

Waste Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire: A Review

Introduction

Herefordshire & Worcestershire's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy: *Managing Waste for a Brighter Future* (herein the Strategy) was first published in 2004. It was prepared and adopted by the eight local authorities across Herefordshire & Worcestershire (the Partnership).

A detailed review and republication of the Strategy was completed in 2011. This set a suite of principles, policies and targets for the management of municipal waste across both counties. As part of this, and in line with Government guidance, the Partnership committed to review the Strategy at least every 5 years.

This Addendum provides a summary of the 2016 review of the Strategy. In particular it includes:

- information on significant changes/ developments in Government waste management policy since 2011, including potential future changes to European policy;
- updates on waste management data including waste growth predictions; and
- commentary on performance against key principles, policies and targets within the Strategy.

The Addendum does not attempt to set new objectives or policy, and should be read in conjunction with the existing Strategy.

The review process and the production of this Addendum have been undertaken by the Strategic Waste Management Board (SWMB), which represents the eight authorities across Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

Key Changes Since 2011

Policy

There have been limited changes to national waste management policy since 2011. The *Waste Management Plan for England* was published in 2013. This did not introduce new policies but instead provided an update on the current waste management situation in England and brought existing waste policies under the umbrella of one national plan.

The *Waste Regulations 2011 (as amended 2012)*, implemented in January 2015, require everyone involved in waste management, including waste producers, to take all reasonable measures to apply the waste hierarchy. Commitment to the waste hierarchy is already, and continues to be, a key principle of the Strategy.

These regulations also aim to improve the quality and quantity of material being collected for recycling by placing a duty on waste collectors to ensure recyclable material (particularly glass, paper, plastics and metal) is collected separately where it is necessary to ensure the

recovery of high quality recyclables and where this is technically, environmentally or economically practicable (TEEP). The authorities within Herefordshire & Worcestershire have undertaken an assessment of their waste collections services to ensure compliance with the Regulations. This assessment has been issued to the Environment Agency and a full copy is available (found on Worcestershire County Council's website: http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20232/recycling_and_waste/1015/waste_strategy)

The European Commission's Circular Economy Package '*Closing the Loop – an EU action plan for the Circular Economy*' was formally published in December 2015. A circular economy is an alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life. The Package aims to extract the maximum value and use from all raw materials, products and waste, fostering energy savings and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Package puts forward revised legislative proposals on waste which include: 65% recycling for municipal waste and 90% diversion from landfill, by 2030. The Partnership fully supports the principles behind the 'circular economy' and will closely monitor how the UK Government responds to the EU proposals, and how this may impact this Strategy going forward.

Infrastructure

Since publication of the Strategy, the Partnership has made significant progress in plans to divert residual waste from landfill. Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council have a long term contract with Mercia Waste Management (MWM) for the delivery of their responsibilities as Waste Disposal Authorities. As part of the contract, MWM obtained planning permission, has managed the construction of and is now operating, an Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at Hartlebury. This facility will divert an additional 200,000 tonnes of municipal waste from landfill.



Envirecover Energy from Waste facility under construction.

The Partnership also continues to invest in their existing processing and collection capabilities. EnviroSort, the Partnership's Material Reclamation Facility has just been refurbished to include the provision of a glass breaker and improved fire protection system.

