



Vote blue  Go green



At our Spring Forum in Manchester, I made it clear that Conservatives intend to lead a new green revolution in Britain. It's an ambitious aspiration but we're already making a start.

We have to think globally and act locally. Conservative councils are bringing innovation and imagination to the challenges of tackling climate change at a local level.

In less than three weeks' time, voters in many parts of the country will go to the polls to elect their local councils. Conservatives are already the largest party in local government, and I'm encouraging our councillors to do everything they can to advance the green agenda. Whether we're in power or in opposition, Conservatives will seek to build a cross-party consensus for local policies to safeguard and enhance the environment.

That doesn't just apply to recycling or reducing carbon emissions. Cleaning up litter, fighting noise pollution and making parks and public spaces beautiful are all on our agenda. As a society we've got the resources to improve our quality of life. My job is to make sure we've got the political will too. We don't want to wait until we're in government nationally to make a difference. We've already started making a difference locally, as the examples of decisive Conservative action given here show. There are many more places throughout our country where Conservatives locally are going green with dramatic success.

We're all in this together, and together we can lead the way. Vote blue, Go green.

Greener: Conservative councils have the highest average recycling and composting rates.¹

Greener: Conservative councils dominate the league tables for the best recycling rates in the country, whilst Labour and Liberal Democrats dominate the league tables for the worst results.²

Cleaner: Conservative councils have the cleanest streets.³

Safer: Conservative councils have helped to create environments with lower levels of crime, including lower levels of alcohol-related crime and vehicle crime.⁴

Cheaper: Conservative councils charge lower council taxes than Labour or Liberal Democrat councils.⁵

Proof 1: Analysis of Audit Commission data for Best Value Performance Indicators 82a+b, in England in 2004-05, correlated with separate Party control data as of July 2004. In two-tier areas, data for lower tier councils only used to avoid double counting. Conservative councils: 22.7 per cent of household waste recycled and composted, compared to 16.8 per cent for Labour councils and 22.5 per cent for Liberal Democrat councils.

Proof 2: Of the councils with the top 5 recycling and composting rates in England, 4 are Conservative (one is NOC. Of the worst five councils in the country, 2 are Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat [Liverpool], 2 NOC - none are Conservative (Sources and methodology: *ibid.*).

Proof 3: Analysis of Audit Commission data for Best Value Performance Indicator 199, in England in 2004-05 (published 30 March 2006), correlated with separate Party control data as of July 2004. BVPI 199 measures the percentage of sites surveyed that fall below a Grade B for cleanliness, using Grades based on those set out in the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse. A low score means cleaner streets. Conservative councils scored an average of 16.8 per cent; Labour councils: 21.7 per cent; Liberal Democrat councils: 18.3 per cent.

Proof 4: Analysis of Audit Commission data for Best Value Performance Indicators, in England in 2004-05, correlated with separate Party control data as of July 2004.

BVPI 127c - Violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises per 1,000 population: Conservative councils: 1.0, Labour councils: 1.7, Liberal Democrat councils: 1.5

BVPI 127d - Violent offences committed under the influence per 1,000 population: Conservative councils: 3.3, Labour councils: 5.2, Liberal Democrat councils: 4.7

BVPI 128 - Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population: Conservative councils: 10.4, Labour councils: 16.0, Liberal Democrat councils: 11.2.

Proof 5: In 2006-07, averaged across the different tiers of local government, Conservative councils charge £81 a year less on Band D bills than Labour councils and £88 a year less than Liberal Democrat councils.

Sources: *ODPM Press Release*, 27 March 2006, correlated with separate party control data as of March 2006. Band D comparisons on Council Tax are now universally used as the fairest way to measure differences between local authorities.

When people voted blue, their councils went green

Barnet Council's recycling scheme has resulted in its recycling rate of household waste rising from 8 per cent to almost 30 per cent since 2002: more than three in four households now participate in the weekly 'black box' scheme.

Brentwood Borough Council's kerbside collection scheme has increased the rate of recycling and composting to 30 per cent.

Bromley Council is pioneering a project to convert used cooking oil into biodiesel, which will be used to power the Council's vehicles.

Enfield Council's Environmental Crime Unit has clamped down on fly-tipping, graffiti and abandoned vehicles – which between 2003 and 2004 fell by 30 per cent.

Richmond Council's recycling scheme of weekly kerbside collections has resulted in households recycling more than 25 per cent of the waste they produce. 20,000 tons a year of rubbish no longer go into landfill.

Shropshire Council has achieved a 25 per cent reduction in CO₂ with a goal of 40 per cent by 2010 - double the Labour target.

Westminster City Council's graffiti and fly-posting removal team clears over 200 sites a month.

If you vote blue...

