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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b> 10
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>30<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2002</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b> <b>DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>JOHN HANSED (5770)</b>	<b>DOC:</b> s:\cent_serv\committee reports\environmental services\30 may 2002\compost scheme.doc
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COMPOST SCHEME</b>	<b>REF: JRH/SAC</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ETWALL, HATTON, WILLINGTON, HILTON, REPTON, MELBOURNE</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: ES07</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That Members note the ongoing progress and recent developments on the Compost Scheme.
- 1.2 That the scheme be extended to Melbourne in September, and subject to finalisation of details, the green waste collected, from Melbourne, be taken to the composting facility operated by Sita at Lount.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To advise Members of the ongoing development of the Compost Scheme and to seek approval to expansion of the Scheme to Melbourne.

## **3.0 Detail**

### Background

- 3.1 The Compost Scheme commenced in 1996 with a trial in Etwall and Egginton. The success of the trial has led to expanding the Scheme to Hatton, Willington, Hilton and Repton. Until 2001 the green waste collected was composted at Park Farm, Etwall but approximately a year ago the Council entered into an agreement with Biffa Waste to take it to their new facility, also at Etwall.
- 3.2 The Scheme has given the Council a cost-effective means of increasing its recycling rate for the following reasons.
  - Alternate weekly collections of black and brown bins means collection costs remain essentially the same.

- Open windrow composting is a low technology process, thus keeping operational costs relatively low compared to other materials recycling operations.
  - By concentrating collection on those villages close to Etwall haul distances for the Council's refuse freighters are minimised.
- 3.3 The process does however depend largely on the willingness of residents to separate their waste and the success of the scheme so far is due, in no small part, to the efforts they have made.
- 3.4 Some residents find it difficult to contain their residual waste in the black bin between collections. In recognition of this the Scheme
- relaxes the policy of allowing a larger black bin to families of five or more (normally six or more)
  - allows one bag of side refuse to be presented
- 3.5 Since 1996 approximately 4,700 tonnes of waste has been composted and therefore diverted from landfill. Based on estimates for 2001/02 the current composting rate in the district is 3.7% out of the Council's estimated total recycling rate of 9.7%
- 3.6 In their consideration of the Best Value Review on Cleansing the Environment the Inspectors complimented the Compost Scheme, both in terms of operation and cost effectiveness. They also considered its expansion a practical and achievable means of the Council meeting its statutory recycling targets of 14% by 2003/04 and 21% by 2005/06.

#### Current Situation

- 3.7 The operation of the Biffa Facility, at Etwall, is strictly monitored by the Environment Agency (EA) under the terms of an exemption to a waste management licence. Following recommencement of collection of brown bins, in February, the Council were advised of the EA's concern over the relative amounts of paper and card contained in the green waste delivered to the site.
- 3.8 Subsequent to this, in April, the Council received a letter from the EA advising that they might prosecute the Council in this regard.
- 3.9 On receipt of the initial advice the residents on the Scheme were asked to put their newspapers in the blue bag scheme for collection and to try and reduce the amount of cardboard. This was done in a "Composting News".
- 3.10 However following the receipt of the EA's letter a site meeting was urgently arranged at which the Council were advised no cardboard would be acceptable. In the face of the threat of prosecution residents presenting brown bins containing cardboard were advised this was no longer acceptable, in a hand delivered letter, and their bin subsequently emptied to a freighter and taken to landfill. Not surprisingly this has caused an adverse reaction by a significant number of those residents who had their bins rejected.

- 3.11 Discussions are now being held with the EA and Biffa to clarify exactly what is allowed in the brown bin in regard to paper and cardboard. Further information will be made available on this issue at the meeting.
- 3.12 There is also an ongoing national issue that could have a substantial bearing on the future of all open windrow Composting Schemes. The Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) are currently undertaking a review of this form of composting in the light of an European Order regarding the composting of material containing animal bi-products. It is possible that the result could be that any green waste including kitchen waste will have to be composted under covers or even in closed containers. A national announcement is to be made on 7<sup>th</sup> June, at a Seminar in London, and two of the Council's officers will be attending.
- 3.13 As stated in paragraph 3.2 to maximise the cost effectiveness of the scheme collections have been introduced to village closest to the facilities at Etwall. This also satisfies the "Proximity Principle", one of the key principles in the Government's national waste strategy that any waste should be disposed of as close as possible to its point of origin.
- 3.14 Delivery of the Council's statutory recycling targets, in conjunction with the Cleansing of the Environmental Best Value Review Action Plan, will require expanding the Scheme by around 4000 properties per year for this current financial year and the three following. As a consequence other outlets for the green waste are being actively sought so that collections can start elsewhere in the district but without increasing haul distances.
- 3.15 Discussions have now been held with Sita, who operate a well established composting facility at Lount, in North West Leicestershire. They have now indicated a willingness to take green waste from the Council, although a formal proposal is still awaited. This would give the Council the opportunity to expand the scheme into the eastern side of the district and the north eastern part of the urban core. The maximum benefit, in regard to haul distance, would be from Melbourne and, subject to a satisfactory outcome of final discussions, it is proposed to extend the scheme there to start in September.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The level of charge paid by the Council to Biffa is such that the Scheme is now operationally self-financing within the level of the recycling credit received, including the purchase of brown bins by leasing. However this is dependant on the amounts of waste collected per property remaining at levels so far achieved and future amounts will need to be monitored, especially in the light of the recent action concerning paper and card.
- 4.2 A service development proposal was approved in the last budget round of £14,500 to assist in extending the scheme. This was sought primarily in regard to new areas on the scheme delivering to Etwall over potentially longer haul distances than to the landfill site at Bretby. If the scheme is extended to Melbourne however, with deliveries to Lount, the need for this finance will be reduced.

- 4.3 DEFRA have advised local authorities that additional funding may be available for recycling initiatives to a total value of £140 m over two years. It was indicated that joint bids would be considered more favourably and therefore a single bid has now been submitted for the whole of the County, co-ordinated by Derby City Council. It is understood the funding is available only for one off costs and therefore wheeled bin purchase costs for extending composting have been included for this Council's part of the bid. It is not known when applicants will be advised of the outcome.

## **5.0 Community Implications**

- 5.1 As stated above the Scheme requires significantly more effort by residents in separating their waste and the extension of the Scheme to around another 16,000 properties over the next four years will have a marked impact on the community.
- 5.2 Maintaining the quality of the waste collected to the satisfaction of the EA, may require the rejection of some of the brown bins presented and subsequent public complaint. Failure to do so however could lead to loads being rejected at the composting facilities and potentially to prosecution of the Council.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Compost Scheme is now established and is contributing in a very cost-effective manner to delivering the Council's recycling targets. Expansion of the Scheme is essential if the Council is to meet its statutory targets.
- 6.2 The Scheme relies on the efforts of residents in separating their waste. Their co-operation so far has been invaluable. The recent change in rules on paper and cardboard have, understandably, caused an adverse reaction from some residents.
- 6.3 To minimise costs and satisfy the proximity principle other outlets for green waste are now needed. It may be possible to take green waste in future to Lount and, if so, it is proposed to extend the scheme next to Melbourne.
- 6.4 The future of open windrow composting of green waste is currently under review by DEFRA and this may ultimately mean changes will be required to the way the Council's brown bin waste is composted with associated cost implications.

## **7.0 Background Papers**

None.