Funding

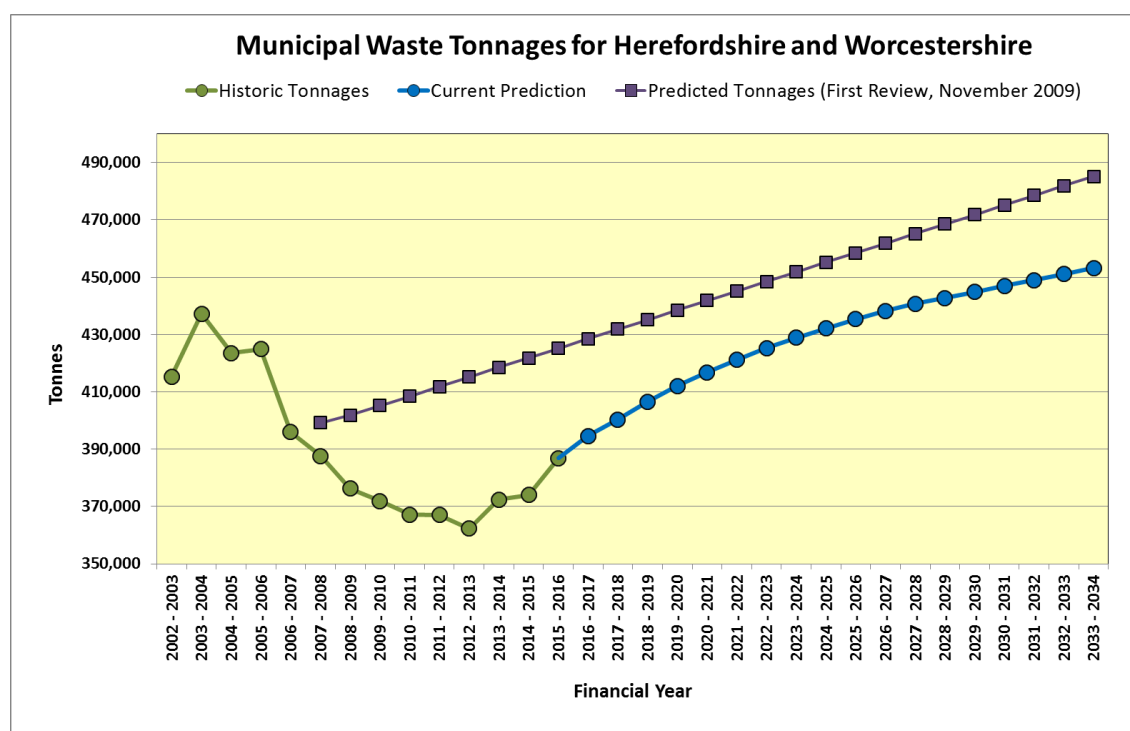
Since 2011, there have been significant cuts to local authority funding. Waste management services across Herefordshire & Worcestershire have had to make efficiency savings of more than £2,000,000. Therefore each authority has had to make very difficult decisions prioritising how funding is allocated. As a result, the aspirations and targets set within the Strategy are increasingly challenging, and in some cases, given the level of funding available, now unrealistic.

Waste Growth

The total municipal waste arising within Herefordshire & Worcestershire in 2015/ 16 was 387,000 tonnes. This has increased by 10,700 tonnes since 2009/10. However, this has been largely down to an increase in the number of households within the authorities. In reality, the amount of municipal waste generated per household has fallen from 1.23 tpa in 2009 to 1.13 tpa in 2015.

The number of households within both Herefordshire & Worcestershire is expected to increase significantly over the next twenty years. As such, although the amount of municipal waste generated per household is not expected to increase, the total amount of municipal waste will. The latest household projection figures have been obtained from the authorities and incorporated into the revised waste projections presented below.

The Partnership will continue to closely monitor waste arisings within the authorities and update predictions against changes to household projections as they become available.



Climate Change

The Partnership continues to understand the importance of viewing waste as a resource and seeks to provide waste management services that work towards minimising greenhouse gas emissions.

The waste collection authorities within Herefordshire & Worcestershire all request environmental policies incorporating carbon footprint information when tendering for services. Work has also been undertaken to optimise the efficiency of waste collection rounds to help reduce fuel consumption.

The recovery of residual waste through the EfW at Hartlebury and its subsequent diversion of waste from landfill, is significantly reducing the carbon footprint of waste management activities across the authorities. The EfW exports electricity directly into the national grid which will help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Opportunities for exporting heat from the facility are continually being explored and, if implemented, will provide additional carbon reductions.

Update on Target 1 – Monitoring our Carbon Footprint

Greenhouse gas emissions from waste management activities within Herefordshire & Worcestershire will be reduced by the changes outlined above. The authorities are in the process of collating waste collection and waste disposal data to estimate the carbon impact of their services. However, due to the considerable fund and staff constraints being placed on the authorities, additional, more detailed, monitoring of the greenhouse gas emissions from waste services is not considered to be necessary or appropriate at this time.

