

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WASTE AND RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH  
GROUP**

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**NOVEMBER 2009**



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**Contact:**

**Dave Gordon**

**Democratic Services Officer**

Gloucester City Council

T 01452 396167

North Warehouse

F 01452 396212

The Docks

E [david.gordon@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:david.gordon@gloucester.gov.uk)

Gloucester, GL1 2EP

[www.gloucester.gov.uk](http://www.gloucester.gov.uk)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to set out the Recommendations of the Waste and Recycling Task & Finish Group. The Group commenced a review of Gloucester City Council's proposed waste and recycling service redesign in September 2009, and also called on witnesses from the County Council, Enterprise, the Furniture Recycling Project and other external parties (e.g Friends of the Earth, Emmaus) to give a wider view as to the Council's current priorities. Local residents were also consulted at a meeting in November 2009.
- 1.2. In addition, the report makes suggestions that will aid the success of the scheme upon its implementation and help predict likely operational difficulties, which can therefore be addressed prior to the system 'going live' in February 2010. Finally, the report identifies issues that should be addressed in the future development of the scheme.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Membership of the Task and Finish Group**

- 2.1.1. The Task and Finish Group had cross-party membership comprising of –

Councillor Jonathan Whittaker (Spokesperson);  
Councillor Kate Haigh; and  
Councillor Gordon Taylor.

### **2.2. Terms of Reference**

- 2.2.1. The Terms of Reference were approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 September 2009, as follows -

- To scrutinise the proposed service redesign before its implementation in February 2010.
- To evaluate the materials being collected as part of the service redesign and whether there should be any changes to this.
- To investigate the problems faced by residents in some forms of housing (e.g. flats, multi-occupier residences) and also the incorporation of facilities in the planning and design process.
- To investigate the potential offered by other organisations (e.g. Furniture Recycling Project) in supporting recycling.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. The Waste & Recycling Task & Finish Group recommends that the Cabinet gives careful consideration to this report when discussing the service redesign. The committee requests a written response by 15 February 2010 outlining how the Cabinet intends to address the following key issues identified by the group:
- 3.1.1. Food waste caddy demonstrations should use newspaper or no liner (paragraph 4.2.5).
  - 3.1.2. Recycling should be offered for refuse bins and recycling boxes at the end of their life.
  - 3.1.3. Schemes coming to planning should have sufficient recycling space built in (paragraph 4.6.6). This should be referred to Planning Policy Sub Committee.
  - 3.1.4. To approach the County Council about a trial of cardboard being collected with green waste (paragraph 4.4.2). The Cabinet should commission a business appraisal regarding the inclusion of this service in conjunction with the County (the waste disposal authority) (appendix 1, email from County Council).
  - 3.1.5. To explore greater co-operation with Furniture Recycling Project including the possibility of the organisation taking over bulky items collection and then only passing non-recyclable items on to the City Council for disposal (paragraphs 4.2.9 and 4.7.1). In any case, to study ways of reducing the level of bulky waste destined for landfill.
  - 3.1.6. After the establishment of the new service, a further extension of the doorstep collection alternating items to be collected in the dry recycling box, for example:

Week 1: Paper, glass, plastic bottles, tetrapaks

Week 2: Cans, metals, glass, textiles (card to be considered)

- Approach Knowaste green nappy centre in Birmingham with a view to trialling the recycling of nappies and sanitary waste.
- Council premises to champion recycling (e.g. corn starch cups to replace plastic at events, recycling glass and cans, and food waste). This should involve at least as many

forms of recycling as for domestic residences, and involve all Council premises.

- 3.1.7. Mini bring sites for flats and HMOs where bins are impractical.(paragraph 4.2.8). Liaise with the local residents to ensure that provisions are as suitable as possible.
- 3.1.8. To liaise with the County Council to ensure that school recycling schemes mirror those for domestic residences as closely as possible, allowing children to apply the lessons learnt about recycling in school to their homes and vice versa.
- 3.1.9. Act to ensure that large bring sites are providing recycling for goods not catered for by Council collections.
- 3.1.10. Investigate changing rounds where there are areas of anti-social behaviour so as to avoid vandalism of bins (paragraph 4.9.2).
- 3.1.11. Put reminder of service redesign proposals as appropriate in with Council tax information at the end of March 2010; some properties are not reached with leaflets (paragraph 4.9.3).
- 3.1.12. Investigate adding eco-bulbs containing heavy metals to kerbside recycling provision in the future (paragraph 4.9.4).
- 3.1.13. Publicise the provision of assisted collection for disabled citizens as part of the service redesign.
- 3.1.14. Investigate alternative facilities for disabled residents, such as clipped wheeled bins / mini sack trucks.
- 3.1.15. Encourage the publicising of the new scheme via the local media (specifically TV) at the launch of the service redesign. Also publicise this report via a press release should it go before Council (paragraph 4.9.5).
- 3.1.16. Conduct research into Gloucester City Home's responsibilities with regards to mini bring centres, and co-operate with them in introducing them as appropriate.
- 3.1.17. Consider introducing bagged collections where the use of bins would cause an impediment to pedestrians and clutter the

