



Increasing Participation in Recycling in Flats

An Overview & Scrutiny Task Group

October 2009

Councillor HB Patel (Chair)
Councillor Clues
Councillor Thomas

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Chair's Foreword

This task group was set up to investigate ways of increasing participation in recycling in flats as a way on improving historically relatively low recycling rates in Brent. The council has set a target of 40% of domestic waste to be recycled in its Local Area Agreement 2008/11, which is supported by the introduction of compulsory recycling. However compulsion is unlikely to have the same impact on recycling rates in flats in comparison to houses.

Our work has led us to believe that the issue is not just about meeting a target. It is about service provision and equality. We believe that Brent Council must sell itself as a recycling borough where our most deprived communities can expect the same level of service provision as the most affluent.



In undertaking this review we received evidence from a wide range of witnesses, which included visiting other authorities and talking to a number of residents and landlords. The task group also undertook a tour of a range of estates in Brent. My colleagues Cllrs. Clues, Thomas and I would like to thank the following for contributing to our discussions and findings:

- Keith Balmer, Director of Streetcare, Brent Council
- Chris Whyte, Head of Environment Management, Brent Council
- David Pietropaoli, Waste Policy Manager, Brent Council
- Tanya O'Rourke, Waste Education and Environment Officer, Brent Council
- Edward Yendluri Westminster Council
- Matthew Homer Islington Council
- Tenants & Landlords from the following:
 - Brent Housing Partnership
 - Stadium Housing Association
 - ASRA Housing Association
 - Paddington Churches Housing Association
 - Fortungate Housing Association
 - Hillside Housing Association

I hope the findings and recommendations set out in this report can provide the building blocks on which sustained improvement in recycling can be made.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow task group members Cllrs. Clues and Thomas for their support and efforts during the course of our review. Their dedication and proactive support ensured a lively and productive debate, which lead us in reaching our findings.

Finally I would like to thank Jacqueline Casson from Policy & Regeneration for her support during this review.

Executive Summary

This report sets out the key findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny task group investigation into increasing participation in recycling in flats.

The task group was set up to identify how participation rates could be increased on estates in Brent to help the council reach its Local Area Agreement target of 40% recycling by 2011. This target is unlikely to be reached without finding a solution for flats.

The task group has taken evidence from a number of sources including visits to other boroughs, a tour of sites in Brent and focussed discussions with a number of residents and registered social landlords.

Key findings are as follows:

Understanding our local population to raise the profile of recycling

The task group used mosaic information¹ to identify ways in which each population type can be persuaded to participate. The task group concluded that it would like to see Brent sell itself as a recycling borough and hold an annual waste reduction and recycling conference to inform and involve local people.

Resources available for recycling from flats

The task group found that only fifty percent of flats currently have recycling facilities and found that the resources currently targeted on increasing this number are unlikely to do so. We are concerned that this means that many of those who currently do not receive a service are in our most deprived communities. We would also like to ensure that the green agenda, particularly waste reduction, recycling and reuse should be a narrative that runs through every aspect of service provision, including housing and planning.

Making recycling easy

The task group believes that as well as making recycling facilities available to all, the key to increasing the tonnage of recycling collected is to make it as easy as possible to recycle. The review looked at different solutions, including near entry sites, door to door collection and co-mingled collection. Although more expensive than the current near entry source separated method currently used for those flats that have facilities the task group would like to see the council explore further the use of co-mingled collections for flats.

Communication, education and involving residents

Our discussions with local residents highlighted that besides the availability of facilities information and education was frequently cited as a barrier to participation. Our findings set out a number of ways to overcome this, including the development of a network of 'Recycling Champions' to encourage and support fellow residents, the involvement of residents from the start when rolling out facilities and a programme of engagement with children and young people.

The finding of the task group will feed into the wider review of waste.

