

Written Questions – Council 22 May 2008

1. Cllr Newbold to Cllr Rosenstiel, Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

When was the City Council's 45% recycling target, present in 2006 figures, dropped, and why?

Answer from Councillor Rosenstiel, Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

Cambridge City Council's recycling rate has risen from 9.7% in 1999/00 to 41.6 in 2007/08. The 07/08 Waste Management service plan was revised and amended in terms of recycling figures to reflect more realistic targets for future years. The 06/07 Service plan contained over ambitious targets as a result of an over optimistic expectation of the impact of Alternate Week Collections in an urban setting. The recycling target for 2010/11 is 45%.

2. Cllr Newbold to Cllr Rosenstiel, Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

How does the City Council's recycling performance compare (year-on-year figures for last three years and projections for next three) with nearby authorities, in particular South Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and St Edmundsbury?

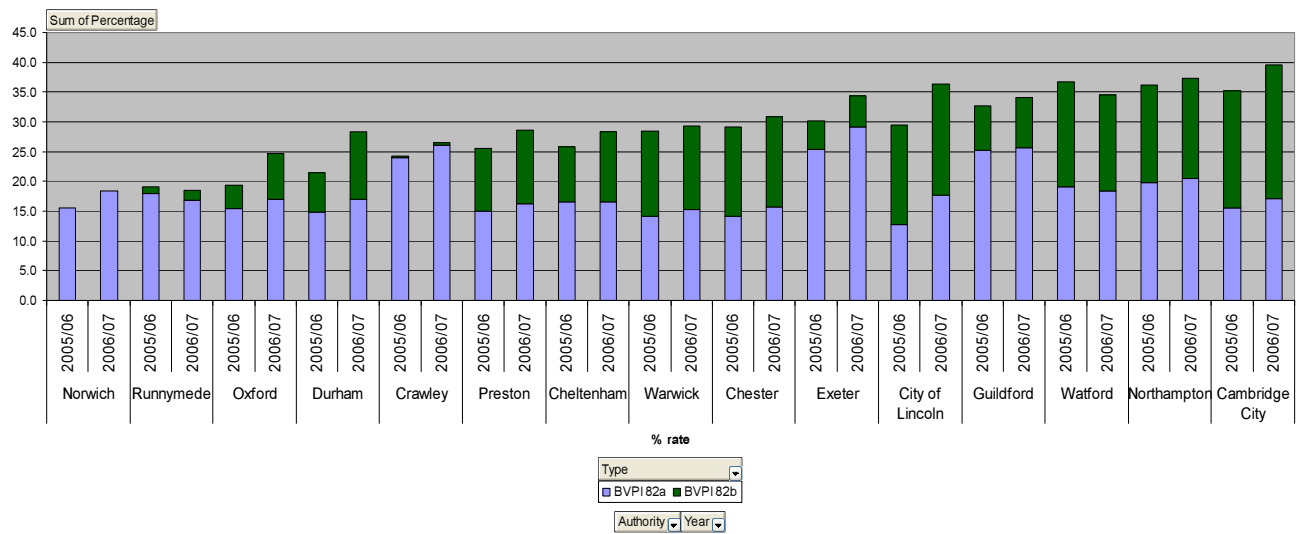
Answer from Councillor Rosenstiel, Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

The City Council's recycling rate compares very favourably with councils in its 'Nearest Neighbour' group. ('Nearest Neighbour' is defined in terms of population size, geographical area and authority type.) However some of the other districts in Cambridgeshire do have very high rates mainly because they do not have the urban issues to deal with that we have e.g. large numbers of flats, houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs), BME groups, high student population which is linked with high levels of transience. These are all challenges that the council is addressing, but are likely to result in a lower rate and demonstrates the advantage of benchmarking with the 'Nearest Neighbour' group.

The graph below shows recycling rates for 2005/06 and 2006/07 for authorities in our 'Nearest Neighbour' group, with Cambridge as the top performing for overall recycling rate for 2006/07. The different bars within the graph represent the rate for Dry Recycling and Composting and together represent the total recycling rate.

