

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL – 27 November 2007

CABINET - 12 December 2007

WASTE RECYCLING – REVIEW OF ALTERNATE BIN COLLECTION SCHEME AND
FUTURE PROPOSALS

REPORT OF HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT

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RECENT REFERENCES:

HE21 – Waste Management Policy review Informal Group - 21 January 2004

CAB867 – Proposed recycling Pilot – Outstanding Issues - 19 May 2004

CAB914 – Future Demands for Recycling Bins – Financial Implications - 27 July 2004

CAB1197 – Waste Recycling - Results of Trial and Future Proposals - 7 February 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report brings the Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet up-to-date with the outcome of the implementation of the Alternate Bin Collection (ABC) Scheme across the District during 2007. The scheme involves refuse and recycling being collected on alternate weeks, together with a fortnightly collection of garden waste. The scheme was introduced following a successful trial as a means to meet the government's then statutory recycling target of 36% by 2005/6, reduce the growth in waste and thus the amount of material going to landfill or incineration and provide householders with the means to recycle more. The Council also resolved to introduce alternative waste management policies that would support its ambition to improve waste reduction and recycling.

This report is referred to the Environment Scrutiny Panel, which has been keeping progress with implementation of the ABC scheme under review as part of its quarterly monitoring, so that it can pass comments to Cabinet.

The report recognises and takes into account the findings of the ABC Special Advisory Panel, which reported to the Leader prior to the roll out of Phase 2 in the summer of 2007 and also considers possible options for increasing recycling in future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Environment Scrutiny Panel:

1. Comment to Cabinet on the success of the implementation of the ABC scheme throughout the district, which has resulted in significantly improved recycling levels without major adverse effects upon the community.
2. Comment to Cabinet on the priorities for increasing recycling as set out in Appendix 4 when resources allow.

That Cabinet

1. Note the options to improve recycling and composting rates within the District in the future
2. Agrees that once proposals are put forward for the provision of suitable infrastructure for the treatment and disposal of food waste then a further report be brought to Cabinet detailing the implications and costs associated with introducing a service for the weekly collection of food waste.
3. Agrees that service of notices under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 be restricted to individual householders that repeatedly fail to comply with the City Councils policies waste collection policies or where householders present their household waste in such a way as to create difficulties with collection or cause environmental problems.

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL – 27 NOVEMBER 2007CABINET - 12 DECEMBER 2007WASTE RECYCLING – REVIEW OF ALTERNATE BIN COLLECTION SCHEME AND FUTURE PROPOSALSREPORT OF HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTDETAIL:1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report brings Cabinet up-to-date with the outcome of the implementation of the Alternate Bin Collection (ABC) Scheme across the District during 2007. The scheme involves refuse and recycling being collected on alternate weeks, together with a fortnightly collection of garden waste. The scheme was introduced following a successful trial as a means to meet the government's then statutory recycling target of 36% by 2005/6, reduce the growth in waste and thus the amount of material going to landfill or incineration and provide householders with the means to recycle more. The Council also resolved to introduce alternative waste management policies that would support its ambition to improve waste reduction and recycling.
- 1.2 This report also reviews the findings of the ABC Special Advisory Panel which was established during roll out of the scheme to consider issues of concern to the public which resulted in a number of recommendations for consideration as part of the roll out project. Progress to date on meeting the panel's recommendations is described and difficulties in implementing some of the recommendations are considered.
- 1.3 Finally, the report considers possible measures could be taken to further increase recycling rates in future.

2 ABC Implementation Timetable

- 2.1 In general terms it is considered that the scheme, particularly in relation to the objectives set by the Council in introducing the scheme, meeting statutory recycling targets, minimising waste to landfill or incineration and obtaining community and customer support, has been a success, evidenced by the increase in recycling rate and the low level of disruption or reduction in performance caused by the changeover.
- 2.2 The new collection arrangements were introduced in two phases as follows

Phase 1 commenced on 15 January 2007: including New Alresford, Harestock, Kings Worthy, Compton and Shawford, Otterbourne (parts), Kings Worthy, Badger Farm, Oliver's Battery, Compton, Colden Common (parts) and Twyford. All of Winchester City, including Weeke, Stanmore, Highcliffe, Hyde, Teg Down, Winnall, Fullood, St Cross and the City Centre.

Phase 2 commenced on 17 July 2007: including Northington, Itchen Valley, Chilcomb, Itchen Stoke, Ovington, Old Alresford, Bighton, Bishop's Sutton, Bramdean, Colden Common (parts), Cheriton, Kilmeston, Beauworth, Tichbourne, Otterbourne (parts), Owslebury, Bishop's Waltham, Wickham, Whiteley, Upham, Durley, Curdrige, West Meon, Warnford, Exton, Corhampton, Meonstoke,

Hambledon, Soberton, Droxford, Swanmore, Shedfield, Shirrell Heath, Widley, Boarhunt and Denmead and all remaining areas of the district.

- 2.3 Overall, customers found changes to the scheme relatively seamless and no significant problems were encountered with implementation due to the detailed planning and extensive communications undertaken beforehand.