¹ Mosaic Profile: Brent residents living in flats produced by Environment & Culture

Recommendations

1. That an annual waste reduction and recycling conference is held aimed at informing and involving local people. This should include a programme of annual recycling awards.
2. That recycling facilities particularly the use of new technologies are a priority consideration in all planning applications for flats in the borough.
3. That Environment and Culture review how resources are allocated within the department with a view to redirecting resources towards increasing the number of flats that receive a recycling service.
4. That Environment and Culture explore further the use of co-mingled recycling collection for flats. This should include setting up a pilot scheme to ascertain the impact on recycling in Brent.
5. That a reusable bag or sack for collecting recycling is provided for all flats in Brent that do not receive a green box service. The bag should have printed on it information on it about what to recycle.
6. That a network of recycling champions is developed on estates in Brent to support and encourage fellow residents to recycle and to link into the recycling service. Recycling champions should also be invited on Neighbourhood Working ward walkabout and other consultation and engagement events.
7. That a programme of engagement for children and young people is developed, particularly in areas where new recycling facilities are being rolled out.
8. That the service ensures that residents are involved from the start in the roll out of facilities on estates, particularly when deciding where bins are sited and how best to provide information
9. That the task group supports the implementation of the newly developed communications and involvement strategy for recycling in flats.
10. That clear and consistent signage on how to recycle is used across the borough
11. The leader of the council's annual council tax letter includes a message about the cost and importance of recycling and an information line number.

1. Introduction & Scope of the Review

Improving recycling rates in Brent is one of the council's key priorities as outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2006-10. The Corporate Strategy sets a target of 30% of waste reused or recycled by 2010. The Government's Waste Strategy for England 2007 set new targets for recycling and composting of household waste. These are at least 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015, and 50% by 2020. The first of these targets, 40%, was built in to the council's Local Area Agreement 2008/11.

Recycling rates in Brent have historically been relatively low. For 2007/8 the council fell short of its target of 25% capturing only 22% of waste for recycling. When compared to other boroughs Brent consistently appeared near the bottom for dry recyclables and near the top for wet recyclables.

In its final report for 2007/8 the Budget Panel recommended that further provision of recycling facilities should be considered alongside the introduction of compulsory waste recycling. The Budget Panel was particularly concerned that the lack of recycling facilities in some properties in the borough, particularly flats, would hinder progress in increasing recycling rates in Brent. Records show that only around 50% of flats have recycling facilities.

There are no figures available for participation rates in Brent, though work carried out on behalf of Brent by WRAP² in 2007 suggests that there is scope for Brent to significantly increase the amount of recycling collected from flats³. Records of which flats have recycling facilities and what sort of facilities they have are incomplete, but work is currently being completed to create an up to date database.

The task group was set up to identify ways through which participation in recycling in flats could be increased. To do this the scope suggested members could:

- Visit sites in the borough to look at current practices
- Talk to tenants and residents group to identify issues and potential solutions.
- Talk to registered social landlords to identify their role in increasing participation in recycling.
- Visit other local authorities who have introduced pilot schemes aimed at improving collection rates.

2. Methodology

In order to complete the work identified in the scope and produce a set of recommendations that will deliver increased participation in recycling in flats the task group undertook the following research.

- Reviewed research on increasing participation in recycling, particularly research related to flats. This included Beacon Council information
- Talked to a number of witnesses. These included:

² WRAP is an organisation that helps individuals, businesses and local authorities to reduce waste and recycle more.

³ Technical Memo for Estates Recycling Services for London Borough of Brent

- Keith Balmer, Director of Streetcare, Brent Council
 - Chris Whyte, Head of Environment Management, Brent Council
 - David Pietropaoli, Waste Policy Manager, Brent Council
 - Tanya O'Rourke, Waste Education and Environment Officer, Brent Council
 - Edward Yendluri Westminster Council
 - Matthew Homer Islington Council
 - Tenants & Landlords from the following:
 - Brent Housing Partnership
 - Stadium Housing Association
 - ASRA Housing Association
 - Paddington Churches Housing Association
 - Fortungate Housing Association
 - Hillside Housing Association
- Reviewed the technical memo for *Estates Recycling Services in Brent* produced by London Remade for WRAP 2007
 - Reviewed *Recycling Collections for Flats* produced by WRAP in August 2009
 - Undertook a tour of sites in Brent
 - Visited the London Boroughs of Westminster and Islington to identify best practice
 - Held a meeting with local RSL's including BHP and with local residents to identify the barriers to recycling and what would need to happen to increase participation.
 - Used a Mosaic profiling report produced by the Street Care team to identify our local population types that live in flats and their key characteristics.

3. Membership

Councillor HB Patel (Chair)
Councillor Clues
Councillor Thomas

4. Context

Local

There are 99,991 households in Brent with almost 46.8% of properties being flats⁴. The 2001 census identified that 27% of dwellings in Brent were purpose built and 18% were part of a converted or shared house. Flats that are in converted houses will be serviced by a green box collection. It is therefore increasing the participation in recycling of residents in the 27% of flats in purpose built blocks that this review will focus on.

