonnage of household waste – percentage sent for recycling);
 - BV82b (total tonnage of household waste – percentage sent for composting).
- 4.3.7 The targets for BV82a for Birmingham are 10% in 2003/4 and 18% in 2005/6.
- 4.3.8 The City Council also entered into a Public Services Agreement (PSA) target within the City Council's overall PSA agreement covering the period 2001/2 to 2003/4. Under that regime the target definition was slightly different as it included both rubble and post incineration metals. However, these materials can no longer be included in the BV Indicators (only rubble that has been recycled can be counted within the LPSA target). The PSA targets were 10% in 2001/2, 13% in 2002/3 and 17% in 2003/4.
- 4.3.9 The BV regime defines what can and cannot be included. The target can include:
- Waste collection rounds (including separate rounds for recyclable collections);



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- Street cleansing and litter collection;
- Bulky waste collections;
- Hazardous household collections;
- Household clinical waste collections;
- Garden waste collections; (this includes green waste collected at the Household Recycling Centres);
- Drop/bring systems;
- Waste from Household Recycling Centres (Civic Amenity Sites).

4.3.10 However, there are exclusions:

- Incinerator residues;
- Rubble;
- Home composted waste;
- Clearance of fly-tipped waste;
- Abandoned vehicles;
- Re-used waste material.

4.3.11 The City Council's recycling waste management function underwent a Best Value Review in May 2001. A progress report was taken to the Sustainability and Public Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2002. The Best Value Review identified six service improvements as follows:

- Separate facilities at public waste disposal sites for green waste and rubble;
- More frequently cleaned recycling sites;
- Renewal of equipment at recycling sites;
- Greater participation of community groups by encouraging them to adopt recycling sites;
- Increasing the accessibility of the recycling service by introducing kerb-side collections;
- Introducing an education and awareness programme.

4.3.12 As a result of the Best Value Review progress, and subsequent decisions by the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services, further steps have been taken to accelerate the introduction of kerb-side collection facilities:

- The use of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) to enable 210,000 households to benefit from kerb-side collections from November 2001;
- Extended to cover 324,000 homes with additional DEFRA funding;



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- An awareness raising campaign through Wards and promotional material;
- Working with Brumcan, CSV Environment and Groundwork on community recycling.

4.3.13 The waste management function has also sought additional funds from DEFRA to provide a kerb-side multi-material collection service to be delivered into a Materials Recycling Facility provided by Onyx/TWD. Unfortunately the bid was recently rejected and a further bid is being made.

4.3.14 The performance on the recycling targets is shown in **Figure 1**.

Year	PSA Target	BV Target	National Waste Strategy Target	Performance
2001/2	10%			8.37% (PSA)
2002/3	13%			12.16% (PSA) 10.74% (BVPI)
2003/4	17%	10%		
2005/6		18%		
2010/11			30%	
2015/16			33%	

Fig. 1: Performance on recycling targets

Source:

4.3.15 Discussions with officers revealed that the PSA target of 17% for 2003/4 will not be reached. There will be no penalties for not reaching this as the City Council will meet 60% of the overall PSA target.

4.3.16 However, if the statutory target of 18% by 2005/6 is not met then penalties will be imposed. These are likely to be financial but government has issued no details yet. The evidence submitted by officers suggested that with the improvements to the paper recycling and green waste being tackled this target would be met.

4.3.17 While the 2015 target is 33%, the government through the PIU review has clearly stated that they wish to see a target of 45% achieved.



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5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The evidence gathered from the three Review Group sessions and the two visits has been grouped under the following headings:

- Community Involvement and Awareness and the Impact of Localisation;
- Waste Recycling Systems;
- Waste Strategy Matters.

5.2 Community Involvement

5.2.1 Evidence from City Council officers indicated that there was a need to educate the public to make full use of the recycling facilities on offer and encourage greater community involvement in recycling schemes. There was evidence of close working in some areas with CSV Environment, Groundwork and with Brumcan to raise awareness of the need for recycling. However, these programmes did not yet extend across the whole city.