3. Performance Results

- 3.1 There have been significant performance changes in the amounts of waste collected and recycling levels prior to and following implementation as shown at Appendix 1. The following describes the most notable changes achieved.
- 3.2 **Combined Recycling and Composting Rate:** the overall recycling and composting rate as shown in Appendix 1A. The Council's overall rate allowing for seasonal and other variations, will average between 38 - 40% annually. The Council will meet its statutory target of 30% for 2007/08 and be close to (if not meeting) its 40% target for 2010/11.
- 3.3 **Mixed Dry Recyclables:** the figures shown in Appendix 1C are in tonnes per month prior to and following implementation and show a significant improvement in the recyclables collected by improved separation of waste by households. On average an extra 2,500 tonnes of materials will be collected per annum.
- 3.4 **Garden Waste:** from a baseline of zero, the free fortnightly collection of garden waste in the district has proved very successful in collecting, on average 350 tonnes of material per month (4,000 tonnes per annum) as can be seen in Appendix 1B. The merit of a free service is self evident, and is likely to be contributing 10% per annum to the Council's overall recycling and composting rate.
- 3.5 **Bring Sites:** the number of sites increased from 62 to 67 with the range of materials collected at a number of sites also increased. The amount of glass collected from bring sites each month is shown in Appendix 1(d) and allowing for seasonal variations has improved from 1,500 to 1,800 tonnes per annum. Further increases are anticipated as households continue to make greater use of these facilities to recycle materials not collected at the kerbside.
- 3.6 **Quality of Recyclables:** the average overall level of contaminants (materials collected but not suitable for recycling) found in the mixed dry recyclables prior to the changes has marginally improved from 7.3% in October 2004 to 5.3% in October 2007 (most recent waste analysis data following full implementation of the scheme). This represents some of the best quality recycled materials in Hampshire. The range of levels of contamination in the recyclables is 2.3 – 11.7 %. These results support the need for targeting of these households for behavioural change interventions including home visits to help them understand the need to better sort waste and recycling before disposal.
- 3.6 **Overall Waste Arising:** figures also indicate a reduction in the overall quantity with total waste arisings reducing from 402kg in 2005 to a 370kg per household forecasted for 2007/08. The overall reduction in waste arisings is positive and indicates that householders are generally taking on board the new arrangements and producing less waste.

4 Customer Impact

- 4.1 Throughout the implementation of the ABC scheme a team of Recycling Advisers have been available to handle customer concerns and queries including home visits where appropriate to explain practical aspects of the scheme and resolve any difficulties. Their role has included
- i. Responding to phone calls received
 - ii. Dealing with email queries
 - iii. Responding to letters received
 - iv. Working with the contractor on practical implementation of the scheme
 - v. Assessing properties requiring weekly collection including difficult access properties, blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation
 - vi. Working on promotional campaigns with schools and colleges
 - vii. Completing contract documentation and schedules for the new collection arrangements.
- 4.2 To date just under 25,000 phone calls have been made to the freephone 'RecycleforWinchester' phone line where they have been handled by the Recycling Advisers as a stand alone team. This equates to approximately 10% of all calls received by the Customer Service Centre and equivalent to half of the number of properties across the District.
- 4.3 During 2007 it was decided to monitor the subject areas of these calls in more detail and a summary of the calls received by the Team by type between January and October 2007 is included at Appendix 2. The results from this are encouraging in that many of the calls relate to routine requests for information or bins which are to be expected with a project of this nature.
- 4.4 The only area of concern highlighted by this analysis is the number of garden waste sacks 'lost' after emptying. Whilst it is possible that some bags have been acquired by other householders as a useful garden waste bag it is recognised that the design of the bags does present problems in windy conditions when they are often blown some distance away. The bags used are a standard design adopted across many local authorities but a trial is underway with the suppliers to consider possible solutions to the problem including weighting of the bag at its base.
- 4.5 Of particular interest is the fact that, whilst some customers may have expressed concerns about health and nuisance issues associated with the new scheme, the numbers are very low. However, it should be borne in mind that the summer of 2007 was relatively cool with temperatures well below the national average. From our experience and discussions with other authorities the number of calls received would increase with warmer weather conditions and the need for a response to these is an important further consideration.
- 4.6 The other popular channel of communication was the 'recycleforwinchester' mail box which received 4236 emails and the website which received 1560 hits re-emphasising the need to provide various options for customers to make contact. In addition the website created for the Special Advisory Panel review received 1146 hits.

