

Evaluation of the Household Waste Incentives Pilot Scheme

Final Report to Defra (Waste Strategy Division)
Appendix 1: East Midlands

July 2006

East Midlands

Leicestershire Waste Partnership

Aim of scheme

The aim of the project was to incentivise households to increase their participation in recycling through a pledge scheme run through schools and school children. The incentive was a charitable donation of equipment to the school combined with a prize incentive for the school children.

Area features/demographics

The scheme ran across the whole of Leicestershire (excluding Leicester City) covering 245,000 households. The waste collection authority recycling rates and respective Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings are listed below: -

	2004-05 Recycling Rate	Index of Deprivation rank
Blaby	29%	330
Charnwood	24%	214
Harborough	46%	346
Hinckley & Bosworth	35%	296
Melton	37%	306
North West Leicestershire	23%	183
Oadby & Wigston	27%	240

Each of the districts provides a kerbside recycling service for dry recyclables and green waste.

Scheme description

The schools that signed up to the scheme were sent packs of materials to enable them to carry out the campaign. Each pupil in the participating schools was given a pledge form to take home for their parents/guardians to sign. This pledge was a promise that the householder will recycle regularly using the facilities provided by the council. They were also asked to nominate a school on the pledge.

The pupils were also asked to collect pledges from other households such as neighbours, family and friends throughout the county. Pupils were rewarded for their achievements dependent on how many pledges they achieved. The schools also benefited by accumulating points each month that could be exchanged for valuable equipment. The points were calculated by apportioning point values to the tonnages of waste recycled each month from the Waste Partnership districts. These points were then distributed

among the schools in direct proportion to the number of pledges that each school collected.

Pupil's incentives ranged from finger bands and wristbands to MP3 players for the top pledge performer in each school. The school's incentives were made up from a catalogue of equipment including computers, TVs, cameras, software and musical instruments.

Defra Funding

Defra funding for this scheme was £157,000, which covered the prize fund, all publicity and promotional material, the project management costs for an external consultant and participation monitoring. This funding support from Defra equates to support of around £0.64 per household.

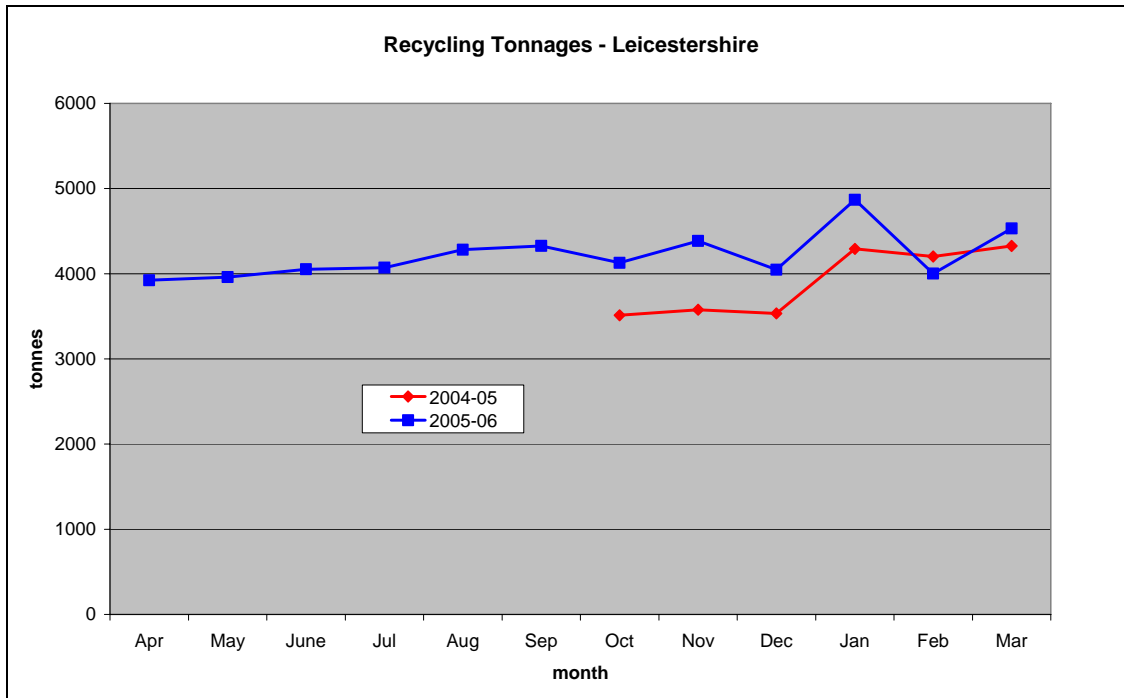
Monitoring mechanism used

The scheme success was monitored through:

- number of pledges collected by pupils and registered at schools
- recording participation rates in kerbside recycling
- monthly recyclable and residual waste data.

