

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO
CABINET**

15 JUNE 2006

**REPORT OF
CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT
TEAM**

INFORMATION ITEM

Environment - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Nelson

REVIEW OF ENGLAND'S WASTE STRATEGY

SUMMARY

The Consultation Document on the Review of England's Waste Strategy has been released by DEFRA and comments have been invited from all Local Authorities and other key stakeholders to inform this process. The information disseminated from this exercise will be taken into account when the final Waste Strategy is published later in 2006.

The Consultation Document summarises the initiatives which have been implemented since 2000, the progress in reducing landfill and increasing recycling and the policy instruments and institutional arrangements implemented by DEFRA and HM Government since then.

The Consultation Document stresses the shift in emphasis towards waste prevention, extending the recycling and reuse culture, and the more sustainable management of non-municipal wastes. The consultation will also seek views on higher recycling targets, new targets for commercial and industrial waste, simplifying the regulatory system. It is also likely from the comments in the Consultation Document, that the Government will be expecting a higher proportion of waste being treated via energy from waste facilities.

The consultation period commenced on 14 February until 9 May 2006.

DETAIL

1. BACKGROUND

(i) The Government (via DEFRA) is consulting on the Review of the National Waste Strategy, which was last published in 2000 (*'Waste not Want Not'*)

(ii) Since publication of this Strategy there has been substantial progress. Of the main waste streams, both municipal and business waste are growing at a rate slower than GDP; municipal waste increased at about 3.5% per year up to the millennium, and this has now slowed to around 1.5% per year.

(iii) Recycling and composting of household waste has doubled in the last four years, with local authorities on course to meet the 2005 national household waste recycling target of 25%.

(iv) Less of most kinds of waste is being landfilled – down from 82% to 72% for municipal waste between 1998/9 and 2003/4 and from 50% to 44% for industrial and commercial waste between 1998/9 and 2002/03. England is on course to meet the 2005 target of reducing the amount of commercial and industrial waste landfilled to 85% of that landfilled in 1998.

(v) A substantial range of new policy instruments have been introduced, by DEFRA including:

- Landfill Tax escalator
- Landfill Allowance Trading scheme (LATS)
- Aggregates Levy
- Regulations to implement a number of EU directives on waste in specific sectors including packaging and vehicles
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS10) covering waste.

(vi) New institutional arrangements have been established, aimed among other things at:

- Strengthening capacity
- Improving efficiency in local authorities
- Developing markets for waste materials
- Increasing public awareness of waste

(vii) These have been via:

- DEFRA's Waste Implementation Programme (WIP)
- Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)
- Additional funding for local authorities (including the Private Finance Initiative)

- Strengthened arrangements have been made for enforcement of waste regulations by the Environment Agency.

(viii) Public awareness of recycling in general has grown and is now greater than for any other environmental issue.

(ix) In revising the National Waste Strategy the Government are building on this progress to make sure that the UK's Landfill Directive targets and other European commitments are met.

2. NEW EMPHASIS

(i) The revised National Waste Strategy will be shifting the emphasis for the future:

- Putting greater focus on waste prevention and embedding this in the wider Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) agenda alongside other environmental impacts
- Seeing waste as a resource and extending a recycling and re-use culture beyond the home to workplaces, shopping and leisure activities
- Highlighting sustainable waste management in the non municipal sectors (over ten times the size of household waste including commercial, industrial, construction, demolition, mining and quarry wastes which have varying characteristics) with greater integration of planning and procurement between municipal and some non-municipal waste
- Securing technologically efficient investment in the treatment of waste in each part of the chain. Previous relatively cheap landfill 'solutions' are not an option and the step-change in investment that has already begun will need to gather pace.

3. GOVERNMENT EXPECTATIONS

(i) The Government expect that:

- There will be continuing growth in household waste but at a reduced rate
- National household waste recycling and composting rates of more than 40% in 2010 and 45% in 2015 could be reached (comfortably exceeding the current targets of 30% and 33%)
- Meeting the landfill directive diversion targets for municipal waste in 2010, 2013 and 2020 remains challenging but achievable; but depends on necessary investment soon in new facilities, including those to increase materials recovery and recover energy from

waste where there is no reasonable prospect that it can be recycled or composted

- Without further action there will be some growth in commercial waste overall, with significant growth in some sectors
- The *WS2000* target for use of landfill for industrial and commercial waste in 2005 is likely to be met and recycling is set to increase, but a continuing decline in the use of landfill will be difficult to achieve across all sectors
- Target levels of recycling of packaging waste, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and end-of-life vehicles (ELV) are expected to be met by the stated deadlines but will need to be maintained at least at these levels thereafter.

4. MEETING THE NEW CHALLENGES

(i) The revised waste strategy will consolidate the Government's current policies but also set out proposals to tackle the new challenges.

(ii) The consultation exercise will invite views on:

- Increased national targets for recycling and composting of household waste (40% by 2010 and 50% by 2020) making a much bigger contribution to our overall recovery targets for municipal waste
- Setting future national targets for landfill of commercial and industrial waste
- Simplifying the regulatory system and making it more proportionate through reforms of the permitting and exemption systems, better guidance and communication, and risk-based enforcement
- Extending producer responsibility in a range of sectors to prevent waste and increase recycling and recovery – looking for voluntary agreements with regulation only if the voluntary approach does not deliver. Key sectors include food, waste and construction
- Keeping the pricing framework under review
- Continuing support from public expenditure through local authorities, Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits, the Business Resource Efficiency & Waste Programme (BREW), WRAP and the WIP programmes

- Helping behaviour changes by business and the public through information, advice and awareness raising
- Government to lead by example in dealing with its own waste and the waste impacts of its procurement operations
- Strategies and programmes to improve the evidence base

5. WASTE PREVENTION

(i) Waste prevention already stands at the top of the waste hierarchy but only limited progress has been made in decoupling waste generation from economic growth.

