SCRUTINY REVIEW – WASTE COLLECTION, RECYCLING & DISPOSAL PART 2

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2008

Members Councillors * Adamou (Chair), *Dodds, Edge and *Weber

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1): Apologies for absence received from Councillor Edge.

Also Present: Cllr Haley and Cllr Thompson

2. URGENT BUSINESS (Agenda Item 2): None submitted.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 3): None notified.

4. MINUTES – The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2008 were agreed.

5.. **EVIDENCE FOR THE REVIEW – REAL RECYCLING**:

The panel welcomed Andy Moore, Campaign Co-ordinator, Real Recycling; to the meeting to discuss the issues relating to source separated and co-mingled recycling collection methods.

The Campaign for Real Recycling wants central government and local authorities to act urgently to improve the quality of materials collected for recycling in the UK. Their main concern is that collection systems that gather a range of different materials in one bag or bin and then compact them could permanently undermine the environmental and financial benefits of recycling. Real Recycling campaign aims to influence local authority policy and practice, and build consensus within the UK of the economic and environmental importance of highly separated collections - Real Recycling is about maximising the economic, environmental and social benefits of recycling.

Within the North London Waste Authority there are a range of dry recycling collection systems operating in North London. Three boroughs Barnet, Hackney and Waltham Forest providing a source separated collection service whereby a range of dry recyclables are collected from householders and then the individual materials are sorted into different compartments on the collection vehicle at the kerbside, materials are then bulked up or directly transferred to the reprocessors.

The other four boroughs Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington provide a co-mingled service whereby the materials collected from householders mixed up together and then taken to a materials recovery

Source separated' collection systems, however, produce materials that can be reprocessed, usually in the UK.

In practice this means residents have one or more separate boxes for different 'dry' recyclable materials and another for 'wet' materials such as kitchen waste. These materials are then collected in a way that maintains this separation, usually by placing the materials into different containers on the collection vehicle.

UK reprocessors of paper and glass, clothes and aluminium prefer (and often pay higher prices for) source separated materials.

The improved price for materials collected can be used to offset collection costs.

The Campaign for Real Recycling wants local authorities to ensure reprocessors receive their materials in the same condition as when the householder dropped them into the recycling box in their kitchen.

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL RECYCLING

Material Quality

Kerbside sorted collections:

- **yields best prices**
- **holds on to reliable market outlets**
- **reject rate typically ½%**
- **achieves lowest cost per tonne in domestic material recovery**
- **Newport CC less than £40/t**
- **costs/tonne will fall as tonnage rises**
- **operator has quality control opportunity**

The needs of the re-processor should be central to the design of any collection system.
Source separated collection systems separate materials as much as possible before they arrive at the local recycling depot ready for sale to reprocessors.

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL RECYCLING

Material Quality

Co-mingled/MRF sorted collections:

- **yield poorer material prices**
- **often struggle to find market outlets**
- **reject rate typically 9%**
- **send mixed material to Far East**
- **cost typically twice as much or more as kerbside sort and cost/tonne may rise as tonnage rises**
- **operator has no quality control opportunity**

During 2006-07, local authorities reported a total of 89,000 tonnes collected for recycling from household sources as rejected for disposal at a MRF and a further 32,000 tonnes that were rejected at the gate of a recycling processor. These stats are based on data reported by local authorities to Waste Dataflow. Expressed as a percentage of the 1.3 million tonnes of municipal waste sent to sorting facilities, this means that over 9% of material set out for recycling doesn't actually get recycled.

Andy Moore, said Householders should be disappointed and frustrated to hear this figure. They have made the effort to save and sort their recyclables and they've paid for the collection via their council tax. That over 9% of the materials and the money are being wasted simply cannot be good for recycling, depending as it does on householder goodwill. This is also a serious value for money question for local authorities.

It's important to note that knowing the rejection rate of the MRF tells us nothing about the quality of material sent for reprocessing. It seems to us that the co-mingling and MRF processes decrease quality and can easily create rejects from materials which left the householder in good order. All this strengthens the case for kerbside-sorted collections where careful handling maintains quality and reject rates are typically a fraction of one percent.

Carbon Footprint

Reference was made to the Energy Audit of Kerbside Recycling Services carried out by London Borough of Camden which concluded that he carbon footprint of the collection service within the borough is 32% smaller for the co-mingled service; the advantage is reduced to 19% when the transport to the MRF is added. The Carbon footprint to the co-mingled collection system, transfer and the MRF is 77% greater than for the kerbside sorted waste collection. [A copy of the report to be sent to members of the Panel]

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL RECYCLING

Carbon

Indicative analysis suggests that:

- **collection transport most locally visible aspect but may well represent less than 1% of the carbon emissions involved in recycling**
- **direct carbon emissions can be doubled by contamination**
- **carbon offset value can be more than halved by contamination**
- **LA carbon indicators NI185, 186 and 188**

GLASS

If glass is presented to glass dealers already crushed, which is often the case when it is handled through a large MRF, it cannot be used for glass packaging. The only outlet, apart from landfill, is as a road aggregate.

