



Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

7th October 2009

JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE – FIRST REVIEW

(Report of the Head of Environment)

1. Summary of Proposals

The purpose of the report is to endorse the revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire (first review) and agree its adoption.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that:

- 1) the Council endorses reviewed Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and agrees the adoption of the revised Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire;
- 2) the Council requests that the County Council provides Worcestershire District Councils with suitable financial support to better enable the authorities to work jointly toward the goals set in the JMWMS. The Head of Environment be delegated responsibility to undertake such negotiations in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health;
- 3) the Council requests that Worcestershire County Council work with the District Councils to identify any efficiency savings on waste collection and disposal that arise from the revised JMWMS that can be shared amongst the Partners.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications on the Council resulting from the adoption of the revised Strategy. An Action Plan to deliver the new strategy forms part of the revised documentation (Annex I). Currently it is envisaged that any actions which the Council needs to carry out will be met from within existing budgets.
- 3.2 The business case for the introduction of a chargeable cost neutral garden waste collection service will be presented to Executive Committee on 28th October.

- 3.3 In extending the range of materials which can be recycled in the green bins, it is likely that there will be an increase in the number of residents requesting additional or larger green bins. It is difficult to predict the likely impact of this but if 5% of residents asked for an additional green bin, this would mean an additional £25,000 would need to be spent on wheeled bins.
- 3.4 The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme penalties and annually increasing Landfill Tax will both impose significantly higher costs on the Waste Disposal Authority (Worcestershire County Council) than the costs of developing a waste treatment infrastructure to divert waste from landfill.
- 3.5 In the past the County Council has paid grants to all districts for achieving improved recycling rates. These grants have now ended, however officers are currently investigating options for gaining further financial support for the waste collection authorities.

Legal

- 3.5 Under the Waste and Emissions and Trading (WET) Act 2003 there is a legal requirement to have a Waste Strategy in place. The WET Act also requires Local Authorities to meet stringent targets set by the Landfill Directive. Under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) allowances will be allocated to waste disposal authorities that set limits for the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. There will be severe penalties (currently set at £150 per tonne) for exceeding the allocation.
- 3.6 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 requires Waste Collection Authorities to carry out waste collection/recycling services.
- 3.7 The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 requires that all Local Authorities in England provide a kerbside collection of at least two recyclable materials from all households by December 2010, unless the cost of doing so would be unreasonably high or comparable alternative arrangements are available.

Policy

- 3.8 The Council adopted the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) in summer 2004. The Strategy includes 10 principles and 24 policies which are detailed in the Headline Strategy document and these provide a framework for all of the Council's waste policies.
- 3.9 An important change in the revised JMWMS is that of garden waste to be collected for composting. Under the existing Strategy, home

composting was promoted as our adopted approach to dealing with garden waste and only Bromsgrove offered a garden waste collection. However, in order to meet increasing national targets for recycling and composting, all authorities are now either exploring or offering chargeable garden waste collection services. In January 2009, Members agreed that a detailed proposal and business case looking at the feasibility of a chargeable self funding garden waste collection, potentially in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council, would be prepared. This will be presented to Executive Committee on 28th October 2009.

- 3.10 However, home composting continues to play a critical role in reducing waste in Herefordshire and Worcestershire with approximately 76,500 compost bins sold between April 2004 and March 2008 leading to an estimated 21,500 tonnes of biodegradable waste kept out of the residual waste stream. Therefore home composting remains an important part of the revised Strategy.
- 3.11 As agreed by Council in January 2009, the Council's preferred approach is not to introduce separate collections of food waste but to promote ways of preventing/minimising food waste by supporting the 'Love Food Hate Waste' national campaign led by the Waste Resources Action Programme.

Risk

- 3.12 It is incumbent on the Council to consider a sustainable waste collection service based on the JMWMS and national policy. The risk of the service failing to meet future targets will influence future Comprehensive Area Assessment outcomes and the Council's direction of travel.
- 3.13 There is a risk that reductions in municipal waste to landfill are not achieved because the revised strategy fails to properly take account of views of, and engage local communities and other stakeholders. Endorsement of the consultation draft revised strategy and the extensive structured public consultation carried out, shows clear leadership and reduces this risk.
- 3.14 Failure to be supported or implemented by all signatory Councils can be avoided by showing clear leadership and commitment to the revised strategy.
- 3.15 There is a risk of not achieving reductions in municipal waste to landfill because the revised strategy fails to be robust enough to support application(s) for planning approval for residual waste treatment facilities. This can be mitigated by endorsement of the extensive, structured public consultation and ensuring that the final adopted revised strategy is robust and well supported.