- 4.7 Finally, 172 letters were received which were responded to individually of these 64 expressed concerns regarding the arrangements, 61 were requests for service or advice and 47 were formal complaints mainly about the principle of adopting the ABC methodology and the perceived reduction in service being offered.
- 4.8 It seems clear that advice from the Council's recycling advisers has helped residents to overcome teething problems associated with ABC. Experience elsewhere suggests that such schemes run extremely well after a settling in period with high levels of customer satisfaction although there is still a need for a process required to deal with a residue of ongoing request or information or service requests.
5. ABC Special Advisory Panel
- 5.1 During the summer the above panel was convened at the request of the Leader to review implementation of the project. The panel met on a number of occasions and their recommendations are detailed in Appendix 3 together with a summary of actions to date or comments on their implementation. There are, however, a number of recommendations from the panel which warrant further consideration and these are addressed below:
- 5.2 **Waste Advisers:** one of the key recommendations was to retain the services of some of the recycling advisers for a further period after the roll out of ABC phase 2 in order to continue the recycling education programme. The Waste Advisers have played an important role in the implementation of the scheme and could have a role to play in continuing this work to deal with issues such as bin contamination, behavioural change programmes and service requests.
- 5.3 **Holiday Collections:** the ABC panel were of the view that the Council should offer to collect bins from within the curtilage of a property if notified that the householder was away on holiday, subject to this being a cost-effective proposal. It also felt that consideration should be given to offering this service for a trial period in order to gauge the level of take-up and the potential longer term cost implications. This has been considered by Officers and Serco but implementation **is not** recommended to Cabinet due to concerns about handling personal information and managing the associated security and liability risks.
6. Issues still to be resolved
- 6.1 During roll out and implementation of the scheme the following operational and policy issues have arisen which require further consideration namely:
- 6.2. **Larger Households:** Cabinet resolved that households of 6 or more are permitted to have an additional recycling or refuse bin and that this be provided free of charge as was the case in the pilot area. Experience has shown that the vast majority of household can cope within this framework. However, there have been a few instances where requests have been received from householders with five or more persons for additional bins. In order to respond to this issue, work is currently underway to consider the implications of a change of policy to households of 5 or more and whether this is warranted at this time.
- 6.3. **Green Waste Ban:** in order to be in a position to prevent garden waste being deposited in refuse or recycling containers Cabinet approved that all householders are served with a notice under Section 46 (1) and (4)d of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Using this notice the authority may specify the size and type of container to be

used for household waste stipulating what can be put in each container type. Waste Analysis indicates that garden waste is no longer a significant problem in refuse bins. As such the service of a district wide notice is no longer necessary or appropriate. In addition the service of a district wide notice may have a negative impact on the public's perspective particularly as the vast majority have fully embraced the new system.

- 6.4 This notice has not yet been issued and for the reasons described Officers are of the view that the service and enforcement of such notices should be restricted to individuals that repeatedly fail to comply with the City Councils policies or where householders present their household waste in such a way as to create difficulties with collection or cause environmental problems.

7 Future Proposals

- 7.1 Now that roll out ABC has been successfully completed it is perhaps time to consider what additional measures are viable at the present time to further improve recycling rates. These are summarised in Appendix 4 for Members' consideration. Each option is described in more detail below.

- 7.2 **Maximising the Potential of Existing Arrangements:** this option is limited in the amount of increased recycling that can be achieved. However Waste Data Analysis indicates that there are still significant amounts of materials being disposed of in residual bins that are potentially recyclable. Whilst ABC schemes typically plateau at about 28% for the kerbside collection of mixed dry recyclables it is apparent that there is still limited potential to improve the performance of the existing scheme by increasing the usage, capture rate of recyclables and reducing contamination.

- 7.3 **Home Composting and Use of Food Waste Digesters:** there is potential for residents in more rural areas to deal with more waste at home through home composting or waste digesters. Whilst the potential of such means of waste reduction is unknown it is one area that the Council could explore and promote further by offering discounted composters and waste digesters direct to residents.

- 7.4 **Kerbside Collection of Glass:** the collection of glass at the kerbside is currently feasible as there are suitable disposal arrangements already in place and it would be popular from the public's perspective. However, due to the success of the Council's "bring sites" there is limited amount of glass in the waste stream of approximately 1,000 - 1,200 tonnes. It is estimated that kerbside collection would only increase the Council's overall recycling rate by between 1 – 2% at significant costs.

- 7.5 **Kerbside Collection of Textiles:** whilst the Council already has in place facilities for the collection of textiles at bring sites further consideration could be given to collecting textiles at the kerbside possibly in association with glass or other materials. It is estimated that kerbside collection of textiles would only increase the Council's overall recycling rate by between 1 – 2% in association with glass.

- 7.6 **Collection of Food Waste:** this option currently presents the greatest potential to increase recycling rates above existing levels. The costs of providing weekly collections of kerbside food waste would be considerable (which could be as high as £900,000 revenue and £700,000 capital due to collection and bin purchase costs plus possible disposal infrastructure) although it would be popular. However at the present time there are no reasonably accessible facilities for treatment of materials collected and it would have to be transported out of County for treatment. For these reasons it is considered that this option is neither financially or environmentally

sustainable at the present time although this position may change in the future. However it is possible to support work on food waste minimisation as described below.