...in Barnet, a Conservative council will set a new target for waste recycled by Barnet residents to rise to 40 per cent by 2011 – up from 32 per cent today.

...in Camden, a Conservative council will give incentives to residents who swap their petrol-driven car for an electric one.

...in Lambeth, a Conservative council will plant more than 1,000 new street and park trees, in consultation with local residents and user groups.

...in Merton, a Conservative council will remove all fly-tipping within 24 hours.

Some examples of cleaner, greener, brighter Conservative councils

London Borough of Barnet *Conservative*

Compulsory Recycling

Since the Conservatives took control of the Council in 2002, Barnet has made great progress towards meeting national recycling targets. In 2002, only 8 per cent of household waste was recycled. In the first nine months of the pilot scheme, the Council said the total collected increased by over 3,000 tonnes, while requests for black boxes soared. One year on from the decision to expand the compulsory scheme across the Borough, the recycling rate is now almost 30 per cent, with more than three in four households participating in the weekly 'black box' scheme. Residents place glass bottles, jars, tins, cans, paper and magazines in their free household recycling boxes. Legal action is very much a last resort; there have been no legal actions so far against householders.

Birmingham City Council *Conservative-led*

Recycling

Tens of thousands of properties in Birmingham are part of a pilot programme with kerbside collection of:

- Multi-material (plastic, glass, tins and cans) - currently 10,000 properties fortnightly (due to increase to 100,000 by April 2007);
- Green waste - currently 40,000 properties (due to increase to 240,000 by April 2007);
- Paper/cardboard - currently 360,000 properties fortnightly.

Graffiti

In Selly Oak District the Council has a 'Hit Squad' – a two-man crew and vehicle equipped with a Grimebuster machine to remove graffiti and with anti-graffiti paint.

In Cotteridge the Council has established a Retailers Against Graffiti Scheme.

River Ranger

The River Rea is an important green corridor for wildlife within the City. It also provides an ideal educational and recreational resource for local schools and communities. 5 wards have clubbed together to fund the Ranger, who covers 8 miles of the river patrolling the banks, liaising with communities and working with local schools.

Brentwood Borough Council *Conservative*

Recycling – Street Care Teams

This year the Borough has launched a kerbside collection scheme, which has increased the rate of recycling and composting to 30 per cent. Following the successful kerbside collection of paper, the Council will start collecting cardboard.

'Street Care Teams', consisting of a fully-equipped vehicle and at least three operatives, sweep and pick up litter, remove fly-tipping and clean the streets. The Council promises that graffiti will be dealt with by the next working day. The streets are thoroughly cleared

once every four to six months. This includes manual and mechanical sweeping of the footways, cleaning of street signs and other street furniture, and verge trimming.

Brentwood's Town Centre Ranger encourages and helps local businesses to keep their premises spick and span. His role is akin to that of a town centre caretaker and he uses his own discretion to respond to problems himself or call in the Council workforce to deal with them.

Residents are encouraged to give their feedback on the service; residents' cards are distributed following cleaning, or they can use the response card in the 'little green guide' the Council produces. The Leader of the Council personally replies to every resident who sends in a response card. The Council has set up volunteer litter collection groups in some villages, whom the green teams then support by collecting what they gather. It is looking to develop more of these community teams.

London Borough of Bromley *Conservative*

The BISTRO Biodiesel Project

The Biodiesel Initiative for Sustainable Transport from Recycled Oil (BISTRO) Project is hosted in Bromley, whose Council is pioneering this five-year scheme.

When used oil is poured down the drains, it causes many problems in water treatment facilities; so Thames Water has agreed to project-manage the used cooking oil (UCO) collection.

UCO will be collected from restaurants, cafés, fish and chip shops and then refined and converted into biodiesel. This will be used by council vehicles, and then other organisations such as hospitals. Production at the Bromley plant will start in August 2006.

The 'Clean and Green' Borough

All 130,000 households in the Borough now have access to kerbside recycling collection. Bromley's recycling rate currently averages 27.5 per cent.

All standard households have been provided with two recycling boxes. Residents living in flats have been provided with re-useable recycling bags. Residents are asked to separate out their recyclables, to ensure that the Council can supply a high-quality product to recycling end-users. This also contributes to its ethos of educating the public in the importance of taking responsibility for their waste.

Bromley is also investing in two Household Reuse & Recycling Centres. A £1 million investment will ensure that residents can recycle as much of their waste as possible in a tidy, safe environment. The Council has also developed facilities such as 'Satellite Sites' for garden waste. Operating in car parks at weekends throughout most of the year, these make it easy for residents to recycle their garden waste, without having to spend time or cause further pollution travelling to the Household Reuse & Recycling Centres.

The Council runs a sorting facility so the minimum amount of material is sent to landfill sites. Street sweepings, gully waste and the annual leaf-fall are all recycled when possible.