street scene. If adopted, ensure that these bags are clearly identified.

- 3.1.18. Encourage Members to identify areas within their wards which may have difficulties implementing the standard service redesign measures.
- 3.1.19. High density areas, and those with poor access / lack of storage space, to have tailor-made solutions (paragraph 4.9.6).
- 3.1.20. To liaise with the County Council to publicise the provision of recycling services not available kerbside at the Hempsted facility (paragraph 4.5.1).

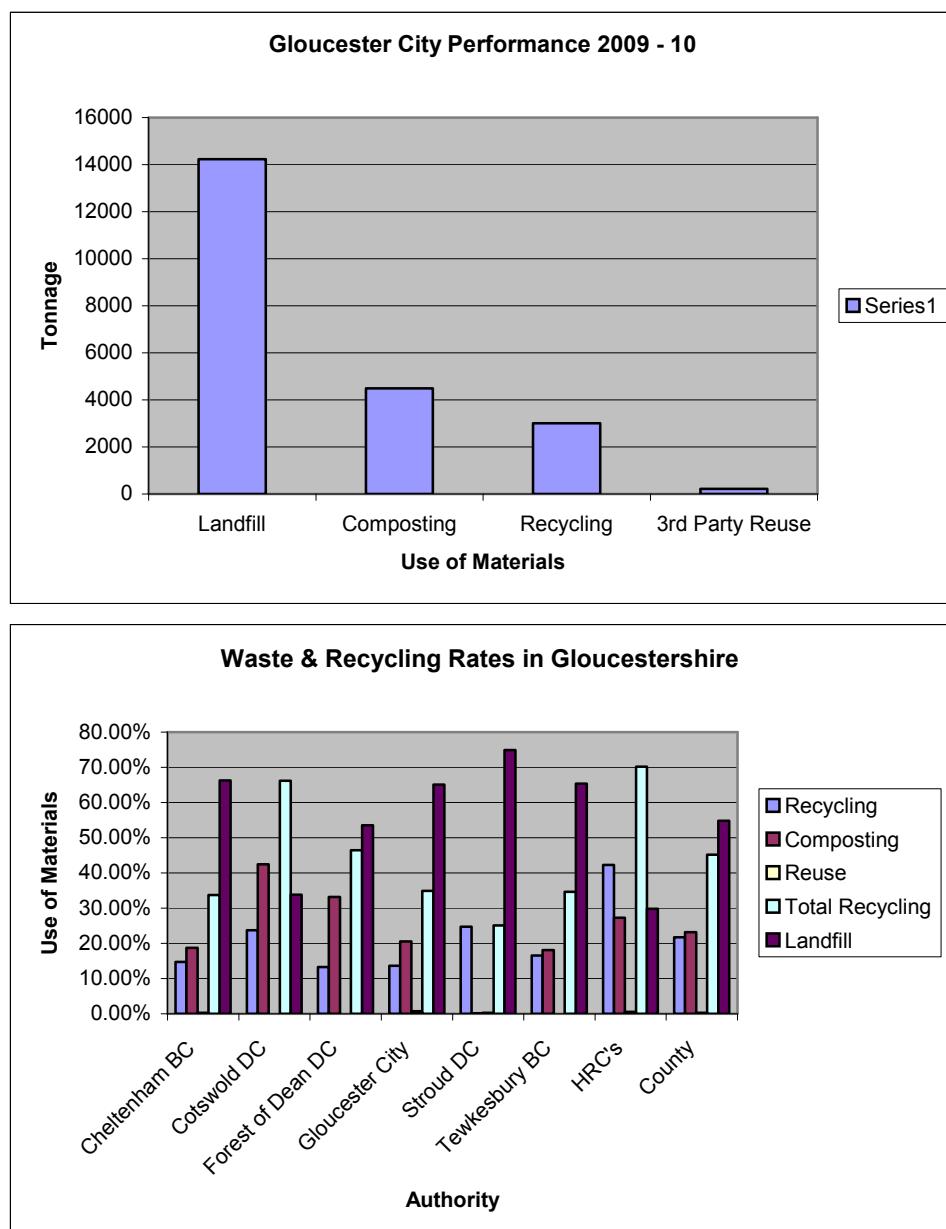
## **4. FINDINGS**

### **4.1. National Policy Context**

- 4.1.1. The policy area of waste and recycling has seen major changes in recent years, as the national Government attempts to increase the level of recycling and minimise the use of landfill. Departments and agencies such as Defra, the Waste & Resources Action Programme and the Environment Agency, as well as initiatives such as the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme have placed local authorities under an obligation to tackle the issue. The DEFRA Waste Strategy requires local authorities to recycle 40% of waste during 2009/10, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020. The Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 and Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 are the key pieces of legislation on the matter, and make the following provisions:
  - Local Authorities should provide for the collection of at least two types of recyclable waste together or individually separated from the rest of the household waste (HWRA 2003, Section 1.3)
