



Telford & Wrekin

C O U N C I L

SCRUTINY REPORT

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND BULK COLLECTIONS

JUNE 2010

CONTENTS

Page number

1. Introduction.....	3
2. What we found out, our Conclusions and Recommendations:	
Objective 1.....	5
Objective 2.....	14
Objective 3.....	19
Objective 4.....	20
3. Summary of conclusion and recommendations.....	22
4. Acknowledgements.....	24

INTRODUCTION

We carried out a review of Waste Management and Bulk Collections because we wanted to find out what the Council was doing to minimise waste, increase recycling rates, reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, and to minimise the environmental impact of waste. We were also concerned that schemes offered the best value for money solutions.

The review had four main objectives:

1. To find out what is in the Waste Management strategy relating to recycling, why the strategy is currently being refreshed and to review in detail:
 - ii) Existing recycling processes which may continue:
 - to do a cost-benefit analysis of each process, including where possible the environmental impact
 - to audit processes to ensure that what should be recycled is being recycled, and that recyclates are not going to landfill.
 - ii) A cost benefit analysis, and where possible the environmental impact of new recycling options that are being consideredTo make recommendations on the best long-term solutions balancing cost with sustainability.
2. To review the enforcement and encouragement strategies for increasing the number of residents actively and efficiently recycling to reduce the volume of residual waste and recommend improvements, taking existing resources into account.
3. For members of the review group to take an active part in the consultation process relating to the disposal of residual waste to help inform the decisions made about disposal options. This is to improve members' knowledge about, and awareness of, the complex issues which will be considered in the autumn (of 2009). This will be followed by and on-going dialogue with officers about the preferred options and the procurement process for the contracting of services.
4. To review the bulk collections policy and make recommendations about how this should operate in future.

The report summarises the information gathered as part of our review, and we have made a number of recommendations which we believe will help address the concerns raised. These will be presented to the Council's Cabinet, and for those recommendations that are accepted, we will monitor the progress to implement them. We would like to thank all those people who have taken the time to meet with us.

Scrutiny Lead Member

Cllr. Roger Aveley (Lead Scrutiny Member)

Other Members of Review Group:

Cllrs. Terry Kiernan, Louise Lomax, Clive Mason, and Adrian Williams
Co-opted members Maurice Viney and Mel Ward

2. WHAT WE FOUND OUT, OUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1

To find out what is in the Waste Management strategy relating to recycling, why the strategy is currently being refreshed and to review in detail:

- ii) Existing recycling processes which may continue:
 - to do a cost-benefit analysis of each process, including where possible the environmental impact
 - to audit processes to ensure that what should be recycled is being recycled, and that recyclates are not going to landfill.
- ii) A cost benefit analysis, and where possible the environmental impact of new recycling options that are being considered

To make recommendations on the best long-term solutions balancing cost with sustainability.

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

1. What is the key legislation relating to waste management?

The European Landfill Directive was introduced to tackle concerns about the impact of landfilling on climate change from the release of harmful gases like CO₂ and methane, and the leaching of potentially toxic liquids into the soil and groundwater. It obliges member states to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) which is landfilled. It sets reduction targets for three target years:

- 2009/10 - reduce landfilling of BMW to 75% of 1995 levels
- 2012/13 - reduce landfilling of BMW to 50% of 1995 levels
- 2019/20 - reduce landfilling of BMW to 35% of 1995 levels

The government may receive fines from the EU for missing these targets.

In the UK, landfill tax is paid on top of normal landfill fees by businesses and Local Authorities that want to dispose of waste using a landfill site. The standard rate of tax has increased year on year from £24 per tonne in 2007/08, £32 in 2008/09, £48 in 2009/10, and by £8 per tonne per year until 2013/14 when it will be £72 per tonne.

The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) was introduced by the government in the 2003 Waste and Emissions Trading Act. The government allocates Local Authorities an allowance in tonnes for the amount of BMW it can send to landfill. The allocation reduces progressively year on year until 2020. Local Authorities are allowed to trade their allowances with other authorities if they feel they have more or fewer allowances than they need (though they do not have to trade them). They can also 'bank' the allowances for future years, or 'borrow' up to five per cent of their future allowances for earlier use. After 2010, Local

Authorities will be fined £150 per tonne if they landfill more than their allocation without having bought extra allocations from other Authorities.

2. How has Telford & Wrekin Council responded to the legislative challenge of increasing recycling and reducing landfilled waste?