Bromley's 'Recycling for All' programme sets a tough target of recycling 50 per cent of all waste by the summer of 2007.

Cambridgeshire County Council *Conservative*
Climate Change and Environmental Awards

The top-scoring county for recycling last year, Cambridgeshire County Council's climate change strategy has been developed in partnership with local businesses and organisations, and the district councils. It has won a number of awards.

For example, the Waste Management Team won the Best Community Initiative award for its innovative Master Composter scheme. The Team's 130 volunteers are committed to promoting composting in their community.

Colchester Borough Council *Conservative-led*
Recycling

The Council runs a borough-wide kerbside scheme collecting:

- glass, cans and foil: in a green recycling box;
- paper, cardboard, textiles, plastic bottles: in plastic bags;
- green garden waste: in reusable sacks.

The Council also provides recycling facilities for residents living in flats. Its pilot scheme was specifically designed to provide residents living in buildings of three storeys and above (who cannot take part in the Borough's kerbside scheme) with a convenient way to recycle. A pilot area of 50 flats, across 9 wards, from the private and public sectors now have recycling bins.

Recycling bins for glass, cans and paper are located around the perimeter of the grounds on a secure frame or in an existing bin building. When they were introduced, all residents were provided with information leaflets and reusable sacks to store and carry their items down to the bins. The Council hopes to expand this service borough-wide soon.

Dacorum Borough Council *Conservative*
Recycling – Waste Services Unit

Newspapers, magazines, junk mail, all food and drink cans and all plastic bottles are collected from 88 per cent of households in the Borough. Garden waste and cardboard are collected from almost half of all households.

The Council has improved its recycling service, and employs two staff to give face-to-face advice to residents. The waste services unit also distributes information and takes part in school and community talks. It has an enquiry hotline and offers assisted collections to help elderly and disabled residents with their recycling.

The education campaign has helped to change people's attitudes to recycling alongside a rapid change in the waste collection service. The original weekly black sack collection and opt-in dry recyclables scheme has been replaced by an alternate weekly refuse and organic waste/cardboard collection, with dry recyclables picked up weekly in boxes; newspapers, magazines and junk mail in black boxes, and cans, aerosols and all plastic bottles in green boxes.

Daventry District Council *Conservative*

Recycling & Energy Saving

Daventry's recycling scheme has ensured that 44 per cent of household waste is recycled. Households are given a red box (paper and textiles), a blue box (cans, glass and some plastics), a brown bin (garden waste and cardboard) and a normal bin for all other waste.

Under Northamptonshire's unique Waste Partnership Shadow Board, all 8 councils in the county work together to deliver the county waste strategy. It has reduced the annual growth in waste produced, increased the amount of waste recycled and composted, and helped to improve recycling and composting across the county. An education programme emphasising the importance of waste reduction is under way. The project focuses on schools and includes a waste education centre and touring education bus.

The council was a founder member of, and a driving force behind, the Midlands Recycling Consortium, which uses its greater purchasing power to negotiate advantageous markets for recyclates.

Dorset County Council *Conservative*

Recycling – Recycling Lottery

Thanks to the efforts of householders, Dorset has one of the highest recycling rates in the UK – 34 per cent. To improve further on this, Dorset ran a recycling lottery. To enter, people had to slip their name and address on a piece of paper into glass food jars and drink bottles and drop them into their kerbside collection box or local recycling bank. The six-month trial resulted in the recycling increasing by 4 per cent. A total of 50 residents won prizes, ranging from massage vouchers to football tickets and from paintballing to National Trust membership.

Dorset County Council has recently received recognition from the Carbon Trust for the pioneering work done monitoring greenhouse gas emissions and its Reduction Strategy/Action Plan. The Council has renewed its Energy Efficiency Accreditation (first held in 2001) which proves its continuing commitment to energy reduction and cost savings for Dorset residents.

East Dorset District Council *Conservative*

Recycling – Brown Bin Scheme

East Dorset's Brown Bin Scheme started in March 2004 and now serves over 13,000 properties. The service collects food waste, cardboard and garden waste using 120-litre wheeled bins that are collected each week. It is designed to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste that is land-filled. The material collected in the brown bins is taken for treatment at a new composting plant in Dorset that converts it into a soil improver to be used by farmers, gardeners and landscapers.

The Council has produced a sorting guide which describes the materials that are collected and the environmental benefits of participating in the scheme.

East Sussex County Council *Conservative*

Re-think Rubbish Bus

The Re-think Rubbish Bus has attended 267 events around the county. Its staff have talked to almost 30,000 people and it has sold nearly 12,000 compost bins, wormeries, and food digesters.