CSV Environment

5.2.2 The Members received evidence from CSV Environment, which began a pilot scheme for community composting in East Birmingham in 1998/9. This has since developed with support from the City Council through landfill tax in parts of three Wards, and by 2002 covered 8,300 households. In 2003, Moseley Ward invited CSV to extend the scheme to another 12,500 households. By the end of 2003, some 20,000 households are covered and it is collecting 15 tonnes per week. The estimate of the cost is approximately £100,000 per annum per Ward.

5.2.3 CSV's operation involves:

- Five compost sites – two on BCC allotments, two with a Housing Association and one on a business site;
- Plastic sacks and introductory leaflets, which are delivered to every resident, inviting them to join the



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scheme. Each resident who opts in gets a sack every two weeks and full sacks are collected every other week;

- The sacks are made of degradable plastic made by Symphony Plastics which degrade after 12 months.

5.2.4 The key lessons from the CSV experience has been:

- The involvement of local residents is essential through local steering committees;
- The implementation of the Animal By-Products Regulations has complicated the recycling process, as all such waste must be excluded from the system. As such, the use of wheelie bins in the opinion of CSV complicates the process as the collectors cannot see what is in the bin;
- CSV do feel that the City's allotments could be better utilised to provide composting facilities for local communities. In their view there have been barriers put up by allotments committees to the introduction of community composting. They therefore wish the City Council to be more pro-active in encouraging the wider use of allotment facilities especially where there is space for such uses.

Involvement of schools

5.2.5 The Members also received evidence from officers from Education and from Environmental Services on work being done with schools and young people. It was clear that whilst there were a number of initiatives and many ideas were being implemented, the impression was that of a lack of full-time resources to really support the development of a proper recycling culture amongst schools, schoolchildren, and local communities. Amongst the key points made were:

- There was a lot of material available to teachers and headteachers on raising waste awareness in schools and with pupils. However, it was clear that there was a shortage of teacher time to do it justice;
- The contact time between Environmental Services and schools was limited. Environmental Health Officers are also involved in visiting schools and encouraging them to apply for the Schools Litter Charter which involves an element of recycling. The majority of the work was undertaken through third parties such as CSV, Brumcan and Groundwork, Young Peoples Parliament and Connexions;
- 163 schools were now engaged in recycling. The promotion of the "Eco Schools" initiative was



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promoted, but it was not taken up as much as it could be. A Head Teacher has been seconded for 2 days per week to work with schools on environmental issues in the curriculum. The Head Teacher will be focusing on promoting Think Leadership and Eco Schools. School environmental action plans developed through the Think Leadership Package include targets for meeting the recycling of paper and green waste. However, it was felt that school governors (who could be champions for a more pro-active approach to recycling) were difficult to access;

- Overall, there was a feeling that a lack of co-ordination and a lack of resources was inhibiting a wider take-up of recycling initiatives in schools.

The Wider Community

5.2.6 Two further issues were raised with regard to maximising the involvement of all residents in current recycling schemes. Firstly, there is a need to consider the languages used to inform people. While there was contact information in ethnic languages included on the leaflets, it was not clear just how much was conveyed by the words used, and also how the recycling message was carried into local communities.

5.2.7 Secondly, the management of recycling sites is clearly important. Some recycling banks are not emptied frequently enough, which leads to overflowing. This is seen to encourage fly tipping and rats, and the resulting unsightliness leads to their unpopularity with local residents. For example, the experience in the Frankley Parish Council area, which identified a temporary site that was not manned, was not a success. City Council officers had to spend a whole week clearing up the mess, which resulted from the resultant free for all. One solution would be to bury the containers, so that there is minimum visibility of the bins.

Summary

5.2.8 The evidence received by the Review Group from officers and organisations working locally, and from the experience of the two visited local authorities, can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst there was enthusiasm from local communities to recycle, there was a feeling that not enough was being done in Birmingham to support local efforts, and to maintain enthusiasm;
- It was important that a long-term view was taken of the relationship with local communities. This required a clear and consistent communication process which was well resourced.