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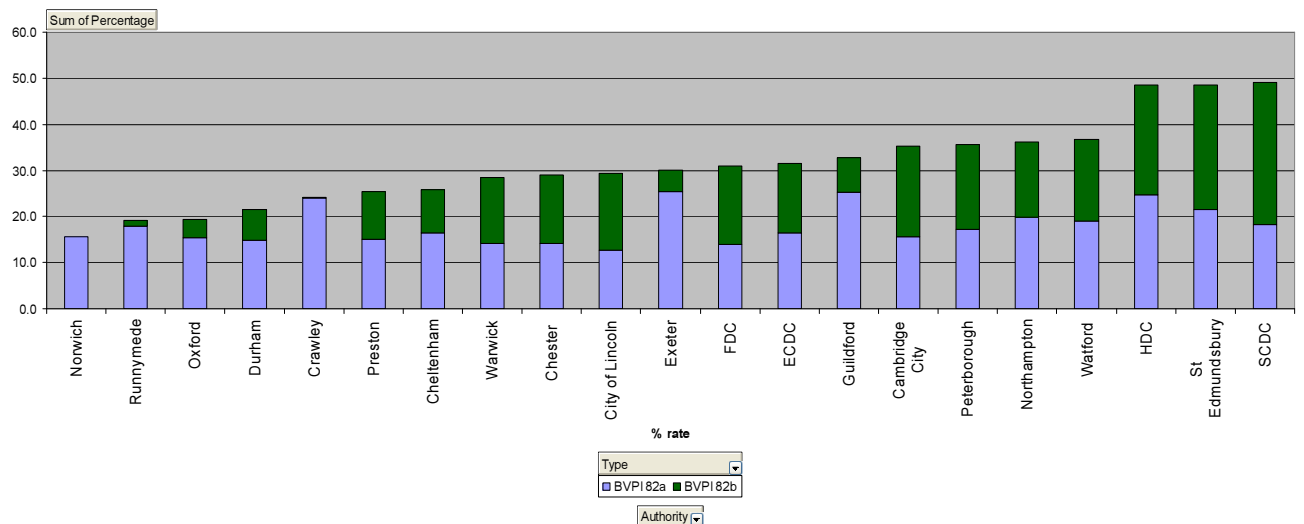
Recycling Rates % (BVPI) 2005/06 & 2006/07 Cambridge City & 'Nearest Neighbours' Group



The following two graphs show recycling rates for 2005/06 and 2006/07 for our 'Nearest Neighbour' group plus the 5 districts of Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and St Edmundsbury.

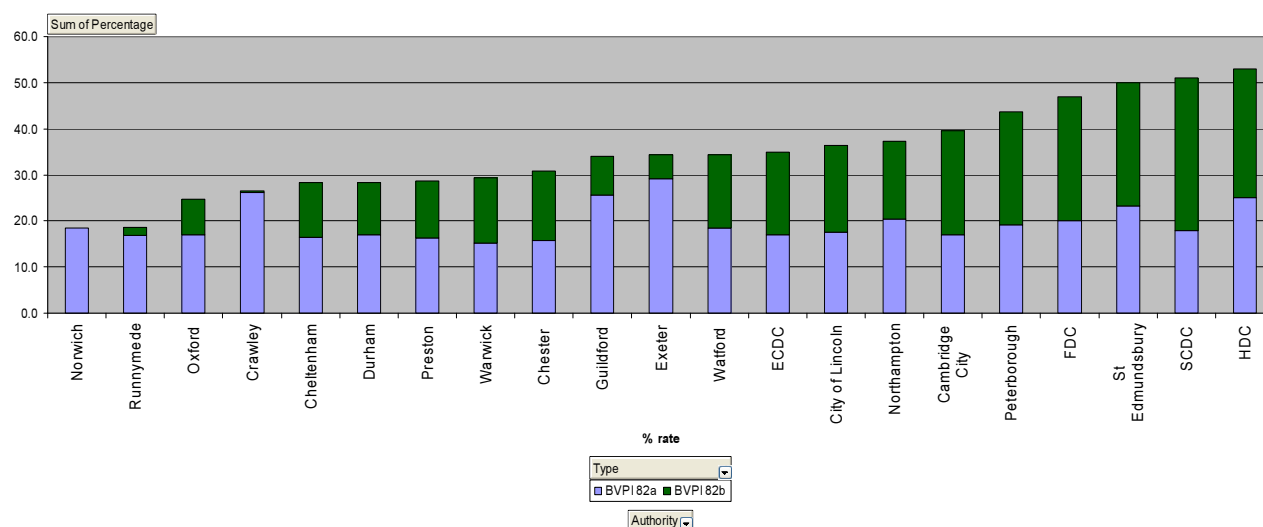
Year 2005/06 Auth_Type (All)

Recycling Rates % (BVPI) 2005/06



Year 2006/07 Auth_Type (All)

Recycling Rates % (BVPI) 2006/07



The table below shows the recycling rates (BVPI 82a for recycling and 82b for composting with a total of both) for the three preceding years for the 5 districts of Cambridgeshire plus Peterborough and St Edmundsbury. It is important to note that the 2007/08 figures are based on estimates for March 08 and therefore may change slightly. Figures for 2007/08 for the 'Nearest Neighbour' group are not available yet.

