

Transport and Environment Committee

10am, Tuesday, 13 January 2015

Attitudes to Recycling

Item number	7.13(b)
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All

Executive summary

In order to engage with residents more effectively and to help increase recycling rates, Waste Services is using market research and surveys to better understand recycling attitudes across the city. With a target recycling rate of 50% for 2014/15, the service needs to ensure all campaigns and engagement on recycling is better targeted to the audience.

The Council has access to demographic data that has been used alongside resident surveys to help identify attitudes to recycling. This information has been used to target the recent food waste campaign which ran in March 2014. This campaign has helped contribute towards a 9.3% increase in tonnage being recycled from April to August 2014/15, compared to the same period the previous year.

The new recycling service, currently being rolled out, has also provided further opportunity to analyse customer satisfaction and the effectiveness of communications.

The aim of the research and evaluation is to create a targeted communications and engagement strategy that allows for more effective delivery of campaigns, to engage better with residents, and ensure the service is responsive to their needs.

Links

Coalition pledges	P49
Council outcomes	CO18 , CO23 , CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4

Attitudes to Recycling

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1.1 notes the contents of the report; and
- 1.2 agrees for an updated communications and engagement strategy to be brought to Committee in Autumn 2015.

Background

- 2.1 Over the past year, Waste Services has been working towards improved customer profiling and evaluation to improve the communications and engagement with residents, in order to help increase participation in recycling, and enable the Council to achieve its recycling targets.
- 2.2 Primarily two exercises have been carried out which have enabled better data to be gathered on attitudes to recycling, through a door to door survey focussed on food waste recycling, and commercially available socio economic profiling data.

Main report

- 3.1 During November 2013, recycling advisors conducted a survey of attitudes to food waste recycling. Door knocking was conducted in specified areas of the city, generating a total of 1587 responses. Of these, 59% of properties responded that they used the kerbside service.
- 3.2 For 62% of respondents, direct mailing remained the most popular method of receiving information. E-mail (10%) and newspapers (13%) were the next most popular methods. Updates via social media was not very popular, although this remains a developing area.
- 3.3 Those participants that do recycle did so primarily due to environmental/social waste reduction issues (totalling 77%). Those that did not recycle justified this in a number of ways. The most common responses were a lack of bins, or that no food waste was generated in the household at all. Of the participants, 26% stated that they had no intention of becoming involved.

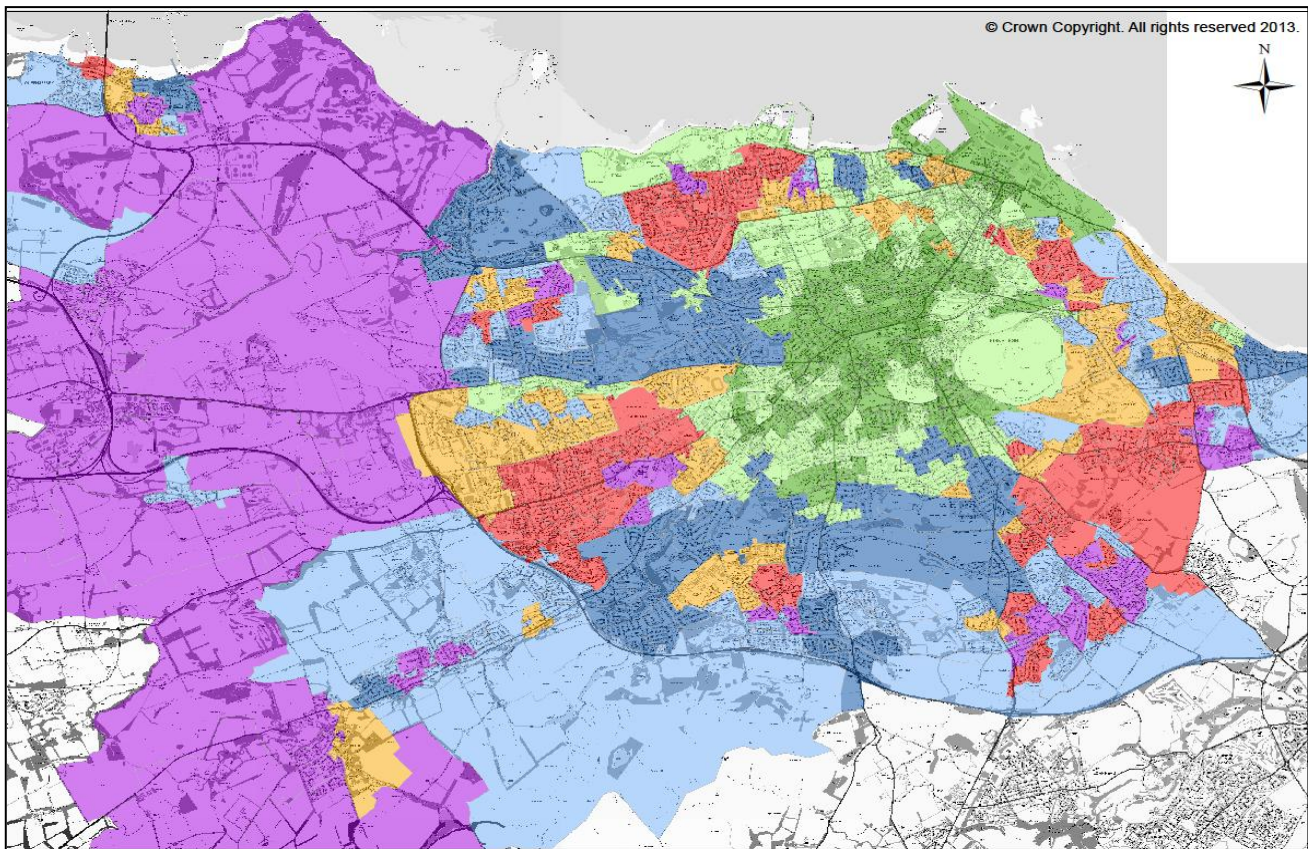
- 3.4 The results from the survey were used to plan the communications campaign that ran as two phases, in November 2013 and in March 2014. The first phase led with key messages on the environmental benefits of recycling food waste and the second phase focussed on what could be recycled and how. The intention was to raise awareness of what constitutes food waste, and also to respond to environmental concerns about waste. The tonnage of food waste recycled has increased by 9.3%. From April to August 2014/15, 2274 tonnes of food waste was recycled, compared to 2080 tonnes of food waste in the same period in 2013/14.
- 3.5 Throughout the campaign, a team of recycling advisors supported this with door to door engagement, as described above in 3.1, included surveys, visits to encourage recycling and ordering recycling kits. The table below shows the number of food waste bin requests, and the reasons for those requests, received from the streets that were door knocked from December 2013 through until March 2014.