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5.3 Waste Recycling Systems

- 5.3.1 Currently the City Council undertakes kerb-side collection of paper from 324,000 households, and a trial green waste collection, which is intended to be extended to 40,000 households in 2004/5. There is no city-wide kerb-side collection of plastics, bottles, clothing, as these are managed through the 300 plus local recycling centres. Brumcan collects paper, glass bottles, cans and textiles in Moseley and Small Heath. All waste streams are audited but not all require the issue of a Waste Transfer Note as some activities are exempt.

Paper

- 5.3.2 The City Council has a contract with Kappa SSK, which takes all of Birmingham's current waste paper. The mill uses cardboard and mixed papers and converts it into corrugated cardboard, which is used within the Kappa board/box manufacturing facilities located elsewhere in the UK. The Kappa mill is the only paper mill within 100 miles of Birmingham. The mill produces 185,000 tonnes of "corrugated case material" per annum.
- 5.3.3 The mill collects 60,000 tonnes from Birmingham, 30,000 tonnes from Nottingham and 110,000 tonnes from the open market, buying in from other outlets. In their evidence, Kappa confirmed that they could handle any future increase that the City Council could supply to it.
- 5.3.4 One hundred and fifty people are employed at the mill, in addition to the transport drivers/pickers from the kerb-side collections employed by the Council, and the private paper recyclers/waste paper merchants.
- 5.3.5 With the kerb-side collections some 350 tonnes/week has been monitored using boxes. With the introduction of bags in the south of the city, this has increased the overall City tonnage to 400/450 tonnes a week. Bags will be introduced to the north of the City in 2004/05 and this will probably increase the overall City total to 450/500 tonnes per week.
- 5.3.6 The Members did express views about the capacity of the new bags to hold paper, and also the need for crews to securely deposit the bag when returning it to the property, as there was evidence of these being blown around (unlike the boxes).

Green Waste

- 5.3.7 Under legislation the City Council is allowed to charge for garden waste collection and there was a period when a 25p charge per green bag was levied, but this was discontinued. The reason was that the green bags ended up in the general waste stream and were incinerated. However, green waste is not a good energy



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source for Tyseley, so the priority is to take it out of the energy stream. Separate collection of green garden waste collected at the Household Recycling Centres commenced in 1999/2000, and this year some 12,000 tonnes will be recovered. A pilot scheme of kerb-side collection of green waste will operate over 40,000 households, beginning in the Spring.

- 5.3.8 The current process for the collection of green waste is for TWD workers, employed on a nine month temporary contract for the March/November period, to assist in the green waste separation at the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs). They are also used to educate members of the public who arrive with mixed waste to encourage greater green waste recycling. A leaflet is distributed.
- 5.3.9 All the green waste collected from the HRCs is taken to two composting companies in Walsall and Worcestershire. The resulting compost is sold to the public and DIY outlets.
- 5.3.10 The City Council is solely responsible for the green waste kerb-side collection, which also goes to the composting companies.
- 5.3.11 The Review Group also received evidence of the work of Leisure Services, which showed that there was clear evidence of benefits from the recycling of plant material from parks and highways. Some 2,000 tonnes is being handled by the Cofton Park recycling/composting facility. Whilst this reduces the tonnage sent to landfill (and therefore Landfill Tax) as well as eliminating the use of peat in plant care, these cannot (by the definitions used) contribute to the PSA and BVPI targets.
- 5.3.12 A trial wood recycling scheme took place at the Castle Bromwich HRC site. Seven percent of waste is wood from this site and this is being "chipped" for new recycled wood material manufacture.
- 5.3.13 The local recycling centres are located at over three hundred locations across the city. They are used for glass, paper, and clothing recycling. Cans and shoes are also collected at sites across the city. The HRCs also collect oil and vehicle batteries.

5.4 Transport Systems Used

- 5.4.1 The City Council uses large rear loading vehicles for the collection of paper and green wastes. The paper waste (kerb-side and local recycling centre) is collected and delivered direct to the Kappa facility, while the green wastes are collected separately and transported to outside the city boundaries by TWD.



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5.5 Visits to Daventry and Colchester

5.5.1 The visits to the two Local Authorities provided the opportunity for the Review Group to see alternative approaches to the collection of recyclables. This included listening to how the local authorities had approached the involvement of local communities.