- 7.7 **Minimising Food Waste:** currently it is estimated that householders throw away about a third of the food they buy which equates to about 6.7million tonnes per year. This waste is not limited to just peelings and bones and a high proportion of the food thrown away could have been eaten. According to Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) consumers have no idea of the amount of food they throw away, yet at a cost of £8 billion per year nationally it is not something that any person can afford to ignore. Also many people do not associate food waste with its negative environmental impact.
- 7.8 WRAP have therefore recently launched a nationwide campaign 'Love Food, Hate Waste' to persuade consumers to reduce food waste which is being supported by a number of celebrity chefs. Trying to persuade and assist householders to reduce food waste from the home is a more sustainable way of dealing addressing this matter at the present time and fits with the waste hierarchy of reduction first. It is proposed that the City Council support this initiative at a national and local level undertaking a range of educational and promotional activities with the assistance of the waste advisers. This initiative would be linked in to supporting activities in 7.3.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The outcome of the rollout of the ABC project has to be considered a success in that it has been completed within the original project timetable and budget but also achieved an overall recycling rate which is in excess of the predictions beforehand. The critical success factors behind this achievement is the amount of forward planning prior to implementation and the comprehensive communications plan used throughout the campaign. Experience from any major changes to refuse and recycling schemes show that success will only be achieved by carrying the public with you and winning over their hearts and minds if the required behavioural change is to take place.
- 8.2 The City Council could for the time being rest on its laurels but the waste collection landscape is a constantly changing one and it is important to keep abreast of developments and to continue to support current systems if performance is to be maintained and improved upon in the future.
- 8.3 The options described in Appendix 4 provide some indication as to possible future developments but at present it is considered that these do not represent a viable environmentally and financially sustainable way forward at present. However, the Special Advisory Panel recognised that it is important that there is sufficient capacity to deal with queries and service requests on practical aspects of the ABC scheme, work on behavioural change projects, resolve issues described in sections 4, 5 and 6 of this report and to handle a likely increase in complaints during warmer summer months. Given that it is unlikely that the Recycling Advisers can be retained beyond the extent of the current approved funding arrangements there may be some increase in implementation issues next year.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

9.1 The proposals strongly support the initiatives the Council is taking in living its value of acting sustainable. The Green Agenda makes it explicit that the Council will significantly reduce landfill, encourage increased re-use and promote recycling.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

10.1 The current expenditure in implementing the project are within the existing budgets allocated and no overspends are expected by the end of the financial year. Procurement savings have also been achieved during the rollout of the project and offered up as they have arisen. At the present time it is too early to provide an accurate revised budget forecast as there are project and contractor costs which will be incurred before the end of the financial year. The final position will be known early in the New Year and will be included within the considerations of the 2008/09 budget.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Report of the ABC Review Panel -19 July 2007

APPENDICES

Appendix 1A Combined Recycling and Composting Rates (Jan 06 – Oct 07)

Appendix 1B Kerbside Garden Waste Collections (Jan 06 – Oct 07)

