

GREEN BUSINESS INITIATIVE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with details of the research that has been undertaken by the Council's Recycling Officer into the options for encouraging/facilitating local businesses to recycle more of their trade waste.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Waste management has become an important issue for businesses. Small to medium size enterprises, (SME's are those businesses with less than 250 employees) represent over 99% of businesses in the UK and form the vast majority of the businesses in the Rochford District. The waste produced by SME's individually may be small but collectively the amount is huge and is estimated to be increasing by 3% per year.
- 2.2 The problem of the annual increase in the quantity of waste, coupled with the increasing legislative pressure on waste disposal, means that there is a serious need for businesses to address their waste issues. Aside from the environmental and legal need to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, the high cost of waste disposal is having an economic effect on businesses. Waste is said to cost businesses approximately 4% - 4½% of turnover each year, which has the potential to be reduced through waste minimisation and good management techniques.
- 2.3 As the majority of businesses tend to be SME's, there are associated problems with trying to deal with waste and environmental issues, for which they require more specific help. Small businesses tend to have very limited resources and the lack of awareness means that businesses cannot necessarily make the best financial and environmental decisions for their organisation.
- 2.4 As many small businesses do not produce large quantities of recyclable waste, it can be difficult for them to purchase specific collections of recyclables. For organisations to provide an affordable price for collection, the value and quantity of the materials collected is critical.
- 2.5 One possible way of overcoming this issue would be for businesses to work in partnership to provide viable quantities of recyclable waste.

3 RESEARCH

Survey

- 3.1 In order to ascertain the types of services required by businesses, a questionnaire and covering letter was sent out to all of the listed businesses on the Purdeys Way and the Eldon Way Industrial Estates. A contact from the Brook Road Industrial Estate had previously circulated a questionnaire to businesses, which highlighted those that wanted a collection of recyclable materials. This list of businesses was then contacted to clarify further details.
- 3.2 Businesses in the District were also offered free waste audits, which is a detailed assessment of their waste practices. Audits highlight exactly what waste is being produced, how it should be dealt with, and provides businesses with information on best practice.
- 3.3 Overall, questionnaire results indicate that businesses want a collection of recyclable materials, however they are not willing to pay extra for it. This would mean that, for the majority of businesses, the cost of a recycling collection plus a collection of their general rubbish would need to be the same price or cheaper than their current waste disposal costs.
- 3.4. Of the businesses who responded to the questionnaire, over 80% want a collection of recyclable materials. Over 80% of businesses highlight cardboard as one of their main waste types and over 56% have paper as a main waste type, with over 36% of businesses stating that plastic shrink-wrap is one of the main waste types in their waste stream.

3.5 Services Already Available

There are a number of contractors already collecting waste and recycle from the Rochford District.

- 3.5.1 **Green Recycling** provides a service whereby they collect mixed waste from a container and this waste is then taken to a Material Recycling Facility (MRF) and the recyclables removed. This service is better for businesses that want to recycle but do not have the time or inclination to separate out their waste, and do not have the storage facilities. The cost of the service is negotiable as it is dependent upon the mix of materials collected.
- 3.5.2 **BPB Recycling** collects office paper only from businesses. They provide sacks for the collection but will only collect a minimum of 25 sacks at one time although collection is free of charge. The key issue this raises for businesses is whether they have adequate storage space for the material.
- 3.5.3 **Premier Recycling** provide 1,100 litre wheeled bins for the collection of white paper, coloured paper, NCR, photocopy, faxes, computer paper, leaflets and brochures. They do not collect newspapers, magazines, cardboard, carbon paper, brown or window envelopes. Their standard charges are £5.46 per

week, based on one collection per week. Additional collections will be charged at £5.46 per collection.

- 3.5.4 **Essex Reclamation** operates a cardboard collection for commercial premises at a cost of approximately £6 per collection, plus a weekly rental charge of £2.50 per bin (excluding VAT).
- 3.5.5 **Onyx/Basrap scheme** - Onyx now owns the rights to the Basrap scheme. Basrap was a commercial recycling scheme for paper, cardboard and plastic shrink-wrap in the Basildon area, run by Onyx but funded by Pitsea Marshes Trust and Basildon Council. It is now owned and run by Onyx as “Onyx Recycling” along the A127 corridor, from Grays to Southend.
- 3.5.6. Collection is in the same way as the initial Basrap scheme: paper, cardboard and plastic from a 1,100-litre wheeled bin. The collection will cost the business £4.31 per lift with no bin rental charge, although the business must have enough material for a lift once a week.