Waste Prevention

Waste prevention is a key principle of the Strategy. The Partnership continues to promote waste prevention through support and publicity of the national waste prevention initiatives *Love Food Hate Waste* and *Master Composters*. A Waste Prevention Officer and a Waste Education Officer are in post to help support waste prevention initiatives across the authorities.

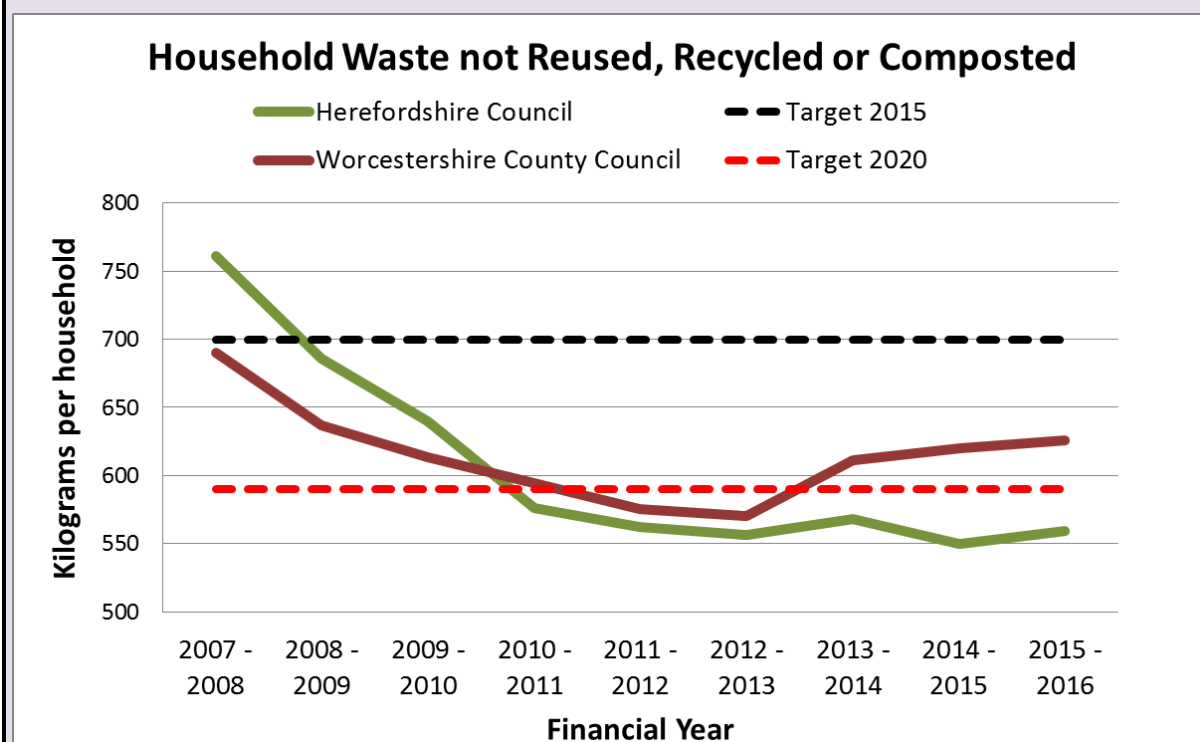
To help encourage reducing the amount of residual waste produced, waste collection authorities now place restrictions on residual waste collections through bin size/ sack number limits.

Reuse has been introduced to a number of the household recycling centres (HRCs) across Herefordshire & Worcestershire. This not only reduces waste to be managed but also supports a number of charities and 3rd sector organisations.

The Partnership understands the importance of coordinated education and awareness raising to promote effective waste prevention. Reduced funding means that the scope for implementing such campaigns is limited at this time. However, where practicable, the authorities will work together to ensure a coherent waste prevention message is publicised.

Update on Target 2 – Reduction in the amount of Household Waste not Reused, Recycled or Composted.