Service (16/12/2013 - 12/03/2014)	New Service	Lost	Damaged	Stolen	TOTAL
Food Individual Bin Requests (Kerbside & Kitchen)	1121	964	439	123	2647
Knocked Streets	634	180	83	13	910
Percentage	57%	19%	19%	11%	34%

- 3.6 In March 2014, further sampling was carried out to analyse the attitudes to recycling using a combination of demographic profiling data and household type, to create the seven customer profiles listed below and shown in the map of the city.
- 3.7 Further customer evaluation of the new kerbside recycling service, which is being rolled out across the city, is currently being carried out. Alongside this, a further waste compositional analysis is taking place to ascertain what key recyclable materials are being put into landfill bins.
- 3.8 This research, coupled with the previous studies, will help to direct the future recycling and waste reduction campaigns. It will allow for much more targeted messaging to be produced, and use the most effective methods of communication and engagement suited to the audience.

Customer profile table and map

1	Younger, more single people, fewer children, strong positive attitude to recycling, average and higher incomes
2	Younger, more single people, fewer children, moderate positive attitude to recycling, less well-off than group 1
3	Income deprived, couples and single parents, many households have children, moderate negative attitudes to recycling
4	Younger, couples and single parents, mix of attitudes to recycling
5	Rich, more families but average age is older, strong sense of social responsibility so likely to recycle due to sense of duty to act and comply with society
6	Large households, more children, well-off, moderate sense of social responsibility so likely to recycle due to sense of duty to act and comply with society
7	Large households, more children, average incomes, rural and suburban areas, moderate negative attitudes to recycling



Measures of success

- 4.1 Increase in household recycling tonnage and customer satisfaction through household surveys of waste service projects.
- 4.2 Increase in understanding of communications on recycling to be measured through surveys.

Financial impact

- 5.1 Targeted communications and engagement programmes will help towards delivering savings through a reduction in landfill and increase in recycling.
- 5.2 No additional cost as the communications budget is already allocated as part of overall waste services budget.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Each campaign will undergo evaluation in order to ensure correct governance and minimise risk of running inefficient campaigns.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 Communications and engagement on waste and recycling contribute directly to the delivery of the Equality Act 2010 general duties of advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. This is evidenced through the individual projects engagement strategies and plans which involve working with all partners and members of the community, detailing how barriers to engagement will be removed and seeking to promote buy-in across communities to common goals.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Communications and engagement projects are expected to reduce waste and carbon emissions, increase recycling, reduce landfill and promote environmental awareness.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 All current and future projects will include consultation with staff, elected members and communities, to feedback and improve on practice.

Background reading/external references

None

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Links

Coalition pledges	P49 - Continue to increase recycling levels across the city and reducing the proportion of waste going to landfill
Council outcomes	CO18 - Green – We reduce the local environmental impact of our consumption and production CO23 - Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community CO26 - The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	None