

# CITY OF PLYMOUTH



## Scrutiny Report

### Recycling

**Select Committee  
Transport and Environment Overview and  
Scrutiny Panel**

**October 2004**

# Recycling

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1:0 Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2:0 Summary of Recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3:0 Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Introduction	<b>6</b>
3.2 Terms of Reference	<b>7</b>
3.3 Key Objectives	<b>7</b>
3.4 Method of Investigation	<b>8</b>
<b>4:0 Background</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5:0 Findings</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1 Kerbside Collection	<b>9</b>
5.2 Material Recycling Facility (MRF)	<b>12</b>
5.3 Civic Amenity Sites	<b>12</b>
5.4 Bring Bank System	<b>13</b>
5.5 Mutley and Greenbank Glass Collection Trial	<b>13</b>
5.6 Untapped Resources	<b>14</b>
5.6.1 School Waste	<b>14</b>
5.6.2 University of Plymouth City Council	<b>14</b>
5.6.3 City Centre Recycling	<b>15</b>
5.6.4 Chewing Gum	<b>15</b>
5.7 Examples of Good Practice	<b>15</b>
5.8 Education and Enforcement	<b>17</b>
5.9 Partnership Working	<b>18</b>
5.10 Funding Opportunities	<b>19</b>
<b>6:0 Financial Implications</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7:0 Conclusions</b>	<b>20</b>

# Recycling

## Glossary

DEFRA – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

WRAP – Waste and Resources Action Programme

WCA's – Waste Collection Authorities

BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicator(s)

MRF – Material Recycling Facility

LPG – Liquefied Petroleum Gas

WEEE – Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

UPP – University Property Partnership

DTI – Department for Trade and Industry

NRF – Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

CRED – Community Recycling and Economic Development Programme

EU – European Union

# Recycling

## Preface

**By Councillor Ian Gordon**  
Chair, Recycling Select Committee  
Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel



Government targets for recycling are constantly rising. Plymouth City Council just met the 16% target set by DEFRA for the end of April 2004. However, based on current recycling trends in Plymouth, the target of 24% for 2005/06 will not be met until the end of March, 2013. Coupled with the fact that the Chelson Meadow landfill site is reaching its capacity, Plymouth faces an extremely difficult challenge in respect of its overall waste management.

The following scrutiny report is an investigation into Plymouth City Council's recycling programme and focuses on the current provision of recycling services for domestic household waste in order to –

- increase participation
- meet government targets
- reduce landfill and overall costs
- identify future service developments

It also ties in to the City Strategy's vision for Plymouth in that it is working towards providing –

“a clean and green city that makes the most of its environment and location”

I would like to thank the Members of this Select Committee and the officers who supported the scrutiny process who were able to provide us with the valuable information without which our review would have little merit.

# Recycling

## 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This review was instigated in order to identify service improvements to assist the Authority in meeting DEFRA recycling targets for 2005/06 and to continue to meet future targets. Having only just missed the 16% target set by DEFRA for April 2004 (15.36%) there was obvious concern that Plymouth may struggle to meet future rising targets. Indeed, based on current recycling trends in Plymouth, the target of 24% for 2005/06 will not be met until the end of March, 2013.
- 1.2 At the outset, the Select Committee appreciated the importance of this review, particularly in light of the Chelson Meadow landfill site reaching its capacity in 2007. The more the City recycles, the less waste goes for landfill and less tax is paid to Government.
- 1.3 This report looks at how the City Council can improve on its current performance on recycling not only from household collections but from all areas of the City, including schools, the University, the civic amenity sites and City Centre.

