

Shropshire Council

March - May 2014

When Shropshire Council launched MetalMatters county-wide in March 2014, the aim was to achieve an uplift in metals recycling performance of 10%. However, post-campaign monitoring showed the scheme to have exceeded expectations more than two-fold, with an actual improvement of 25% and payback on investment reached in just three months.

Shropshire operates a revenue sharing scheme with collection partner Veolia, giving an added incentive to target metals for recycling. Waste Prevention Officer James Thompson describes the campaign as a quality, ready-made solution that could be rolled out in any local authority with minimal input. He says: **“Based on our experience, local authorities will almost certainly see a guaranteed return on investment, uplift in recycling, and less waste to dispose of, which also saves taxpayers money.”**



KEY FACTS

Number of households:	135,000
Recycling service:	Fortnightly kerbside sorted, separate containers for metals and plastics, glass and mixed paper
Programme cost:	£33,000
Total cost per household:	25p
Additional value generated:	£134,000*
Return on investment:	3 months

METAL CAPTURE RATE

Pre campaign:	9.9kg/household
Post campaign:	12.4kg/household
Metals capture rate increase:	25%
Additional metals captured:	324 tonnes (2.4 kg/hhld)

*Additional income includes landfill saving of £32,000 @ £100/tonne



MetalMatters

www.metalmatters.org.uk/case-studies



Overview

As England's largest inland county, with one of the lowest population densities, Shropshire has many rural households, especially in the south of the county. For the local authority recycling team, which facilitates recycling and residual waste collections from 135,000 households, driving between remote properties raises cost issues, while for the more isolated residents, carrying boxes and bins to pick up points can be equally challenging.

Waste Prevention Office James Thompson says: "We have a relatively elderly population. We offer assisted collections for disabled people, but the handling of containers can still be a difficulty for some others. Due to the sparse population, particularly in the area of outstanding natural beauty around south Shropshire, it is not feasible to go door knocking, so communicating with people face to face can prove a challenge."

In terms of metals specifically, Shropshire follows the national trend on participation – barriers include a reluctance to prepare items such as pet food containers and foil containers for recycling by rinsing. However, Thompson is clear that the benefits plainly outweigh perceived barriers. "Recycling of metals has a major impact on energy usage and carbon emissions, which makes it a particularly attractive target; the inherent value is another. We have an income sharing arrangement with Veolia through our PFI contract, which incentivises all parties to divert as much waste as possible from landfill. Unlike food or garden waste, which you have to pay to be recycled, we receive an income from metals, which helps to maximise financial returns."

Shropshire has a recycling rate of around 53%, but over recent years dry recycling has remained static or has fallen slightly. The MetalMatters campaign was proposed through the local authority's communications steering group as a means to leverage in funding and support to inject enthusiasm into metal packaging recycling participation, with the bulk of the £33,000 funding provided by MetalMatters and £11,000 and £5,500 provided by Veolia and Shropshire Council respectively.



The Campaign

The MetalMatters campaign launched in March 2014 and consisted of:

- Two directly addressed leaflet drops;
- High profile launch photo-call with the then Secretary of State for the Environment
- Signage panels on 25 kerbside collection vehicles;
- Extensive radio and newspaper coverage;
- MetalMatters page on council website;
- Social media activity.

The campaign ran for two months. Residents received the two MetalMatters 'Transformation' leaflets, six weeks apart, in addition to seeing coverage in the local press, community magazines and in newsletters for elected members. BBC Radio Shropshire ran two interviews at the start of the promotion, while the authority managed web copy and a substantial Twitter campaign using content supplied by MetalMatters. Local MP for North Shropshire, and then Secretary of State for the Environment, Owen Paterson, also attended a photo-call in a continuation of support for the campaign at the highest level.

Veolia and Shropshire Council used the fleet of 25 recycling collection vehicles to promote the campaign and also jointly attended over 20 public roadshows throughout the county, using MetalMatters-branded displays and promotional materials to communicate and reinforce the campaign's key messages. Support for roadshows was also provided by local volunteers from Shropshire Master

Composters group, adding to the community engagement benefits of the campaign. James Thompson says of the campaign materials:

"The two 'Transformation' leaflets were immeasurably superior to standard council fare. A lot of time and effort has been put into working out what works and, crucially, it has been tried and tested on customers, so we trusted that it would work."