  - The Secretary of State shall lay before each House of Parliament a report of the performance a) of each English waste authority in meeting its recycling and composting standards and b) of each English waste collection authority towards meeting the requirement imposed by the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 (HWRA 2003, Section 3.1).
- 4.1.2. The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 places no obligation on local authorities to use one agency to collect waste across all residences under its jurisdiction, collect the same materials from all housing or to choose between re-use and recycling. Instead, they can vary the service provided it meets the requirements listed above. However, it is a responsibility of the agencies involved to compile and maintain data on waste and recycling rates.

## 4.2. Gloucester City Council

- 4.2.1. Stephen Perkins (Waste & Recycling Manager), Sinead Tunney (Waste Product Manager), David Sutton (Group Manager, Housing Services, Streetcare and Community Safety), Martin Shields (Corporate Director Services and Neighbourhoods) and Steve Phelps (Group Manager Financial Services) provided the Group with some information regarding the current state of the Council's policies at a variety of meetings throughout autumn 2009. In addition, Councillor Steve Morgan (Cabinet Member for Environment) attended the final meeting on 17 November 2009.



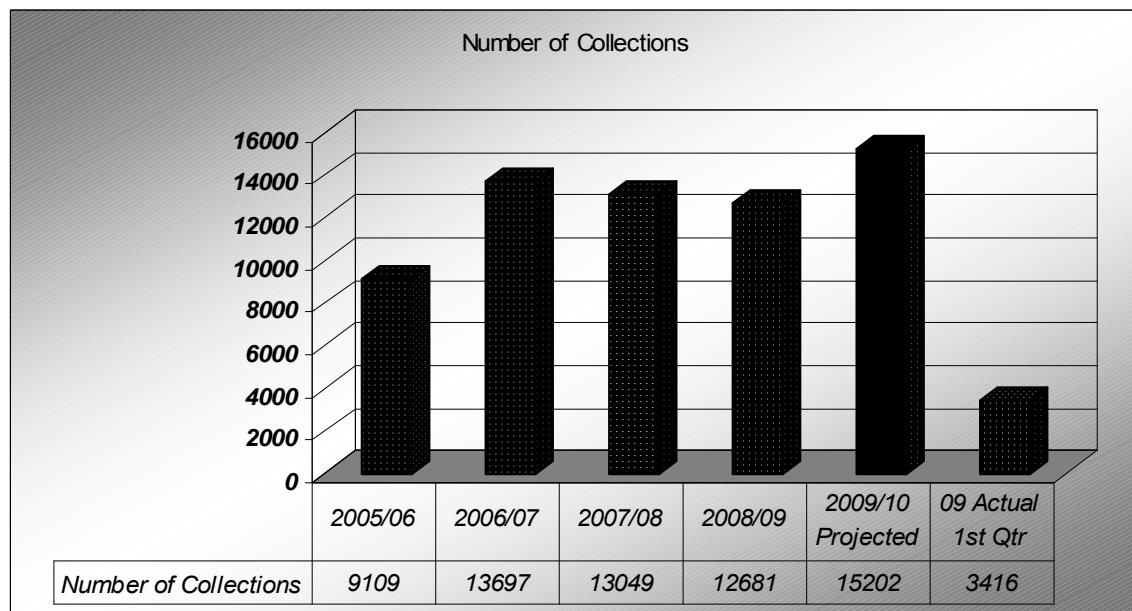
- 4.2.2. The waste service redesign was being driven by the Local Area Agreement for 50% recycling by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010, and will be implemented in February 2010. Failure to achieve the 50% target will impact on the Reward Grant currently allocated to the City Council by the County Council. The service will aim to increase the level of