## 2.0 Summary of Recommendations

The Recycling Review Select Committee recommends that –

- 2.1 significant funding be identified as a matter of urgency in order that –
- (i) the roll-out of replacing the 55 litre box containers with 90 litre dustbins or bags can be commenced, with the possibility of part funding from WRAP grants being investigated,
  - (ii) recycling schemes at Plymouth's University and schools can be progressed and commenced as soon as possible;
  - (iii) a doorstep garden waste collection service can be introduced;
  - (iv) recycling opportunities can be introduced around the City Centre;
  - (v) recycling facilities can be introduced at the City's high-rises;
  - (vi) a local education and marketing strategy alongside the current national and Devon campaigns be planned and commenced as soon as possible.
- 2.2 enforcement measures be introduced in respect of customers failing to recycle or recycle correctly;

## Recycling

- 2.3 consideration be given to the introduction of a doorstep glass collection service;
- 2.4 consideration be given to refurbishing the recycling areas at both Civic Amenity sites;
- 2.5 consideration be given to ways of overcoming the problem of access to Chelson Meadow for commercial vehicles bringing recyclable materials;
- 2.6 consideration be given to the introduction of an additional Civic Amenity site to the north of the City;
- 2.7 consideration be given to charging households for replacement bins;
- 2.8 officers explore alternative funding opportunities;
- 2.9 officers investigate further for future consideration –
- more sustainable collections systems (i.e. electric powered vehicles or horse drawn carts)
  - the introduction of SMART cards as part of the corporate process
  - the development of waste to energy plants as part of the Waste Tender
  - introduction of standard condition to street trading licences regarding provision of recycling facilities and recycling performance
  - a pilot project for the provision of strategically placed chewing gum target boards around the city centre

and report back to the Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel in 6 months time.

### **3.0 Introduction**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 At its business meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2004, the Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel appointed a Select Committee to undertake the Recycling review. The Members appointed to that Panel were –

- Councillor Ian Gordon (Chair)
- Councillor Derick Bray
- Councillor Michael Leaves

## Recycling

- Councillor Graham Shears
- Councillor Brian Vincent

3.1.2 Dr. Colin Trier, School of Earth, Ocean and Environmental Sciences, from the University of Plymouth, was invited to participate in the review as a representative of the Environmental Sustainability Group of the 2020 Partnership.

3.1.3 Throughout the review the Select Committee was supported by Les Netherton, Head of Environmental Regulation Service, David Weeks, Cleansing Manager, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

### 3.2 Terms of Reference

3.2.1 The terms of reference for the recycling review were established as –

“to examine the recycling services for domestic household waste provided by Plymouth City Council as necessary to review current provision and identify service developments to meet statutory recycling targets and to make recommendations that –

- advise the authority on future service developments to meet statutory targets for recycling household domestic waste
- respond to the national consultation on the guidance to the Household Waste Recycling Act
- advise the authority on financial provision for future years”

### 3.3 Key Objectives

3.3.1 The Select Committee held its scoping meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2004, where it determined that its key objectives would be as follows –

- (i) to explore the current provision of household domestic waste recycling;
- (ii) to investigate current service level provision and performance;
- (iii) to investigate national guidance and good practice for recycling;
- (iv) to investigate future service developments to improve recycling to meet statutory targets and identify the economic requirements in preparation for the budget setting process 05/06.

## Recycling

### 3.4 Method of Investigation

3.4.1 The Select Committee determined to undertake their investigation through a number of meetings, discussions with officers, a site visit and a practical assessment of the doorstep recycling scheme.

3.4.2 In total, five meetings were held during the course of the Committee's investigation, as follows –

25<sup>th</sup> August, 2004  
9<sup>th</sup> September, 2004  
20<sup>th</sup> September, 2004  
27<sup>th</sup> September, 2004  
13<sup>th</sup> October, 2004

3.4.3 Details of all the reports and background information which were considered, along with those who attended and gave evidence, are provided at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

### 4.0 Background

4.1 Plymouth City Council is responsible for collecting 111,340 tonnes of domestic waste from 116,799 households each year. In addition, around 12,390 tonnes of recycling is also collected. The collection of all this waste is managed by a total of 21 rounds, 14 in respect of domestic waste and 7 for recycling.

4.2 The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 aims to increase the recycling rate of household waste and assist Local Authorities in achieving their statutory recycling targets. It states that by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 waste collection authorities (WCAs) must collect at least two types of recyclable waste separate from that of normal household waste.