The Council's Waste Management Strategy sets out the Council's actions and targets for recycling, waste minimisation, treatment/disposal of residual waste and other waste streams such as commercial waste. The strategy was developed in 2005 and has been refreshed following the introduction of new legislation and a public consultation exercise in the summer of 2009. The reviewed strategy has 3 main aims:

- To take account of changes in waste policy and legislation
- To consider future performance and waste reductions initiatives
- To review the Landfill Allowances position and the long-term options for residual waste

The Council has responded well to the challenges and successfully brought forward schemes which have increased recycling rates and decreased the amount of waste going to landfill. This is in addition to the downward trend in overall waste. The amount of waste going to landfill is currently below Telford & Wrekin's landfill allowance, and projected to be within 5,000 tonnes below the allowance over the next 3 years. This means that the Council will not incur the potentially very costly LATS penalties over this period. This should also go towards meeting the target of a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2050.

Landfill fees in Telford & Wrekin are around £15-£20 per tonne. This compares with around £20 in the south east and around £25 per tonne in congested areas. The Council recently retendered the landfill disposal contract which started on 1st April.2010 and this brought significant savings.

The Council was targeted to recycle 37% of waste in 08/09. There has been an increase in the recycling rate since 2008/09 and the current rate is 41%. It is anticipated that this will increase to 45% by 2015. The introduction of more kerbside collections and receptacles should have a positive impact on the 2010/11 rates, and it is estimated that the introduction of food waste recycling could increase the rate by as much as 7%.

3. Recyclable waste – what is in the bins, and where does it go?

The average recyclable waste from bins in Telford & Wrekin is made up of:

Green and kitchen waste	37%
Other (tins, metals)	20%
Paper and card	18%
Glass	7%
Plastics	7%
Textiles	6%
Wood	5%

Cardboard, food tins and drink cans, garden waste, glass, paper, shoes and textiles are collected from the kerbside by TWS on alternate weeks. Plastics, low energy bulbs and batteries are being added from June 2010. Other recyclable household goods can be taken to Bring Banks or one of 4 Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) in the borough. The Council has produced a handy leaflet "Where does it all go?" which clearly explains to the public what to do with their waste and what happens to it, and there is extensive advice and information on the Council's website explaining how to reuse and recycle a comprehensive list of items, and what happens to waste.

4. Who manages the waste in Telford & Wrekin?

The Council has 2 key contractors:

a) TWS is contracted to provide:

- Kerbside collection of recyclates, until 2014
- Kerbside collection of residual (non-recyclable) waste, until 2019
- Operation of the Halesfield, Ketley and Newport Community Recycling Centres (CRCs), until 2019

Recycling of green waste is sub-contracted by TWS to Jack Moody Ltd. and the bulking of recyclables, other than green waste, is sub-contracted by TWS to Pink Skips in Ketley.

b) Sita UK is contracted to provide:

- Operation of the Granville CRC, currently on a rolling contract
- Landfill contract at Granville, until 2013

We asked whether the Council would save money by contracting directly with a range of companies instead of having one umbrella contract, and whether the Council could generate an income stream from recycling. The TWS contract is long term, and was let when the market was volatile. The Council has a low risk strategy as it is dealing with public money, and cannot take risks with Council Tax payers' money. The contractor therefore takes the risk on the contract, and wins or loses depending on market values. Additionally, the cost of procurement for setting up multiple supplier contracts would be significant.

5. What do local people think about recycling?

Public consultation was undertaken in summer 2009 to gauge opinion on recycling. A survey was conducted to find out local people's preferences for recycling options and targets, attitudes to costs, and general views about recycling. The survey gave 2 options for achieving a 50% recycling target, 2 options for achieving a 55% target and 1 option (at £16 extra) for achieving a 60% target.

The overwhelming message that came out is that the public wanted to recycle more. More people preferred the higher recycling targets than the lower: 46% opted for the 60% recycling target, even told that it would cost more in Council Tax. The majority wanted to see waste in grey bins

treated locally, and wanted to prioritise diverting the methane producing waste (such as food) from landfill over plastics. People felt that where containers were concerned, “one size” does not fit all, and that containers should be more appropriate to the household’s needs e.g. single people do not need the same receptacle volume as whole families. 60% either agreed or agreed strongly that people should be fined for not recycling, although there were worries about the level of fines and that they should not be imposed on people who are unable to carry containers.

The most popular suggestions for improving services were:

- Kerbside plastics collection
- Longer opening hours at CRCs
- Food waste collection

6. What new schemes are being introduced to increase recycling?

There are several schemes that have been agreed by the Council, or are moving ahead, following the consultation and the refresh of the Waste Management Strategy.