Authority	Year	BVPI 82a	BVPI 82b	Grand Total
ECDC	2005/06	16.4	15.2	31.6
	2006/07	17.0	18.0	35.0
	2007/08	17.0	19.0	36.0
Cambridge City	2005/06	15.5	19.7	35.2
	2006/07	17.1	22.5	39.6
	2007/08	17.8	23.8	41.6
Peterborough	2005/06	17.2	18.5	35.6
	2006/07	19.2	24.5	43.8
	2007/08	20.2	25.9	46.1
FDC	2005/06	13.9	17.0	30.9
	2006/07	20.0	27.0	47.0
	2007/08	22.0	29.0	51.0
St Edmundsbury	2005/06	21.5	27.1	48.6
	2006/07	23.2	26.8	50.0
	2007/08	23.7	27.1	50.8
SCDC	2005/06	18.2	30.9	49.1
	2006/07	18.0	33.0	51.0
	2007/08	18.7	34.5	53.2
HDC	2005/06	24.8	23.7	48.5
	2006/07	25.0	28.0	53.0
	2007/08	27.0	29.0	56.0

The following table shows the predicted recycling rates for the current financial year plus two subsequent years. For some authorities these figures are not available.

Authority	Year	Both
ECDC	2008/09	
	2009/10	
	2010/11	
HDC	2008/09	58.0
	2009/10	
	2010/11	
Cambridge City	2008/09	43.3
	2009/10	44.5
	2010/11	45.0
St Edmundsbury	2008/09	50.0
	2009/10	50.0
	2010/11	50.0
Peterborough	2008/09	48.8
	2009/10	53.3
	2010/11	59.0
SCDC	2008/09	51.0
	2009/10	54.0
	2010/11	55.0
FDC	2008/09	55.0
	2009/10	58.0
	2010/11	59.0

3. Cllr Herbert to Cllr Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

Given the claim by the Executive Councillor and the Leader in media releases and press statements that 43% of Cambridge homes built in 2005/6 were affordable homes

a - what have been the actual %s achieved in 2005/6, and in 2006/7 and 2007/8 ?

b - what have been the overall % of housing built for social rent in each of these years ?

c - what have been the overall % built as affordable family/large household housing (3 bedroom plus) each year ?

What methodology and checks are being adopted to ensure that overall performance is consistently and accurately reported, so that objectivity and improvement are the main focus, and not PR efforts ?

Answer from Councillor Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

- a. The number of affordable homes completed as a percentage of the total number of homes completed is as follows.

2005.06 – 28%

2006.07 – 25.6%

A percentage for 2007.08 is not available as all of the relevant data has yet to be compiled. This exercise is anticipated to be complete in July.

- b. Of the above, the number of socially rented homes completed as a percentage of the total number of homes completed is as follows.

2005.06 – 17%

2006.07 – 13%

2007.08 – Not available as above

The difference between a. and b. is made up of the percentage of homes completed for shared ownership or under Key Worker initiatives for example.

- c. The number of affordable homes completed with 3 bedrooms or more as a percentage of the total number of homes completed is as follows.

2005.06 – 6%

2006.07 – 5%

2007.08 – Not available as above

Most of these completions relate to higher density schemes within the existing urban area. Much more affordable family housing will be provided in the urban extensions. Recent planning permissions at Clay Farm, NIAB and Trumpington Meadows are all proposing much higher percentages of family housing. All these schemes now have outline consent.

Note - The percentages given are in respect of total completions on all sites regardless of size including those sites that are below the planning threshold of 15 units or 0.5 ha sites and have no requirement for affordable housing. In these years most of the planning consents were based on the previous 30% affordable housing requirement policy, not the current 40% requirement. It will take some years for all the consents granted at the 30% requirement to filter through the system as planning permissions have a three year life at least.

The Council's Planning and Housing Teams liaise on a regular basis to monitor the total number of homes completed and the number of which are affordable homes and respond to provide central government returns. The Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document published in January 2008 confirms the definition of Affordable Housing used to produce the above statistics.

4. Cllr Herbert to Cllr Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

a) Please provide details on the affordable housing schemes and locations that have been funded using the commuted sum from non-site delivery of affordable housing at the Belvedere, and what are the future plan uses if any sum remains unspent?

b) What other commuted affordable housing sums have been raised and where have they been used?

