

Pressrelease

And once you're done with it, please don't forget to use the back of this sheet for notes before you put it in the recycling bin. Thank you.

Time to act now on the 3Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle

“Recycling on its own, while essential, is not enough” is the message coming out of Surrey today.

Issues around packaging, food waste, recycling and waste charging have all been in the national spotlight. Going one step further is a new campaign from Surrey aimed at tackling its waste problem head on. “There are 3Rs in Surrey – reduce, reuse and recycle” will encourage residents and businesses to go beyond recycling to adopt all 3Rs.

To launch the campaign Surrey has released findings from the biggest independent research project ever commissioned into UK consumers' attitudes to reusing and reducing waste. It revealed that while people are willing to act with the environment in mind, the majority admitted they could actually do more.

- Seven in 10 (70%) families believe that they only buy what they need. But figures from WRAP estimate more than a third of food bought is thrown away uneaten;
- More than half of Surrey residents (51%) don't regularly choose products with less packaging; and
- Two thirds (66%) of Surrey residents know they could do more to reduce waste.

Peter Martin, Deputy Chair of the Surrey Local Government Association and Surrey County Council Executive Member for the Environment, is encouraged by the findings: “It's obvious that people want to do more to tackle the root cause of waste production. Lots of authorities are campaigning on recycling, but as far as we're concerned in Surrey, that isn't enough. Recycling is essential, but we need people to reduce first and then reuse what they can before recycling. We need to focus on prevention rather than cure.”

- Nearly nine in 10 (89%) households revealed a desire to reduce the amount they waste;
- An equally high percentage (88%) said they would be willing to step up their reusing efforts; and



- A staggering nine out of ten (92%) would be prepared to increase the amount of recycling they do.

Peter continued: “Surrey is a great place to live. A recent survey by Channel 4’s ‘Location, Location, Location’ placed seven Surrey districts and boroughs in the top 20 places to live in the UK. But there is an environmental downside to Surrey’s enduring economic prosperity. The county’s residents generate more waste than most. With consumer spending only set to increase, the threat from increasing waste is obvious. We all need to act now.”

The campaign - “There are 3Rs in Surrey” - is a pioneering project from the Surrey Local Government Association that will tackle the issue of waste management – in the home and in the work place – by addressing the root cause and reducing the amount of waste generated in the first place. Each year, every man, woman and child in the county creates over half a tonne of waste – equal to the weight of the average person every seven weeks. The campaign will focus attention on the fact that recycling alone is not enough to protect the environment; consumers need to reduce the amount of disposable goods they buy, and reuse whatever they can, whenever they can. Both consumer and local businesses will be targeted in an effort to stop waste increasing.

Matt Smyth, Waste Minimisation Manager at Surrey County Council, commented: “We are – as a country, as a county, and as individuals – all guilty of throwing too much away. Recent news attention on packaging, food waste, the debate around incentive charging, and our own research findings shows just how important it is that we all work together to combat waste. Our green and pleasant land simply can’t sustain the levels of waste we currently produce.

“The 3Rs campaign aims to show people just how easy it is to make small, practical changes in our waste habits that will lead to great positive differences to our homes, environment and economy.”

The 3Rs campaign will pick up pace in mid-November with a range of activities to give people information and advice on how they can reduce, reuse and recycle their food waste and other waste items including, furniture, clothes, plastic bottles and paper.

Ends



For more information on the report and the campaign, please visit www.surreywaste.info or contact Arthur Browne on Arthur@3-monkeys.co.uk.

Notes to editors:

Research

Surrey County Council, on behalf of the Surrey Local Government Association, commissioned a comprehensive independent research study into the state of waste in the county. The research, conducted by independent consultancy Tickbox in August 2007, quizzed over 2000 Surrey residents on their waste habits with food waste, green waste and dry goods waste.

On the back of the report into these findings, the Surrey Local Government Association (waste board), today launched a major waste management and awareness campaign, called “There are 3Rs in Surrey” designed to promote all 3Rs of waste - reduction, reuse and recycling. The Surrey Local Government Association is made up of Surrey County Council and the district and borough councils of Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Guildford, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Runnymede, Tandridge, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Waverley and Woking,

Objectives of the campaign

The campaign is designed to educate and raise awareness amongst Surrey residents and businesses of the environmental and financial impact of waste, and to help them manage their waste by applying the 3Rs - reduce, reuse and recycle - in their everyday lives.

Although the research found that the vast majority of Surrey residents are willing to take steps to reduce, reuse and recycle, certain groups such as those with younger children, young professionals and house-sharers appear to find it considerably more difficult to do so. A large part of the “3Rs in Surrey” campaign will be to show residents how easy it can be to incorporate the reducing, reusing and, as a last resort, recycling.

About Surrey

- Surrey has a population of around 1.1million people
- Per square mile, it is the most densely populated shire county in England
- The county is run by a two-tier system comprising the county council and 11 district/borough councils



- The average age of Surrey residents is 39
- The most densely populated area is Epsom & Ewell, with an average population of almost 20 people per hectare of land
- The least populated area is Mole Valley, with three people per hectare
- The last two census reports (1991 and 2001) showed that, in 10 years, the population grew by almost 5%*

For more information on the 3Rs please contact:

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