⁴ Figures taken from the 2001 census as reported in Mosaic Profile: Brent residents living in flats produced by Environment & Culture

Wrap Report

In 2007 the council received funding from WRAP to engage London Remade to undertake a survey of estates recycling in Brent. This included an inventory of local authority estate blocks without recycling facilities, an analysis on estates tonnage data and research into recycling options for estates. The resulting report, *Estates Recycling Services in Brent*, states that tonnage data provided by Brent Council shows that 18 kg per household per year recycling is collected from estates (flats) which is significantly lower than the average of 33 kg/hh/yr collected in four of the boroughs they surveyed that provide source separated estate collections and the 67 kg/hh/yr average collected by four other boroughs that provide Co-mingled collections.

The WRAP report sets out options for recycling schemes on estates. These are:

- Bring recycling systems
- Co-mingled Collections
- Door to Door Collections
- Collection points on each story
- Modified chute recycling systems
- Dedicated chute recycling systems
- Food waste collection for estates
- Food waste processing options

Door to Door collection trial

In late 2005 and early 2006 Brent Housing Partnership and Wettons (estates cleaning company) undertook a three month trial of door step recycling⁵. The blocks selected for the trial were:

- Alexander Court 1- 48 & 81-103
- Besant Way 17- 25
- Gauntlett Court 38- 43 & 75-7
- Hyde Court All 27 Flats
- Mead Court 1- 6 & 57- 68
- Rainborough Close 92 - 103 & 104-115

As part of the trial the following actions were taken:

- Wettons provided a leaflet informing residents of the Pilot scheme along with 5 clear plastic sacks to place co-mingled waste in.
- Glass was not collected due to health and safety issues with regard to collecting this waste in plastic bags.
- Wettons' staff were asked to complete a summary page in order to keep a record of the number of bags collected and the locations.
- Initially some residents were confused and left waste at the main entrance to the block, but this did not cause a problem because Wettons were there early to collect. As experience tells that after a few weeks the number of people contributing to a

⁵ This information was extracted from a report by Brent Housing Partnership Board produced following the completion of the pilot scheme.

recycling service tends to reduce, Wettons kept up the supply of leaflets to try and encourage the residents to use the service.

- Just before the Christmas period Wettons carried out a survey in the blocks to ascertain whether or not the residents had any issues with the service. Wettons also tried to encourage the use of the service especially over the Christmas period when waste would be higher than usual.
- During the pilot scheme residents in other areas had asked Wettons to collect recycled waste from their area. They did take this waste but did not record it so that are figures were comparable week on week.

The results of the trial were as follows. The number of tenants recycling averaged 13.50%. The initial period was promising with a 20% uptake. This is broken down into the following areas;

- Alexander Court	10.00 %
- Besant Way	27.78 %
- Hyde Court	20.37 %
- Rainborough Close	10.80 %

Wettons carried out a survey over a few days and a weekend to try and get as many people as possible. Due to language barriers and people refusing to talk to them, they only managed to speak to 30 % of the total dwellings in the pilot scheme area.

Total collection for the 10 week period on this small area amounted to 2.4 tonnes of bulky items. 94.5 % of items collected were recyclable with 5.5 % contamination.

Introduction of compulsory recycling

Compulsory recycling was introduced in the borough in August 2008 to help increase participation rates and reduce the amount and therefore the cost of waste going to landfill. The roll out of this initiative involved providing information, assistance and advice to residents so that they are able to access the kerbside collections service for dry recyclables.

The impact of this initiative has so far been significant. In the first eleven months of being in place the recycling rate has risen from 22% achieved in 2007/8 to 29%. This exceeds the target of 27% set for 2008/9.

Compulsion does not currently apply to flats but if it did it would be unlikely to have the same impact on those living in flats as those in houses. This is because flats in blocks frequently have communal recycling bins which means that it is difficult to know who is recycling and who is not. In addition the logistics of collecting recyclables and taking them down to communal bins means flat dwellers are likely find recycling more challenging.

