

SIMPLY WEEKLY RECYCLING SURVEY

Head of Service/Contact: Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Annexes/Appendices (attached): **Annex 1** - Simply Weekly Recycling survey results

Other available papers (not attached):

Report summary

Simply Weekly Recycling was launched in summer 2017. This summer we have surveyed residents' satisfaction with the service one year on.

Recommendation (s)

(1) That the Committee reviews and comments on the survey's findings.

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 Simply Weekly Recycling is the key service which allows residents to recycle their household waste. It contributes to the Council's key policies of Sustainability and Managing Resources.
- 1.2 It is very expensive to dispose of refuse. We want residents to recycle because it saves them money and protects the environment. Therefore, it is important to have a service that residents like and find easy to use.

2 Background

- 2.1 Simply Weekly Recycling was launched during the summer of 2017. It was designed to make recycling easier, with weekly collections and more mixed recycling.
- 2.2 With the service now a year old, we have surveyed how residents feel about it. Our questions focused what residents like/dislike about it, and how easy/difficult they find it to use.

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- 2.3 The full report on the survey's findings is attached at **Annex 1**, and includes the methodology used and the profile of respondents.
- 2.4 Key findings are:
 - 2.4.1 The vast majority of respondents found it easy or very easy to understand 'The Big Switch', and to use the service thereafter.
 - 2.4.2 The vast majority of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the service.
 - 2.4.3 Nearly half of respondents said that they recycle more with Simply Weekly Recycling, although just over half said that they recycled the same amount. It may be noted that recycling tonnages have continued to rise since the service was introduced, which is against the declining trend across Surrey as a whole.
 - 2.4.4 When asked what we could do to help them recycle more, nearly half of respondents said that they already recycled as much as possible. A quarter of respondents said it would help if they got clearer guidance on what to recycle, and a fifth of respondents said they would like more recycling options.
 - 2.4.5 10% of respondents said that Surrey County Council (SCC) tip opening times were a barrier to recycling. Comments on this issue were made in several sections. It seems that reduced SCC tip opening times may be driving some otherwise recyclable items into our refuse bins.
 - 2.4.6 We received some very positive comments about the service and how it is delivered.
 - 2.4.7 Borough Insight and our bin 'hookies' were cited as the chief ways respondents heard about 'The Big Switch'.
- 2.5 A very small number (5%) of respondents were dissatisfied:
 - 2.5.1 Typically, this focused on operational issues such as missed bins, set-back of bins after collection, litter or vehicles blocking roads. However, while of obvious importance, these comments are not specifically attributable to Simply Weekly Recycling itself. There were few negative comments about Simply Weekly Recycling as a service structure. It may be noted that missed bins consistently average just 0.1% of collections i.e. 99.9% of collections are made on time every week.

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- 2.5.2 Some respondents also felt that garden waste should be collected weekly rather than fortnightly. Garden waste has been fortnightly since its introduction in 2006 (as it is across all Surrey districts). In view of current garden waste tonnages and the resources needed to collect them, officers consider that there remains no business case for increasing the frequency of garden waste collections.
- 2.5.3 The space taken up by bins is also commented on in various sections. It may be noted that Simply Weekly Recycling did not change the number of bins needed by residents.
- 2.6 While many respondents noted that they recycled as much as they could, some respondents noted the difficulty of understanding what can/can't be recycled:
 - 2.6.1 With so much now being recycled (for example, in June the Council hit an all-time high of 57% recycling), and the complexity of modern packaging, it is understandable that some residents feel this way.
 - 2.6.2 When we launched Simply Weekly Recycling we took advice from WRAP (the Waste and Resources Action Programme) that simple messages about what can be recycled helped people to recycle more.
 - 2.6.3 But in the light of the above, officers will be sending out a revised, more detailed service guide to all houses during November. This will also be advertised in e-Borough Insight, and will be the subject of a separate Members' Briefing.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The Committee is invited to review and comment on the survey's findings.
- 3.2 Comments regarding Surrey County Council tip opening times will be shared with SCC.
- 3.3 A revised, more detailed service guide will be delivered to all houses in November.
- 3.4 Comments regarding operations will be reviewed as part of our on-going attention to service quality. In particular, we will review our operation to collect textiles for recycling.
- 3.5 The Council will continue to support initiatives for developing recycling, including Surrey Waste Partnership publicity campaigns. These are already diarised throughout the coming year e.g. textiles in autumn 2018 and food waste January/February 2019. Already, we have used lessons learned from the Partnership's recent flats improvement pilot to create better services for other hard-to-reach flats.

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4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 Limited. Costs of delivering the new service guide in November have been shared with the Surrey Waste Partnership. Epsom & Ewell's share of these costs comes from existing budgets. Surrey Waste Partnership publicity campaigns are generally fully-funded from Partnership funds (separately contributed-to by the Council within existing budgets). Existing budgets will cover any additional spends.
- 4.2 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** The costs of the new service guide will be met from existing waste revenue budgets.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** The council, as a waste collection authority, is required by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011 to arrange for separate collection of recyclable materials. Reviewing the introduction of the council's Simply Weekly recycling scheme will help the council build on the scheme and look at ways of increasing recycling rates. Although there are currently no defined targets for recycling, the UK must recycle at least 50% of its household waste by 2020.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 Simply Weekly Recycling has undoubtedly been successful and continues to deliver increased recycling. Respondents have overwhelmingly welcomed the service, which echoes much positive feedback that we received at the time of 'The Big Switch'.

7 Partnerships

- 7.1 We continue to work with the Surrey Waste Partnership to consider best practice. In particular, we have worked with the Partnership's communications team on various programmes – including the imminent new service guide – and its specialist flats team.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 A further item of this meeting's agenda highlights current financial issues with recycling. However, these are not related to satisfaction with the service or the levels of recycling that it generates.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 Simply Weekly Recycling has been warmly welcomed by residents, and Officers have noted the comments made by respondents.
- 9.2 The Committee is requested to review and comment upon the findings of the Simply Weekly Recycling satisfaction survey.

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- 9.3 As noted above, officers will continue to support recycling development through various initiatives.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);