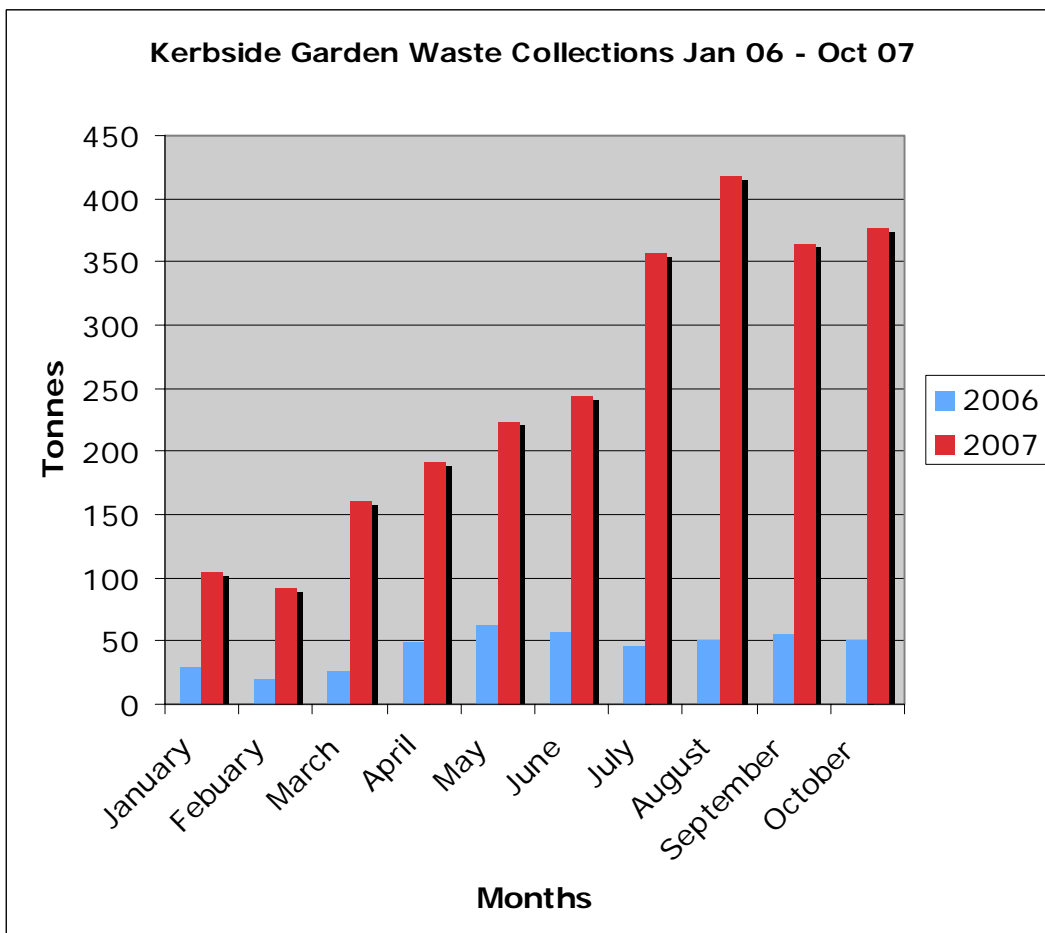
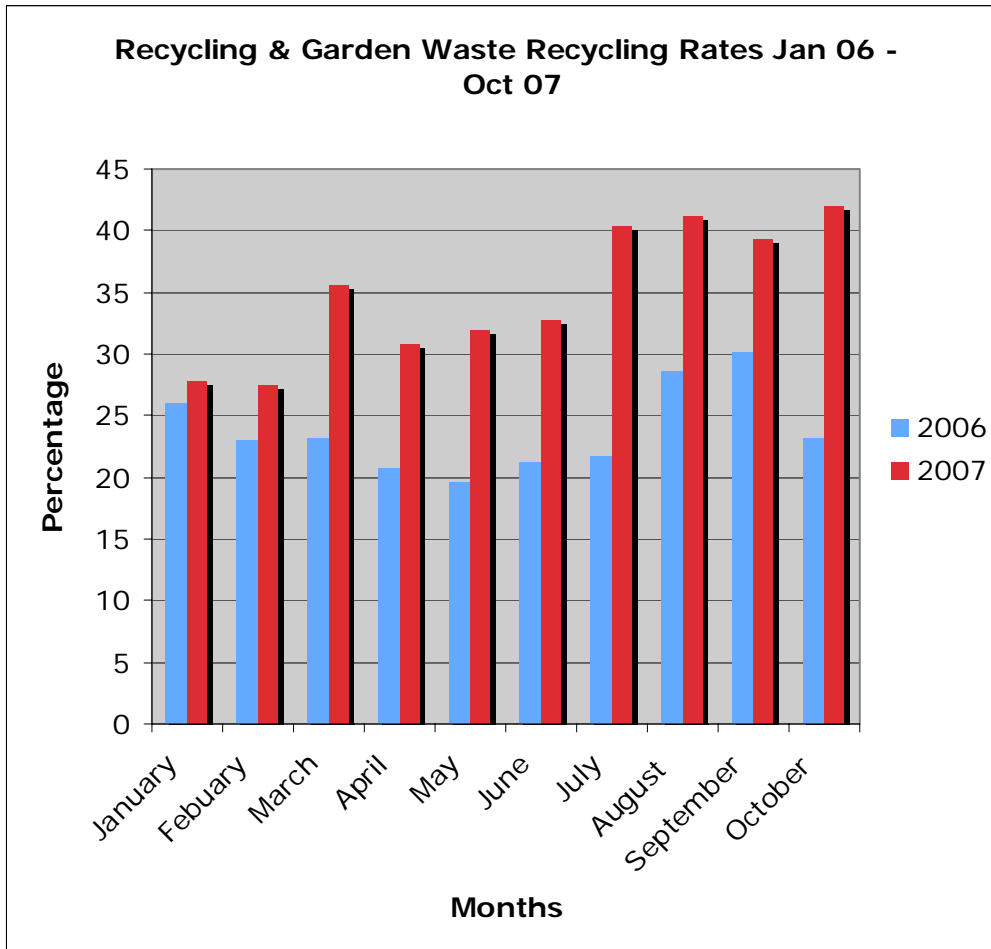
Appendix 1C Mixed Dry Recyclables Kerbside Collections (Jan 06 – Oct 07)

Appendix 1D Glass Collected from Bring Sites (Jan 06 – Oct 07)

