

Report of the Interim Strategic Director

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PRINCIPLES FOR THE REDUCTION OF CONTAMINATION1. Purpose of report

To inform members of the document entitled 'Nottinghamshire Principles for the Reduction of Contamination'.

2. Detail

The acceptable contamination rate outlined in the Countywide PFI waste and recycling contract is 5%. In simple terms this means that by weight a recycling bin cannot contain more than 5% of the wrong items.

The Council's current contamination rate for 2018/19 is 10% which exceeds the acceptable level. The Council is not alone each District within Nottinghamshire being above the 5% threshold.

The document entitled 'Nottinghamshire Principles for the Reduction of Contamination', which sets out measures to reduce contamination, was approved by the Joint Waste Management Committee (JWMC) on 17 April 2019. The JWMC is the Member led board which provides oversight for waste related issues within the Nottinghamshire County. The Chair or Deputy Chair of the Leisure and Environment Committee are the Councils representative at the JWMC meetings.

Further information on contamination is shown in appendix 1 and a copy of the document entitled 'Nottinghamshire Principles for the Reduction of Contamination' is shown in appendix 2.

3. Financial implications

There are no additional financial implications.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report and the document entitled 'Nottinghamshire Principles for the Reduction of Contamination'.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

1. Purpose of the 'Principles for the Reduction in Contamination'

The purpose of the document entitled 'Principles for the Reduction in Contamination' is to provide a common set of measures which each District Council could use for addressing and reducing contamination in the recycling bin.

Whilst each individual authority has the autonomy to use the measures within the document the approval of these principles demonstrate a commitment by all partners to reducing contamination.

2. What items go in the recycling bin

The items that can currently be placed in the green lidded recycling bin are as follows:

Plastic Bottles
Yoghurt Pots
Margarine and Butter tubs
Paper and Cardboard
Tins, Cans and Aerosol

Any other item contained in the bin is classed as a contaminant.

3. Contamination Sampling

Each week Veolia undertake a sampling exercise of the materials collected from Broxtowe residents. This involves a cross section of material being extracted from random loads.

The material is then separated into the different waste types and weighed accordingly. The average contamination level over the monthly sampling is then used to calculate the contamination rate for the month.

Wrong plastics make up the majority of the contamination within the recycling bin. However, contaminants such as food waste, glass, textiles and nappies tend to be the most problematic. This is due to the fact that these items have the potential to affect the quality of other recyclables and can cause particular problems within the sorting process.

4. Reasons for contamination

In simple terms contamination in the recycling bin can be categorised into two categories. Category one is where people think they are doing the right thing by putting the item in the recycling bin. Category 2 is where people do not necessarily give consideration to recycling.

Category 1 items are often associated with confusion. This is particularly in the case in terms of plastic recycling. Contaminants that fall into this bracket are items such as food trays and ice cream tubs.

Category 2 items are generally items whereby the resident has not necessarily given consideration to recycling. Contaminants that fall into this bracket are items such as food waste and Nappies.

5. Current contamination checking process

The crew will lift up the bin lid to visually inspect the bin before emptying the bin. The crew do not rummage through the bin.

Should it be apparent that a bin is contaminated the crew will not empty it and place a red tag on the bin. The red tag informs the resident why the bin has been left and what contaminant is in the bin. The address is logged by the driver on the in cab Bartec Unit.

Should a resident then contact the Council the information is available to the Contact Centre staff to identify why the bin was not emptied. The resident is then informed that they should remove the contaminant and a crew will return to empty the bin within three working days.

Recycling refresher training has recently taken place with the crews to remind and reinforce what items can be put in the recycling bin.

6. How we do currently educate residents

The following activities are undertaken to promote recycling:

- Recycling sticker on bins
- Educational video
- Website Information
- Email Me bulletins
- Presentations to Community Groups
- Presentation to Schools
- Social Media messages and banners
- Information Leaflets
- Face to Face contact with the resident
- Vehicle Livery
- Information in different languages for font size

7. Year on year contamination rates

Prior to 2014/15 a 5% contamination rate was applied. However, from 2014/15 a sampling regime was introduced. The table below shows the average contamination rate from 2014/15 onwards.