- Plastics

A kerbside plastics collection was the overwhelming choice of the public for what should be done next. This was agreed by the Council’s Cabinet in December 2009 and is due to be rolled out in June 2010. The kerbside collection will cost no more than recycling from bring banks and CRCs. The re-usable collection bag has been specially designed for Telford & Wrekin Council. Local suppliers were unable to source the bag at the right price, so they will be imported from China. TWS has invested in new split bodied vehicles for the collection which will compact the plastics down. The collection will include all plastics except contaminated plastics and black food trays which cannot be recycled at present.

- Food

The public wanted food waste taken out of landfill because it is a huge generator of methane and leachates. A food waste scaled trial was approved by Cabinet in March 2009 although it is unlikely a full collection will be rolled out until the scheme becomes cost neutral in revenue terms. It is estimated food collection would save around 2,600 tonnes of CO₂ annually, and could contribute to the generation of renewable energy through anaerobic digestion.

- Nappies

Recycling nappies is a difficult issue and has been under review. There is currently only one nappy recycler in the market and the risks associated with contracting with a sole provider are high. The technology is expensive, and the projected project costs would be an additional £20 per household per year. Whilst nappies are “on the radar”, it is unlikely that a collection will be introduced in the near future. Work has focussed instead on driving down the cost of gate fees with the contractor.

- In-house recycling
It was thought that the Council should lead by example on recycling. A needs assessment of every department in each Council building was done, and a contract for the collection and recycling of the Council's waste was put out to tender at a cost of around £25,000-35,000 per year and has been operating for several weeks.
- POD recycling
Also known as a "node", a new communal, combined recycling pod has been installed in Randlay. These could come to replace street bins and banks, and would enhance the look and feel of the public realm in a cost effective way.

7. How are the CRCs performing, and what is being planned to improve their recycling rates?

There are four Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) in the borough in Halesfield, Ketley, Newport and Granville. The Council has made a lot of progress on improving recycling rates, but the poorest performers in the recycling area are the CRCs. Some are better than others, but recycling rates are lower than they should be at around 30%. There is very little now that cannot be recycled, so the Council is reviewing CRCs to see how performance can be improved with the aim of increasing recycling rates from 30% to 60%.

Several issues have been identified:

- There needs to be more separation and segregation so that different types of waste can be recycled
- There are problems with public access and queuing at some sites
- Some have high skips which are difficult for people with mobility problems to lift waste into
- CRCs are not undercover which makes them less attractive
- The sites have limited opening hours.

More research and consultation is required before decisions can be made, and funding has been secured to do this. Research has already been done into the usage and distribution of visitors to each CRC site which showed that for example residents do not necessarily use their local site and other factors such as proximity to work or shops can influence which site is visited. On one day, none of the visitors to the Newport site who were asked actually came from the Newport area but residents of both Staffordshire and Shropshire were using the site. Other factors influencing the use of Newport are that Staffordshire now close their sites on one day in the week and there is no kerbside collection of green waste.

An early idea is to construct a new super CRC to serve the northern area of the borough and enhance the existing Halesfield site to serve the south, and to consider closing sites which are not fit for purpose. The new sites would aim to increase recycling rates to 60%, in line with what the

recycling survey showed the public wants. There will be thorough consultation and environmental and equalities impact assessments before decisions are made, although it is likely that Newport will be affected in some way as the current site is not adequate.

It is difficult to project how much the super-CRCs would save without detailed proposals, but improved separation and segregation of waste would mean that recycling rates should reach the 60% level which would bring massive savings for the Council.

8. How do we know our waste is being recycled?

As part of the review we made site visits to Jack Moody Ltd. and Pink Skips to see what happens to the waste collected at the kerbside. Jack Moody Ltd. is contracted by TWS to recycle green waste, and Pink Skips is contracted to bulk and recycle all other recyclable waste collected at the kerbside.

The Council has a contract with TWS for the collection and recycling of waste from the kerbside and CRCs. It is up to TWS how this is achieved, and the Council does not have a contractual relationship with the companies sub-contracted by TWS.