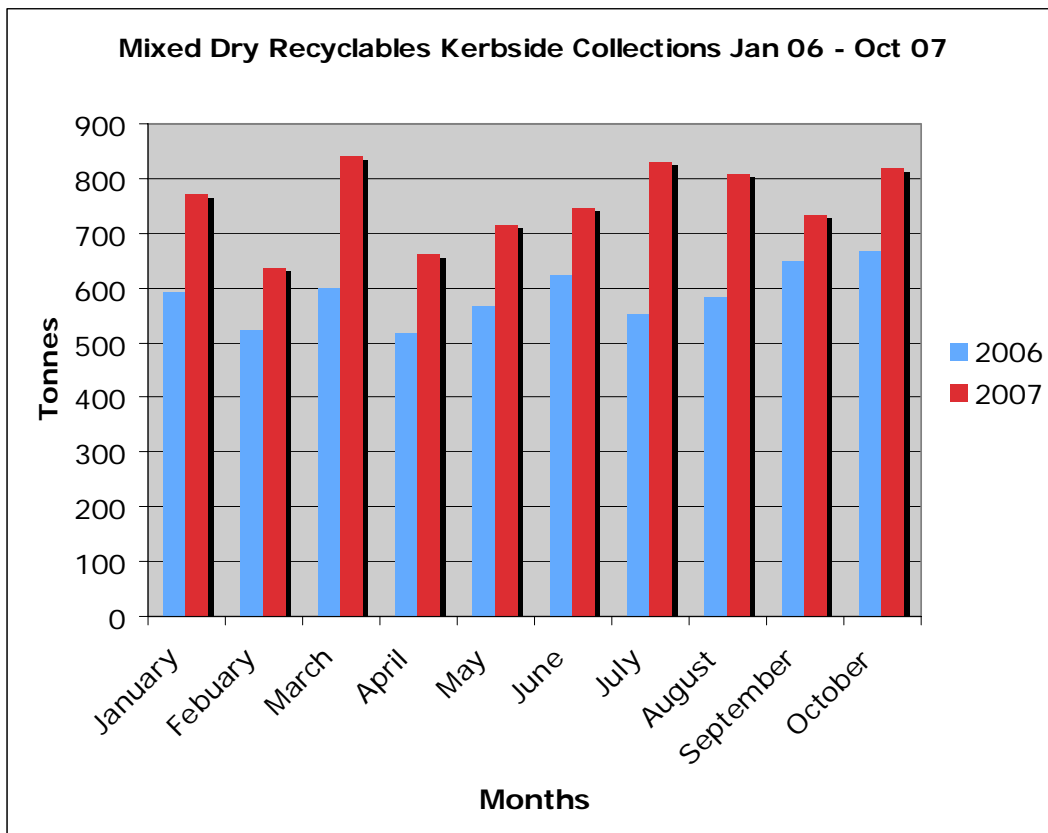
Appendix 2 – Recycle for Winchester Call Analysis Data (Jan 07 – Oct 07)

Appendix 3 – ABC Review Panel – Key Recommendations and Progress Report Update

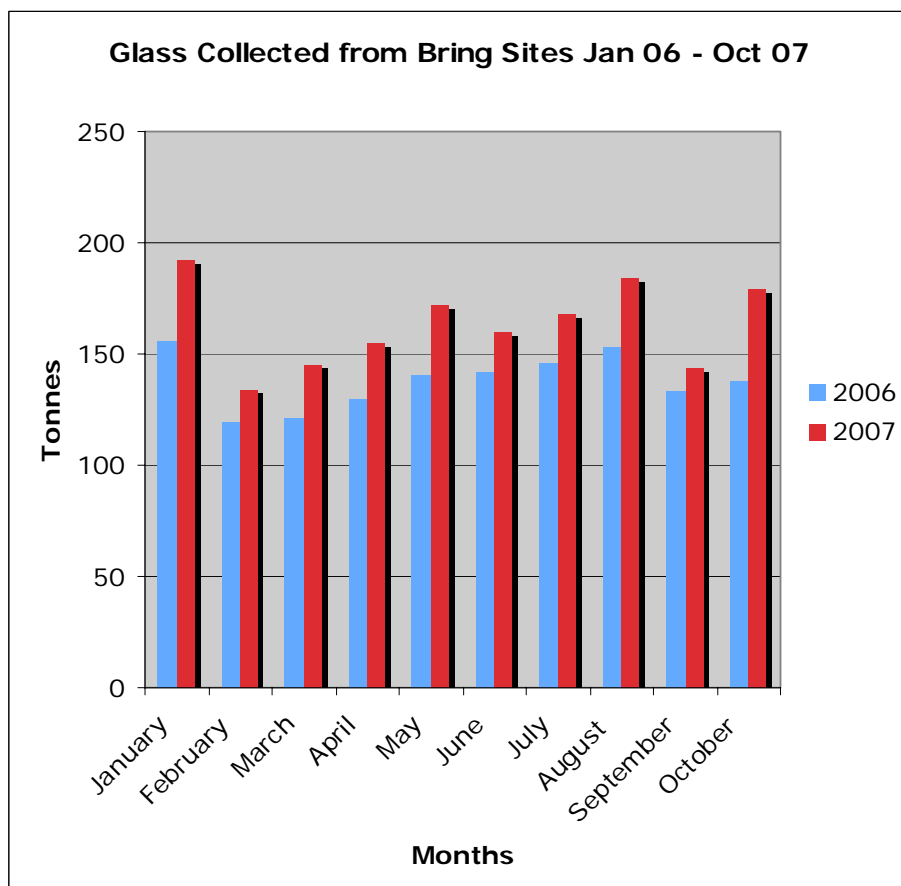
Appendix 4 – Future Options to Improve Recycling Rates