London Borough of Enfield *Conservative*

Environmental Crime Unit

Enfield Conservatives were elected in May 2002 on a pledge to make the Borough a greener and cleaner place to live. The previous Labour council had made cuts of over £6 million to the environment budget meaning that fly-tipping, fly-posting, abandoned vehicles, potholes and litter had all become major problems.

More investment was required to deal with problems such as potholes and broken pavements, and environmental crime issues required a more joined-up approach. An Environmental Crime Unit (ECU) was created to:

- Inspect all abandoned/nuisance vehicles within two days of notification;
- Remove all cases of fly-tipping within four hours;
- Investigate all reported untaxed vehicles within two days of notification;
- Collect old vehicles from domestic properties within three days of receipt of payment and documentation;
- Remove all obscene or racist graffiti from council-owned property within 24 hours of notification.

The results are clear. For example, the number of abandoned vehicles in Enfield decreased by 30 per cent between 2003 and 2004. The Council also attempts to prevent problems arising in the first place by offering a door-to-door collection service for old vehicles at a cost of £35 per vehicle.

Partnership is integral to the success of the ECU. For example, it has established a Street Hawk programme which recruits local residents to be the eyes and ears of the community by informing the Council of litter, graffiti and other types of vandalism. Seventy volunteers were recruited for the various pilot areas. The scheme is so successful that it is now being introduced across the Borough.

Fylde Borough Council *Conservative*

Recycling & Climate Change

Recycling4Fylde&Wyre is an integrated recycling collection service that has been rolled out across the Fylde over the last few years.

In 2004/05 residents in Fylde recycled 32 per cent of household rubbish - the best recycling rate in Lancashire. This figure is steadily increasing as a direct result of the Council's new recycling initiatives.

Separate collections have been provided for the following types of household rubbish:

- Dry recyclables (Green Box & Blue Bag): paper, cans, glass and textiles;

- Compostable rubbish (Green Wheeled Bin): garden waste and cardboard;
- Residual rubbish (Grey Wheeled Bin): rubbish that can't be recycled.

The Council currently provides:

- Twin Bin service for recycling compostable rubbish and cardboard;
- Blue Bag service for recycling newspapers, magazines & junk mail;
- Green Box service for recycling glass and cans;
- Recycling Centres for recycling paper, glass, cans, textiles, books and shoes;
- Home Composting for the recycling of kitchen waste, cardboard and garden waste.

Gloucester City Council *Conservative-led*

Recycling

Conservatives have delivered investment of £3¼ million over the last 18 months, tripling the recycling rate. The Council has introduced a green waste scheme to 26,000 households and has invested £170,000 introducing a plastics and cardboard collection scheme. It has scrapped the charge for bulky waste across the city.

Despite widespread concerns that the charge was encouraging fly-tipping, the Liberal Democrats wanted to keep this unfair tax.

Harrogate Borough Council *Conservative*

Recycling

The Council has put recycling at the top of its agenda. It has been congratulated by the Audit Commission for the way it handles household waste, receiving a 'good performing' accolade for its work. The recycling rate has increased from 9 per cent of household waste to 21 per cent over the last three years.

As well as the doorstep scheme for recycling paper, cans and glass, the Council is testing a scheme to recycle plastic and garden waste. It was announced recently that green waste recycling will be extended to Knaresborough, helping local residents who currently have to travel to Stonefall tip to dispose of their garden waste.

Hertsmere Borough Council *Conservative*

Recycling and Refuse Collection

Hertsmere has invested £1 million in a new waste depot and over £1 million in a fleet of new refuse collection vehicles. It has introduced green waste collections across the Borough. The recycling rate has doubled in 12 months - from 12 per cent last year to around 25 per cent this year.

From September 2006 the Council will introduce a system of alternate weekly collection, so as to increase the recycling rate further.

London Borough of Hillingdon *Conservative-led*

Recycling and Parks

The Council has an excellent record in recycling, with year-on-year improvements. Estate

recycling is virtually 100 per cent and there is a free green waste collection scheme in place. The Council's graffiti removal budget has doubled and the removal of any racist graffiti is given priority.

The Council has introduced neighbourhood solo sweepers to clean the streets. These include investments in new machinery, more pedestrian sweepers, and a pavement washing programme. A residents' satisfaction survey shows a marked improvement in street cleanliness.

Hillingdon has an Air Quality Action Plan, and conducts noise monitoring. The 5-year plan aims to minimise emissions in the Heathrow area.

There are six new Park Patrol constables in service, and six green spaces projects have been implemented. Park Patrols have made parks safer environments; the constables have the authority to intervene against anti-social behaviour, for example, keeping illegal motor-biking out of the parks.