Herefordshire & Worcestershire currently produce 559 and 626 kilograms respectively of household waste per household (kg/hh) that is not reused recycled or composted¹. The Partnership has been successful in achieving the 2015 target of reducing residual household waste by 35% of year 2000 levels. The target for 2020 (a 45% reduction based on 2000 levels) is becoming increasingly challenging due to the significant reductions in funding. However, the Partnership will continue to do whatever is feasible and affordable, to reduce residual waste through waste prevention and increases to recycling/ composting.



¹ 2015-16, NI191 figures from Waste Data Flow

Recycling and Composting

The authorities across Herefordshire & Worcestershire have continued to expand their kerbside recycling collection service which is now available to 100% of properties across the Partnership area. To provide consistency to residents, a common core waste collection service is provided across all the authorities that offers a commingled collection service for materials including paper, card, cartons, cans, plastic and glass². A garden waste collection service is also available to the majority of residents for an additional charge.

Recycling and composting at HRCs continues to improve with the sites now recycling more than 70% of material brought into the site. Recycling of plasterboard is now available, and trial schemes are in operation for the recycling of carpets and mattresses at selected HRCs.

Street sweepings collected by the authorities street cleansing teams are now also recycled.

Bring sites across the Partnership area are being rationalised to reflect the increase in coverage of the kerbside collection service. However, the waste collection authorities are continuing to investigate options for brings sites to recycle material not collected at kerbside, for example textiles and waste electronic & electrical equipment.

A declining, and for some materials, volatile market for recyclable material has provided additional challenges to the Partnership's desire to increase recycling. For example, in 2012 the Partnership recycled more than 12,000 tonnes of timber. However, since 2013, the economics of recycling timber has changed significantly and, as a result, the majority of the timber collected is now used as a biomass fuel for energy production. Whilst this still diverts this material from landfill, it does reduce the amount of material recycled across the Partnership.

In 2014/15, the recycling and composting rate across Herefordshire & Worcestershire was 40%. If the recycling of timber had remained an option for the authorities then the Partnership's target of 43% recycling and composting by 2014 would have been achieved.

Update on Target 3 – Household Recycling & Composting Targets

The Partnership's current recycling and composting performance falls below the national recycling and composting targets of 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020. The Partnership is still committed to supporting its contribution to the national target by maintaining the current level of performance and, where financially viable, introducing new initiatives to improve overall performance. However, current budget and staffing constraints mean that significant awareness raising to increase participation, or major changes to the services provided, to increase performance is not possible.

Update on Target 4 – Household Waste Recycling Act

The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 required local authorities in England to collect at least 2 recyclable materials from all households by 2010. Within the Strategy the Partnership committed to continue to meet this requirement. In fact, the Partnership has exceeded these expectations by collecting glass, plastic, metals and paper from more than 95% of households.

² Glass collection is not available to the small proportion of properties that are classified as 'hard to reach' and as such are offered a bag rather than bin collection for recyclables.

Recovery

The Partnership has made significant progress on plans to maximise recovery of residual waste and divert it from landfill. The EfW at Hartlebury is diverting an additional 200,000 tonnes of municipal waste from landfill. The facility exports electricity directly into the national grid. It has also been enabled to operate as a combined heat and power (CHP) plant which will allow the recovery of heat, when an appropriate user becomes available.

Update on Target 5 – Recovery Target

The Partnership aimed to recover value from a minimum of 78% of municipal waste by 2015. A delay in the procurement and build of the EfW has meant that this target has not yet been achieved. However, now that the facility is fully operational, the recovery rate for the Partnership is expected to exceed the target. If a viable market becomes available for the recycling of bottom ash produced as part of the EfW process, then recovery would be further increased.

Disposal

The Partnership, through the activities outlined above is committed to diverting waste away from landfill through prevention, recycling, composting and recovery.

Update on Target 6 – Reduction in Biodegradable Municipal Waste Landfilled.

The Strategy committed to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled in line with allowances set by Government under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme. This Scheme was abolished as part of the Government's Waste Policy Review, and as a result, there is no mechanism for measuring or monitoring performance against this target. The specifics of this target are no longer appropriate and should no longer be considered part of the Strategy. However, the principle behind it, to divert biodegradable waste away from landfill, is still valued by the Partnership, and will be delivered through the Recovery Target (Target 5) described above.