(ii) DEFRA propose further action on:

- Prioritising products where waste impacts need to be tackled
- Extending product stewardship by producers and retailers and reducing waste impacts through eco-design
- Promoting re-use and re-manufacture with support from the 'BREW' programme (Business Resource Efficiency & Waste)
- Further engaging businesses (including SMEs) to stimulate resource efficiency through advice services
- Advising the public on environmental impacts of products

(iii) There are also proposals for:

- future standards for local authorities on reducing and recycling household waste
- piloting more recycling services for small businesses
- Encouraging energy recovery, as part of our energy policy and an alternative to landfill, but not at the expense of practicable waste prevention, recycling and composting
- Placing further restrictions on use of landfill in the longer term
- Strengthening central and regional co-ordination and advice on procurement to help local authorities make the investment needed
- Continuing to develop markets for recycled materials including further standards for such materials, which will allow lighter regulation

- A new management plan for waste imports and exports
- Arrangements for better collection and management of household hazardous waste

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(i) DEFRA are inviting proposals on:

- The establishment of a Sustainable Waste Programme Board (with cross government membership and external advice) to drive delivery of the strategy and ensure coherence of waste policies
- The strengthening of regional working including better partnership between Local Authorities at the Regional and Sub-Regional level in procuring waste management facilities to complement regional spatial planning orchestrated by regional planning bodies and their Regional Technical Advisory Bodies
- Funding the Regional Development Agencies to co-ordinate business waste and resource management at regional level in partnership with local authorities and private and voluntary sector
- A wider strategic role for local authorities (in partnerships) to facilitate more integrated management of different waste streams
- Improving the interaction of producers and compliance organisations with local authorities to deliver EU and national targets
- Help for the voluntary and community sector to make a fuller contribution to the delivery of waste objectives

(ii) Finally, as legitimate waste management becomes more complex and expensive the potential is greater for a significant increase in waste crime. To address this proposals are invited on what more targeted prevention and enforcement is needed.

7. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL WASTE STRATEGY PROPOSALS:

- **Greater focus on producing less waste in the first place** by developing a greater emphasis on eco-design, increased engagement with businesses and householders on waste prevention, including more agreements with businesses to take greater responsibility for their products at the end of their life

- **Developing a recycling culture** by shifting our thinking so that the recycling of resources is part of our everyday activities whether at home, at work or during leisure. New, more ambitious recycling and composting targets for household waste – 40% in 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020 – are being proposed, alongside advice and information to the public
- **Recovering more resources from businesses waste** with new targets for a reduction in the proportion of commercial and industrial waste landfilled, more help for small businesses and a more joined up approach in managing waste from different sources facilitated by local authorities and regional bodies
- **Making proper use of new investment to recover energy from waste as an alternative to landfill but not at the expense of practical waste prevention and recycling** by seeing a more modest growth than original estimates. *Waste Strategy 2000* set a target for 67% recovery of waste by 2015 by recycling, composting, energy from waste (incineration, pyrolysis and gasification) and digestion with at least 33% composting and recycling. The new strategy proposes the same overall target of 67% recovery target in 2015 but with much higher levels (45%) of recycling and composting

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL

- (i) The Council supports the drive towards less waste and this has been the focus of the Environment and Regeneration Select Committee's work on waste policy over the previous 2 years which has informed recent Cabinet decisions e.g. charging for bulky household waste, charging for replacement wheeled bins and the need to introduce a 'no side waste' policy. The Council will therefore need to seriously consider further waste reduction measures.
- (ii) Measures which support waste reduction and prevention will continue to be supported by the Council. Recent studies as commissioned by GONE will provide a useful toolkit of measures which could be implemented by the Council in future, which will complement existing waste minimisation initiatives e.g. home composting and real nappy campaign.
- (iii) The Consultation Document proposes much higher recycling targets than those which have previously been set by Government. These stand at 30% by 2010/11 and 33% by 2015/16. To reach higher targets of 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015/16 and 50% by 2020/21, will require radical policy changes and investment in expanded recycling services. 50% recycling has recently been achieved in other local authorities but this has been as a result of investment in extensive recycling collection services coupled with alternate weekly collections. Demographic/socio-economic issues also play a part in this as it no coincidence that the highest

performing Councils are predominantly based in more affluent areas in the South of England. As in (i) above, the Council will need to seriously consider adopting similar expanded recycling services coupled with an alternate weekly collection regime.

- (iv) The Council will need to support more recycling of business waste and this can be done by more joined up working between the different agencies within the Council and by more joint working with regional groupings and partnerships e.g. Renew Tees Valley, ONE North East and 'BREW' programme. Recent work commissioned by GONE has provided an insight into the potential for more regional working in this area.
- (v) The Consultation Document acknowledges the important role which energy from waste will have to play in tackling the country's waste over the next 15 years or so. Stockton is in the fortunate position of having a long-term solution as a partner in the joint waste contract with Sita. The energy from waste route will be a major option for many local authorities with limited landfill capacity or limited scope for other technological solutions. The Council endorses this recognition of the role of energy from waste which is particularly relevant at the moment, as energy needs are high on the Government's agenda. Energy from waste could represent an important part of the renewable energy agenda

9. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly from this report

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

Consultation paper only. Low risk.

11. COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Liveability and Community Safety and Well-Being themes

12. CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

Not Applicable.

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Background Papers

Cabinet Report 11 August 2005
Environment Select Committee Reports 2004 -2005

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

All

Property

N/A