Hyndburn Borough Council *Conservative*

Recycling

The Council has introduced kerbside recycling services for the collection of paper, glass, cans and garden waste. The recycling rate has nearly doubled over the last two years, with nearly 7,000 tonnes of household rubbish recycled last year.

The Council is issuing more fixed penalty notices for littering, and taking non-payers to court. The Council is also focusing on commercial premises, taking owners to court for littering and rubbish dumping.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea *Conservative*

Police Community Support Officers - Litter

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Kensington and Chelsea are the first in London to be able to issue fixed penalty fines for dog fouling, littering and dropping chewing gum. PCSOs are also involved in reporting and arranging for the removal of graffiti.

Although PCSOs were granted the power to issue penalty fines for dog fouling and litter when they were introduced in 2002, the Metropolitan Police Service was unable to enforce this in practice until now; the Council has now developed its own unique penalty ticket to tackle these quality of life issues and anyone caught will be issued with a £50 fine.

Lichfield District Council *Conservative*

Recycling - Two box scheme

Lichfield District Council operates an alternate weekly collection of household waste which is placed in a 240-litre wheeled bin, as well as a weekly collection of recyclables from every household. Two boxes are provided for recyclable materials: paper and

cardboard are collected in the small box and glass bottles and jars, food and drinks cans, textiles and plastic bottles are collected in the large box. There is an 80-90 per cent participation rate in the scheme.

On alternate weeks, there is a collection of garden waste and residual waste. Garden waste is collected in a 240-litre wheeled bin and made into soil improver, which can be bought back by residents for use on gardens and allotments.

For residents in terraced houses who do not have space for a selection of bins on their doorsteps, the Council provides mini-recycling centres within walking distance.

Lichfield's big push on recycling started in the summer of 2000, when a consultation document was sent to 40,000 households and a mobile exhibition unit went out to 20 venues around the district.

The recycling and composting rate has soared from 27 per cent in 2001/02 to the current rate of 46 per cent.

Mole Valley District Council *Conservative-led*

Recycling

Local Conservatives have made great progress on recycling with the introduction of a twin bin system and a new recycling facility at Leatherhead. These have brought the recycling rate to over 30 per cent this year and there are lots of plans under way to do even better in the future, including a garden waste collection service, a new composting plant for green waste at Buckland Nursery and extending the range of recyclables collected, particularly glass.

Purbeck District Council *Conservative*

Recycling

In Purbeck, every household was issued with a grey wheelie bin for non-recyclable rubbish and a green 55-litre kerbside box for recyclable materials. Residents have received a leaflet, a recycling calendar and they also have access to a helpline number.

In the first month of the scheme, recycling rates across Purbeck almost doubled. After the first six months, a recycling rate of over 30 per cent is being sustained.

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Conservative

Recycling

Richmond residents are now recycling more than 25 per cent of the waste they produce through weekly kerbside collections, 123 recycling sites across the Borough and food and green waste recycling. 20,000 tons a year no longer go into landfill.

The Council is also piloting kerbside plastic and cardboard recycling schemes which, if successful, will be rolled out across the Borough. When in power, the Liberal Democrats scrapped a proposed plastics recycling scheme.

Repairs to roads and pavements have also been implemented, with much more to come – including 25 more miles of pavement repairs in the next few years. In addition, £4.7 million is being spent to upgrade parks, open spaces and libraries.

Runnymede Borough Council *Conservative*

Yellow Bus Scheme

When local businesses expressed concern about congestion at peak times, Runnymede Borough Council began to work with the Runnymede Business Partnership to find a solution. In 2002, Runnymede Borough Council introduced the Yellow Bus Scheme, part-funded by the Council and local business sponsorship.

Attention focused on areas that were not already well-served by public transport so as not to take people away from regular bus routes. A target of ensuring that pupils were picked up from within 300 metres of their home and taken to school was introduced. A similar service operates at the end of the school day along with a 'late' bus for those participating in after-school activities.

Buses are dedicated to individual schools. This promotes a sense of ownership by the students, and prevents conflict between different bus users. Each student is issued with a Yellow Bus pass, which must be shown to the driver as the student boards the bus, and families with two or more children receive a one-third discount.

The bus reduces traffic congestion and the risk of road accidents. Each bus is fitted with an environmentally friendly Euro 3 engine running on low sulphur diesel.

Shropshire County Council *Conservative*

Sustainable energy

The Council has developed both a corporate and a community Climate Change Strategy. It has set itself a demanding target for CO₂ reduction – a 2 per cent year-on-year reduction, achieving a 40 per cent reduction on 1990 levels by 2010 (excluding the purchase of green electricity). So far, there has been a 25 per cent reduction in CO₂. Annual reports show continued progress.

The Council has reduced energy consumption in its own buildings by using trained site managers and putting specifications on new equipment. It has also reduced the need for staff travel.

