

Case Study

Aberdeenshire Council Targets Food Waste

Background...

With the Scottish Government proclaiming its intention to become a zero waste society by 2025, many Scottish authorities are facing their biggest challenge to date and are exploring new ways to divert more waste away from landfill.

2008 saw Aberdeenshire Council expand its recycling services and become one of the first Scottish authorities to introduce a food waste collection scheme. Aberdeenshire was also the first local authority to use Straight's 23 litre Kerbside Caddy, which has been specifically developed for the collection of food waste and has since become the leading container used for this purpose across the UK.

The trial...

Aberdeenshire Council decided to run a trial food waste scheme after putting forward a successful funding bid to the Scottish Government. Matt Davis, Waste Strategy Officer for Aberdeenshire Council said, *"Food waste was one of the main materials left in the waste stream that we did not collect. Although we offer a kerbside recycling service to all residents in Aberdeenshire, we are aware that in order to meet future recycling targets, we need to increase the range of materials that we collect. Food waste accounts for over 30% of the contents of the average household bin. Collecting food waste was the next logical step."*

The twelve month trial was initially launched across 5,000 households in the area, which consists of medium density housing. The area was originally chosen for its close proximity to the sorting plant where collected material can be easily transferred. However, much of the trial area also follows a coastal route, which has enabled the collection crew to gain experience of using the containers in an area where there are often harsh weather conditions.

Matt Davis comments, *"Straight's Kerbside Caddy offers an excellent solution for food waste collections. We've tested its durability and the Kerbside Caddy is one of the strongest containers we've seen. The Caddy can easily withstand the severe weather that Aberdeenshire often receives."*

"The Kerbside Caddy is the perfect size and many residents have also commented on the locking lid, which prevents any spillage of collected contents. Seagulls are also a constant problem in the coastal areas. The Kerbside Caddy's locking lid stops the gulls getting into the container and stealing its contents."



23 litre Kerbside Caddy

- Tough and durable hard wearing shape
- Hinged locking lid prevents spillage and protects contents
- Ergonomic back handle for greater control
- Shell grip at front of container offers enhanced handling
- Recessed textured base for easy emptying
- Thick wall sections for added strength
- Smooth wipe clean interior prevents dirt traps
- Raised lid allows water run off
- Chip nest area for RFID tag
- Print areas for customisation



Summary...

Ten months into the trial and Aberdeenshire is collecting approximately 8 tonnes of food waste each week. The Council's current recycling rate is 32% and the food waste collection will help the Council towards meeting its target of 40% by 2010.

55% of residents included in the trial participate on a regular basis and 70% of residents participate occasionally. The Council hopes to increase the collected tonnage to over 9 tonnes per week by encouraging the remaining 30% of residents in the trial area to participate in the scheme.

Aberdeenshire will continue to raise awareness of the trial through the use of a wide range of communication and marketing activities, including leaflet drops, adverts in local newspapers, press releases, labels and also by visiting the residents themselves.

Matt Davis continues, *"It is vital to maintain frequent communication with the residents during the trial to keep the momentum of the scheme going and to keep it at the forefront of people's minds. Education is the key to a scheme like this being a success."*



"Informing residents about the success of the trial enables them to understand the value of what they are doing and reinforces the message about the importance of recycling."

"Reiterating the message will ensure that it becomes second nature for residents to separate their food waste. We want to encourage the remaining 30% of residents that do not currently use the scheme to at least try it. To ensure maximum participation, we will also be visiting the residents to find out how and if we can improve the scheme."

The Future...

Due to the success of the trial, the Council is hoping to expand the scheme to cover a further 70,000 households, dependant on additional funding. It is estimated that this could help Aberdeenshire Council increase its recycling rate by more than 5% once the scheme is fully implemented.



Matt Davis adds, *"The trial has proved a great success and has been well received by the residents of the towns we serve because the scheme is so simple to use. We collect approximately 3.1 – 3.5 kg/hh from participating properties and the residents who take part think it's a great service."*

"We've had very few contamination issues and have definitely seen a reduction in the overall amount of waste that we send to landfill. We would certainly recommend this type of collection to other local authorities who are looking to increase their recycling rate. Our trial demonstrates that this type of scheme can still work well, even in extreme coastal conditions."



Facts

- 55%** participation in food waste collection trial
- 3.1kg** of food waste collected weekly from each participating households
- 32%** recycling rate, aiming for 40% target by 2010
- 8** tonnes of food waste collected each week
- 5%** increase in recycling rate once scheme fully implemented