Answer from Councillor Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

a) The commuted sum funding available from the Belvedere site has contributed to the provision of 65 Affordable Homes on the following schemes;

Scheme	Funding (£)
Abbey 3 (Huntley/Headford/Dunsmore)	312,000
Wulfstan Way 4 (6 additional flats)	402,000
Cameron Road	130,000
Fallowfield H2	110,000
Baldock Way	72,000
Galfrid Road	334,000
Elmfield Close	1,314,776
	2,674,776

This will leave an unspent balance of £34,575. Officers are producing a report to recommend that the balance be committed to adapted units at Arbury Park. Officers are also currently working to secure Housing Corporation funding for the Elmfield Close scheme. This would allow an element of the commuted sum to be used to support the proposed scheme at Simons House.

b) Other commuted sums available but not yet committed are as follows;

	at 19/5/08	Spend deadline as at 22.02.08
Land at Homerton	£81,732	4.1 years
Land rear Newmarket Road	£384,480	No deadline
Tyco Site	£101,099	9.3 years
Mix of small commuted sums pre 2002	£230,017	No deadline
Total	£797,328	

5. Cllr Newbold to the Leader of the Council

We note the recent appointment of an older people's champion. The 2008 Annual Statement from the Liberal Democrat administration includes no specific reference to older people. Please outline City Council initiatives being undertaken in the next 12 months which are particularly targeted to older people.

Answer from the Leader of the Council

A key theme within the Community Strategy is "Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities". Within this theme, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) will be working with and supporting partners over the next 3 years so that:

- More older people are enabled to lead independent, active lives and have the opportunity to thrive in their communities;
- We see a reduction in personal crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime;
- Different generations (older and younger) and ethnic groups are living harmoniously alongside each other and feeling a sense of belonging.

The LSP is currently developing an action plan with partners to address these and a number of other issues.

Specific City Council initiatives during 2008/09 which are particularly targeted towards older people include the following:

- Provision of £688,000 annually to meet the shortfall in Government funding for the new national concessionary bus passes; and lobbying the Government for a better distribution of funding for future years.
- There will be member briefings and liaison with county-wide partners on the Government's plans to close some local post offices which is likely to have a major adverse impact on older people;
- The new customer service centre specifically considered the elderly in its design - e.g. hearing loops at the desks, holders for walking sticks at each desk;
- The Council's "Guide to Services for Older and Disabled People" will be updated, giving details of services available to older people and how people can access them;
- An Older People's Housing Strategy is being drawn up in consultation with older people and key stakeholders, due to be submitted for Executive Councillor approval in November 2008;
- The Council is involved in the development of a county-wide Disability Housing Strategy, the outcome of which will benefit older people with disabilities, and is inputting into a county-wide Older Persons Strategy;
- As part of the Council's Sheltered Housing Modernisation Strategy work will be completed to modernise Mansel Court sheltered housing scheme to provide 25 self-contained flats and extra-care facilities, and work will also start on Talbot House to provide a modernised 20 unit scheme. Housing Corporation funding is also being sought for the redevelopment of Simons House, to provide an exemplar Sustainability Code level 5 extra-care scheme.

- 21 older persons' flats have just been completed at Wulfstan Way, and Housing Corporation funding is being sought for a further 40 older persons' flats at Elmfield Close. In relation to the Growth sites negotiations will be taking place for an extra-care housing scheme within the Cambridge Southern Fringe and Northstowe, and discussions are starting on the possible provision of some older persons' bungalows at Cambourne;

Other ongoing initiatives specifically benefiting older people include the following:

- All community centres continue to offer programmes targeted at older people as part of the Cambridgeshire Celebrates Age scheme;
- The 'Active Ageing- Ageing Well' initiative promotes activities for older people within the Council's sheltered housing;
- The Council's grants budget has a specific funding pot for 'active older people' which grant funds a number of groups representing older people. Recipients this year include Age Concern, Cambridge Cruse, Cambridge Older People's Enterprise, and others.
- Area Committee funding regularly funds groups of older people, often for trips and events.
- A number of events are specifically targeted at older people, including the Mayor's Day Out, regular tea dances in the Guildhall, and a range of trips, film shows and other events, as well as shows and other entertainment presented in homes and clubs catering for the less mobile. There is a free senior citizens mailing list for such events
- Adaptations are provided for people with disabilities through Disabled Facilities Grants and funding for adaptations in the Council's own stock.
- Grants and loans for home improvements are offered to vulnerable owner-occupiers, many of whom are older people.
- Advice is offered on energy efficiency measures, and energy efficiency grant funding secured for vulnerable older people
- There is annual targeting of pensioners through the Council Tax information leaflet, with a section 'Don't pay more Council Tax than you need to' informing pensioners of the need to ensure that they claim entitlement to welfare benefits.
- Some of the regular joint welfare benefit road shows are specifically targeted towards older people.
- The Greenfingers scheme offers gardening assistance to residents who are infirm and/or disabled and do not have a friend or relative who can help maintain their garden.
- The Forever Active scheme provides exercise / activity sessions for the over 50 age group within the City.