4.3 Plymouth City Council already exceeds this by recycling four items at kerbside – cans, plastic, card and newspaper. In addition, recycling facilities are provided at the city's two civic amenity sites and various bring sites.

4.4 Only domestic waste recycled contributes to the Government's BVPI 82a and 82b targets. A breakdown of the proportion of waste materials recycled at Chelson Meadow during 2003/04 is provided below –

Material	% Recycled
Paper	27.6
Glass	11.2
Wood	13.6



## Recycling

Material	% Recycled
Scrap Metal	16.9
Cardboard	3.8
Cans	1.6
Plastics	0.8
Mixed paper/card	2.2
Garden waste	22.3

4.5 With a current overall recycling participation rate of 55%, the City Council is struggling to meet ever-increasing government targets and this report looks at ways in which this can be addressed, not just through household collections but via –

- the bring/civic amenity sites
- provision of facilities in the City Centre
- schools
- Plymouth University campus and student accommodation

## 5.0 Findings

### 5.1 Kerbside Collections

5.1.1 There are three types of recycling containers presently in use – 240/120 litre wheeled bin, 55 litre plastic box container with lid and 90 litre standard dustbin - with the type of container distributed to each household being dependent upon access and storage.

5.1.2 Because of Plymouth's topography it is unfeasible, on health and safety grounds, to provide wheeled bins to every household. As a result, half the City has been issued with wheeled bins of one size or another and the other half has been issued with the plastic 55 litre box containers. However, within the wheeled bin rounds, there are small pockets of households unsuited for wheeled bins and these have, therefore, been issued with 90 litre dustbins for both green and brown waste.

5.1.3 A survey into the level of participation with household recycling was conducted during the early part of 2003 by Street Services and the University of Plymouth. The results showed an overall participation rate of 55%, however the survey also revealed that the rate in respect of households with wheeled bins was significantly higher at 74.7% compared to those using box containers at 37.7%. It is thought that one of the reasons for the low participation in the box round system could be due to their limited capacity and the fact that they have to be stored for 2 weeks.

## Recycling

- 5.1.4 One of the major problems faced by the Council is providing recycling facilities for those living in high-rise accommodation or flats. Approximately 8% of properties in Plymouth are not provided with any form of recycling container, this equates to approximately 8,000 properties for which a likely minimum of 1,300 tonnes of additional recyclable material could be generated. One possible solution to this is the provision of bulk recycling containers in special storage areas outside of the flats and residents being supplied with a recycling receptacle which they can store in their flat for taking down to the bulk store at regular intervals. The bulk container would then be emptied on a fortnightly basis as per the rest of the City.
- 5.1.5 The following additional problems associated with kerbside collections were identified –
- contaminated recycled waste
  - lost opportunities in respect of garden waste recycling
  - lost opportunities in respect of kitchen waste recycling
  - lost opportunities in respect of glass recycling
  - loss of 55 litre box lids and recycled goods due to inadequate storage provision
  - no accurate recorded data on type of recycling receptacle issued to each household
- 5.1.6 Consideration was subsequently given to what could be done to increase the participation rates in doorstep recycling and make use of opportunities which were currently being lost, such as –
- (i) introduction of waste wardens to follow rounds and identify people not participating or abusing the system (follow up with education and enforcement if necessary);
  - (ii) recycling incentive schemes, including potential for credits to be added to the SMART card;
  - (iii) increased collections of recyclables with possible reversed frequency of green and brown waste;
  - (iv) more flexibility over type of recycling container currently used on box rounds (e.g. expandable bags, small bins, etc.);
  - (v) householder consultation;
  - (vi) provision of bulk recycling containers at blocks of flats;

## Recycling

- (vii) separate collection service for kitchen and garden waste alongside promotion of composting bins;
- (viii) introduction of an education and awareness programme;
- (ix) introduction of more environmentally sustainable systems to promote recycling either through electric powered vehicles or horse-drawn recycling collections.