National

The Government's Waste Strategy for England published in 2007⁶ aims to reduce the overall amount of waste produced. The government's key objectives are to:

⁶ A copy of the strategy can be found at www.defra.gov.uk

- decouple waste growth (in all sectors) from economic growth and put more emphasis on waste prevention and re-use;
- meet and exceed the Landfill Directive diversion targets for biodegradable municipal waste in 2010, 2013 and 2020;
- increase diversion from landfill of non-municipal waste and secure better integration of treatment for municipal and non-municipal waste;
- secure the investment in infrastructure needed to divert waste from landfill and for the management of hazardous waste; and
- get the most environmental benefit from that investment, through increased recycling of resources and recovery of energy from residual waste using a mix of technologies.

The aim is to create incentives that will push producers, retailers, consumers and local authorities towards waste prevention, re use and recycling and away from disposal. One of the key drivers for local authorities is the increase in landfill tax escalator by £8 per tonne per year from 2008 to at least 2010/11. The strategy says that to compensate against the cost of this increase ' local authorities will have to commission or provide convenient recycling services for their residents and commercial customers and advice and information on how to reduce waste. They will also have to work with their communities to plan and invest in new collections and reprocessing facilities'

5. Key Findings

To help develop an understanding of current facilities, practices and problems members of the task group took part in a tour of estates in Brent. We visited a variety of sites across the borough and identified a number of issues that we believe need to be addressed if participation rates in Brent are to increase.

We also held small group discussions with a number of residents and RSL representatives. The task group chose this method of consulting to enable us to dig deeper into issues raised and help to have open discussions about some of the possible solutions.

A report produced by the Streetcare Unit using Mosaic data to profile residents that live in flats in Brent, provided us with a useful insight into some of the key characteristics of our local population. This data is particularly useful for identifying the preferences and views of different population groups in relation to, for instance, attitudes to the environment. This information can also be used to develop communication and engagement strategies that target different population types.

All of this has helped us build a picture of the main issues impacting on recycling from estates. These are:

- Understanding our local population to better target resources
- Making recycling easy for residents in flats
- Resources for recycling from flats
- Communications and Educations
- Signage

The remainder of this section will set out our key findings and recommendations in relation to each of these issues.

Understanding our local population to raise the profile of recycling

The importance of understanding resident 'types' was recognised by WRAP in its *Recycling Collections for Flats* report August 2009⁷. They said that 'flats might have clusters of certain types of residents meaning different approaches to recycling and communications are needed'. They also point out that this information is useful in designing communication and engagement strategies for different population types and blocks of flats.

A Mosaic report produced by Streetcare identified four main population types that make up the greatest proportion of Brent residents that live in flats. These are:

D27 – Multi-cultural inner city terraces attracting second generation settlers from diverse communities. This type accounts for 29.96% of Brent residents living in flats.

E28 – Neighbourhoods with transient singles living in multiple occupied old houses. This type accounts for 27.81% of Brent residents living in flats.

F36 – High density social housing, mostly inner London, with high levels of diversity. This type accounts for 16.55% of Brent residents living in flats

E29 – Economically successful singles, many living in privately rented inner city flats. This type accounts for 7.05% of Brent residents living in flats.

The map attached at appendix (A) shows the spread of flats in Brent. There are significantly more in the south than the north of the borough. The map attached at appendix (B) shows flats by Mosaic type in Brent.

The data shows that types E28 (green on the map) and E29 (pink on the map) are more likely to believe that people should recycle more than the national average. They are also significantly more likely than the national average to be concerned about the environment. The biggest difficulty in increasing participation in this group is likely to be the transient nature of their lifestyles. Their concern about the environment and their belief that people should recycle suggests that they can be easily persuaded to participate in recycling particularly if recycling was made easy and they get targeted clear messages about how to do it.

D27 (red on the map) is no more concerned than the national average about the environment and is slightly less than the national average to believe that people should recycle. This population type is more likely to live in converted Victorian flats and therefore served by the green box scheme. It is clear that more could be done to convince them of the need and benefits of recycling.

F36 (yellow on the map) is identified as significantly less likely to believe that people should recycle than the national average and is significantly less likely to be concerned about the

⁷ Can be found at

http://www.wrap.org.uk/local_authorities/research_guidance/collections_recycling/recycling_collections_for_flats/

environment. This population group is the most likely of all of the types that live in blocks of flats and to be unemployed, therefore economically disadvantaged. Type F36 is also three times more likely than the national average to be council or housing association tenants. Increasing recycling rates in this group could prove to be challenging and more resources will need to be targeted in developing strategies for working with this group to increase participation in recycling.