- Jack Moody Ltd. handles all the green waste collected in Telford & Wrekin. All the waste is recycled through a process of aerobic composting and converted into either high grade peat-free compost which is sold mainly for agricultural use, or biomass fuel which is supplied commercially and to local authorities, schools and public places with a biomass installation and as a bagged product for domestic users. There are no waste products. The site was clean and well maintained, odourless, and blended well into the landscape. The company also works with the Council's Environmental Education Officer to support the school education programme, and has produced material for the resource pack for schools.
- Pink Skips handles all other recyclable kerbside waste; cardboard, food tins and drink cans, glass, paper, shoes and textiles. The waste is delivered by the TWS vehicles to segregated bays for bulking and onward transport to recycling centres. The Pink Skips buyer searches the market to find the best price for the waste and to identify suppliers bringing in new processes so more can be recycled. All suppliers are certified by the Environment Agency.

In addition to the kerbside waste, Pink Skips manages trade waste and domestic waste from skip hire which is mixed. This is hand picked to separate the recyclable material for bulking/baling and recycling from the non-recyclable and contaminated waste which is sent to landfill. On average 73-74% of all waste is recycled, but this can reach over 80% at the top end. Builders waste is all recycled into hardcore and material for construction projects.

- Anaerobic Digestion (AD)
We also visited the BiogenGreenfinch digester in Ludlow, and the Lower Reule Bioenergy Ltd. digester under development at Brookfield Farm in Gnosall to find out more about anaerobic digestion as a means of processing food waste. This was in anticipation of a possible food waste collection in Telford & Wrekin.

AD is an environmentally sustainable process for treating organic waste and converting it into renewable green energy. It is a complex biological process which breaks down naturally occurring micro-organisms (occurring in food waste, animal slurry and silage) to produce biogas which can be supplied as gas or converted into electricity and pumped into the national grid. The by-product is bio fertiliser which is safe and odourless, and can displace manufactured chemical fertilisers. The process is sealed, and there is no waste. There are relatively few ADs in England – only 4 at the time of our visits – whereas in Germany there are around 4,000. On average, ADs produce enough electricity to supply between 500-800 houses. When fully operational, the facilities at Gnosall will produce enough electricity to supply full power to 1,000 homes or light 5,000 houses locally.

There is a viable economic model for AD although there have to be economies of scale and all potential income streams have to be maximised: gate fees, export of heat and electricity and Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs) which are used to incentivise energy companies to produce energy from renewable sources. Biogas attracts double ROCs than other sources.

The Government, local authorities and food retailers see food waste diversion away from landfill as a means of meeting targets to reduce landfill by 10 million tonnes by 2013. The last Government introduced incentives to encourage a 50% increase in the production of renewable electricity by 2015 and the new coalition Government has already expressed a desire to promote a 'huge increase' in renewables from AD.

- A waste bulking station would allow the Council to have flexibility in the destinations that wastes and recyclables are sent to in the long term. Such flexibility would allow closer management to meet recycling and landfill diversion targets within budgetary constraints.

9. What are the other key issues?

- Commercial waste
The Council is responsible for the collection, recycling or treatment/disposal of domestic waste, but has no statutory responsibility for commercial waste. The trend in fly tipping is downwards, and an element of what is fly tipped is trade waste:

commercial tradesmen are not allowed to use CRCs. The Council could look at being more rigorous in prosecuting fly tippers, and another solution could be to have a CRC for trade so waste could be disposed of at a reasonable price.

- **Packaging**

One of the ways of minimising waste is to reduce packaging and to make it recyclable. The Waste Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) is a national organisation which helps individuals, businesses and local authorities to reduce waste and recycle more, to make better use of resources and to help tackle climate change. WRAP has made considerable inroads by lobbying and working with retailers on these issues.

The Courtauld Commitment is a voluntary agreement between WRAP and major grocery retailers and brand owners which is leading to new solutions and technologies so that less food, products and packaging end up as household waste. Over 40 major retailers, brand owners, manufacturers and suppliers have signed the agreement since its launch in July 2005. The retailers represent 92% of the UK's grocery supermarkets. ASDA, the Co-operative and Cola-Cola are just three of the big names signed up to the agreement who have all introduced more resource efficient packaging to take material out of the waste stream and reduce emissions.

OUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our main concern in meeting Objective 1 was to find out what steps the Council was taking to increase recycling rates and to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill. This was important to avoid costly increases in landfill tax (by 2013 the cost of landfill will be £107 per tonne compared to £10 per tonne 5 years ago), to avoid financial penalties for exceeding landfill allowance targets (£150 per tonne over the allowance) and to help meet reduced CO2 targets. At the same time, we were concerned that introducing new schemes may also be expensive and that they should be environmentally beneficial.