- 5.1.7 The downside to the 55 litre box containers is its limited size. Problems were also reported with the lids blowing off in strong winds and getting lost. The majority of the 51,000 homes to which these were issued would, however, be suitable for standard 90 litre dustbins. It was, therefore, proposed that the rounds achieving 50% participation be targeted for the introduction of 90 litre dustbins and the results be reported back to the Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel. In addition, cheaper alternatives in the form of recycling bags should further be investigated.
- 5.1.8 Consideration was also given to a possible weekly collection on the box rounds, however, there is currently no evidence to suggest that a weekly collection would result in an increased use.
- 5.1.9 Plymouth City Council does not currently operate a dedicated garden waste collection service. The Audit Commission in their Best Value inspection of Waste Management in August 2002 highlighted that the “collection of green waste within domestic bins fails to encourage composting” and they recommended “that PCC consider charging for green waste collection”.
- 5.1.10 During 2002/03 a total of 4,353.74 tonnes of garden waste was composted. This represents a total of 22.3% of all recycled waste, second only to paper. Customers are allowed to add garden waste to the weekly collected brown bin service but, as this waste is combined with other domestic waste, this cannot be sorted for recycling/composting purposes.
- 5.1.11 Home composting does not contribute to the recycling rates for the purposes of BVPI returns as it is very difficult to calculate the amount of composting on a premise basis. Home composting does, however, benefit the local authority as it reduces the overall amount of waste deposited in domestic waste bins. Plymouth City Council sells composting bins through a number of garden centres at a cost of £15.00.

## Recycling

### 5.2 Material Recycling Facility (MRF)

5.2.1 The MRF receives recyclable material from the fortnightly green bin/box collection as well as inputs from the bring banks and the civic amenity recycling centres. It operates the glass stockpile and acts as a stockpile for South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council.

5.2.2 The overall recovery rate for material received at the MRF is currently 63%, however, a market for the mixed lower grades of cardboard and papers has been obtained and by investing in a new baler and changing the sorting method in one of the “picking stations” another 5,000 tonnes of material will be recovered each year raising the recovery rate to 85%.

### 5.3 Civic Amenity Sites

5.3.1 There are currently two civic amenity sites in the City, one at Chelson Meadow and the other at Weston Mill. However, the Waste Local Plan identifies the need for an additional Civic Amenity Site to the north of the City. Both the existing sites operate 7 days a week and segregate a variety of wastes for re-use and recycling purposes including –

- glass, paper, cans, cardboard and plastic bottles
- scrap metal
- waste oil
- LPG cylinders
- wood
- green waste
- textiles
- soil and hardcore
- fridges/freezers
- bric-a-brac

5.3.2 A van permit system was introduced in November 2002 in order to restrict the amount of trade waste entering the sites which was being classified as household waste.

5.3.3 Since 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2004, the wastes produced by the Council’s free bulky waste collection service have been diverted to the recycling centre for sorting. The recovery rate for which is currently 40%. In addition, since 16<sup>th</sup> August, those electrical items that cannot be re-used are being collected and reprocessed in accordance with the forthcoming W.E.E.E. directive due to be implemented around July 2005.

## Recycling

- 5.3.4 During 2003/04 61% of all waste received at Chelson Meadow and 36% at Weston Mill was recycled.
- 5.3.5 Consideration was given to what could be done to increase use of the recycling facilities at these sites, such as –
- (i) introducing a smart card;
  - (ii) making recycling the priority - emphasising the point “recycle first – dump only if you must”;
  - (iii) providing easier access - public and commercial;
  - (iv) clearer identification of recycling stations - colour coding, i.e. red for glass, yellow for paper, green for garden waste, etc.
  - (v) advertising to users the amount of waste being recycled in tonnages each month and the targets that need to be achieved.

### **5.4 Bring Bank System**

- 5.4.1 There are currently a total of 48 recycling banks city-wide providing a combination of bottle, paper and can banks. It is currently the City’s only long-term method of recycling glass and whilst it works well for able-bodied persons and for those with transport there are, however, those who cannot avail themselves of this type of facility.
- 5.4.2 A waste analysis survey undertaken during the Best Value Review suggested that around 4,000 tonnes of glass is still not being recovered through the bring bank system.

