

## **MATTERS HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT**

06/08 - **WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES:** Councillor Cooper as Cabinet Member for the Environment and the Acting Head of Environment gave an update on the Council's Waste and Recycling Services. It was reported that the provisional annual recycling rate for 2007/08 was 26.9% compared to that of 23.21% for the year 2006/07. There had been an increase of 3.07% during the year and an approximate 9% increase in the previous four years. It was explained that the overall increase was relatively low in comparison to that seen in other authorities but that it had occurred dramatically over a short period of time. It was also explained that on average, people living in the Harrogate District produced 10% less waste per head than those living in other districts, the figure being 384 kg per head compared to 424 kg per head.

It was reported that the box and bag recycling scheme had been expanded and now covered nine out of ten homes in the District, that Tetrapak banks had been installed at several waste amenity sites and that the number of textile recycling facilities had also been increased. Further expansion of the box and bag recycling scheme was planned for Autumn 2008 as was the green waste recycling scheme, although it was noted that it would be impossible to offer these schemes to all households due to them being located in spaces that simply could not accommodate the large collection vehicles.

It was further reported that a focus would be put upon waste diversion work throughout the coming year with the message being to encourage people to reduce, re-use and recycle. The Cabinet Member also explained that the Council had entered into a Service Level Agreement with neighbouring authorities and therefore become part of the York and North Yorkshire Waste Management Partnership (YNYWMP). Work had been undertaken as part of the Partnership with the aim of introducing a junk mail recycling initiative, a home composting scheme and also a furniture re-use initiative. The Service Level Agreement would ensure that the costs associated with the establishment and consequent management of these new schemes would be shared amongst its Members.

The Cabinet Member also informed the Commission of the possibility of a new recycling facility in the District and also the expansion of the paper recycling scheme to include magazines, newspapers, office paper, junk mail and cardboard.

In response to questions from Members, the Acting Head of Environment informed the Commission that the Council was doing everything possible to include every household in the various recycling schemes currently in operation and that alternatives were available to assist those who could not be included due to the location of their home, such as the provision of over 127 'bring sites' and also work being undertaken in an attempt to make it easier for people to gain access to the waste amenity sites to use recycling facilities there. She also explained that those properties located outside village collection perimeters could be included in recycling schemes in the future when drivers are more familiar with their routes and the times taken to turnaround their loads. Residents in this position could contact the Customer Service Unit with requests for

inclusion in the schemes and their information would be passed on to the appropriate officer.

In relation to questions about the cost of the recycling services, the Cabinet Member informed the Commission that the Council spends a vast amount of money and will always experience losses in connection with the services. However, it was explained that the Council must continue to provide the services as landfill sites are rapidly reaching capacity and the Government and also the EU continue to impose strict targets that authorities are obliged to strive for. The suggestion was put that the Council could incinerate waste and use it to produce electricity but the Cabinet Member responded that no matter how sophisticated the technology, incineration would always produce harmful carbon by-products. He indicated that the most suitable way of dealing with waste would be to focus upon reducing consumption.

Several Members then expressed concern that some residents had difficulty in handling numerous waste and recycling bins and that others permanently left their recycling boxes on the pavements and grass verges outside their homes. The Acting Head of Environment explained that assisted collections were available to those residents who may require them and also explained that the Council's agreement with the Highways Authority was that bins and boxes should only be left outside on the day of collection or in cases of early morning collections, from the night before. Members were asked to give details of those households permanently leaving receptacles on the streets to the Acting Head of Environment after the meeting so that officers could help suggest alternative arrangements.

Members then discussed the need for a second waste amenity site in Harrogate. The Cabinet Member informed the Commission that the County Council had not yet decided upon a suitable location and expressed his dismay at it taking so long. It was felt that County Councillor Wood should be invited to the next meeting of the Commission to join in the discussions.

Following a suggestion from Councillor Willoughby, it was agreed that the Acting Head of Environment would liaise with Parking Services about the possibility of providing temporary recycling facilities throughout the summer months at picnic sites in the District.

**RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):**

That (1) County Councillor Wood be invited to a meeting of the Commission to discuss with Members the need for an additional waste amenity site in Harrogate; and

(2) the Head of the Environment would liaise with Parking Services about the possibility of providing temporary recycling facilities at various sites throughout the summer.

(5.32 pm - 6.03 pm)