Key results

- The graph below shows the dry recyclable tonnages collected in 2005-06, for the duration of the pilot period, compared to 2004-05 as a baseline. It shows an increase in the tonnages collected between October 2004 and March 2006. The trend over the pilot period (Oct 05 – Mar 06) is in line with the seasonal fluctuations of the previous year.



- The average participation rate for kerbside dry recycling, across all the districts, has also increased over the same timeframe. The average rate for Leicestershire in 2005/06 was nearly 72%. More detailed participation data for the 6-month pilot period (that will soon be available for analysis) should provide an indication of success of the incentive in raising awareness and, more specifically, turning that awareness into action.
- With respect to involvement from schools, 42% (96 of the 228 schools in Leicestershire) participated in the scheme, with pupils gathering more than 11,000 pledges to recycle, a ratio of around 115 pledges per school.

Conclusion

Although it is encouraging to see an increase in both the tonnage of recyclables collected and overall participation rate, until more detailed participation rate data and schools feedback is analysed, it is difficult to say how much of this increase can be directly attributable to the incentive scheme.

Key lessons learned

- The Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP) believes that the scheme has undoubtedly raised awareness of recycling amongst children. This is both beneficial in the short-term, motivating parents to act now through so called 'pester-power', and in the long term, potentially shaping their future attitudes and behaviours towards waste.

- The partnership used an external consultancy firm to manage the project on a day-to-day basis. This was critical to the pilot's successful management due to limited LWP staff resources at the time, particularly in the specialised field of communication and promotion management.
- The partnership expressed concerns over the timescales for the pilot funding. Greater flexibility would have allowed the scheme to be run over a full academic year to maximise impact. This trial did not fit ideally with school terms making working with the schools more challenging.

Further Information

As part of the incentive scheme a detailed participation survey was undertaken, copies of this may be available from Leicestershire County Council.

Nottinghamshire County Council, Mansfield District Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council

Aim of scheme

The aim of this scheme was to incentivise householders to reduce their waste and recycle more through the use of a community and individual incentive. The scheme examined how the provision of financial incentives to communities impacted upon the recycling and composting rate of Rushcliffe a high performing Borough Council in comparison with Mansfield a low performing District Council.

Area features/demographics

The incentive scheme ran in three areas within both Rushcliffe and Mansfield waste collection authorities.

Rushcliffe Borough is a largely rural district, with the centres of population split between small towns and villages. The district is ranked 314th in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The council is currently achieving a very high recycling and composting rate of 47%. A Three Bin scheme is in operation throughout the borough, collecting paper / card, cans, tins, plastic bottles in a blue bin and green waste in a green bin and residual waste in a grey bin using alternate weekly collections.

Mansfield District is a largely urban authority. The district is ranked 59th in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The council is currently achieving a recycling and composting rate of 17%. A similar Twin Bin scheme is in place throughout the borough, collecting paper / card, cans, tins, plastic bottles (but not green waste) and residual waste on alternate weekly collections.

A total of around 7,000 properties were involved in the pilot (including 2,000 in control areas). The trial areas were selected to represent a less affluent, a middle income and more affluent demographic make-up.

Rushcliffe

Area	No. of households
Sutton Bonnigton	704
Hickling & Kinoulton	557
Tollerton	808
'Control'	1,148

Mansfield

Area	No. of households
Oak Tree	1,096
Warsop	989
Bull Farm	1,051
'Control'	1,019

Scheme description

The project proposed to encourage residents to minimise waste and recycle more. In return for waste reduction and increased recycling the community would benefit by receiving a payment towards a community project.

The trial areas will be assessed on how well the community managed to:

- Reduce their waste
- Increase the percentage of waste recycled
- Increase the set out rate and overall participation in the scheme
- Reduce the level of contamination in the bin

At the end of the trial the community that has made the most significant difference over all these four areas will be awarded the top prize of £5,000, followed by £3, 000 and £1, 000 respectively.

Community leaders were to choose appropriate causes to fund that would be linked to improving health and the surrounding environment. The money raised would be donated to these causes.

Individual members of the community (randomly chosen) also had the opportunity to win a £30 high street voucher or a rucksack made from recycled PET bottles if they put their recycling bin out on the right day containing the correct materials.