### **5.5 Mutley and Greenbank Glass Collection Trial**

- 5.5.1 A trial weekly doorstep collection commenced in September 2003 following a leaflet drop to every household and a press release. The participation rate observed by the collection crew was less than 30% and, over a 47-week period, the total glass collected was 46.88 tonnes, an average of 1 tonne per week.
- 5.5.2 Despite the leaflet drop and press release, it became clear that households within the trial area were generally unaware of the existence of the scheme.
- 5.5.3 This study provided rigorous data to support the assertion that the lack of participation in recycling schemes is attributable to the lack of education and awareness and problems associated with the choice of recycling container.

## Recycling

### **5.6 Untapped Resources**

#### **5.6.1 School Waste**

- 5.6.1.1 School waste can be included in recycling targets. However, schools within Plymouth currently have their waste paper collected by Cornwall Waste Paper Company or Severnsides.
- 5.6.1.2 Exeter City Council collects all waste paper from schools within its area and this amounts to 6 tonnes every fortnight. The bins are provided free of charge and each classroom is issued with a box and a recycling representative from each class ensures that these are emptied into the bins provided.
- 5.6.1.3 Educating children on the benefits of recycling at school encourages participation at home with knowledge being passed from child to parent.
- 5.6.1.4 A further incentive for encouraging school recycling is the recycling credit scheme which passes onto recyclers the savings in the collection and disposal costs of recycled household waste. This includes schools, voluntary groups, community groups and charities. Individual members of the public taking materials to recycling and household waste centres or bring bank systems are not eligible.

#### **5.6.2 University of Plymouth**

- 5.6.2.1 There is currently no provision for recycling either on campus or within the accommodation halls. On the basis of a student population of 20,000, a potential 1,400 tonnes of recyclable waste is potentially being lost annually. Dr. Trier has opened up discussions with the University's Environmental Manager and his waste team to consider how the University can effectively contribute to Plymouth's recycling targets. They would like to support the City Council in its efforts but the responsibility for the removal of waste from residences has been transferred to UPP (part of Jarvis).
- 5.6.2.2 A further meeting is to be arranged between Dr. Trier, UPP and the Student Union to discuss provision of recycling containers in the shared kitchen areas and separate small bins or other receptacle in each room. It is hoped that all participating students will then transfer their individual recycled waste to the large bin in the kitchen areas which will subsequently be transferred by student volunteers to free standing large wheely bins placed adjacent to existing brown wheeled bins.
- 5.6.2.3 Additional 'bring' containers could be positioned at strategic points around the University campus.

# Recycling

## 5.6.3 City Centre Recycling

- 5.6.3.1 There are no recycling centres in the City Centre and currently all waste within the City Centre bins is sent for landfill as there are no safe means for sorting this waste.
- 5.6.3.2 Additional bins could be provided, at existing locations where there is adequate space, for recycling cans, plastic bottles, glass bottles.

## 5.6.4 Chewing Gum

- 5.6.4.1 Members were concerned about the problem of chewing gum and discussed ways in which the public could be encouraged to dispose of it in a more environmentally friendly way. The Chair had heard of a scheme where target boards were set up around the City displaying “hot topics” for discussion and giving people the opportunity to vote on the matter by placing their gum in the appropriately marked box. The Panel agreed that this might be worth trialling in Plymouth.