recycling taking place in Gloucester; the target is for 60% of all waste to be recycled by 2020, and at the time of the review the figure stood at 42%. However, this was a significant improvement on the figure of 31% for 2008-9, and it was intended to reach 50 – 60% by 2010 – 11.

- 4.2.3. A particular concern was how flats or multiple occupancy residences (HMOs) would be incorporated into the scheme. Those living in such accommodation were to be consulted during the spring of 2010, and would receive a revised service based on their needs later in the year.
- 4.2.4. The vehicles to be used in the new service will have four compartments to store separate types of recycling (paper / card, plastic bottles, tins and glass), and a compartment allocated to food as well as provision for household batteries. Categories of items to be recycled had been prioritised, although the allocation of this would be subject to some alteration in light of public consultation. An additional consideration when deciding which items to collect could be the availability of local bring sites, although this could not be relied upon without some further investigation.
- 4.2.5. Food waste will be collected on a weekly basis, with 7 litre caddies provided for internal use. Once filled, their contents will then be transferred to 23 litre caddies for external collection; this material will be compressed and sent to the Dymock and Sharpness facilities. Public information will be provided as part of this to ensure that all residents are aware of the services provided; for example, newspaper, biodegradable bags (to be bought by residents, not provided by the Council) or no lining are all options for the food caddies, but carrier bags are not to be used.
- 4.2.6. Garden waste collection is now provided at 44,500 households after its extension to areas such as Hempstead. It is predicted that this growth will continue as this does not present many difficult problems. However, the regularity of the service may be varied depending on seasonal demand; November – February in particular see very little garden waste being produced when compared to peak periods. The area of garden waste use is evolving rapidly, and the impact of future developments may cause the service to be subject to on-going revision.
- 4.2.7. At the time of the review, the timetable for the service redesign was as follows:

January 2010	Containers to be delivered
February 2010	First weekly collection of food waste, landfill and garden waste on alternate weeks
March-June 2010	Development of service to flats and other, difficult to serve properties

- 4.2.8. There was also the potential for mini-recycling centres to be used as a suitable solution for some problematic areas; however, this would have to be in conjunction with Gloucester City Homes and local residents, and could require substantial work. The County Council have also provided some funding to establish focus groups that could provide valuable information on this.
- 4.2.9. One particular problem has been the collection of bulky waste. There is still a waiting list for this service, although it has been reduced from 6 weeks to 3 – 4 weeks. The number of such collections has also increased, from 9,109 in 2005 – 6 to a projected 15,202 in 2009 – 10. However, this service is not ideally suited to the objective of increased recycling, with much of the material not being used in this way and only the timber being extracted for future re-use. The Furniture Recycling Project have expressed a willingness and ability to help resolve this, which will be discussed later in this report. The possibility of recycling metal has some potential, although can be subject to volatile market prices for the materials. Officers stated that bins and recycling boxes were, in themselves, recyclable.



- 4.2.10. Members received a short version of the road shows being provided for local residents during the autumn of 2009. Gloucester City Homes, the County Council and Enterprise were also involved in these events, which were designed as a two-way communication process (with services subject to change depending on feedback from the public). As an example of the impact of these events, card has now been added to the list of materials to be collected by the new vehicles.

### **4.3. Visit to Rose Farm, Dymock**

- 4.3.1. Members visited the Rose Farm facility on 25 September 2009 to gain an understanding of the processes involved in In-Vessel Composting (IVC). The facility takes food and green waste and composts it in a large concrete vessel and raised to a set temperature for 2 days. The

mix is then moved into another vessel and the process is repeated, after which the compost is placed in heaps, tested and is then suitable for use. The process is scientifically monitored and all stages. The facility accepts waste from inside and outside the County, from waste authorities and private contracts such as the Glastonbury Festival.

- 4.3.2. The owner of the facility also discussed the possible benefits of anaerobic digestion of food waste which can be used to produce electricity. However, a guaranteed volume would be required to make this viable.

