

Delivering more

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## Biffa Municipal press release

1<sup>st</sup> August 2011

### SURREY HEATH GETS TOP RECYCLING AWARD

A 'top to bottom transformation' of its recycling and refuse service that helped Surrey Heath Borough Council to beat its 60% recycling and composting target some 15 years early has won a prestigious industry award.

Against stiff competition, its Project Roary scheme won the Local Authority Target Success category of the National Recycling Awards held recently in London. The award was presented to Surrey Heath's chief executive Karen Whelan and councillor Vivienne Chapman, along with Biffa municipal director Roger Edwards and Biffa business manager Darren Kenny, by comedian Marcus Brigstocke at the MRW-organised event in London that attracted over 600 guests.

*MRW* acting editor Andrea Lockerbie said: "Winning a National Recycling Award is an amazing achievement. Each year the standard and number of entries and gets higher and higher, making it a tough job for the judges to pick out a winner."

Edwards commented: "The results of our long-term partnership with Surrey Heath have been outstanding, and owe everything to the enthusiasm, support and commitment of local residents.

"The service's transformation shows just what can be achieved, and underlines our belief that, where appropriate, fortnightly commingled recyclable collections really can make a difference."

This point is supported by a recently-published study of dry recyclable collection performance by public sector environmental consultancy WYG. It found that local authorities could significantly boost recycling through alternate week collections from wheeled bins of refuse and of commingled dry recyclables.

The study found that the most improved dry recycling council in 2009-10 was Surrey Heath which, after changing its recycling service, increased its dry recycling yield by 270 per cent, adding 130 kg to reach 178 kg per household per year.

#### Doubled recycling rate

The heavily-redesigned service was launched in September 2009, and over the following year, over 17,000 tonnes of dry materials, food and green waste, plus other recyclables, were collected from households and recycling centres. Combined with just over 9,500 tonnes of residual waste, this produced a recycling and composting rate of 64.19%.

This doubled Surrey Heath's recycling and composting rate of 32.2% for 2008-09 and enabled the local authority to become one of England's top performers in just a year.

#### First change for 40 years

Having committed to achieving Surrey's county-wide recycling and composting targets of at least 40% by 2010, 50% by 2015 and 60% by 2025, Surrey Heath changed its long-established refuse and recycling service for the first time in 40 years.

The replacement for the weekly back door collection of sacks for residual waste and carrier bags for paper and cans was alternate week kerbside collection of dry recyclables and of residual waste, using a 240 litre wheeled bin for the former, and a 180 litre wheeled bin for the latter.

Waste food was also collected weekly, using a kitchen caddy and a larger outdoor caddy, and a far wider range of dry recyclable materials was targeted for collection (paper; cardboard; glass, metal and plastic containers; plastic food packaging; aerosols; cartons including Tetrapak; and foil).

#### First month doubled recycling tonnage

The new service launch in September 2009 went smoothly, settling well and delivering near-immediate results. The first full month saw 1,428 tonnes of recyclables and 788 tonnes of residual waste collected, compared to the usual monthly average of 740 tonnes of recyclable and 1,556 tonnes of refuse.

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Between April 2010 and March 2011, the new service collected 11,311 tonnes of dry recyclables, 6,702 tonnes of compostable organics and 9,784 tonnes of residual waste to produce an annualised recycling and composting rate of 64.8%. This is likely to place Surrey Heath amongst the top performers in Defra's 2010-11 league table to be published in the autumn.

The National Recycling Awards are organised annually by MRW magazine in association with UPM and recognise the best of the UK's recycling and waste management industry and local authorities.

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**Biffa Municipal Notes to Editors**

- The municipal division of recycling, waste and renewable energy business Biffa ([www.biffa.co.uk](http://www.biffa.co.uk)) currently provides high quality, efficient recycling, refuse, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services for over 40 local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland. The division expanded considerably in late 2010 when municipal services specialist Verdant Group, and its 24 local authority contracts, joined Biffa when Greenstar UK was acquired. The municipal business makes over 2½ million collections per week, and employs in excess of 2,500 staff who use over 1,000 vehicles. Its notable successes include helping South Oxfordshire District Council achieve a recycling and composting rate of 70% during 2010, placing the council second in Defra's 2009-2010 league tables for overall recycling, composting and reuse and winning a LARAC Award for the most improved recycling authority. The first months of Vale of White Horse District Council's new service saw its recycling and composting rate match that of its South Oxfordshire neighbour, while a redesigned service for Surrey Heath Borough Council doubled its recycling and composting rate to almost 65%, helping it meet its 2025 target almost 15 years early. Biffa etc etc etc