A marketing campaign was developed to inform residents of incentives to be gained by their community by improving their waste management. As part of this campaign guidance was provided about how they could make these improvements. The campaign was branded 'A Big Difference' and it involved the whole community including schools and community groups.

Defra Funding

Defra funding for this scheme was £100,000, which together with a similar level of match-funding from Nottinghamshire County Council covered the prize fund, all publicity and promotional material and data processing costs. The funding contribution from Defra equates to support of around £14.29 per household.

Monitoring mechanisms used

This pilot study was to monitor a variety of performance indicators to assess the impact of the incentive scheme:

- Pre and post trial door-stepping attitudinal surveys
- Pre and post trial waste analysis studies to monitor recyclable capture rates
- Monthly set-out rates for residual waste and recyclables
- Weekly recyclables and residual waste weight data to monitor the diversion rate.

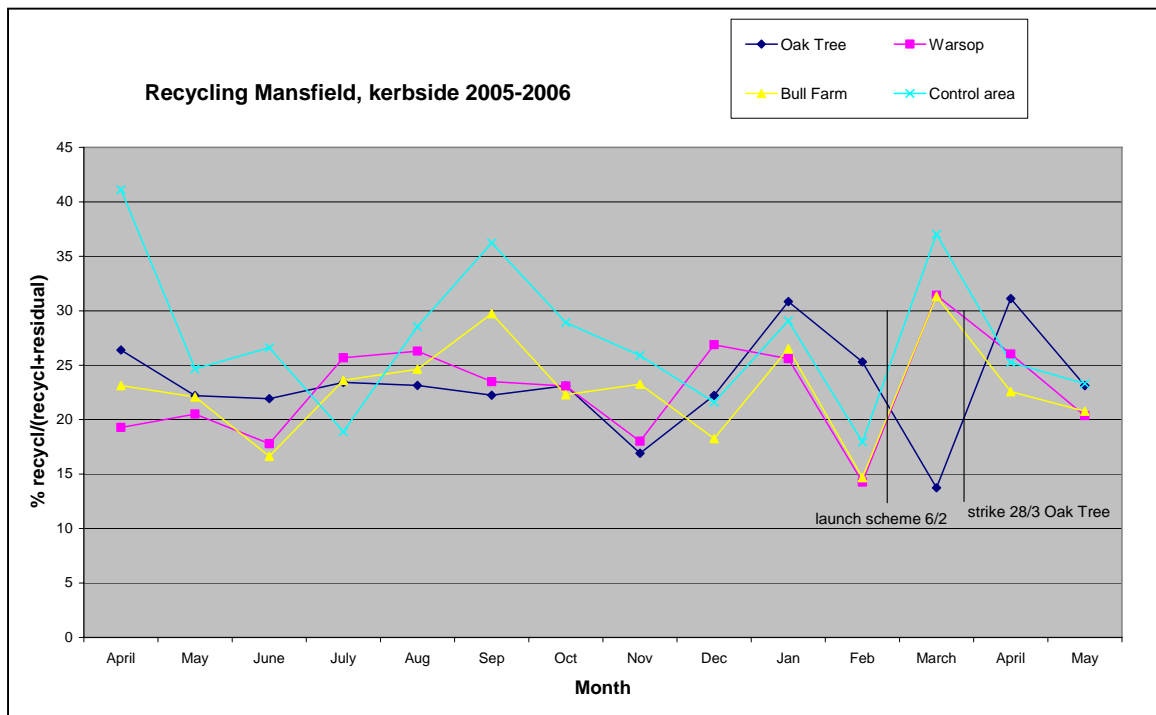
Key results

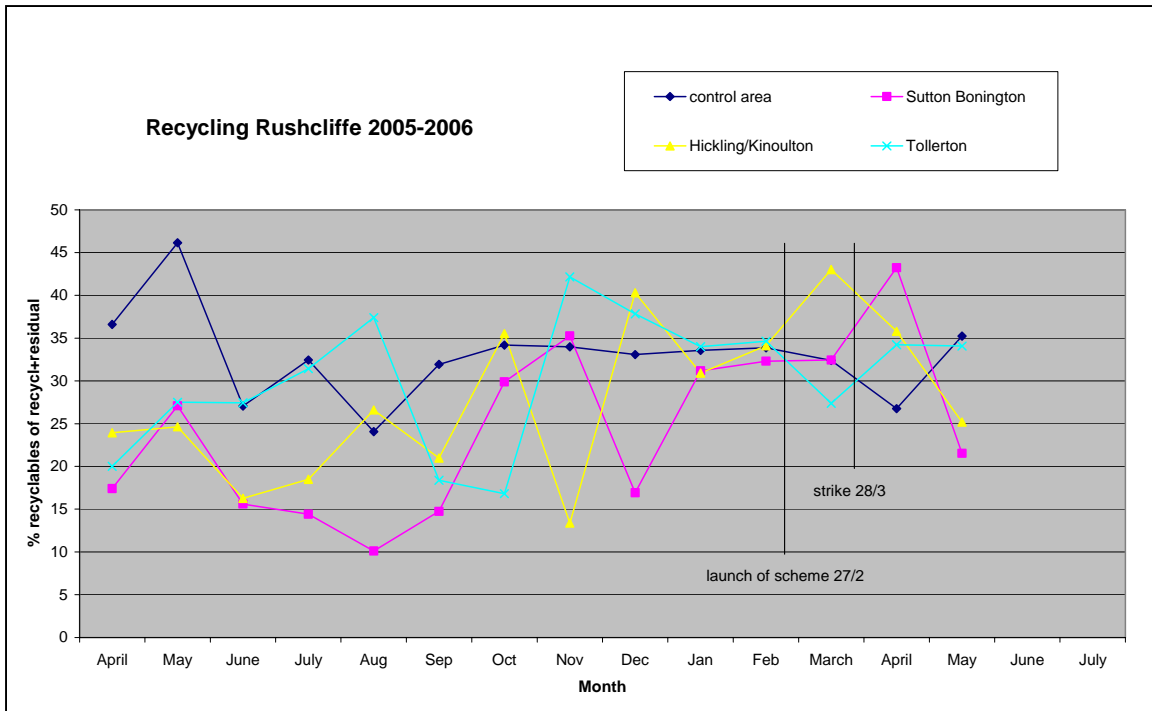
For a variety of reasons including resourcing problems and publicity planning the pilot did not start until February 2006.

The authority has commissioned and received a pre-trial attitudinal survey report (conducted by Enventure Consultancy) and the March 2006 baseline waste analysis draft report (conducted by MEL Research) was received in May 2006.

Using this initial data, baseline figures for set-out, capture and diversion rates have been established against which the impact of the incentive will be measured when the post-trial monitoring is conducted later in the Summer 2006.

In addition, weekly monitoring of the weight of recyclables and residual waste collected is being used to track changes in local diversion rates. Initial data for the incentive trial period as well as earlier baseline data is shown in the following two graphs.





Conclusion

The pilot did not start until February 2006 and there was then a strike affecting collection tonnages in March 2006, so until the post trial monitoring data is received and analysed it is impossible to assess the overall impact of the incentive. However, the authorities concerned have already made a number of important observations with respect to lessons learned in implementing the incentive.

