

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH)

TO THE EXECUTIVE

5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2006

**Oxfordshire's Waste Strategy**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

1.1 The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) has commissioned work to develop a future waste collection and disposal strategy. The Partnership recently met with the Leaders and Chief Executives to agree the next steps in establishing a Waste Strategy.

1.2 This report summarises the way forward for Oxfordshire and highlights the implications for this District Council.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Members are requested to note the position and endorse the agreement made at the OWP meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

2.2 that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Portfolio holder for Waste Management, to agree and implement the public engagement consultation exercise.

**3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies**

3.1 This report supports Strands A,D,E & G of the Council's Vision Statement and does not conflict with any existing Council Policies.

**4.0 Background**

**Collection and Disposal**

4.1 In summer 2005, ERM and Enviro Consultants were appointed to consider the future waste collection and disposal strategy for Oxfordshire. This work has now been completed and briefings have been given to Members on the future options for Waste collection and disposal.

4.2 The aim of this work has been to identify future collection and disposal options based on a business case model, with explicit weightings given to a range of economic, environmental and social factors. Adherence to the Waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle has been key.

4.3 The work paid close attention to the emerging Waste Strategy for England and the specifically Landfill targets (LATS), that place heavy penalties on authorities disposing of Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) over their allocation. These 'penalties' start in 2010 and get progressively harsher.

4.4 There is a strong incentive on Waste collection authorities to recycle and divert more waste away from landfill. Future collection methods need to embrace that challenge with more capacity introduced for minimisation and recycle collection. In addition a significant fraction of the household residual waste is food waste and that will need to be diverted from landfill.

4.5 There is a limit to what these collection methods can achieve. In 2005/6 the Vale District Council recycled 23% of dry recyclables. It is anticipated that this can be extended significantly by the

introduction of fortnightly residual and dry recyclable collection. The current Brown Wheelie bin scheme, where residents pay £29/year for the fortnightly service for the garden waste to be collected and composted, complements the successful home composting scheme that has helped establish the Vale as one of the lowest waste producers in the country. It contributes around 5% to the recycling rate. The OWP is examining the impact of separate collection of kitchen food waste.

- 4.6 Even when the Collection authorities have achieved these higher recycling rates there remains the significant challenge to the County Council to divert much of the remaining 50% (currently around 150,000 tonnes). The County Council is considering various treatment options and is expected to go out to the market on a technology neutral basis. Whatever route is chosen it will involve some form of treatment either Energy from Waste incineration, Mechanical Biological Treatment or Advanced Thermal treatment.

### **The Way Forward for Oxfordshire.**

- 4.7 At a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April the OWP met with the Leaders and Chief Executives of Oxfordshire and agreed a way forward as follows:

- (a) to re-affirm a collective commitment to launching a waste strategy for Oxfordshire based on greater joint working and overall benefit to the Oxfordshire residents and council tax payers;
- (b) to launch as a preliminary step, subject to agreement of format by Council Leaders by 21 April 2006, a public engagement exercise in May distinguishing clearly between those aspects where a clear lead would be given, with the aim of creating better understanding and buy-in and those aspects on which views were required before final decisions were taken. A proposed approach to that engagement is set out below:
  - to take as a baseline that, where councils had implemented or committed to fortnightly collections and/or green waste collections, there would be no reason for them to go back on that;
  - to emphasise adherence to the waste hierarchy, with minimisation at the top of the list;
  - to say that all councils were minded to move to fortnightly collection of residual wastes with separate collection of dry recyclable collections;
  - to state that the case for food waste collection was more balanced and explain the benefits and the costs and ask for views;
  - to explain that collection of food waste would require procurement of in-vessel composting and to explain what that process involved;
  - to make absolutely clear that even with the highest level of minimisation and recycling there would still be a need to procure further treatment capacity, that that could not be wished away and that authorities would face big fines if that was not done;
  - to make clear that three treatment technologies were seen as being potentially acceptable (Advanced Thermal Treatment, Energy From Waste(Efw), and Mechanical and Biological Treatment) and that the market would be approached on that basis;
  - to make it clear in particular that EfW was environmentally safe, that there was a commitment to pursue that option if it clearly represented the best value and

- to point out that this option had been pursued by environmentally sound countries with high recycling levels;
- the survey should be carried out in such a way that the views of the public in each district could be separately identified in order to distinguish whether different areas had given different responses.
  - to prepare a professional engagement document to be issued after the Council elections in May for a response in June with resolution of a final waste strategy by the end of June or early July at the latest and to recognise that between now and the exercise starting it would be important to get agreement on the technical issues and uncertainties so that all partners were happy with the way that issues had been expressed and that a further paper would be brought forward in this regard by 21 April 2006;
- (c) subject to consideration of the outcome of the public consultation exercise by Council Leaders and Members of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, that Oxfordshire County Council, in consultation with the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership start the waste treatment procurement process in August as set out in the current project plan;
- (d) that District Councils give an indication to the County Council (by the end of May 2006) of tonnages in order to provide certainty for procurement to include procurement for food waste;
- (e) to ask Chief Executives to report to the June meeting of the Oxfordshire Leaders Group on governance and financial arrangements in order to make the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership effective in delivering the forward agenda, whilst ensuring equity between councils.

### **The impact to the Vale District Council**

- 4.8 In the short term this Council should also consult locally on the Waste strategy in parallel with the County wide public engagement launched in May. In the meantime Officers will be considering the full implications of the emerging strategy together with a provisional programme for implementation. This will be presented to a subsequent Executive meeting.

DAVID STEVENS  
Assistant Director (Environmental Health)

STEVE BISHOP  
Strategic Director

CLLR TONY DE VERE  
Executive Portfolio Holder

Background Papers: none