Daventry

5.5.2 The key elements of the collection system used by Daventry are:

- A weekly kerb-side collection of dry recyclables from two kerb-side boxes:
 - The "red box" recycled newspaper, magazines and other paper (no cardboard), clothing and shoes;
 - The "blue box" recycled plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans and glass bottles and jars;
- A "brown wheelie bin" for garden waste and cardboard;
- A "grey wheelie bin" for all other household waste.

5.5.3 The recyclables are collected using a special vehicle that holds the wastes. The recyclables are separated out from the boxes by the operatives on the street.

5.5.4 Daventry dispose of their recyclables on a joint basis with Northamptonshire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority. The green waste is taken to the County Council's large composting site. They also market their recyclables through the waste resource market dealer, after collection of the materials at their depot in Daventry.

5.5.5 A key feature of their success in achieving a high recycling rate of 43% in 2001/2 has been the take up of the green waste recycling service. Daventry also put a lot of effort into devising a communication programme with Waste Watch. The Review Group was provided with full details of the programme and the monitoring of people's reactions through doorstep, postal and telephone surveys.

5.5.6 Amongst the more useful responses to this consultation was feedback that residents felt the scheme was manageable, and that operational information about the scheme such as lists of materials and collection dates was most useful.

Colchester

5.5.7 Colchester has had a long history of kerb-side waste paper



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collection stretching back some 40 years. However in the last decade it has broadened and also refined its collection procedures. It is doing this within a broad aim of aiming to “become the cleanest and greenest borough in the country”. They have undertaken a fortnightly kerb-side recyclable service in recent years.

5.5.8 Over the last 2 years, Colchester has undertaken a “High Diversion Recycling Trial” in part of its borough (West Mersea). This has seen diversion rates from landfill to recycling of almost 60%. As a result of that trial, Colchester is introducing a borough wide system which has learnt from the experience of the two year trial in West Mersea.

5.5.9 Colchester collects the following recyclables:

- Paper and card;
- Clean glass bottles and jars;
- Clean drinks and food cans;
- Green garden waste;
- Plastic;
- Old clothes and shoes.

5.5.10 The experience of the trial has shown Colchester that they needed to change their collection system quite radically to gain a major increase in their recyclable rate. They have had the advantage of a long period of local residents being involved in paper kerb-side collections.

5.5.11 However, it became evident that they would require a different type of vehicle to collect the recyclables and general waste, and to alter their collection rosters. In April 2004 they will introduce a new vehicle specially designed for them which will accommodate both general waste and recyclables in weekly collections. The collection rotas will be:

- Week 1 – general waste, green waste, glass, plastics;
- Week 2 – general waste, paper and card, cans, clothing and shoes.

5.5.12 There will be nine new vehicles to service the new system compared with six under the current system (which are already supplemented by spare collection vehicles when there are too many recyclables on some rounds on any given week).

5.6 Waste Strategy

5.6.1 The City Council does not have an up-to-date Waste Strategy. While there have been updates to the strategy, it was clear that the



