



ENVIRONMENT

Integrated Recycling and Residual Waste Collection - Daventry District Council, a Beacon Council

Summary

Daventry District Council is one of the UK's leading recycling authorities. For the past six years the authority has diverted from landfill in excess of 40% of the household waste it has collected, through a combination of weekly collections of dry recyclables and alternate weekly collections of compostable and residual wastes. Latest figures show an overall recycling and composting rate of 45% (2005/06).

In 1998, Daventry District Council was one of the first authorities to introduce an integrated recycling and waste collection service by virtue of its four-bin system. At the same time it was one of the first authorities in England to successfully introduce an alternate weekly collection of recyclable and residual waste district wide, proving its value as a means of driving public participation in kerbside recycling services.

Officers and Elected Members worked closely to develop a pioneering waste collection service, they had to think outside of the box and learn from their mistakes, not being in a position to learn from others' previous experience.

Daventry District Council has gained unprecedented levels of public participation, service satisfaction levels are high, 85% of users are satisfied with the waste service (BVPI 90) and 60% think the council keeps them well informed. Such praise resulted in Daventry District Council receiving Beacon Status in 2006 for Waste and Recycling.

Improvement through efficiency



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Project background

Daventry District Council has made dramatic changes to its refuse collection services over recent years in an attempt to meet the various recycling and composting targets which have been aimed at waste collection authorities.

The publication of 'Making Waste Work' in 1995 set local authorities an 'aspirational' target to recycle 25% of their household waste by 2000.

“Daventry was prepared to make radical changes to its service, far ahead of other authorities, and lead citizens through the necessary changes to ensure high participation - up to 95% in some areas”.

Daventry District Council differed from most in that it was keen to achieve the Government's 'aspirational' targets prior to the introduction of more recent statutory targets. Without Daventry's political will and vision, the changes that have been made would not have been possible, and its example of high diversion recycling, would not have been available for so many other authorities to emulate.

Key steps

1995 - The 'Red and Blue box Scheme'

The authority took the decision to introduce a weekly kerbside collection of dry recyclables in 1995 using two kerbside boxes. The 'red and blue box scheme' enabled residents to recycle newspapers, magazines, paper, clothing and shoes through the red box, and plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans, and glass bottles through the blue box. Residents were provided with free boxes and their recyclable items were collected on a weekly basis from their kerbside.

1998 - Green Waste Trial

The authority introduced a compostable waste collection service to 5,500 households in the east of the district. The trial involved the distribution of a second 240 litre wheeled bin to all properties in the area. The collection of the brown bin containing garden waste as well as organic kitchen waste was to alternate with the collection of the grey wheeled bin containing the residual waste.

1998 - Community Communication and Education Programme

To support the organic waste collection trial, Daventry District Council secured landfill tax funding and employed Waste Watch to run a communication and education programme. The communication programme was there to provide information and advice to householders, and to stimulate interest in the trial.

Surveys were taken throughout the trial to ascertain householder perceptions and to obtain feedback on the communication methods used. Although initially there was some confusion and concern over the change in service, generally it was received and managed well.

“There is excellent internal and external communication on priorities. The Council maintains clear contact with its public, partners and staff”.

CPA Assessment Judgement, May 2004

1999 - District-wide alternate weekly waste collection service

By changing the frequency of the collection of residual waste from weekly to fortnightly, and imposing a policy of not collecting side waste, residents were 'forced', due to the limited capacity of their grey wheeled bin, to recycle more of their dry recyclables (plastic bottles, cans, paper etc). Those that did not recycle found that they generated more refuse than would fit in the one wheeled bin and were left with additional waste that they had to find alternative ways of disposing of.

The council considered the organic waste trial a success in January 1999 by which time recycling rates in the trial area had exceeded 50% and the go-ahead was given for the authority to introduce alternate weekly collections of organic waste and refuse district-wide during the year 1999-2000. Since September 1999, all 32,000 households within the district have had the four bin collection service. Red and blue boxes are emptied weekly, whilst the grey and brown wheeled bins are emptied on alternate weeks.

Present day

Daventry District Council now operates an integrated waste collection service, and has consistently achieved one of the highest recycling rates in England over the last six years. This adoption of an integrated waste collection service has taken significant financial and staff resources and has required on-going education and support for the residents of the district who are now educated to appreciate the Council's achievement. The current recycling rate of 45% (2005-06) is far in excess of the statutory target of 30% set for the Council by central Government.

The success achieved by Daventry District Council has been recognised nationally with the authority being used as a best practice case study by the LGA, Friends of the Earth and the Resource Recovery Forum. The twin bin and box scheme has been advocated as the preferred collection system for all partners within the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership (NWP), in order that the County is able to meet the recycling and composting targets agreed within Northamptonshire's Joint Waste Management Strategy, and to reduce the amount of waste disposed via landfill, in line with LATS targets and the EU Landfill Directive.

The future

By signing up to the Northamptonshire Joint Waste Management Strategy in 2002, Daventry agreed to continue in its efforts to encourage residents to segregate their waste for recycling with the aim of achieving diversion from landfill of 50% or more by 2020. The authority is well aware that this next 5% improvement in performance may well be the most difficult, as it will involve engaging with those residents whom, for whatever reason, have not been 'switched on' to recycling over the past 10 years. However, the authority has shown its commitment to the service in the past, and will continue to support the drive for an efficient and effective integrated recycling and waste collection service for the residents of Daventry and Northamptonshire.

Future objectives include:

- Achieve a target to recycle/compost 50% of the waste we collect
- Establish the efficiency savings available through improvements to waste and recycling collection rounds and / or through integration of services between districts
- Pursue the provision of an in-vessel composting facility within Northamptonshire via the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership to enable kitchen waste to be collected for composting
- Promote waste reduction, re-use, recycling and composting amongst residents and increase participation in kerbside recycling services
- Work in partnership with Northamptonshire Waste Partnership to procure joint waste collection and treatment arrangements.

“As a small authority, the Council has been particularly effective at maximising its capacity by efficient organisational development and joint working with other public sector partners”.

CPA Assessment Judgement, May 2004



**2006-2007
Waste & Recycling**

Transferability

Due to the high profile of the waste collection agenda many authorities have subsequently chosen to introduce integrated collection systems similar to Daventry's. Many of these authorities have visited Daventry District Council for advice and assistance, this has enabled the experience and lessons learned to be shared. The following is a selection of authorities that have learnt from Daventry District Council and are now reporting significant improvements in their kerbside diversion figures:

- Harborough District Council
- Kettering Borough Council
- Lichfield District Council (Beacon Status)
- Rushcliffe Borough Council (Beacon Status).

For those authorities struggling to meet statutory targets, Daventry District Council can show them the route that it chose to take, highlighting how it developed a service to suit its population, raised awareness with Elected Members and residents, dealt with service implementation, opposition and the 'unexpected' with regards the following initiatives:

- Development and implementation of a district-wide integrated recycling and waste collection service
- Successful implementation of alternate weekly residual and green waste collections
- Long-term commitment from Elected Members
- Proactive waste education and communication programme
- Engagement with areas of low participation
- Key player in the formation of the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership.

For those authorities who have achieved relevant success, but who are looking towards longer-term targets, Daventry District Council can share its experience of engaging with the 'more difficult' sectors of their communities. Being a Beacon authority has given Daventry the opportunity to share its experiences with others whilst, at the same time, allowing them an opportunity to improve their own service further by listening to and learning from their regional and national colleagues.

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