In its focus on renewable energy, the Council has installed heat pumps or solar electricity in many of its buildings. Under new contracts, the Council purchases 100 per cent renewable electricity at no additional cost – this comes from the burning of sewage gas.

The Council is supporting research into wood fuel, biogas, biodiesel and wind power. The Schools Advisory Service actively promotes curriculum activities linked to sustainable energy.

Improving cycle routes

The Council has also developed a variety of local off-road cycle ways and on-road cycle lanes in Shrewsbury and market towns. These are complemented by an increasing variety of secure cycle parking facilities.

Cycling and public transport have been integrated with the Shropshire Bike-Bus; there are cycle parks at bus stops and a specially-adapted easy access bus, with a rear rack capable of carrying 2 bikes.

South Oxfordshire District Council *Conservative*

Recycling & Climate Change

South Oxfordshire District Council was one of the first councils in the country to install underground banks for glass recycling. The environmentally-friendly banks are easy to use, with an opening above ground for placing glass into an underground container. The containers' rubber lining reduces noise from dropping glass, and they are less visually intrusive than a traditional, above-ground bank.

Council offices use electricity from renewable sources and have been using energy-efficient condensing boilers since 2002. The Council is also currently investigating the possibility of installing on-site renewable energy technologies.

To reduce single car occupancy for travel to meetings, the Council has set up a pool bike scheme and offers a cycle mileage allowance for business use. A Green Travel Plan to encourage sustainable travel to work and meetings is currently under development.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council *Conservative*

Recycling

St Edmundsbury Borough Council is top of the recycling league tables. It is the only council to have reached 50 per cent, thanks to its three-bin system. This involves the collection of recycled items from two bins (compostable materials and dry recyclables such as paper, plastic and cans), and another for the rest of the rubbish (such as food, pet waste and disposable nappies). The garden waste and vegetable peelings are composted and turned into soil improver which is sold to individuals and organisations such as landscaping companies. The dry recyclables are sorted, sold and turned into items such as newspapers, traffic cones, fleeces, street signs and park benches.

St Edmundsbury is part of the Suffolk Recycling Consortium, a partnership of six Suffolk District and Borough Councils and Viridor Waste Management. By working together, the members of the Consortium have enabled a major investment to be made at the Great Blakenham recycling plant. This improved technology has increased the total amount of recycled material to 36,000 tonnes per year - representing a recycling rate across the Consortium of approximately 30 per cent. By working together with all Suffolk councils, the Consortium members have achieved significant improvements in the recycling rates across the county.

Surrey County Council *Conservative*

Pegasus School Bus Project

Surrey County Council is providing a state-of-the-art transport service for primary school children.

The Ride Pegasus! scheme provides a high-quality school bus service. It aims to reduce traffic congestion and local pollution by encouraging parents to send their children to school by bus instead of travelling by car.

Parents will have the confidence of knowing that their children are travelling in a safe and secure environment. The vehicles are fully-seatbelted, wheelchair accessible, have police-checked adult escorts and can be tracked using real-time satellite technology.

The first phase of the scheme started in January 2006 with six services. In the period up to April 2007, further Ride Pegasus! services will be introduced to other primary schools in and around the area as demand is identified.

Tandridge District Council *Conservative*

Tandridge District Council has recently signed a fourteen-year refuse and recycling contract. This allows for a rolling programme of moving from a fortnightly to a weekly recycling service that includes plastics. Two pilot schemes covering a quarter of the district will be launched this year.

Before the new contract was placed, Tandridge residents were asked what type of refuse collection service they wanted. They wanted to keep the weekly service from the back door and the new contract provides this. This is a highly customer-orientated refuse collection service of a type that is rarely found today.

The council has pioneered the use of photo-voltaic cells for the production of electricity directly from sunlight. It has placed an extensive array of cells on the roof of the council offices that should produce 25 kw of power. This will both reduce the cost of electricity consumed by the Council and feed electricity into the national grid when the offices are empty.

Following the burning down of a major sports pavilion in the district, the Council has designed environmentally-friendly features into the replacement.

London Borough of Wandsworth *Conservative*

Noise Pollution

Each year the Council receives more than 5,000 complaints about nuisances, of which over 4,000 are about noise.

In most cases the Council deals with noise problems by assessing whether the noise is unreasonable, taking into account factors such as loudness, time of day, how often it occurs and how long it lasts. Noise which is unreasonable is then dealt with as a 'statutory nuisance' under the powers of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A

Council officer must witness the noise before taking action, and if the noise is thought to be a statutory nuisance, the law requires the Council to serve an 'abatement notice' on the person responsible. The scope of the notice will vary with different circumstances, and may require an immediate stop to the noise or prohibit its recurrence, or, in cases where some work is necessary, allow a specified time for compliance.