We have noted positively that the Council has been very proactive in this area, and has brought forward (and is continuing to bring forward) new schemes to tackle the issues in a timely and appropriate fashion. Recycling rates have increased, and are targeted to rise to 45% by 2015, and residual waste is projected to be within 5,000 tonnes below the landfill allowance target for at least the next 3 years. Overall, we have been assured that the Waste Strategy, and the implementation of new schemes, take account of what the public say they want and have regard for cost and environmental impacts.

We have however made recommendations in three areas which we feel would address specific concerns. These are:

- In line with the coalition Government's desire for sustainable energy, and local people's desire to take food out of the waste stream, that the Council develops the business case for Anaerobic Digestion as a means of generating sustainable energy from food waste, including an options appraisal of the cost effectiveness and environmental benefits of investment in its own anaerobic digester/s against contracting food waste processing out.
- Arising from a concern that staff working for a Council sub-contractor (the waste industry currently has the highest number of injuries and deaths at work than any other sector) should be working as safely as possible, we recommend that the Council checks TWS' risk assessments for robustness.
- That the CRC review should aim to address the issues identified as part of this review and that it should explore options for:
 - Training of staff at CRC sites
 - Working with neighbouring authorities to address cross-border issues (out of borough people using CRC sites funded by Telford & Wrekin)
 - Developing a CRC site for commercial waste
 - Extended opening hours

Additionally, although we do not want to make any recommendations about nappies at this time, this may be an issue for future scrutiny, including looking at the potential for a nappy collection and laundering service for re-usable nappies alongside a promotion of the reusable nappy incentive which is a currently a £40 voucher.

OBJECTIVE 2

To review the enforcement and encouragement strategies for increasing the number of residents actively and efficiently recycling to reduce the volume of residual waste and recommend improvements, taking existing resources into account.

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

1. Are any recycling enforcement schemes being planned?

Until very recently, the options available to incentivise recycling could be either a carrot or a stick. The previous government had proposed plans to let Councils pilot schemes which would charge people according to the waste thrown out - giving households which recycled the most rubbish and left the least in their bin a rebate, while charging those who put out the most non-recycled rubbish. No Councils had yet signed-up to the trials. Locally, the result of the Telford & Wrekin waste recycling survey showed that 60% of people either agreed or agreed strongly that people *should* be fined for not recycling, while 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

However, the new Communities Secretary is expected to rule out the "pay as you throw" charges, and the coalition is backing rewarding people for recycling instead. A reward for recycling scheme is being trialled in Windsor and Maidenhead, and this is now under the national spotlight to see how this works.

This approach falls in line with the approach that has been taken by Telford & Wrekin Council. The view of the officers we spoke to was that more positive measures should be adopted to educate and engage non-recyclers, so they are encouraged and helped to recycle before consideration was given to imposing financial penalties. Incentive and enforcement also comes at a cost, and schemes can be complex and costly to set up, monitor and administer. This means a reward scheme may not be viable in the current economic climate.

2. How do we educate people about recycling?

- Schools
The Council has an Environmental Education Officer who works between the Waste Management and Environmental Projects teams. Projects are targeted on schools to educate young people for life, and talks are given on request from teachers and community groups about recycling and waste, climate change and global warming, energy and water efficiency.

The Waste Less @ School project targets primary schools, and includes an introductory talk with the class, a school waste questionnaire, a school waste audit, a results discussions session, the development of a Waste Efficiency Action Plan and follow up waste

audit. A Schools Resource Pack is being developed which will also be available on-line, alongside activities piloted in 4 primary schools. Possible secondary school projects included a Media and a Recycled Fashion Show, with possible private sector sponsorship.

- Local people

In addition to publicity around the roll out of new recycling containers, there are various public awareness raising activities. A key message to get across is that not only is not recycling bad for the environment, but that it also costs a lot of Council tax money. Some of these are:

- The website has extensive information about how unwanted items and waste can be re-used or recycled, information about how people's waste is recycled and frequently asked questions about containers.
- Articles in Council and partner publications, including thanking people for recycling.
- Attendance at Council road shows and public consultation exercises throughout the borough.
- Waste audits on individual bins to show people how they could recycle more.
- The waste minimisation campaign "Love Food, Hate Waste", run in 2008/09.

- Elected Members

Elected members can play a role in championing recycling. The recycling survey was circulated to all Town and Parish Councils, a meeting was organised for Town and Parish Councillors, and the team has attended full Parish Council meetings. A Members Information Seminar was held in December 2009.