#### 4.4. Gloucestershire County Council

- 4.4.1. Gloucestershire County Council was represented at the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009 by Tony Childs (Waste Services Manager). The County Council had tried to provide an anaerobic digester for waste, but the bidder had pulled out in 2007 ending the scheme. However, there has been some movement in this area, with the Dymock facility also investigating the potential for service provision.
- 4.4.2. The County has also inquired as to the possibility of placing plain cardboard in with garden waste. There was the potential for this to take place, but several problems emerged. Firstly, it was often the case that, when this happened, inappropriate cardboard (e.g. tetrapaks) would be placed in the garden waste. In addition, seasonal changes in demand could lead to periods of the year when cardboard would be the dominant material, lowering the quality of any produce made using refuse. Finally, such a policy would place an additional burden on waste collection agencies in terms of sorting materials. However, Cory Environmental had agreed to trial such a service, and an offer had been made to the City and County Councils. A subsequent email from the County Council gave further information on this proposal (see appendix 1).
- 4.4.3. The matter of recycling at schools had emerged during earlier meetings; the County Council allowed schools to access recycling by signing a contract, a service which had been promoted across the region. Those not joining the system were listed at the County Council, who were seeking to ensure compliance. Whilst this service did accrue a cost to those signed up, this was less than the cost of using a trade waste bin. The County has also targeted youth groups to promote the message on recycling; from April – October 2009 they visited 49 schools, scouts groups and similar organisations, using drama sessions to reinforce the importance of recycling and re-use. It was also emphasised that, by encouraging children to discuss these matters with parents, pressure could be applied to families to increase their levels of recycling.
- 4.4.4. In terms of funding, the County Council has provided the City with £380,000 for diverting waste from the landfill towards recycling. There is also an additional £100,000 on offer to Councils who meet long-term targets for diverting materials away from landfill. It is estimated that this

should make the change in service provision cost neutral over the period 2009 – 12, reducing costs after this period. The pressure caused by the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme would also encourage moves towards recycling, as should materials not be diverted away from landfill then charges running into millions of pounds could easily be accrued.

#### **4.5. Visit to Hempsted**

- 4.5.1. A visit to the County facility took place on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009. This was organised in conjunction with Roger Smith (Gloucestershire County Council). It was notable that a wide range of materials could be recycled at this facility, and that hours also offered considerable availability for users of the site. It also offered options which went far beyond the potential for Council provision; however, it is not suitable for all customers given its location and design, and kerbside collection or bring sites will continue to be the main focus for most households.

#### **4.6. Enterprise**

- 4.6.1. Keith Rowe (Enterprise General Manager) and Lee Thompson (Enterprise Waste & Recycling manager) provided information to the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Enterprise have a 15 year contract with the City Council, which has approximately 13 years left to run as of the time of the meeting. Joint work is conducted via the Streetcare partnership; a target of 50% recycling has been set, although Enterprise were confident that they could exceed this.
- 4.6.2. Monitoring this target will be conducted by a variety of bodies (e.g. Defra, the Environment Agency). Enterprise will provide the raw data, using weigh bridges to collect information on the amounts of refuse being allocated to different pathways. This should give some ability to estimate the progress of the new service one month after its implementation. It is also hoped that area-by-area data of waste and recycling rates can be calculated in conjunction with the City Council, although it is intended to tackle any issues arising through education rather than enforcement (at least in the early stages of the process). The decision to move to enforcement will be for the City Council to decide.
- 4.6.3. It is anticipated that transient populations and areas with limited space for wheeled bins may prove the most problematic for the service redesign. In the latter case, bags (clearly bearing the City Council logo) may be presented kerbside, although this requires further analysis. This question has formed part of the consultation undertaken in recent months. The issue of space has also led to some areas not being provided with garden waste bins; on-site composting has been suggested as a solution to this issue. Given the variations in living accommodation across Gloucester, it is possible that a street-by-street plan may be required in some areas.
- 4.6.4. As per the legal requirements, all residents should have access to at least 2 streams of recycling provision. Mini-bring sites could be one

way of meeting this requirement; these would be emptied at least once per week, with more collections possible if problems emerge with over-demand. Focus groups have discussed this, and should such a plan be implemented Enterprise will recruit 'champions' from the local residents to ensure two-way communications are effective.

