



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Council

Tuesday 26 July 2011

Agenda Item 8, Questions

a) Written Questions

Question From: Councillor Alaric Rose

Topic: Cherwell District Council Refuse & Recycling Service

In 2006/07, CDC was one of the nation's top performing councils for recycling rates. However, the figures released earlier this year for 2008/09 show that South Oxfordshire DC now outperform us. Oxford City Council now collects a wider range of materials in residents blue bins than Cherwell District Council, and it is likely that they too will achieve a higher recycling rate. Can the Leader assure me and my constituents that we will continue to lead the way in recycling?

Response

Cherwell District Council's recycling performance has consistently been one of the best performances in the country. From a position of 274th best performing council for recycling in 2002/03, since the launch of the alternate week collection scheme in 2003/04, the Council has consistently been in the top 30 councils for recycling since 2004/05. In addition, for councils in the South East, Cherwell has either been 1st or 2nd for recycling for six years.

Year	Recycling Rate	National Position for Collection Authorities	Position for South East authorities
2002/03	10.3%	274 th	
2004/05	43.4%	9 th	1 st
2005/06	43.3%	14 th	1 st
2006/07	44.6%	24 th	2 nd
2007/08	47.5%	27 th	1 st
2008/09	49.7%	27 th	2 nd
2009/10	51.4%	21 st	2 nd
2010/11	57.3%	Expected Top 20	

Whilst Cherwell was one of the first to modernise its waste collection service in 2003/04 based on a simple, easy to use and cost effective system, South Oxfordshire and indeed other Oxfordshire waste collecting authorities have only relatively recently gone through a service modernisation programme and in doing so, have benefited from the lessons of others who have gone before. All have different collection systems based on cost and other market factors so comparison is difficult.

The Council's intention is to get the recycling rate to around 60% in 2011/12 by encouraging residents to use the extensive recycling facilities offered by both the kerbside collection service and the recycling bank system at 75 community locations. This will still place Cherwell in the top performing category.

If all residents were to full use the recycling system, so that no materials which could be recycled by the current collection systems ended up in the residual waste bin, then the recycling rate would be around 80%. Hence encouraging residents to recycle more and fully utilise existing systems is more important and cost effective than introducing new expensive collection systems.

Innovation

The recycling scheme introduced in 2003/04 has remained unchanged at the kerbside except for the introduction of food waste in the brown bin. However a number of improvements and innovations have been made which have driven recycling rates forward. These include

- Expansion of the number of glass banks from around 40 sites to the current level of 75 sites
- Introduction of the glass bag which successfully increased glass recycling and was a runner up in national recycling innovation awards
- Introduction of a recycling bag for people living in flat complexes
- Introduction of on street recycling in the three urban centres – the first Oxfordshire authority to introduce such facilities
- Introduction of small waste electrical & electronic equipment bring banks, one of the first council's in the country, again a runner up in two national recycling innovation awards
- Introduction of food waste recycling during late 2009/10 with the rollout communication plan also receiving a highly commended in national recycling awards

- Installation of vending machines for kitchen caddy liners in July 2011– first council in the country
- Compost giveaway events for the last three years, returning compost to residents while encouraging residents to recycle more

Customer satisfaction

The waste services offered by the Council have achieved high customer satisfaction levels. Over recent years, customer satisfaction levels with the refuse & recycling services have shown significant increases, these include

Recycling banks

Customer satisfaction has risen from 77% in 2006 to 87% in 2010

Refuse collection

Customer satisfaction has risen from 67% in 2006 to 78% in 2010

Recycling services

Customer satisfaction has risen from 79% in 2006 to 83% in 2010

Future opportunities

The current dry recycling contract expires in March 2012. A new contract will shortly go out for tender. This new tender is expected to deliver financial savings for the Council due to rises in commodity values and competition between recycling material facilities.

However in addition to any financial savings there is likely to be an opportunity to increase the range of materials being collected. This may further enhance the current system but it is unlikely alone to greatly increase the recycling rate.