

Liberal Democrat Local Government  
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## Alternate Week Collections Oxford's experience

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Cleaner City portfolio holder



## Recycling Changes for Oxford



### Where we started



#### April 2006 Recycling rate 19%

- Whole city (55,000 households) had weekly back door collections of general refuse and kerbside collection of paper, glass and cans
- 13,000 households had a fortnightly collection of garden waste and cardboard for composting



### New Scheme Approved



- Wheelie bins for non-recyclable (landfill) waste (a supply of 4 lilac 60l bags per fortnight for all properties which could not cope with a wheelie bin)
- Green box (up to 2 free, 2 more at £5 each) for 'good' paper and glass
- Blue box (up to 2 free, 2 more at £5 each) for 'other' paper, cans, plastic bottles, cardboard
- Green reusable bag for garden waste (up to 4 extra at £7.50 each)
- Two collections each week – bin & bag one week, green & blue boxes the next



### Implementation



#### Four phases with communications citywide and by areas:

- Phase One – September 2006 – citywide fortnightly green waste and cardboard collection
- Phase Two – November 2006 – Area A (15000 households) - change to alternate week collections
- Phase Three – February 2007 – Area B joins
- Phase Four – April 2007 – Area C joins



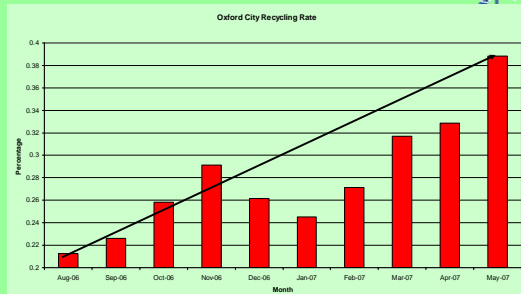
### Communications Strategy



- Introductory leaflet
- 'It's coming' – card to return
- 'Now you can recycle for Oxford'
- Calendar
- Members on board and informed
- Seminars, public meetings, roadshows, exhibitions, etc



## Recycling rate



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## Requests for extra recycling containers

- Green boxes 16,304
- Blue boxes 7,106
- Blue wheelie bins (at £20) 3,291
- Garden sacks 5,890
  
- Field officer visit requests 4,479

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## Essentials

- Communication and Information
- Call Centre – we increased staff from 4 to 9, extended hours to 0800-2000, over 5000 calls per week in the first few weeks
- Website, information and advice
- Flexibility in size of bin, larger or smaller on request
- Assisted collection for elderly or disabled residents
- Answer letters and emails promptly – respond to press comments
- Dedicated staff
- Enforcement only after education, education, education
- Feed back results
- Field officers

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## Public concerns

- **Change** – must be bad – ‘we pay our council tax for regular collections of our rubbish’
- **Rats** – ‘bound to increase with less frequent collection’
- **Smells** - ‘food waste rotting for 2 weeks’
- **Maggots** – ‘we’ll be overrun with them’
- **Aesthetics** – ‘ugly, ruining the appearance of streets, especially in conservation areas’
  
- AND –

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## Public Concerns cont...

- ‘Can’t we choose whether we want a wheelie bin?’
- ‘It’s a cost-cutting measure’
- ‘What about holidays?’
- Burglars’ invitation
- ‘All this, and we still can’t recycle all plastics’
- ‘We don’t believe that you are recycling it’

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## Still to do...

- Flats - some still on weekly collection due to inadequate storage – some special containers issued
- Food waste – once a treatment plant is available, introduce weekly food collection, with or without green waste
- Extend the range of plastics collected
- Get HMOs to co-operate – students, a transient population
- Improve performance to reach the target of 45% by April 2008

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**If Oxfordshire does not meet its LATs  
targets (across all five Districts)  
then it faces fines of:**

- £3.1 million in 2009/10
- Rising to £12.8 million by 2019/20