- 4.6.5. Standard weekly collections will be taking place to ensure that confusion with the new service is minimised. Card and plastic bottles will be part of service provision, whilst the tonnage carried by the vehicles has also increased. Should technology improve, or residents demand service alterations, then the process will evolve accordingly. In addition, the data collected for half-yearly composition rates may have an impact, although the City Council is not constrained to use only this information.
- 4.6.6. Planners have been approached by Enterprise and the City Council to ensure that they consider waste and recycling in their designs for new housing. Bins, chutes and other amenities should be included in their designs as best fits the needs of residents, although use of chutes as an 'easy option' should be discouraged.

#### **4.7. Furniture Recycling Project**

- 4.7.1. Christine Nash attended the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009 to represent the organisation. She noted that the minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009 recorded concerns over the waiting list for their service; however, although this was 5 – 7 days at present, this was some time less than the bulky waste collection service (see paragraph 3.2.9). They also had a volunteer member of staff who worked at the City Council and could co-ordinate any joint efforts. She was also concerned about the lack of awareness regarding the organisation's services at the City Council.
- 4.7.2. The Project had contacted the City Council to arrange discussions regarding the removal of furniture from the waste stream and their allocation to disadvantaged members of the community. In the last 6 months, 4,904 items had been collected from Gloucester, with 1,761 households having been visited; in total, this accounted for 231 tonnes of material diverted from landfill. The recently appointed Waste & Recycling Manager had been given this programme as part of the post's responsibilities, and the representative argued that a more co-ordinated approach could increase the amount of furniture being re-used through the Project.
- 4.7.3. Staff involved in any such expansion of the service would need to be trained. A project at Tewkesbury had collected approximately 2,000 goods and dropped them at the docks, but the lack of trained drivers led to much of this material being damaged in transit. Provision of additional vans and trained drivers would increase the ability to recycle and re-use furniture; Emmaus and the British Heart Foundation could also be partners in such a campaign. The Furniture Recycling Project had also undertaken some joint working with the County Council under

the private finance initiative and had the expertise to test any goods involved.

#### **4.8. Friends of the Earth**

- 4.8.1. Mary Newton represented the Friends of the Earth at the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009. She informed the meeting that anaerobic digestion has seen great improvements in recent years; in 2005 it had not been common practice, but was now being advocated by Defra as preferable to home composting. As well as compost, it also produces gas which can be put into the national gas grid (a practice which has been spreading across continental Europe) or used in H<sub>2</sub> fuel cells, and has the lowest environmental impact of any current system. The County's response to this can be seen in paragraph 3.4.1.
- 4.8.2. The meeting was also informed as to the approach taken in Somerset regarding education and enforcement. Here, people leaving out inappropriate materials would be visited by officers rather than face any immediate action or sanction. It is vital to ensure that local communities are aware of service provision; attendees were broadly supportive of an approach emphasising education over enforcement.
- 4.8.3. The representative also enquired as to the sharing of profits. She was informed that Enterprise would receive any initial profits, although profit share could take place if the figures involved were sufficiently high.

#### **4.9 Public Consultation Event**

- 4.9.1 A public meeting was organised for 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009, and was held in the Council Chamber. As well as approximately 18 representatives of local residents, the meeting was attended by Cllr Morgan (Cabinet Member for Environment), Martin Shields (Corporate Director Services and Neighbourhoods), David Sutton (Group Manager Housing Services, Streetcare and Community Safety) and Sinead Tunney (Waste and Recycling Service Manager) were in attendance to answer questions, and Sharon Goode (Gloucester City Homes) also provided some information. The members of the public had been requested to represent areas of Gloucester with issues regarding the implementation of the mainstream service redesign (e.g. flats, HMOs, areas of dense housing with little room for bin storage).
- 4.9.2 The matter of anti-social behaviour and the vandalism of bins was raised. In response, the Group Manager Housing Services, Streetcare and Community Safety informed the meeting that action can be taken (although evidence gathering could often prove problematic).
- 4.9.3 It also became apparent that many in the less typical residences were not obtaining the Council's publicity literature in the run-up to the service redesign. Shared letterboxes, problems around language or a high turnover of residents all appeared to contribute to these problems.