Returning bottles to the retailer and receiving the deposit in return used to be common practice. Consumer preference turned to the convenience of non-returnable bottles. Milk bottles are one of the few types of glass packaging still reused (an average of 12 times). Despite the extra weight required to withstand wear and tear and the costs of cleaning, returning bottles can still be the best option when they are recovered and refilled locally.

Recycling

Many people set aside glass for recycling and either participate in kerbside collection schemes or take them to a bottle bank, usually located at civic amenity sites and supermarkets. Glass can also be recovered from businesses, such as pubs and restaurants, and from companies, schools or organisations which are able to have a bottle bank on site.

Glass Bottles

- **quality required for any remelt**
- **no remelt possible, no new bottles being made from ex MRF/co-mingled**
- **ex MRF/co-mingled some found to be 40% non-glass**
- **glass only roadfilled in UK and Ireland**
- **roadfill over remelt makes no carbon sense**
- **contamination from co-mingled glass reduces paper/other material quality and so basket price**

In Haringey approximately 70,000 properties receive a regular collection of green garden waste, either on a weekly basis as part of the Mixed Recycling Service or on a fortnightly basis The Panel felt that cconsideration should be given to collecting cans and glass in the same way as green garden waste is collected.

There are currently no processes for sorting glass. In theory, glass should be the rampant recycling success story. It is one of the few packaging materials that retain all its qualities – 100 per cent – no matter how often it is re-processed.

According to a report from British Glass the rate of growth of glass recycling has slowed from 10 per cent in 2005 to 1.8 per cent in 2006. Yet the growth in glass consumption has not slowed. This break in the glass recycling chain is primarily due to an increased diversion of glass into road aggregates.

Myths

- no evidence that kerbside sort harder for public to grasp
- no evidence that co-mingling yields higher diversion or better carbon value
- no evidence that kerbside collections any less safe for operators
- kerbside sort doesn't require multiple boxes

RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

The panel heard about the Midwest Recycling Association in the USA. Recycling programs in Wisconsin and surrounding states expanded rapidly as a result of mandatory recycling legislation causing markets for many materials to become saturated with recyables. As a result of this large and small recycling programs had to compete for a limited number of markets. Large programs, in densely populated areas, are typically more attractive to buyers because of the large quantities of materials generated within a relatively small geographic area.

One way to make recycling programs more competitive is to improve the economics of scale by having many suppliers within an area, market their materials together. The larger volume and more consistent supply of recyclables attract larger and more reliable markets. Members benefit from more stable markets and better prices.

Cooperative Marketing
Cooperative marketing means no more marketing hassles for member programs - members not only have better access to markets, their access to the markets is more stable, and they receive consistent, top prices for their materials. Materials currently marketed by the Association include: newspaper, corrugated cardboard, glass, plastic containers, steel cans, aluminium, office paper, and magazines. The Association is open to searching for markets for other materials suggested by its members.

KEY QUESTIONS AND ISSUES RAISED BY THE PANEL

- Lobbying central government to ensure that bottles are returned and reused – it was noted that various environment organisations are already championing this initiative e.g. “bring back the bring-backs” - Bottle deposit charges and cash in exchange for the return of used bottles and cans should be considered especially aluminium cans as this is an expensive material.

- Consideration should be given to collecting cans and glass in the same way that green garden was collected.

- Consideration should be given to retaining the paper and glass banks in Haringey.

- In terms of solutions - one size does not fit all.

- What other options are there apart from co-mingled collection?

- There was a need to resolve the issue of kerbside collection of plastics to including looking at vehicle design.

- The need to consider recycling in the wider context for the future including ensuring that reprocessors are designed to fit collection systems.

- The need to be competitive.

Officers stated that Haringey currently provides a complete waste collection service and a comprehensive weekly collection solution to its residents. Waste minimisation would have an impact on achieving recycling rate - However achieving 45% by 2015 would be more difficult.

Examples of good practice

Newport Council - stillage system considered to be a good model to follow.
Manchester CC - four stream collection through procurement.
Bristol Council – Food and Garden collection.
Northern Ireland

Agreed that:

A copy of the Camden Report be circulated to members of the panel.
A copy of the Waste Strategy be circulated to members of the panel
That the Director of Urban Environment be invited to the next meeting of the Panel to address the issues identified by the panel i.e:

1. What impact will the new multi million pound contract have on Haringey with regard to source separated or co-mingled bearing in mind that collection methods will affect all seven boroughs. Is it already fixed?
2. What is the economic impact with regard to the market for recyclate materials crashing in the present economic climate? However, surely glass is a valuable and becoming a rare commodity.

Cllr Adamou
Chair