

31 March 2011-03-31

Spelthorne Council starts weekly food waste collection in the autumn

Spelthorne Council's Cabinet agreed on 30 March to start collecting food waste from October this year.

Following the introduction of an alternate weekly collection of rubbish and recycling in 2007, the Council has decided to push ahead with a food waste collection in order to increase recycling rates still further – from the current 37% (18% in 2007) and address a rubbish stream seen as a high national priority to remove from the waste stream.

Surrey's Plan for Waste Management has a recycling target of 70%, of which districts and boroughs would be expected to achieve 64% and County 86% from their Community recycling centres. Food waste makes up 28% of the residual waste in Spelthorne and if sent to landfill degrades forming methane - a potent greenhouse gas. Recycling all materials is important but we still support reduction and reuse of materials wherever possible.

We will be providing a kitchen caddy and a small container which goes outside, thus avoiding the plethora of objects found in some other Boroughs. We also hope this will make it very easy for residents to understand the new collections and actively take part while recognising we have some keen composters, who may not wish to join in at this time.

In addition, more plastics will be added to the range of items that can be recycled so from May 2011, yoghurt pots, food trays – but not plastic bags or films – will be recyclable.

Chief Executive Roberto Tambini said: "The Council gave a commitment in 2007 that it would look at recycling food waste as soon as it was financially viable and now Surrey County Council has agreed to make both capital and revenue contributions on the same basis as they have done with other Surrey districts who have introduced the scheme. This has helped to make the project achievable. "While we are still anxious to encourage residents to reduce overall waste and therefore the need to recycle, we realise that, at that same time, we need to use all possible recycling measures at our disposal. It will also reduce the necessity to spend increasingly large amounts of money on Landfill Taxes which, without action on food waste, would rise to around £6m a year by 2013/14. "We hope to be able to boost our recycling rates to over 50% which is the experience of other Surrey districts that have successfully introduced this scheme."

Ends

Notes to editors:

How does the scheme work?

Households who currently take part in the AWC scheme will receive two bins – (one) a kitchen caddy for putting the waste into and – (two) a small outside bin which will be emptied weekly.

What can go into the food waste caddy?

- ☺ dairy products
- ☺ fish
- ☺ fruit and vegetables
- ☺ meat and bones
- ☺ bread and pastries
- ☺ tea and coffee grounds
- ☺ left over food

Not plastic bags or films

Does food waste need wrapping?

You can put food waste straight into the caddy but the Council will be providing an initial roll of biodegradable liners for residents to use. We would encourage residents to continue to use biodegradable liners

Where can I buy compostable liners?

Lots of shops and supermarkets now sell them.

Can I use ordinary plastic bags to line my caddy?

No. Please don't do this otherwise the waste will not be collected. These bags take years to rot down.

Should I still use my composter?

If you already use a home composter please keep doing so – uncooked fruit and vegetable peelings can be composted. Use the caddy and food waste bin for food that cannot be composted such as cooked food, meat and dairy products.

If I live in a flat, can I be part of the scheme?

If you live in a flat, we will be evaluating whether or not you can be a part of the scheme. Some flatted development will have a 240litre bin provided to serve all the flats involved.

Will the food in my bin smell?

Not if you empty your kitchen food caddy regularly into the outside bin and tie up the starch liners. Your outside food bin will have a sealable and lockable lid which will stop smells getting out and pests/vermin getting in. In fact this method reduces the smell caused by rotting food by providing a special container and weekly removal.

Media enquiries to the communications team on 01784 446297/444260/446372