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**MEDIA RELEASE
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BABERGH BAGS "ENCOURAGING" EARLY RESULTS FROM NEW RECYCLING SCHEME

A Suffolk district council has publicly thanked residents for supporting its new recycling scheme, with initial results showing a significant increase in domestic recycling levels. In early December 2002, Babergh District Council launched a dedicated recycling operation whereby its Pink Bags were collected on alternate weeks with the residual waste still being collected every week.

Results show that during the first six weeks of operation, over 380 tonnes of recyclable waste was recovered and sent to the recycling plant at Great Blakenham. This brings the average recycling rate from the Pink Bag Scheme up to 14% - compared to just 6% before the introduction of lorries which only collect the Pink Bags.

"We know that it is early days, but these increases are very encouraging indeed" enthused Malcolm Firth, Babergh's Head of Environmental Services. "I would like to thank local residents, our Parish and Town Councils, as well as the staff at Babergh, for having helped to make what could have been a difficult transition that much easier."

Babergh has divided the district up into two areas – Blue and Yellow Week areas – where recyclable waste is collected on alternate weeks. In doing so, its contractors, Cleanaway, are using four extra vehicles to collect the Pink Bags.

"Bearing in mind that four new crews have had to be employed, with limited knowledge of a geographically diverse rural district of over 230 square miles, they have done a remarkably good job. Our contractor Cleanaway does, however, offer apologies to all those householders who may not have benefited from their usual reliable service during the changeover but reassures us that the scheme will have settled in by the end of the month."

Babergh is also keen to emphasise that even if households have run out of Pink Bags that they can still recycle. "If residents place their dry recyclable material in bags or boxes marked 'For recycling' then the bin men will collect them as before" explained Malcolm Firth.

"The willingness of Babergh residents to take advantage of this improved Pink Bag Scheme bodes well when we switch over to a two-bin solution (one for recycling and one for residual waste) later on in the year" he concluded. ENDS

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