Our consultation with residents and RSL's identified the main barrier to recycling for people living in blocks of flats were:

- No recycling facilities in their area
- Lack of knowledge and understanding about how to recycle, what to recycle and the cost of not recycling
- Bringing recycling down stairs then sorting – why can't it all go in one bin
- The council should provide something to keep recycling in and take it down stairs
- Mess around the bins and contamination of the different collection bins deters recycling.

We believe that Brent must sell itself as a recycling borough, where reducing waste and recycling is accepted by all of our residents as their individual and collective responsibility. We also believe that to do this the council needs to actively engage residents. We would therefore recommend that an annual waste reduction and recycling conference is held to inform, and involve individuals, groups and schools. A programme of annual recycling awards should be set up as part of conference activities.

Recommendation

That an annual waste reduction and recycling conference is held aimed at informing and involving local people. This should include a programme of annual recycling awards.

Resources for recycling from flats

The task group is concerned about the level of resources currently available to increase participation in recycling in flats. Members of the task group are in no doubt that one of the key ways of increasing participation in recycling in flats is to increase the percentage of flats that have recycling facilities. At present around fifty per cent of flats in Brent have recycling facilities. We were informed that currently there is only one member of staff who works on service development and engagement in relation to estates. This means that there is a limit to the number of flats that receive new facilities which impacts on the team's ability to increase the percentage of flats served. In addition we found that the records of which flats have what facilities are patchy. Over the last few months a great deal of this officers time has been taken up by developing a new database so complete and accurate information is gathered.

There are currently three vehicles (top loaders) collecting recycling from estates. The collection crew for each vehicle is made of one driver and one loader. Two of the vehicles are running at full capacity and the third has some spare capacity.

This level of resource means that the service is not able to be proactive and the team only provides facilities to flats when a request is made. To be able to increase participation and therefore recycling rates the council needs to push up the percentage of flats that are able to recycle not just to reach the LAA target but to ensure that it is being equitable in the provision of services to a large proportion of our population who are not able to participate. The task group is concerned that too many of those who currently do not receive this service are from our most deprived communities because services are currently configured with suburban households in mind.

The task group believes that the green agenda, particularly waste reduction and recycling should be a narrative that runs through every aspect of relevant service delivery including housing and planning and that the planning service needs to ensure that high quality recycling facilities are available in all new build flats. The task group was particularly impressed by the Envac system installed at the Wembley site and believes that all large scale developments should be encouraged to consider new technology as part of their scheme.

Ideally we would like to recommend that recycling and reuse becomes the direct responsibility and focus of an assistant director level post. However, given the work being carried out as part of service reviews for the council's Improvement and Efficiency strategy we will recommend that Environment and Culture look at how resources are allocated within the department with a view to redirecting resources towards increasing the number of flats that receive a service.

Recommendations

That recycling facilities particularly the use of and new technologies are a priority consideration in all planning applications for flats in the borough.

That Environment and Culture review how resources are allocated within the department with a view to redirecting resources towards increasing the number of flats that receive a recycling service.

Making recycling easy

Members of the task group are in no doubt that the key to increasing the tonnage of recycling collected from flats is to make sure all flats have access to recycling facilities and make it as easy as possible for residents to participate. One of the key focuses of our investigation has been the systems used for recycling from flats both in Brent and piloted in other boroughs.

We heard from a number of sources as well as the WRAP report that different solutions needed to be found for different estates. In Brent estates are mainly served by near entry source separated bring sites using 240 litre or 1100 litre bins depending on the size of the site. For smaller blocks of up to 8 flats green boxes could be provided. The recycling officer informed us that systems worked best when residents took the lead and were committed. However, as we saw during our tour of sites in Brent, contamination is a major issue.



The Waste Policy Officer outlined a number of the different systems used across London.

Kerbside collection – Each local authority sets its own criteria for kerbside collections from flats. In Brent green boxes can be provided for blocks where there are 8 or fewer flats in a block. This is the most cost effective way of extending existing provision for this type of residence.

Door to Door collection – Boxes or reusable bags are used by residents to store recycling in their flat then the box/bag is placed outside their door on a pre arranged day for collection. This system can perform well but can also have health and safety implications. For instance there can be a fire risk or injury risks to collection crews. Each individual block needs to be assessed. Southwark Council currently provide 40,000 households on estates with door to door collection. This is co-mingled and is collected weekly. They are currently collecting 68kk/hh/yr. Other local authorities that do door to door collections include: City of London, Islington, Haringey and Westminster.