## 5.7 Examples of Good Practice

- 5.7.1 Between September 2003 and April 2004 Friends of the Earth undertook a survey of the doorstep recycling services available throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The aim of the survey was to find out what services were on offer to households and how far local authorities need to go to meet the requirements of the Household Waste Recycling Act. Despite the challenges, some local authorities have put in place good practice schemes which are rapidly increasing their recycling rates such as –

### Bath and North East Somerset – South West

Household waste recycling and composting rate: 26.1%

Weekly Collection	✓	Same day collection	✓	Over 5 materials collected	✓	Service reaches all households	✓	Materials separated on-street	✓
-------------------	---	---------------------	---	----------------------------	---	--------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---

### Daventry – East Midlands

Household waste recycling and composting rate: 44.37%

Weekly Collection	✓	Same day collection	✓	Over 5 materials collected	✓	Service reaches all households	✓	Materials separated on-street	✓
-------------------	---	---------------------	---	----------------------------	---	--------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---

# Recycling

## Fermanagh – Northern Ireland

Household waste recycling and composting rate: 20.1%

Weekly Collection	X	Same day collection	✓	Over 5 materials collected	✓	Service reaches all households	✓	Materials separated on-street	X
-------------------	---	---------------------	---	----------------------------	---	--------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---

## Lichfield – West Midlands

Household waste recycling and composting rate: 42.6%

Weekly Collection	✓	Same day collection	✓	Over 5 materials collected	✓	Service reaches all households	✓	Materials separated on-street	✓
-------------------	---	---------------------	---	----------------------------	---	--------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---

## North Cornwall – South West

Household waste recycling and composting rate: 24.6%

Weekly Collection	X	Same day collection	X	Over 5 materials collected	✓	Service reaches all households	✓	Materials separated on-street	✓
-------------------	---	---------------------	---	----------------------------	---	--------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---

5.7.2 The Friends of the Earth Best Practice Code for Doorstep Recycling states that doorstep recycling should –

- **be frequent** – because regular collections are more convenient for householders
- **be on the same day of the week as rubbish collections** – to avoid any confusion
- **include a wide range of materials** – because the greater number of materials collected, the more people are likely to participate and the greater the amount of material people will put out for collection
- **include good customer care** – with regular information about the service
- **provide an easily storable container** – as yields of materials for recycling have been found to be higher in areas provided with a bag or box compared to similar areas without
- **involve separation at the doorstep** – because these materials will be less contaminated than those sorted at a central sorting facility. Cleaner materials are more valuable to re-processors and a higher proportion of these can be recycled.



## Recycling

5.7.3 The survey revealed that new and innovative schemes are being introduced faster than ever before and Friends of the Earth conclude that there are 5 key steps that will help local authorities rapidly improve their recycling target rates –

- (i) expand existing doorstep collections to all households and invest in reaching ‘difficult’ properties e.g. high-rise, high density and remote rural homes;
- (ii) increase the number of materials collected. Some local authorities are successfully collecting 7 or more materials;
- (iii) increase the frequency of recycling collections to weekly, or introduce a fortnightly alternating recycling and rubbish collection where residents support it;
- (iv) ensure the cleanest, most valuable recyclate by gradually replacing co-mingled ‘twin-bin’ collections with collections that are separated on-street into specially designed compartmented vehicles. Local authorities that have not yet introduced multi-material schemes should introduce source-separated collections from the start;
- (v) invest in providing good customer care service for householders so that they are encouraged to take part in the scheme and recycle as much of their waste as possible.

5.7.4 Research also revealed the following example of best practice from Teignbridge District Council in respect of garden waste recycling –

“During the summer of 2003 Teignbridge Council launched a trial garden waste service which has proved to be very successful. Two-ply brown paper sacks are sold, at an extensive number of sites across the council area, at a cost of 50p each or 5 for £2.00, which includes the cost of collection (left out with fortnightly recyclable waste). A total of 65,000 bags were sold (equivalent to approximately £32,500) and over 260 tonnes of compostable garden waste were collected.”

Teignbridge District Council also sells composting bins which are the same size as those sold by Plymouth City Council for £3 less (£11).

## 5.8 Education and Enforcement

5.8.1 In order to sustain the Council’s existing recycling scheme and assist any new measures that may be introduced, education and enforcement will need to increase.

## Recycling

5.8.2 A local education and marketing strategy running alongside the current national and Devon campaign could be planned and commenced. In addition, consultation between organisations such as the Groundwork Trust and the University of Plymouth Business School could be considered in relation to consultation and partnership working as there may be assistance in facilitating a marketing campaign.