- Master Composters

The Council also supports the work of the Master Composters. This is an independent, voluntary organisation which aims to promote and encourage home composting. The Master Composters work in a variety of ways from word of mouth with friends and neighbours, working with community groups, attending community events, green days, Council organised road shows, work shops in schools and other organisations and give a very comprehensive guide to composting. They target primary school children aged around 9-10 as they are old enough to understand and get involved in school gardening projects, to help educate their own families and will hopefully adopt the habit for the future.

Composting produces a useful end product, reduces the amount going to landfill, reduces CO₂ and methane emissions, reduces the carbon footprint from collection and distribution of the end product and saves money on compost. The Master Composters estimate that for every

seven properly used compost bins, one tonne of material will be diverted from landfill each year, and based on this calculation together with the number of bins sold through the Council scheme Telford & Wrekin households, recent to composting, potentially divert about 1,500 tonnes/year.

More information can be found at www.homecomposting.org.

The Master Composters would appreciate help from members in raising awareness of their service.

3. Whilst we understand the need for kerbside collections and separating waste, there is a problem with storage space for containers. Are we doing anything to tackle this?

Clearly part of the “encouragement” strategy for increasing the number of people who recycle rests on providing them with the means to easily and conveniently do so. Kerbside collection may be the most convenient method, but means that households are expected to store a container for each collection. The issue of containers sparked much debate during this review.

Each household in Telford and Wrekin already has:

- a red box with divider
- a blue box, with hat
- a blue bag
- a grey wheelie bin
- a green wheelie bin.

New receptacles will be introduced for the plastics collection, and food waste in the trial area. The existing range of containers is not always appropriate to the needs of individual households, for example people living on their own or in smaller houses or flats have very different requirements and space than people with large families or gardens. The message from public consultation was that “one size does not fit all”.

The design of the existing receptacles is poor and there has hitherto been little innovation in design to keep up with the increasing separation of waste for collection. In an ideal world, the whole suite of receptacles would be recycled, redesigned and replaced, but the costs are prohibitive. But there remains a long term need for a better solution. There are alternatives: split containers/wheelie bins, bins with removable drawers, re-usable hanging bags for example. Another option would be to mix more waste – Shropshire mixes green waste with cardboard - but this increases contamination and compromises recycle values. The rule of thumb is – the more you mix, the lower the quality, the lower the value.

Research has been done into what other authorities in the region and beyond are doing, and there is little evidence of innovation. The Council’s waste team have spoken to a major manufacturer, but there was little interest in product development and there is little competition in the market. There could be an opportunity for a local entrepreneur to come up

with a new design! The Council has itself taken an innovative approach to the receptacle for plastics. The re-usable, drawstring bag is made from lightweight but strong and durable mesh material which can be squashed, rinsed, put in the washing machine and will survive freezing temperatures.. It holds 2 weeks' average plastics waste volume. The bag has been specially designed for Telford & Wrekin.

Containers are procured through an open tender process which is compliant with EU regulations. The main criterion is value for money, although other factors such as environmental impact, sustainability and the working environment are taken into consideration. A weighting is applied to each criteria, and if the price differential between bidders is not decisive then the other factors come into play.

A thorough review of containers is about to be undertaken, and the public will be invited to a series of road shows over the summer where they will be consulted on the alternatives. Council members will also be engaged in this process.

OUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall we have been assured that the Council is working effectively and with the right approach to encouragement and enforcement strategies. The hard work and enthusiasm of the waste management team is worthy of note. There are however a number of recommendations we would like to make which we think will help to address issues and improve performance.

On the issue of storage for waste containers, we recommend:

- That the review of waste receptacles should aim to find innovative solutions to reduce the amount of storage space required for separate waste containers, and to find solutions suitable for people living in flats, including communal containers.
- To use the planning process and Section 106 Agreements to ensure that storage space for waste containers, either per property or communal space including underground, is incorporated into new developments.

On the issue of using local suppliers, we recommend the Council should:

- Work to identify potential local suppliers of waste containers, and develop the market so that local companies are better able to compete for contracts, within EU procurement regulations.

To help encourage recycling, we recommend that the Council should:

- Get the message across to the public that “recycling saves money” by running a publicity campaign in Insight, Town and Parish Council newsletters and via the Parish Forum. This should give examples of the

cost of not recycling (landfilling) easily identifiable items of household waste such as glass bottles, tins etc.

- Explore the feasibility and cost of incentivising recycling by running competitions for the “Best Recycler” and the “Best Composter” in Telford & Wrekin.