Collection point on each floor – Bags of recycling are then taken from the collection point to a bring site usually by the caretaker. One of the main advantages of this system is that residents can get rid of their recycling whenever they want to. This is particularly effective if recycling points are situated next to residual waste chutes. There is limited data on the cost and effectiveness of this type of scheme. However, costs prepared by one authority estimated that the cost of paying a caretaker to take the recycling to a bring site may be around £26 per household per year. Islington have undertaken a small pilot of this system.

Chutes - Chute systems can obtain the highest recycling rate (See WRAP report 2009) . They can be introduced by installing new chutes (this can cost approximately £2000 per floor), making changes to the way residents use existing chutes (alternate collections for instance), and modifying existing chutes. We heard that Westminster have a dedicated chute system, with two chutes running in parallel – one of the chutes has been converted to take co-mingled recycling. They provided residents with co-mingled recycling bags and sound proofed bins were installed at the bottom of the chutes. The scheme has seen a large increase in the amount collected from 0.68 kg to 5.7kg per household per week.

The recent WRAP report *Recycling Collections for Flats* sets out the average kilogram per household per week collected for many of the collection schemes outlined above, appendix (C). This shows that besides chutes (for which only a small amount of data is available and they would be impractical to build retrospectively), co-mingling offers the best average

collection rate. During our tour of sites in Brent and our visits to other local authorities we saw examples of each of these systems in use. The task group heard over and over again that solutions for recycling from estates need to be tailored to the site.

When we looked at the pilot schemes in other authorities whatever system was in use including, door to door collection and bring sites, the biggest single factor in increasing participation rates was the introduction of co-mingled collections. We heard from Islington that the change from source separated to commingled collections had seen their participation rates rise from 12% to 27% in 8 months. When we toured sites in Brent we saw many examples of bring sites where the separated collection bins had been cross contaminated and where recycling had been left on the ground around the bins. We believe that the sight of already contaminated bins will have a negative impact on those trying to recycle properly. Residents who have a low or moderate commitment to recycling are likely to find collecting recycling in one bag or box to take to the bring site and then having to sort into different bins adds to the process of recycling. For residents that are not strongly committed to recycling this is a barrier that ideally should be removed.

The WRAP report highlighted this as a particular problem in high rise flats where they said that the additional distance to bring sites and effort or perception of difficulty was a barrier.



We have obtained some figures from Street Care setting out the estimated cost of expanding the current scheme of sources separated bring sites and of introducing co-mingled collections for flats. These figures were produced in late 2008 but are based on 2009/10 prices.

Expansion of existing source-separated scheme	
Collection costs	429,000
Gate fee/revenue	0
Campaign costs (based on £1.50/hhld)	37,500
Sub-total	466,500

Expansion of scheme to all estates (co-mingled collection)	
Collection costs	420,000
Gate fee/revenue	153,020
Campaign costs (based on £1.50/hhld)	50,000
Sub-total	623,020
Container costs capital (940 1,100 Litre bins @ £235pu plus lid replacement costs)	230,900
Prudential charges for capital	54,815
Sub-total revenue costs	677,835

Disposal and collection cost savings

Option	Savings in residual disposal costs		
	09/10	10/11	11/12
Maintain existing scheme (no expansion)	-169,696	-207,383	-239,465
Expanding existing scheme (source separated)	-289,651	-353,978	-408,739
Expanding scheme (co-mingled)	-349,629	-427,276	-493,375

The cheapest way to collect recycling is the current source separated method, though saving in residual disposal costs are greater for co-mingled collection over the timescales outline above. The task group is attracted to the simplicity, from the point of view of people who live in flats, of co mingled collections and the potential of this method to increase the amount of recycling collected and increase participation rates. We would therefore recommend that the use of co-mingled collections for residents living in flats is explored further.

In our discussions with local residents they frequently cited the lack of something to carry their recycling to the bins in as a barrier to recycling. During our visits to other local authorities we heard that although boxes, like those given to houses are frequently impractical for flats, a bag to collect recycling was provided. WRAP research shows that residents provided with a reusable sack or box to collect and store recyclables collected an average of 2.26 kg/hh/wk as compared with an average of 1.18kg/hh/wk for those without. We believe that by providing a reusable sack with information printed on it about what to recycle sends a clear message that recycling is important and the council wants to help you participate.