4 GREEN BUSINESS CLUBS

- 4.1 One way of overcoming the lack of information businesses suffer from, is by setting up a forum where businesses can learn about waste minimisation practices, legislation and other environmental information, and importantly, share best practice.
- 4.2 Several Local Authorities in Essex run Environmental Business Clubs in one form or another, including Southend. This Club provides businesses with a newsletter containing environmental information and themed meetings, where businesses can gain more information on specific topics. Several businesses from the Rochford District already attend the Club and further Rochford businesses are welcome to attend.
- 4.3 The Environment Agency and Business Link also run the Essex Waste Minimisation Club. At present meetings are held quarterly, although it is now proposed that they run one meeting each month. Businesses from the whole of Essex are welcome to attend.

5 ADDITIONAL BUSINESS INFORMATION SERVICES

- 5.1 The lack of resources commonly associated with a small business also needs to be taken into consideration when providing help to businesses. Green Business Clubs, although able to address the issue of a lack of knowledge, are not always very practical for businesses with limited personnel.
- 5.2 In order to address this situation, it would be useful to set up other business services, such as a monthly/quarterly newsletter and dedicated web site, which could provide businesses with up-to-date legislative news, as well as local information. A set of information leaflets could be produced for businesses on relevant themes, such as “Duty of Care Regulations” and how

to minimise and recycle individual waste materials. Relevant business information could be distributed with the business rates information.

- 5.3 Businesses could also benefit from the production of a local waste and recycling guide. The guide could have several pages of hints and tips, with the majority of the guide containing useful contacts so businesses could get adequate help and advice, such as the Environment Agency and Envirowise, as well as local contractors. Offering advertising space to contractors and other local businesses could pay for the production of the guide.

6 SUMMARY OF OPTIONS FOR COMMERCIAL RECYCLING SERVICE/ PROMOTION

- 6.1 Following the research that has been undertaken and taking into consideration the costs and the practicality of implementing certain initiatives, the following actions have been identified as being achievable and beneficial to both the Council and local businesses.

- **Fact sheets** – produced on key waste and recycling issues (legislation, how to reduce waste, recycling contacts, etc.) A set of fact sheets could be available free of charge to businesses on request. The cost of this would be mainly officer time and minimal print costs.
- **Waste audits** – could be offered to businesses to help identify what waste they are producing, and highlight where they can reduce waste and waste costs. It will also help identify legal implications on their waste and again the main cost would be in officer time.
- **Web site** – pages of the Council web site could be developed to provide information for businesses, including downloads of fact sheets, contact details of local recyclers, etc. Again the main cost would be officer time.
- **Green business club** – promotion to local businesses of the green business club that already exists in Southend and also Essex Waste Minimisation Club.
- **Business Directory** – information on recycling could be included within the Council's existing Business Directory.
- **Preferred Partner** - identify a preferred partner following which a number of activities could take place, such as:-
 - Advertising their service only.
 - Providing them with a list of businesses only.
 - Providing direct promotion to businesses, recruitment, meetings/working lunches. Costs would be about £5,000 per annum.

- Working in partnership with them and subsidising the scheme; this has not been costed, but could be significant based on level of support.

6.2 All the above options would be of very minimal cost, but would demonstrate that the Council was being proactive in assisting local businesses to not only increase their recycling activity, but also to possibly deal with their waste in a more financially efficient manner.

7 RISK IMPLICATIONS

Operational Risk

7.1 The Council would want to monitor the schemes / companies that it was promoting to ensure that they operate an effective and reliable service.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The increase in commercial recycling activity in the District would contribute positively to the environmental standards that exist in the District.

9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Implementing the initiatives detailed in Section 6 of this report would involve costs of around £5,000 over and above officer time.

10 RECOMMENDATION

10.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the initiatives detailed in Section 6 of the report be agreed.

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Background Papers:-

None

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