"In fact we had some very positive feedback from residents. We had a couple of comments that the material looked so good that we must be spending a lot of money on it, which gave us the opportunity to explain how we were working in partnership with the metals industry on this campaign."

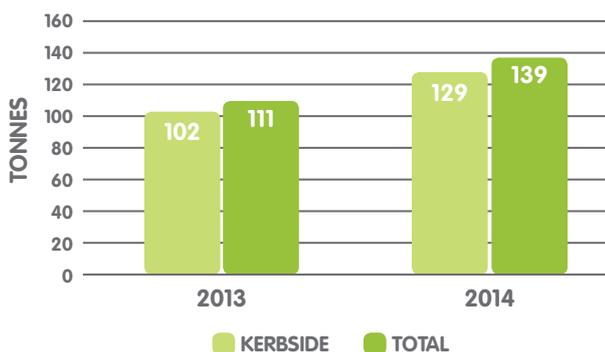
Programme Results

It is obvious that the campaign has appreciably outstripped expectations, with a 25% increase in metal capture. Thompson confirms: "We put together a business case that assumed a 10% uplift in food and drink cans, so we have definitely over-performed."

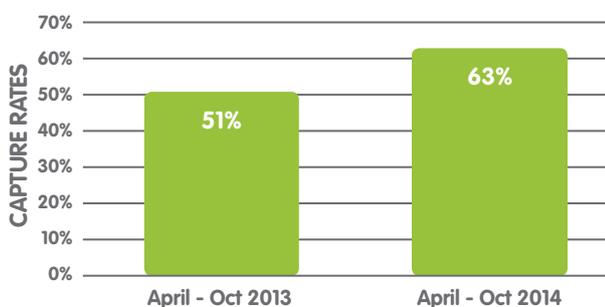
Shropshire monitors daily tonnage inputs from dozens of kerbside collection vehicles arriving at waste transfer stations, and also receives MRF (materials recovery facilities) data, which analyses the split between cans and plastics.

Compared with a pre-campaign yield of 9.9 kg per household per year, the five-month period following the campaign saw an increase to 12.4 kg. This translates into 324 tonnes per year across the county – or 2.42 kg per household.

Average Metal Packaging Tonnage Collected Per Month



Metal Packaging Capture Rates - Kerbside & Bring



Return on Investment

From an investment of £33,000, with MetalMatters shouldering the largest portion of £16,500, the campaign generated an additional £102,000 based on the value of the 324 extra tonnes of metal collected (which is shared between partners). It also saved the Council over £30,000 in landfill costs (based on a current taxes and gate fees of around £100 per tonne).

Overall savings therefore totalled £134,000 or 99p per household. Since the total costs of the campaign amounted to 25 pence per household, the payback period was reached in three months.

James Thompson says: "Running MetalMatters has certainly helped to demonstrate the need to invest in good communications programmes for recycling, especially when the benefits include a good financial return. You need only look at the data: Most local authorities pay in the region of £100 per tonne to dispose of waste to landfill; if you can collect metal and recycle it there is a particularly good return on capital expenditure."



Summary and conclusions

With the direct element of the campaign itself over, the 'make your metals matter' messages remain: The borough's recycling vehicles still feature MetalMatters messaging, and the local authority also uses leaflets and promotional displays and giveaways at events to keep reminding residents of the need to recycle more.



"MetalMatters gives you an off-the-peg, ready-made solution and is certainly something we would recommend to other authorities. It is clearly a no-brainer that at a time when public finances are strapped, that councils should be investing more in quality communications."

James Thompson, Waste Prevention Officer

Links:

new.shropshire.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/news/metal-matters/

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About MetalMatters

MetalMatters was developed and is funded by the metal packaging manufacturing industry, reprocessors and fillers. The programme works in partnership with local authorities and their waste collection partners to promote metal packaging recycling, and thereby improve capture rates for metal packaging at the kerbside. The MetalMatters programme is supported by WRAP.

MetalMatters is being managed on behalf of the funding partners by the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation (Alupro).

For details of MetalMatters campaigns and case studies visit www.metalmatters.org.uk

METALMATTERS FUNDING PARTNERS

(AT 1ST JANUARY 2015)

INDUSTRY ORGANISATIONS:



METAL PACKAGING REPROCESSORS



FOIL CONTAINER MANUFACTURERS



HOUSEHOLD FOIL MANUFACTURERS



METAL PACKAGING CONTAINER MANUFACTURERS



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