Year	Contamination Rate (%)
2014/15	5.7
2015/16	7.9
2016/17	8.9
2017/18	9
2018/19	10

As is shown in the table above the contamination rate has grown year on year since 2014/15. One reason for the increase in contamination could be that the topic of recycling has received far less coverage at a national level in recent times. In addition the resource level within the recycling team has reduced and this could also be a contributing factor in the increase in contamination.

8. Comparison of other districts

Whilst the Council is significantly above the contractual agreement of 5% in comparative terms the Council's overall contamination rate is one of the lowest in Nottinghamshire. The table below shows the different contamination rates for each Nottinghamshire District for 2018/19.

Local Authority	Contamination Rate 2018/19
Ashfield District Council	12.1%
Bassetlaw District Council	10.8%
Broxtowe Borough Council	10.3%
Gedling Borough Council	12.7%
Mansfield District Council	12.5%
Newark & Sherwood District Council	10.5%
Rushcliffe Borough Council	11.7%

9. Contamination Working Group

A Countywide Contamination Group has recently been created to help address contamination. The group is made up of a representative of each District Council together with representatives from Veolia and Nottinghamshire County Council. The aim of the group is to work collaboratively and share good ideas and best working practice.

**Nottinghamshire
Principles
For The
Reduction
Of
Contamination**

1.0 Introduction

Each Waste Collection Authority in Nottinghamshire operates the same dry recyclable kerbside collection scheme. The Nottinghamshire PFI contract delivered a bespoke materials recovery facility at Warren Way, Mansfield, in 2009 for Nottinghamshire County Council (“the Materials Recovery Facility”). The Materials Recovery Facility is managed and operated by Veolia.

2.0 Background

The purpose of the guidance is to demonstrate a commitment from all Waste Collection Authorities in Nottinghamshire to work in partnership to reduce contamination and improve the quality of the co-mingled dry recyclables collected through the kerbside collections.

The input specification for the Materials Recovery Facility is:-

- Household newspaper and magazines
- Cardboard
- Plastic bottles, margarine tubs and yoghurt pots
- Food and drink cans and aerosols

The acceptable contamination rate as outlined in the Countywide PFI Waste and Recycling contract is 5%. Since 2009 contamination levels have increased consistently each year reaching an average level of 12% in the most recent contract year to date (2017/18).

3.0 Principles

The principles below show the measures that will be undertaken by each Waste Collection Authority which are aimed at reducing the level of contamination within the recycling bin:

- Recycling bins should be checked by the collection crews before being emptied. The check involves a visual inspection by lifting the lid to view the contents of the bin. Operatives are not expected to search through the bin.
- Collection crews are not to accept recycling side waste in plastic bags.
- Collection crews should endeavour to reject any bins which upon visual inspection contain several items which do not conform to the input specification
- Contaminated bins are not to be collected but should be tagged or a sticker placed on them to identify that the bin does not contain only target recyclables. The tag or sticker should show the relevant Waste Collection Authority’s contact details.
- Collection crews should report contaminated bins so that the Waste Collection Authorities can engage with a resident on a contamination issue and provide the ‘Recycle for Nottinghamshire Guide’ which explains clearly the target recyclables which should be placed in the recycling bin.
- Dependent upon individual Local Authority’s policies, Waste Collection Authorities should permit one ‘fresh start’ collection which will be collected as residual waste.
- If a second contamination event occurs within a reasonable time frame the Waste Collection Authority should engage with the resident and endeavour to visit the property with a view to understanding the reason why a second contamination event

has occurred. If a visit is not possible the Waste Collection Authority may utilise alternative methods to interact with the resident.

- If appropriate, a section 46 notice may be issued to the resident in accordance with the Waste Collection Authority's policies.
- Following repeated contamination by a resident a decision should be made by the relevant Waste Collection Authority on whether the recycling collection service should be withdrawn in accordance with their individual policy.
- A suite of templates for Communications materials (eg bin stickers, leaflets and bin tags) provided by Veolia may be utilised and distributed by the Waste Collection Authorities to ensure a consistent message is provided to all residents within Nottinghamshire.
- A Waste Contamination Working Group consisting of at least one representative from each partner authority will meet once every three months to work collaboratively and share ideas and good practice on reducing contamination at the Materials Recovery Facility.

4.0 Reporting

A quarterly progress report on contamination levels will be presented to Joint Waste Management Committee and Joint Officer Board by the Waste Contamination Working Group.