OBJECTIVE 3

For members of the review group to take an active part in the consultation process relating to the disposal of residual waste to help inform the decisions made about disposal options. This is to improve members' knowledge about, and awareness of, the complex issues which will be considered in the autumn (2009). This will be followed by and on-going dialogue with officers about the preferred options and the procurement process for the contracting of services.

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Due to time limitations, our review focussed on Objectives 1 and 2 of the terms of reference and Objective 3 is not covered in detail in this report.

However, we were interested to find out what current thinking is on incinerators. The Council recently rejected a planning application for an incinerator in the borough, and there are no current plans to build one. From the officers' point of view, the team accepted that some capacity would be needed, but that a best value option would be to look for capacity in an existing incinerator outside the borough. Local incinerators in neighbouring authority areas would be a first option, although the cost of moving freight by rail to a facility further afield could be offset by lower fees. There are incinerators with spare capacity and the team was confident that good rates could be negotiated. Shropshire has yet to announce its decision on the incinerator, and there are other local facilities such as in Wolverhampton.

While we are increasing recycling, and residual waste is decreasing, the increasing population as a result of new housing and any upturn in the economic position could well see there being more waste to incinerate or treat in some other way.

OUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As we did not cover this element of the review in detail, there are no specific recommendations we would like to make on this issue.

OBJECTIVE 4

To review the bulk collections policy and make recommendations about how this should operate in future.

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

1. What is the current bulk collections policy?

Charging for the bulk collection service was introduced in June 2008 with a collection of up to 6 items costing £15. The charge fee is one of the cheapest in the Council family group and also in the local region, and offers the most items collected for the fee. Many of the other Councils only collect 3 items for £15, or it costs £30 to collect the 6 items.

There are currently two categories of residents exempt from the fee; those who are registered disabled, and those on the Council's wheelie-bin "pull-out service" list.

Telford & Wrekin is the only Council in the local area that offers any concessions: all other Councils charge a fee for all residents. Since the £15 charge for bulk collections was introduced there has been a reduction in demand of 76% compared to when the service was free. In turn this has allowed the Council to meet its financial income/savings target.

2. How has the introduction of the charge affected fly-tipping?

Although initially seen as a concern, the number of fly-tips has decreased since charging was introduced. In the period April 2006 – March 2007 there were 4935 fly-tips. For the same period in 2008/09 there were 4118 fly-tips (a 17% reduction compared to 2006), and for the same period in 2009/10 there were 3877 fly-tips (a 22% reduction compared to 2006). The reduction in fly-tipping may be attributed to the proactive approach of the Council's Enforcement team discouraging fly-tipping through education, awareness and enforcement.

Fly tipping on private land is not monitored.

3. Have any issues have been flagged up relating to the bulk collections policy?

When calling the customer contact centre, some customers may say they are disabled so that they receive a free collection, but there is currently no way of validating this. This has lead to the amount of free collections gradually increasing. Currently roughly 50% of all collections are classed a free collections with no income generated for the Council.

Within Telford & Wrekin's family group 10 of the 14 Councils give no concessions on bulk collections, and every resident who uses the service is made to pay the fee. The current charging method has been discussed with the Council's Equalities Officer given it focuses on whether someone has a disability as opposed to whether they have the ability to pay for the service. For example, someone who is affluent but disabled receives the

service for free whilst someone who is able bodied and in severe financial difficulty still has to pay.

OUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We were concerned about the fairness of the charging policy for bulk collections, and the fact that fly-tipping on private land is not monitored. There are no specific recommendations we would like to make at this time, but would like to refer this issue to the new Scrutiny Committee for Environment and Rural Area to consider as an issue for a more detailed review in the future.

3. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our main concerns about the potential environmental damage and the financial implications of not increasing recycling, and not reducing the amount of waste going to landfill, have largely been addressed by this review.

We have been assured that the Council is taking this issue very seriously, and has been successful in bringing forward schemes which have, and will continue to, improve the efficiency of waste management and the level of recycling within the context of increasing budget constraints.

We have been impressed by the commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of the Waste Management team at the Council and would like to recognise their achievements in such a complex area of work. Their commitment to engaging with local people and elected members and taking their views into account is commendable.

However, there is always room for improvement, and we have made a number of recommendations which we hope will help improve services for customers and improve the overall performance of the Council. These are explained in each section of this report, and are summarised in the table below.