5.8.3 A marketing campaign was launched early this year to promote the £50 fine penalty for those customers putting bins out early. Since the start of the campaign, in excess of 400 fixed penalty notices have been issued along with 6 prosecutions.

### **5.9 Partnership Working**

5.9.1 The Audit Commission in their Best Value Inspection of Waste Management highlighted that 'planning for the future delivery of the service through separate externalisation and partnership has not been rigorously challenged'.

5.9.2 Plymouth City Council has adopted a strategy of partnerships with the following being key performers –

- Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee – gives unified contracts for the sale of recyclables and in the last year has been extended to include the collection and transport of recyclables with delivery to the end producer. This partnership gives economies of scale and stability to the prices from recyclables
- Wood Yew Waste – a private sector company which takes wood for chipping and subsequently supplies to a fibreboard manufacturer in Devon. The company takes waste from the civic amenity sites and has in the last year placed their own employee on site to increase the amount recycled. In addition the company takes waste from commercial and industrial sources. This agreement recycles 1,800 tonnes of wood a year
- Exeter University Ecological Sciences – have a facility on site and currently compost the green waste from the civic amenity sites. 5,800 tonnes of green garden waste was recycled in 2002/03
- Probation Service – joint work has been carried out in respect of the doorstep collection for glass within the Greenbank and Mutley areas of the City (see 5.5 above)

## Recycling

### 5.10 Funding Opportunities

#### **WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme)**

- 5.10.1 WRAP was created by Government to work with industry, the public sector and the wider community to increase recycling. It is a not-for-profit company backed by substantial Government funding from DEFRA and the DTI. Its particular focus is on creating stable and efficient markets for recycled materials and removing the barriers to waste minimisation, re-use and recycling.
- 5.10.2 WRAP is providing support to local authorities to meet the requirements of the EU Landfill Directive so as to achieve the national target of recycling or composting of 24% of household waste by 2005/06. It offers the opportunity to tender for grants to cover both capital and research and development needs, and can be used to cover a number of areas, including marketing and education.
- 5.10.3 The organisation is about to roll out its Recycling and Organics Advisory Team (ROTATE) for free advisory service to support local authorities in the improvement of kerbside collection systems. It will focus particularly on organics collection systems and will also provide complimentary support on civic amenity sites. Local Authorities that are eligible for support will include those that have separate kerbside collection schemes in place and, either want to expand or increase the performance of their schemes.
- 5.10.4 WRAP will help local authorities with the challenge of diverting biodegradable waste from landfill. It has developed a Home Composting Programme and to date 24 local authorities have successfully applied. It has allocated 500,000 bins for 2004/05 and 750,000 bins for 2005/06 and, with the pilot schemes which have already commenced, it will be able to provide expertise based on their findings to date.

#### **NRF and CRED**

- 5.10.5 Groundwork have developed a joint funded project between NRF and CRED to extend the home recycling scheme to high rise flats in Stonehouse, Barne Barton, Ernesettle, North Prospect and Honicknowle.

### 6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 In the period 2001-2004 there was an additional net stock gain of 1,221 new houses to the City which resulted in an additional cost to Street Services of £40,293 for wheeled domestic and recycle bins (purchase only).