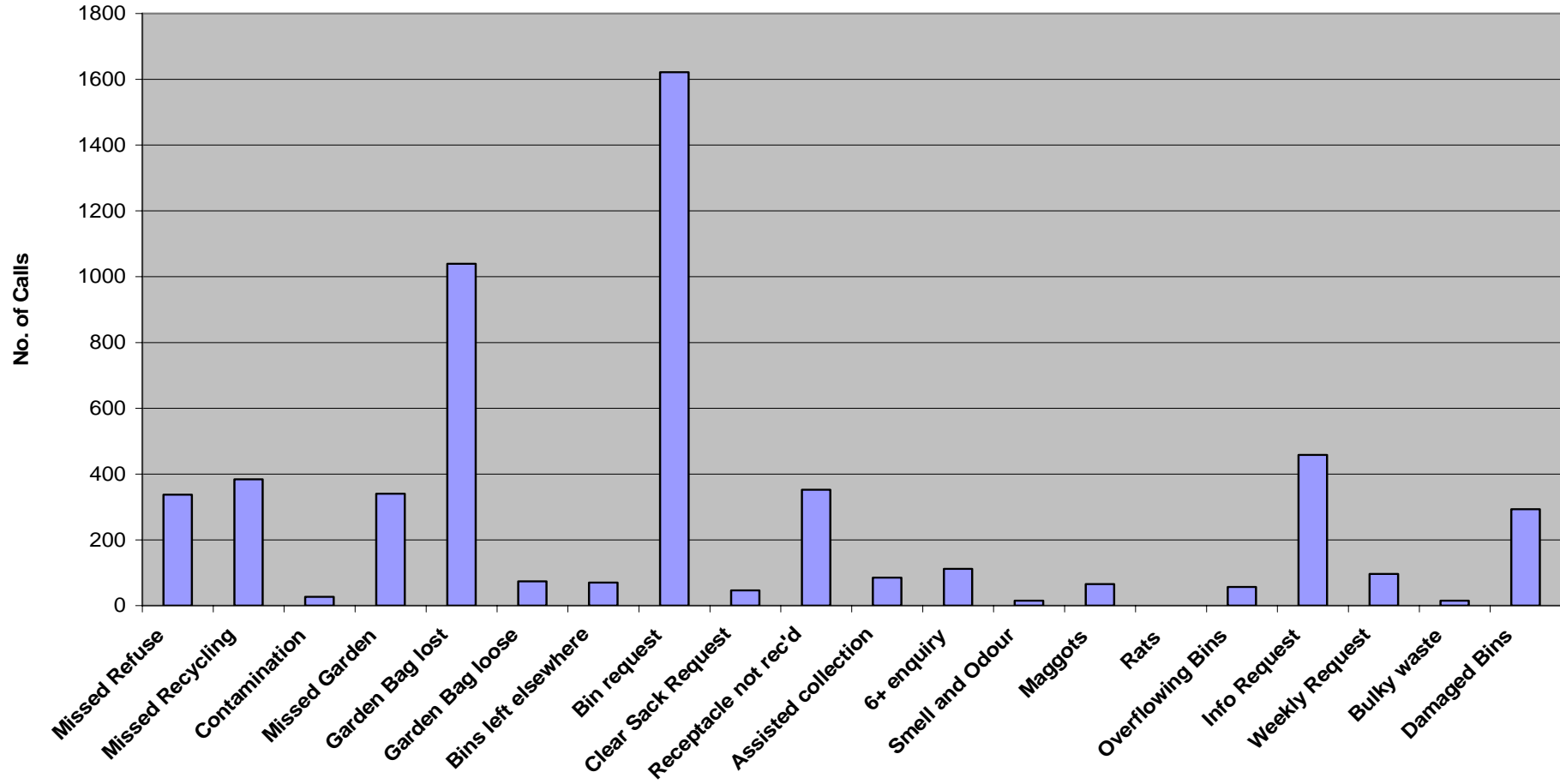
Appendix 1C



Appendix 1D



Recycle for Winchester Call data Analysis (Jan 07 - Oct 07)



REPORT OF THE SPECIAL ADVISORY PANEL (ABC) SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Progress/Comments</u>
That the Leader be informed that the ABC scheme as being rolled out throughout the District is achieving its objectives and that most residents have adapted to it well, with no evidence of health risks).	Roll out of ABC completed 15 July 2007
That the roll out of ABC phase 2 should continue on schedule.	Roll out of ABC completed 15 July 2007
<p>That the current policy of allowing weekly collections to continue in exceptional circumstances be supported where the Council's professional officers deem that fortnightly collections are inappropriate.</p> <p>Such exceptional circumstances may include blocks of flats, residents sharing communal bins and dwellings with difficult front to rear access.</p>	<p>Individual circumstances continue to be assessed on an ongoing basis. Three hundred householders written to and where requested individual visits made by waste advisers.</p> <p>To date 1,400 premises mainly in the City Centre continue to receive weekly collections of refuse.</p>
To continue to encourage local residents to wrap putrescible waste and ensure that bin lids are kept closed in order to minimise the risk of smells, maggots, flies and rodent infestation. Side waste should be kept to an absolute minimum, preferably eliminated.	Programme of publicity and education being developed subject to the ongoing availability of waste advisers and resources.