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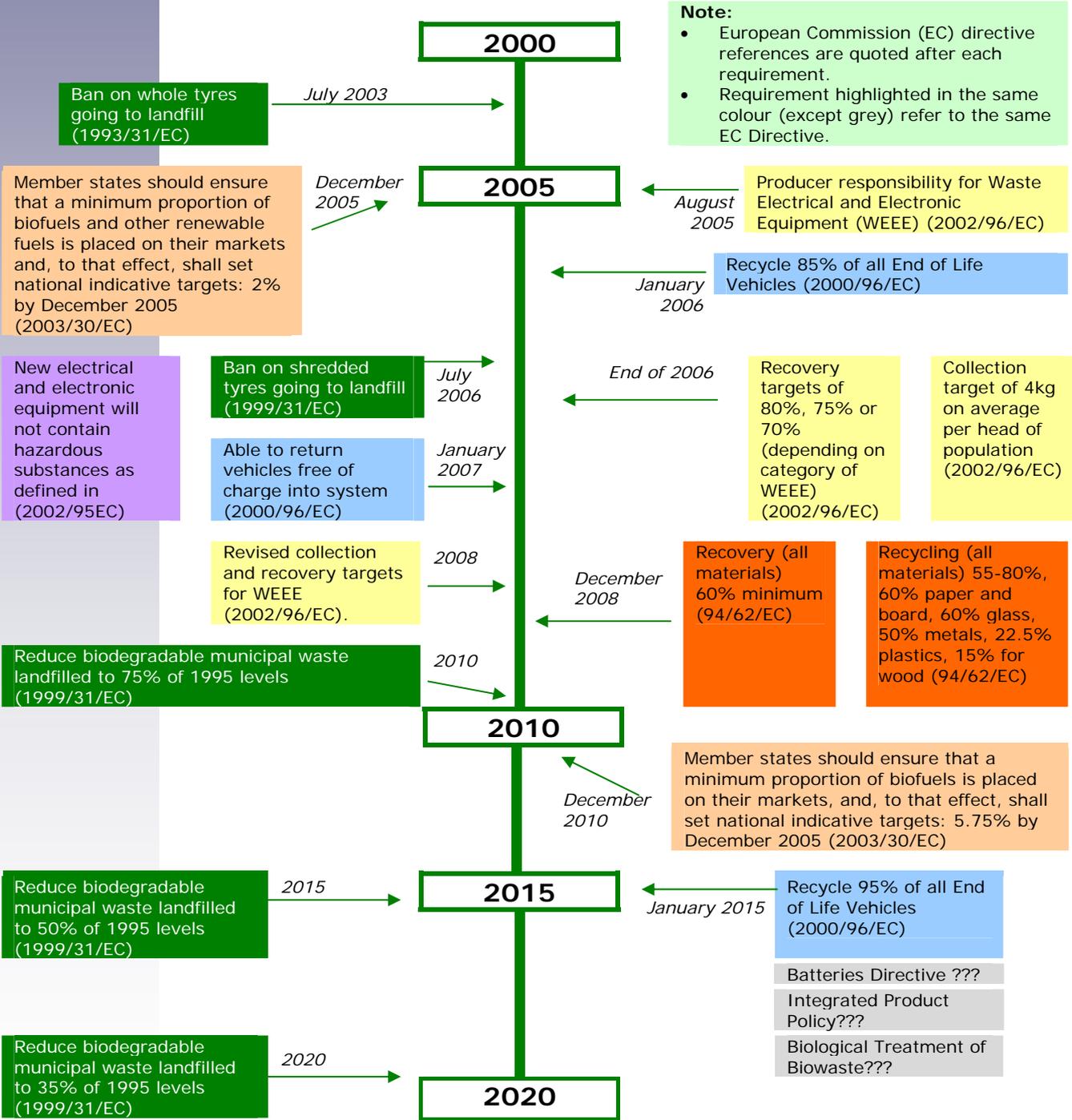
work to produce an up-to-date Strategy should be accelerated.

- 5.6.2 The Review Group received evidence from City Council planning officers and from the Black Country Housing Association (BCHA) and the Environment Agency on how the planning system did or did not support householders to recycle their waste. It was stated that, in planning terms, waste as an issue had only really come to the fore in the last year or so.
- 5.6.3 The planning process could only really influence new developments, for example through ensuring adequate access for collection vehicles, and for residents to have adequate storage facilities.
- 5.6.4 There will be Supplementary Planning Guidance produced for consultation on "Sustainable Development" towards the end of 2004. This follows on from the formal approval of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan. This will probably state that within residential and commercial development there will need to be provision of space for the segregation of waste.
- 5.6.5 Consideration was being given to "showcase" residential schemes being developed in Birmingham where these principles would be embedded.
- 5.6.6 In further evidence on the influence of the planning system, the BCHA showed that in their experience, there were two significant barriers to recycling – inertia and segregation. It was therefore essential that the house was adapted to make it easier for people to recycle. This usually related to kitchen storage units and outside storage being made easier and convenient. The BCHA has been promoting the "Eco-Home Standard" in their developments for some years, and recommended that the City Council should adopt the same standard. The details of the standard are set down in Appendix 2.
- 5.6.7 The Environment Agency referred to the increasing pressures on Local Authorities to eliminate landfill - though 25% of Birmingham's municipal waste goes to landfill in comparison to 77% nationally. The Agency also referred to the new Household Waste Recycling Act, which placed higher obligations on local authorities and the importance of educating the public and residents to recycle.
- 5.6.8 The Agency was also quite clear that while the City Council was now undertaking two kerb-side collections (with the extension of the green waste collection) it would like to see the City Council undertaking additional kerb-side collections (such as for cans if viable).