- 4.9.4 One member of the public also raised the issue of long-life light bulbs containing mercury; could these be recycled? In response, it was stated that the second phase of the service redesign after February 2010 would tackle this issue, along with other specific difficulties. The process was bound to continue evolving after the initial rollout.
- 4.9.5 In terms of the publicity surrounding the proposed service redesign, some concern was expressed that some areas of Gloucester had not held road shows or similar events. Council representatives responded that the aim of the first stage of the publicity campaign had been to maximise the audience rather than target specific groups. Supermarkets had only been one element of the campaign; the city centre had also staged events. The aim of this early part of the road shows had been to establish a feel for the general public reaction to proposals; the next phase was to be more specific and detailed. The local press and radio had also covered the events, with taster leaflets also distributed to raise the profile. The Waste & Recycling Service Manager added that not everyone will be part of the service redesign on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010, and that some tenants were more likely to see changes towards the end of 2010. In terms of Matson & Robinswood, there was to be an event on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009 to consult with local residents.
- 4.9.6 The Cabinet Member for Environment also informed the meeting that the service redesign was not a 'one size fits all' project, and that individual circumstances would be addressed. Consultations with Gloucester City Homes and tenants' groups had been taking place from the start of the process and would be ongoing, but 100% coverage of all residences would not be possible immediately. The Waste & Recycling Service Manager would be looking at locations such as this. A Clapham Court roadshow event was to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009; in terms of sanctions against those in such residences not abiding by any alteration to the service, some authorities were keen to do this but Gloucester City Council would look at other means (e.g. education) before enforcement action was taken. Enterprise had also appointed a recycling officer to help with this. Government policy obliged local authorities to offer at least 2 forms of recycling provision to all residences by the end of 2010.

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

5.1 The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the following for their contribution to the review –

- Councillor Steve Morgan (Cabinet Member for Environment)
- Martin Shields (Corporate Director Services and Neighbourhoods, Gloucester CC)
- David Sutton (Group Manager, Housing Services, Streetcare and Community Safety, Gloucester CC)
- Stephen Perkins (Waste & Recycling Manager, Gloucester CC)
- Sinead Tunney (Waste Product Manager, Gloucester CC)
- Steve Phelps (Group Manager Financial Services, Gloucester CC)

- Tony Childs (Waste Services Manager, Gloucestershire CC)
- Roger Smith (Gloucestershire CC)
- Keith Rowe (General Manager, Enterprise)
- Lee Thompson (Waste & Recycling Manager, Enterprise)
- Christine Nash (Furniture Recycling Project)
- Mary Newton (Friends of the Earth)
- Sharon Goode (Gloucester City Homes)
- 18 residents who attended the Public Consultation Event

**Gloucester City Cardboard Recycling – scenarios if card were added to garden waste for composting.**

At the Gloucester City Council Waste & Recycling Task and Finish Group meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October they members requested that a report be prepared by the County Council setting out the figures on cardboard recycling prior to the meeting on 17 November 2009. The financial implications of following three scenarios are set out below:

Certain assumptions have been made in drawing up this table;

- ? • Total residual waste remains static at 31,470
- ? • Cardboard in residual waste remains static at 6.20%
- ? • Process costs start at the assumed rate £30/t and grow by 3% pa.
- ? • Cost to landfill starts at £70/t and grow by £10pa.
- ? • Any potential savings does not include transportation & bulking costs.

**Scenario 1**

If Gloucester City captured 30% of cardboard between 2009/10 and 2013/14 there is potentially a saving of £170,000 in disposal costs. This shows a 19% reduction in costs when comparing to the existing process. With a 30% capture rate in 2009/10 NI192 Recycling and Composting would go up from 35% to 36%.

**Scenario 2**

If Gloucester City captured 50% of cardboard between 2009/10 and 2013/14 there is potentially a saving of £284,000 in disposal costs. This shows a 32% reduction in costs when comparing to the existing process. With a 50% capture rate in 2009-10 NI192 Recycling and Composting could potentially go up from 35% to 37%.

**Scenario 3**

If Gloucester City capture 70% of cardboard between 2009/10 and 2013/14 there is potentially a saving of £397,000 in disposal costs. This shows a 45% reduction in costs when comparing to the existing system. With a 70% capture rate in 2009-10 NI192 Recycling and Composting would go up from 35% to 37%.

The above demonstrates that if cardboard was recycled instead of being landfilled between 2009/10 and 2013/14 there is potentially a saving of between £170k and £397k. However, the figures do not include any additional costs for collection, transportation and bulking and treatment prices would have to be agreed. In addition there are a number of quality issues which would have to be addressed if card were to be added to garden waste on a permanent basis.