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Progress/Comments</u>
That all residents who have raised concerns with the Panel be contacted to discuss their concerns and reassess their individual circumstances.	Letters sent out to all and visits made by Waste Advisers to discuss their individual needs.
To retain the services of the Council's recycling advisers for a further period after the roll out of ABC phase 2 in order to continue the recycling education programme.	Dependent upon the availability of resources/ waste advisers. As yet no resources available to employ them for 2008/09 onwards.
Offer to collect bins from within the curtilage of a property if notified that the householder was away on holiday, subject to this being a cost-effective proposal. Consideration should be given to offering this service for a trial period in order to gauge the level of take-up and the potential longer term cost implications.	Considered by Officers but not recommend to Cabinet due to security risk presented to householder's property whilst on holidays.
That consideration is given to setting up a scheme for collection of glass for recycling from commercial premises in Winchester city centre.	Detailed feasibility study required to assess demand, operational requirements, constraints, costs and practical implications.
That a creative communications strategy be developed to encourage behavioural change, following the Phase 2 roll out, including the possible development of a strong network of community champions and use of feedback cards. This could include a competition to find a solution to the problem of green waste bags blowing away once they have been emptied and a sticker to remind residents of the importance of wrapping waste.	<p>Being developed – delivery of communications strategy dependent upon availability of waste advisers to implement.</p> <p>New design of garden waste bag developed with manufactures and will be tested shortly.</p>
That planning guidance is introduced to ensure that adequate space is allowed for bin storage as part of all new developments and extensions.	Draft policy prepared adoption being progressed.

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Progress/Comments</u>
To investigate the use of anaerobic digesters as one method of dealing with domestic food waste. (Done see comments on food waste)	Home digester currently being trialled through Project Integra. Further report to be brought to Members for consideration once outcomes are known.
To consider promoting the role that home composting can play, for example via the 'master composters' scheme.	Home composting actively promoted through the WRAP Scheme. Over 4,000 discounted home composters were sold in the district between 2005/07. Further scheme being explored for 2008.
The use of feedback cards, drawing residents' attention to the way they are managing their waste, should be considered.	Implemented and ongoing. Effectiveness dependent upon future availability of waste advisers.
That a small local annual user survey be introduced to provide regular feedback and help prevent minor concerns becoming major issues.	Implementation – dependent upon the availability of waste advisers.
That a watching brief be kept on potential problems if there is very hot weather following the phase 2 roll out.	Implemented and ongoing

Potential Options to Increase Recycling Rates

***Note: Options described are in addition to current ABC Scheme**

Option	Description*	Estimated Increase in Recycling Rate	Additional Estimated Collection Tonnages	Estimated Additional Cost	Comments/Barriers
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive promotion of home composters and digesters • Use of waste advisers to maximise participation, and control of contamination • Increase diversion rate of 'kerbside' scheme (including mixed paper) to 80% of targeted materials through increased publicity, education and promotion • Reducing side waste • Extensive communications programme aimed at reducing food waste and promoting home digesters. 	1– 2%	<p>Dry recyclables + 500 tonnes</p> <p>Reduction in overall waste arisings not quantifiable at this stage.</p>	<p>Waste Advisers £70k pa</p> <p>+£20K Cost of promoting suitable containers and general publicity</p> <p>Extensive communications programme aimed at reducing food waste at home and use of home digesters.</p> <p>Financed from ABC roll out savings carried forward to 2008/09.</p>	<p>Recommended by ABC Review Panel but not envisaged within draft 2008/09 budget</p> <p>Difficult to evaluate effectiveness of home composters and digesters.</p> <p>Ongoing promotion and support required.</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of on street recycling bins 	0	Minimal	<p>Revenue and capital costs dependent upon the number of and location of bins provided</p> <p>Revenue dependent upon the number of and location of bins provided</p>	<p>Contamination of recyclables with litter will be a problem.</p> <p>Insignificant amounts of materials likely to be collected</p> <p>Good public relations initiative.</p>

Option	Description*	Estimated increase in Recycling Rate	Additional Estimated Collection Tonnages (pa)	Estimated Additional Cost	Comments/Barriers
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fortnightly kerbside collection of glass and textiles 	2-4%	Glass - 700-900 tonnes Textiles - 200 - 300 tonnes	£450k Contractor's collection costs (subject to negotiation) Capital costs of providing baskets £500k Increased costs associated with publicity, education and promotion	Popular with customers In significant increase in recycling rates resulting from major expenditure.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weekly collection of food waste 	8-10%	Food - 4,000 tonnes	Significant increase in collection costs and would require additional capital funding for containers. Cost estimated at £900k revenue and £700k capital depending on methodology adopted	Substantial processing capacity is required within a reasonable distance a prerequisite. No processing or treatment facilities available. Availability and sustainability of markets for the materials collected.