It is not possible to provide detailed costings for the recommendations within this report without a considerable amount of additional work being undertaken by both scrutiny and finance officers. However, the recommendations have been placed into one of three categories as follows:

- Low cost indicates that the recommendation could be funded from within existing resources, although not necessarily in the current year.
- Medium cost indicates that the recommendation is anticipated to cost up to £10,000 which is not currently budgeted.
- High cost indicates that the recommendation is expected to cost more than £10,000 which is not currently budgeted.

Recommendation	Indication of cost	One-off/on-going
<p><u>Recommendation 1</u> The Council develops the business case for Anaerobic Digestion as a means of generating sustainable energy from food waste, including an options appraisal of the cost effectiveness and environmental benefits of investment in its own anaerobic digester/s against contracting food waste processing out.</p>	<p>LOW for developing the initial business case</p>	<p>One off</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 2</u> That the Council audits TWS' risk assessments for robustness.</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>On-going</p>

<p><u>Recommendation 3</u> The CRC review should explore options for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of staff at CRC sites • Working with neighbouring authorities to address cross-border issues of out of borough people using CRC sites funded by Telford & Wrekin Council • Developing a CRC site for commercial waste • Extended opening hours 	<p>LOW for the specific piece of work recommended</p>	<p>One off</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 4</u> The review of waste receptacles should aim to find innovative solutions to reduce the amount of storage space required for separate waste containers, and to find solutions suitable for people living in flats, including communal containers.</p>	<p>LOW for the specific piece of work recommended</p>	<p>One off</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 5</u> To use the planning process and Section 106 Agreements to ensure that storage space for waste containers, either per property or communal space including underground, is incorporated into new developments.</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>On going</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 6</u> To get the message across to the public that “recycling saves money” by running a publicity campaign in Insight, Town and Parish Council newsletters and via the Parish Forum. This should give examples of the cost of not recycling (landfilling) easily identifiable items of household waste such as glass bottles, tins etc</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>One off, with potential for on-going</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 7</u> To explore the feasibility and cost of incentivising recycling by running competitions for the “Best Recycler” and the “Best Composter” in Telford & Wrekin.</p>	<p>MEDIUM (potential private sector sponsorship)</p>	<p>One off</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 8</u> To identify potential local suppliers of waste containers, and develop the market so that local companies are better able to compete for contracts, within EU procurement regulations.</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>As appropriate</p>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all those listed below who have contributed their time to participate in this review, and have shared information and views with us.

Adrian Lawrence	Cabinet Member
Meredith Evans	Corporate Director
Sally Hall	Service Delivery Manager, Development Plans and Sustainability
Dave Hanley	Service Delivery Manager, Environment and Open Space
Matt Whitfield	Waste Policy Officer
Jo Tombs	Environmental Education Officer
Ian Critchley	Lower Reule Bioenergy Ltd (Gnosall)
Matthew Franklin	Lower Reule Bioenergy Ltd (Gnosall)
Philip Greenaway	Greenfinch Biodigester (Ludlow)
Mr. Moody	Jack Moody Ltd.
Adrian Collins	TWS Area Director
Trevor Davies	Master Composters
Tony North	Commercial Manager, Pink Skips
Brian Pritchard	Operations Manager, Pink Skips
Tom Lavery	Buyer, Pink Skips

We would also like to thank Molly Hooper and Tina Brasenell in the waste team for their help in organising the external meetings.

Addendum to Waste Management & Bulk Collections Scrutiny Report

Since the scrutiny report was finalised, a report was brought to Cabinet on 22nd June for the Future Provision of Waste Management Infrastructure.

The report was to seek approval to make future changes to the provision of waste management infrastructure in the Borough including:-

- the construction of a new, Super Community Recycling Centre (CRC) co-located with a Waste Bulking Station (WBS) in the Hortonwood area to serve the north of the Borough;
- retention of the existing CRC at Halesfield to serve the south of the Borough;
- the closure of Granville and Ketley CRCs; and
- developing a facility in Newport in a new location focusing on provision of recycling facilities.

Cabinet agreed to the termination of the Granville CRC contract, the replacement of the Newport CRC in a new location as an enhanced recycling centre, and the identification and acquisition of sites in the Hortonwood area for the construction of a Waste Bulking Station and a co-located super CRC in the Hortonwood area. Officers will bring back detailed reports to show design and costings for approval before any financial commitments are made.

The Future Provision of Waste Management Infrastructure report is not referred to in this Scrutiny report because it came to Cabinet when the scrutiny review had been concluded, and Members of the review group did not have sight of the report before it was presented to Cabinet.