Failure to comply with an abatement notice is an offence and the Council can prosecute. It may also take what is called 'default action' in some cases, which could involve disabling car or intruder alarms or seizing stereo equipment.

- For complaints about car or intruder alarms, the Council deals with the matter on the day the complaint is made, or, if the complaint is received during the late evening, as soon as possible the next day.
- For other noise complaints, the Council initiates an investigation within one working day.
- The Council meets these targets for over 98 per cent of complaints.
- The Council aims to respond to noise complaints within 1 hour in not less than 80 per cent of cases if the complaint is received when officers are on duty.

The Council has also launched a new service aiming to provide local residents with up-to-date and comprehensive information on flight patterns and aircraft noise in the Borough.

Westminster City Council *Conservative*

Clean Streets

'Clean Streets' is one of the five themes of Civic Renewal. Westminster's commitment to improving standards is enshrined in the UK's largest cleaning contract (£32 million a year). New equipment, more and better paid staff and the use of pioneering technology ensure Westminster maintains its reputation as the UK's cleanest city.

Adequate enforcement is another aspect of Clean Streets. Last year, Westminster issued over 12,000 litter fines - more than any other council in the country.

A dedicated graffiti and fly-posting removal team has been set up under Civic Renewal and is currently clearing over 200 sites a month.

New on-street urinals have been introduced in several parts of the West End to combat the impact of late-night revellers. These have been outstandingly successful and have dramatically reduced street urination.

The West End will always be the most challenging place in the country to maintain high standards due to the intensity of use, compact streets and 24-hour use of the local environment. Westminster is proud of its record and believes that the last two years have seen significant improvements in street cleanliness.

West Oxfordshire District Council *Conservative*

The Council has dedicated hit squads that tackle fly-tipping and fly-posting throughout the Council's area. It also has tough recycling targets; in 2003/04, it recycled 13.7 per

cent of household waste, beating the 12 per cent target.

The Council also purchases all its electricity from renewable sources, and has recently started building a ground source heat pump to heat all Council facilities. The Council headquarters has a series of photovoltaic cells and solar panels on its ceiling which provide power and heated water for the building.

Woking Borough Council (*Conservative-led*)

Climate Change

The Council has opened a town centre Combined Heat and Power (CHP) station, as part of an extensive Climate Change Strategy. It is the first commercially-operating energy station of its kind in the country.

The CHP station uses combined heat and power technology, together with heat-fired absorption cooling, to produce environmentally -friendly energy services.

The station provides heat, power and cooling to town centre buildings, including the Council offices, by distributing electricity via private wire, and heat and chilled water services via private pipe networks.

The main benefit is that this reduces fuel poverty – the use of the private grid reduces energy losses and costs. There is a security of supply and the ability to operate in ‘island mode’ if the National Grid fails.

Across the country, Conservatives are campaigning to protect their communities' environment and improve people's quality of life. Here are some examples of what will happen if people vote blue on 4 May.

Conservatives in Barnet will...

- step up our ground-breaking initiatives in the field of recycling. We will also aim to reduce overall waste and will set a new target for waste recycled by Barnet residents to rise to 40 per cent by 2011 – up from 32 per cent today;
- work with flat owners to make arrangements for the collection of recyclable materials;
- make arrangements for the doorstep collection of cardboard and plastics;
- protect the green belt.

Conservatives in Brent will...

- put in place an effective bio-diversity programme;
- oppose developments of inappropriate high density, multi-storey housing;
- properly fund our open spaces;
- act to ensure fast, efficient graffiti removal;
- increase the funding of work on roads, pavements and accident prevention;
- improve grass verges and street trees, and resolve the pavement parking issues, particularly pavement parking along narrow streets;
- improve awareness of recycling, with an educational programme in schools on the benefits to everyone of recycling. Children can then teach their parents;
- drastically reduce the quantity of glossy magazines being produced by Brent Council;
- begin a recycling competition to promote best practice and award a prize to the school with the best ideas.

Conservatives in Camden will...

- introduce a scheme providing significant incentives for residents who choose to swap their petrol-driven car for an electric one. This will include free parking anywhere in the Borough and we will investigate the provision of on-street charging points;
- campaign for the introduction of electric buses in the Borough;
- revisit the efficiency possibilities of providing bins to allow householders to segregate recyclable materials;
- introduce incentives such as reduced collection fees for segregated recyclable materials;
- pledge to maintain the regularity of doorstep collections of rubbish;
- provide free collection of bulky household items;
- protect our trees by moving away from the presumption that trees should be felled at the first indication that there might be a problem, and work from the position that felling will be a last resort;
- introduce a formal replanting process whereby, if residents want it and except in exceptional circumstances, a tree will be replanted within a certain time wherever an old tree has had to be removed. Residents will always be included in the choice of species for replacement trees;
- identify more sites where plants and flowers would enhance the public environment.