## Recycling

- 6.2 Plymouth City Council currently provides new and replacement bins free of charge. An average of 4,776 replacement bins were requested last year at an approximate cost of £78,804. Current budget limitations, however, prevent the replacement of damaged domestic bins although Street Services will endeavour to replace damaged recycle bins.
- 6.3 Initial costings for some of the proposals identified in this report have been worked out as follows -
- (i) to provide a weekly collection of recyclables on the 55 litre box rounds would cost £166,290;
  - (ii) to replace the box containers in households currently achieving 50% recycling or more with 90 litre standard dustbins for recycling would cost £163,938. Cheaper alternatives in the form of recycling bags should also be investigated;
  - (iii) to provide recycling facilities at high rise flats would cost –
    - £200,000 for 1000 x 1100 litre Euro containers
    - £80,000 for 1000 x 25 litre portable storage containers
  - (iv) to provide 50 additional bins around the City Centre for recycling purposes at £500 per bin would cost £25,000;
  - (v) for education, awareness raising and enforcement action a sum in the order of £90,250 would be required.
- 6.4 Purchasing costs for the initial procurement of waste containers at Plymouth University to be determined, based on current availability. The provision of bins currently costs the City £1.50 a week per bin, however, should recycling bins be provided free of charge so as to encourage participation, the loss of revenue in supplying these bins will need to be met by Plymouth City Council.
- 6.5 Similarly, in respect of the City's schools, provision of boxes for each classroom and 1100 wheeled bins free of charge will result in a loss of revenue which will need to be met by Plymouth City Council. Consultation with Lifelong Learning will confirm the exact number of schools in the City.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The Panel concludes that there are a number of key issues which need addressing in order to assist the City Council in improving its performance and achieving the recycling targets set by Government –

## Recycling

- (i) high level of properties unsuitable for wheeled bins (50%);
- (ii) poor participation in box recycled rounds;
- (iii) lack of recycling facilities/lost opportunities at high-rise/flats;
- (iv) lack of recycling facilities at Plymouth University Campus, including halls of residence;
- (v) use of domestic bins for garden and kitchen waste – loss of composting opportunities;
- (vi) lost opportunities for recycling at schools;
- (vii) lost opportunities for recycling in City Centre;
- (viii) lack of education and awareness programme;
- (ix) lack of enforcement;

- 7.2 In addressing any of the above issues there are, of course, the budget implications to also be taken into consideration. This is in addition to replacement of damaged bins and provision of new bins to new housing developments. In respect of the latter, thought should be given to charging households for bins, especially replacement bins as a result of damage caused by the householder.
- 7.3 The Panel was also of the opinion that given the fact that recycling targets are measured per tonne and glass is one of the heavier products in comparison to paper and card, more should be done to improve the Council's performance in respect of glass such as doorstep collection.
- 7.4 Once recycling participation rates have been increased, consideration may have to be given to the effect upon the MRF operation with a view to increasing operation to a 2-shift system.
- 7.5 Due to Plymouth's topography and current Health and Safety Legislation, the introduction of wheeled bins to all properties within the City remains unfeasible.
- 7.6 Surveys of high rise accommodation should commence along with resident consultation with regard to providing bulk recycling containers as soon as possible.

## Recycling

- 7.7 Partnership working could be developed further and should be considered and encouraged both internally and externally.
- 7.8 A local education and marketing strategy alongside the current national and Devon campaigns should be planned and commenced.
- 7.9 Contact should be made with WRAP to discuss how Plymouth City Council can benefit from both funding and expertise.

# Recycling

## Appendix 1: Reference Materials

- (1) Draft Guidance for Waste Collection Authorities on the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003
- (2) Friends of the Earth: Waste – New doorstep recycling survey
- (3) Friends of the Earth: Doorstep recycling – a good practice guide and local authority case studies
- (4) Waste Management Budget Overview
- (5) Recycling Participation Survey Results
- (6) Report of Head of Street Services: Plymouth City Council - Recycling
- (7) Powerpoint Presentation: Street Services
- (8) Recycling Participation Survey and Glass Collection Trial: Mutley and Greenbank – 2003/04

# Recycling

## Appendix 2: Contributors

The Panel would like to express their sincere thanks to all those who provided information and advice:

- Les Netherton – Head of Environmental Regulation Service
- Reg Matthias – Head of Street Services
- David Weeks – Cleansing Manager
- Gordon Paton – Cleansing Operations Manager
- Mark Vincent – Operations Manager (MRF)
- George Wheeler – Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Services
- Kevin Mott – Tidy Plymouth Officer
- Hannah Metson – Service Development Manager
- Nick Jones – Principal Parks Services Manager