- 3.16 The Council could choose not to approve the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy or could require the document to be amended. This option would damage the Council's reputation in its Partnership with Local Councils in Worcestershire and could also delay any progress in developing a Residual Waste Treatment solution for Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.17 The revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is founded on the principles of sustainability and Climate Change is recognised as a key issue which needs to be considered in the future delivery of waste services.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 The present Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire "Managing waste for a brighter future" was developed in Partnership with all members of the Joint Members Waste Resource Management Forum. It was adopted by all the Councils within Herefordshire & Worcestershire in 2004 and set down for the first time how all the Councils would work together in a coordinated manner to reduce the amount of waste being land-filled.
- 4.2 The Strategy was developed at a time when the amount of municipal waste collected and disposed of was increasing year on year. The Strategy was founded on six key principles from which emanated eighteen key policies and eight specific targets. Applying the 'Waste Hierarchy', the Strategy focused on restricting waste growth, increasing recycling and composting and reducing the amount of waste treated and ultimately disposed of to land-fill. The uppermost concern in producing the Strategy was to meet restrictions on landfilling of municipal waste introduced under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme. Substantial financial penalties are incurred if restrictions are exceeded.
- 4.3 An integrated collection and disposal system known as the "Vision for Waste Collection" was central to future joint working. In this system, collection authorities would collect commingled dry recyclables and residual refuse from each household on alternate weeks. Commingled dry recyclables were to be sorted in a new facility to be constructed within Worcestershire ('Envirosort' is currently under construction at Norton near Worcester). At that time it was planned that residual waste would be treated using an

autoclave process capable of reducing its bulk and producing a usable fibre by-product. Planning permission was gained for autoclave plants at Hartlebury in Worcestershire and Madley in Herefordshire but it has not proved possible to conclude a satisfactory contractual arrangement to construct these facilities.

- 4.4 This Council's recycling and waste management performance has improved steadily each year since district wide kerbside recycling was introduced in 2003/04. The Council's current recycling rate is forecast at around 32% this year and the amount of waste collected has now fallen below 2001/2 levels.
- 4.5 Other Councils in Herefordshire and Worcestershire have also made substantial improvements which means that levels of municipal waste across the two counties have begun to fall in recent years. Significant issues remain however, especially in relation to treatment and disposal of residual waste to meet future restrictions on landfilling.
- 4.6 The original Strategy contained a commitment to regular formal review on a three yearly basis recognising the dynamic nature of both waste management legislation and technology. The Joint Waste Resource Management Forum commenced its review of the Strategy in 2007 following the publication of the overarching national Government Strategy, Waste Strategy for England 2007. The need to complete a more robust document, supported by a number of technical studies (forming the annexes), along with the introduction of the new performance framework part way through the process, have meant that the revised document is now ready to be published five years since the original was published in November 2004.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 For the revised Strategy to be credible and robust, it was essential to be able demonstrate that it has been subject to rigorous, extensive and properly balanced consultation with the public and interested parties. A sequential, structured approach was adopted using an initial series of focus groups to identify key issues that were explored and quantified through a sample survey. This provided balanced and statistically valid feedback on the consultation draft enabling final refinement of the Strategy document to fully reflect responses. Partners had the opportunity at a number of stages to endorse the evolving document to reduce the risks of non-adoption of the final Strategy.
- 5.2 The consultation period ran for a period of 13 weeks from 16th February until 15th May 2009 and concentrated on the changes to

- the strategy arising from the review process, for example Climate Change and the new challenges posed by Waste Strategy 2007.
- 5.3 Independent specialists with knowledge and expertise in running similar public consultation exercises were engaged to lead this process. Support was provided through existing technical and communications resources.
- 5.4 The consultation process proved invaluable in developing the final revised Strategy documents. Focus groups enabled the views of residents to be sought and without this opportunity they may not have provided their valuable input. There was an excellent response to the public postal survey with a response rate of over 20%. However, there was a limited response to the on-line questionnaire and ways of improving this response rate will be considered in future consultations. Responses were received from a variety of different stakeholders and interested parties which provided detailed and challenging comments reflecting a range of views and issues. Annex H contains full details of the consultation process and outcomes.
- 5.5 Waste Strategy for England 2007 focuses much more on the contribution made by waste collection, treatment and disposal to Climate Change. It also sets out to break the link between economic growth and the growth in waste production, by seeing waste as a resource from which value can be derived. Targets for recycling, diversion of waste from landfill and recovery of value are now more demanding than those established previously. The previous non statutory national target of recycling 33% of household waste by 2015 has been significantly increased to 45%, rising to 50% by 2020. To achieve these levels of recycling, it will be necessary to introduce new collection/treatment systems. The draft revised joint Strategy takes on board this revised national position.
- 5.6 Since 2004, the issue of Climate Change has become of increasing concern and importance. Councils in Herefordshire and Worcestershire have adopted robust policies and strategies to meet obligations and targets placed upon them to contribute towards reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases and to mitigating the effects of climate change. New National Indicators require councils to measure their performance in relation to greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to Climate Change.
- 5.7 Statutory Guidance has been issued by central government on the production of joint municipal waste management strategies subsequent to the adoption of our original Strategy. Strategies have also become subject to assessment in accordance with Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment legislation. These requirements