Conservatives in Chorley will...

- redirect more money to refuse collection and improve the direction and supervision of the cleaning teams.

Conservatives in Crawley will...

- increase investment in Crawley's grass-cutting, street cleaning and litter collection;
- contest cramming, in-fill development proposals which often damage the environment.

Conservatives in Croydon will...

- extend the current kerbside recycling service to all homes and include plastic, cardboard and green garden waste;
- do more to keep the streets clean, increasing the frequency of cleaning in those wards that are currently cleaned once every two months to once a month.

Conservatives in Eastleigh will...

- fight to restore the right of every householder to have free weekly collections of all household waste;
- encourage recycling by making it more attractive through offering rewards for green waste, and sending all non-recyclable waste to energy recovery units rather than to landfill.

Conservatives in Hammersmith and Fulham will...

- improve the orange sack recycling scheme;
- introduce a moratorium on all fines for rubbish/recycling sacks put out on the wrong day;
- examine schemes, such as compulsory recycling, which operates in Conservative-run Barnet;
- reward owners of low emission vehicles with a 50 per cent reduction on parking permit charges for low emission cars;
- ensure street cleaning is properly co-ordinated with other relevant services such as refuse collection.

Conservatives in Lambeth will...

...make our streets cleaner and greener by:

- Improving and expanding the recycling service to increase recycling rates;
- Investing more money to improve recycling services and refuse collection;
- Introducing doorstep recycling on all estates;
- Giving our housing estates a cleaning service as good as privately-owned housing;
- Continuing the successful neighbourhood spring-cleaning days;
- Introducing 'Street Champions' to support and promote the Council's green initiatives, helping to make sure high standards are maintained on our streets;
- Clamping down on dog fouling, littering offences, graffiti, fly-posting, fly-tipping and other nuisances, and providing more dog litter bins in problem areas;

- Investing more money in our public toilets, with better provision for women and the disabled.

...protect and improve our parks and green spaces by:

- Employing more park rangers with legal powers to police our parks properly, and basing them in specific locations;
- Bidding for more external funding from the Lottery and other sources to speed up our improvement plans for green and open spaces;
- Investigating the possibility of introducing local management for our larger parks and green spaces;
- Aiming for at least six of Lambeth's parks and open spaces to achieve 'Green Flag' status;
- Promoting bio-diversity in all of Lambeth's parks. We will work with Friends of Parks groups to achieve this;
- Opposing the loss of playing fields, and any further erosion of green and open spaces in Lambeth and neighbouring boroughs. This includes building developments on open spaces, such as the plans for housing in Crystal Palace Park;
- Investing in better lighting and security.

...make Lambeth a more environmentally friendly place to live by:

- Planting more than 1,000 new street and park trees, in consultation with local residents and user groups;
- Identifying ways in which we can adapt to combat the potential effects of climate change - for example, by making plantings in local recreation parks less dependent upon regular watering;
- Providing opportunities to develop renewable energy generation within the Borough, including on council-owned buildings;
- Minimising the Council's harmful impact on the environment;
- Encouraging individuals, organisations and businesses in the local community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Opening a 'Scrapstore' for non-hazardous items where businesses and individuals can donate unwanted items for reuse by schools and others;
- Lobbying the Government to introduce legislation that makes polluters pay for the damage they cause to our environment.

Conservatives in Merton will...

- Remove all cases of fly-tipping within 24 hours;
- Investigate all reported untaxed vehicles within two days of notification;
- Keep our streets clean and fine those who dirty them;
- Invest more in tackling the graffiti menace, in order to clear **all** graffiti within 5 working days of it being reported;
- Remove chewing gum from town centre pavements and introduce a public education campaign on the nuisance;
- Ensure residents are provided with an annual update on refuse collection services;
- Consider extending existing community skip schemes as part of a mobile recycling

initiative across the Borough;

- Consider the feasibility, and pilot the introduction, of wheelie bins where appropriate.

Conservatives in Southwark will...

- Defend all of Dulwich and Surrey Docks from the huge and inappropriate increase in housing density in Ken Livingstone's plans to redesignate them as urban planning zones;
- Improve maintenance of our parks and open spaces and protect them from development;
- Work to see real investment in better youth provision and leisure facilities in Dulwich, where it has been neglected for too long;
- Strengthen Southwark Council's Community Wardens and ensure full coverage till 10.30 p.m. across the Borough.

Conservatives in Tower Hamlets will...

- Establish a recycling task force to improve performance in 2 years. Conservatives believe real ambition and innovation is needed to turn around Tower Hamlets' abysmal recycling record.