Recycling of Paper and Green Waste

Appendix 1: Government Targets





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Appendix 2: Eco-Homes Standard

Extract from Eco-Homes – The environmental rating for homes; The Guidance 2003 BRE (Building Research Establishment).

Aim

The Eco-Homes Standard aims to encourage developers to provide homeowners with the opportunity and facilities to recycle household waste. In order to achieve the standard, six credits must be achieved as set out below.

Credit Requirements

Two credits can be gained by providing one of the following recycling facilities.

Three internal storage bins with:

- Minimum total capacity of 60 litres
- No individual bin smaller than 15 litres
- All bins in a dedicated position.

or

Three external bins with:

- Minimum total capacity of 180 litres*
- No individual bin smaller than 40 litres
- All bins in a dedicated position (within 2m of the external door).

or

A local authority collection scheme for recyclable material*.

Six credits can be gained by providing full recycling facilities:

Three internal storage bins with:

- Minimum total capacity of 30 litres
- No individual bin smaller than 7 litres
- All bins in a dedicated position.

and either

Three external bins with:

- Minimum total capacity of 180 litres*
- No individual bin smaller than 40 litres
- All bins in a dedicated position (within 10m of the external door).

Or

A local authority collection scheme for recyclable material*.

* Special requirements apply for block of flats. See *Guidance* for flats.



Recycling of Paper and Green Waste

Applicability

The same approach is taken for both new build and refurbishment. All dwellings throughout the development must meet the requirements.

Main information to be provided by the Developer

Specifications must state the recycling bin location(s), and details sufficient to meet the *Credit Requirements* and the *Guidance* below. The appropriate drawings should show the recycling bin location(s) and details sufficient to meet the *Credit Requirements* and the *Guidance* below.

Guidance

1. If the details are stated in the specification, they should also be on the drawings. Relevant drawings would be the general arrangement, dwelling and site plans or similar, where the location and layout is shown and sizes are stated.
2. Three bins for recyclable materials should be provided **in addition to** the normal waste bins, both externally and internally.
3. All recycling bins should be specifically designed for this purpose and labelled for recycling.
4. The internal recycling bins should be located in a dedicated position, ideally in the cupboard under the sink or any other cupboard in the kitchen, next to the non-recyclable waste bin. Where a kitchen cupboard location is not possible, the bins should be located near to the kitchen, in a utility room or adjacent garage. If a bin or storage container for recyclable paper is provided, this could be in any location in the home provided it is a dedicated and practical space.
5. Hard standing (or equivalent) should be provided for the external bins.
6. If there is an appropriate local authority curb-side collection scheme for at least **three** types of recyclable waste, which will operate on the site, appropriate credits will be given. The bin sizes quoted in the Credit Requirements do not apply if the local authority supplies dedicated recycling bins.

Flats

7. Internal storage is as the standard case.
8. Where external bins are supplied, they should be large enough to cater for all dwellings allocated to the bins, and suitable for the collection/emptying service envisaged.



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- The bin sizes will depend on the frequency of collection. The total capacity of the external storage may be less than the total capacity based on the individual dwelling requirements in the credit table.
 - There must be a written agreement for the local authority or other company to maintain and empty the bins on a regular basis.
 - An example of compliance would be a weekly collection service, where the storage capacity is at least 6 litres per bin per flat (in the case of no internal storage), and 3 litres per bin per flat (where internal storage is provided).
9. If internal bins are available, the distance to the external bins can be up to 50m from the front door of the block of flats. If for some strategic reason the bins cannot be located within 50m, exceptions to the rule may be allowed. Full details must be provided.

Refurbishment

10. There is no specific guidance for refurbishment. The standard approach should be followed.

References

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. *Buildings Regulations Approved Document*