have meant that it has been necessary to change the format of the Strategy, which is also of considerably greater size.

- 5.8 The revised Strategy now comprises a Headline Strategy and a series of detailed supporting documents as listed in 9.3.
- 5.9 The revised strategy builds upon the strengths and successes of the original Strategy. Commitment to the 'Waste Hierarchy' remains a key principle. This is reflected in policies focusing on reducing the amount of waste arising, increasing the proportion recycled and from which value is derived and minimising the amount of waste that is landfilled. These are described in more detail in Annexes B, C and D.
- 5.10 The "Vision for waste collection" has been replaced by a policy of providing a core service to all households of kerbside services for commingled recyclables and residual waste together with additional services for other waste streams that may be provided on a charged for basis. The previous blanket approach of alternating weekly collections has been replaced with a focus on waste reduction being achieved by all authorities increasing the amount recycled and restricting either residual waste collection frequency and/or container capacity. An important change to the Strategy is the introduction of the Core Collection Service where all councils will collect the same recyclable materials.
- 5.11 The prescriptive approach to treatment of residual waste by an autoclave process has been removed from the draft revised strategy. There is now a new policy to increase diversion away from landfill supported by a Residual Options Appraisal (Annex D). This provides a detailed appraisal for waste treatment options capable of increasing the value derived from the residual waste stream. The appraisal informs the method for future treatment of residual waste, proposals for which are expected to come forward from the Waste Disposal Contractor (Severn Waste Services). The robustness of the strategy is important in supporting necessary applications for planning consent.
- 5.12 Targets within the revised strategy are presented on a pooled basis. Each partner Council will have an identified contribution to meeting these targets. The Council's contribution to meeting the pooled 43% recycling target by 31st March 2014 will be fulfilled by increasing our overall recycling & composting rate to 39.8%.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management - None identified at this time.

- Community Safety - Good quality waste services contribute positively to the perception of the local environment.
- Human Resources - None identified at this time.
- Social Exclusion - We are currently completing the roll out of bespoke recycling services to as many properties in the town as possible, including flats and hard to reach areas. Clear policies and service standards continue to benefit residents who require special collection arrangements.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The revised strategy represents the culmination of substantial work by the Joint Waste Resource Management Forum to update the present strategy to reflect significant changes in national policy, local policy, changing technology and progress in improving performance to date. Its formal adoption by all partner councils will show leadership and lend weight in consulting with our communities and other stakeholders.
- 7.2 To limit printing of the large document, full copies of the revised Strategy documents are available in the Group Rooms for Members to view from 28th September.

8. Lessons Learnt

Since the original Strategy was published in 2004, the waste agenda has moved on and the new Strategy and action plan (annex I) reflect these changes. As a result of the public consultation, a number of revisions were made to ensure that the views of local residents and stakeholders are fully reflected.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire 2004 – 2034 published in November 2004, “Managing waste for a brighter future”
- 9.2 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire – First Review - November 2009 as detailed below. In order to reduce printing, copies of the Strategy are available electronically and limited printed copies have been made available for Members to view in the Group Rooms:

Headline Strategy

Annex A Waste Growth

Annex B Waste Prevention Options Appraisal

Annex C Recycling & Composting Options Appraisal

Annex D Residual Waste Options Appraisal

Annex E Scoping Report to inform Strategic Environmental Assessment

Annex F Strategic Environmental Assessment

Annex G Achievements So Far

Annex H Consultation Process and Outcomes

Annex I Action Plan

Annex J Glossary

Waste Strategy for England 2007

10. **Consultation**

Endorsement of the revised strategy has been sought from all member councils of the Joint Waste Resource Management Forum.

11. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Sue Horrobin (Waste Management Manager) who can be contacted on extension 3706 (e-mail sue.horrobin@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

12. **Appendices**

None.