Recommendations

That Environment and Culture explore further the use of co-mingled recycling collection for flats. This should include setting up a pilot scheme to ascertain the impact on recycling in Brent.

That a reusable bag or sack for collecting recycling is provided for all flats in Brent that do not receive a green box service. The bag should have information printed on it about what to recycle.

Communication, Education and Involving Residents

Our discussions with local residents and RSL's and the Mosaic data highlighted earlier in this report provided us with invaluable information that should be used when designing ways of communicating with residents and influencing their behaviour. It is important to use this information to develop communication and education strategies that take the preferences of our main population types that live in flats into account.

Our discussions with local residents highlighted information and education as a barrier to recycling and information and education strategies as a way to increase participation. Time and again we heard comments like:

- 'Lack of knowledge about how to recycle'
- 'No clear message about what to recycle'
- 'People who have never recycled need support to start'
- 'People need to be educated about the benefits of recycling and the cost of not recycling'
- 'Include children they will persuade their parents to recycle'
- 'Develop recycling champions on each estate'

When asked how they would launch recycling on their estate one group of BHP tenants suggested the following:

- Provide a constant flow of information and encouragement from the start
- Prior to launching scheme put signs, developed by the tenants group all over the estate saying 'We are going to recycle / become recyclers'
- Tenant's group should take the lead and a call meeting. Consult with residents on where bins should be sited, explain what, how and to provide a countdown to launch – with council support
- Make it easy – provide a bag for recycling (the bag should have information about what can be recycling on it) and provide facilities for co-mingling
- At the same time go through local schools to get kids involved
- Tie in launch with existing tenants event

Mosaic data can help identify the best way to target our different population groups. For instance type E28 and F36 are generally responsive to all forms of media particularly poster and telemarketing calls. However, as discussed earlier, these groups have very different views in relation to the environment and recycling. This means that the same form of

communication could be used but with different messages – E28's need to know how to recycle where they live, F36's might need to be persuaded about the importance of recycling as well as how to do it. For F36is, who are more likely to be BHP residents and live in areas with a high school age population, recycling education through schools would be a useful way of targeting adults with key environmental messages. During the course of our investigation the service has developed a communications and involvement strategy based on Mosaic and we would like to support the implementation of this.

We heard from the recycling officer and during our visits to other authorities that recycling schemes worked best when they had been requested by residents themselves or when residents were involved in the design of the scheme. During our visit to Islington they told us that in developing pilot schemes they were 'cherry picking' estates where residents were likely to be keen recyclers as their buy-in would ensure the best chance of success. In Westminster a pilot scheme on one of their estates had become 'self enforcing' with residents encouraging and supporting others to recycle. The Brent residents we talked to thought that it was a good idea to involve people when deciding where to site recycling bins. They also believed that a network of 'recycling champions' should be developed to provide support through education information and encouragement to their fellow residents on estates and a link into the council. Indeed a number of the people we met were keen to get involved particularly in areas where no recycling facilities were available yet. This type of involvement will prove invaluable in changing the habits of residents and helping the council to spread the message about the importance of recycling and how to recycle. As Neighbourhood Working is one of the council's main mechanisms for engagement and involvement recycling champions should be invited to take part in all ward walkabouts and consultation events.

Recommendations

That a network of recycling champions is developed on estates in Brent to support and encourage fellow residents to recycle and provide a link into the recycling service. Recycling champions should also be invited on Neighbourhood Working ward walkabouts and other consultation and engagement events.

That a programme of engagement for children and young people is developed, particularly in areas where new recycling facilities are being rolled out.

That the service ensures that residents are involved from the start in the roll out of facilities on estates, particularly when deciding where bins are sited and how best to provide information.

That the task group supports the implementation of the newly developed communications and involvement strategy for recycling in flats.

The leader of the council's annual council tax letter includes a message about the cost and importance of recycling and an information line number.

Signage

Time and again during our tour of Brent and visits to other local authorities we saw examples of how signs could either help or hinder recycling. Signage is particularly difficult to get right when residents are being asked to sort their recycling into the correct bins. We would therefore recommend that clear and consistent signage is used across the borough.

Recommendation

That clear and consistent signage on how to recycle is used across the borough



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