Key lessons learned

- Feedback from the authorities involved suggested that it would be easier to monitor and assess any impacts of an incentive if a smaller trial is used to focus publicity more intensively and enable easier monitoring.
- The officers found that promotion of the scheme was difficult because it involved specific pilot and control areas, i.e. a restricted area to employ adverts, posters, roadshows, etc. The authorities found it highly restrictive to have to exclude broader ranging communication channels that would have detrimentally highlighted the incentive to areas where the scheme was not taking place.
- More time was needed to implement this project and build momentum for the public to get used to the scheme. The consensus from the authorities is that the project will finish just as the public are starting to get the hang of it.
- Mansfield Officers felt that the timescales associated with allocating and spending the funding received was constraining and caused the project to be delivered in a 'rushed' manner.

- Partnership projects take longer to co-ordinate and deliver due to: availability of partners, the need to have joint agreement from individual authorities, and to ensure accountability at all points.
- Rushcliffe and Mansfield officers felt that realistic resources were not made available from their authority for this scheme and therefore they relied almost entirely on the project officer.
- Partnership projects take longer to co-ordinate and deliver due to: availability of partners and the need to have joint agreement from individual authorities and to ensure accountability at all points.
- Conduction of the waste analysis and door stepping has proved to be invaluable in this project. The results from the first phase of the waste analysis have shown quite clearly what elements of the waste stream need to be targeted in terms of waste education to ensure higher capture rates. Even in the high performing authority it has shown that for some materials such as food and drink cans more of these materials can be recycled. The waste analysis also enabled the project to compare how the same social classes in different areas perform in terms of recycling.

Further Information

As part of the incentive scheme a detailed attitudinal survey and waste analysis was undertaken, copies of this may be available from Nottingham County Council.