

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR  
TO THE EXECUTIVE  
1 SEPTEMBER 2006

**No time to Waste: - The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 The strategy employed by the Council in respect of waste minimisation, recycling and composting and residual waste collection has been influenced by a wide range of considerations. An extensive programme of joint working between the Oxfordshire Councils has led to a revised Oxfordshire Joint Household Waste Strategy. As one of the partner councils the Vale is invited by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) to approve the new strategy.
- 1.2 In order to assist Members in considering the strategy this report: summarises its scope and content; refers to the associated developments and Action Plans; outlines the main strategic considerations for the Vale's own waste strategy; and identifies which of the waste collection options modelled by OWP should be developed further in Oxfordshire. The contact officer for this report is David Stevens, Assistant Director (Environmental Health) telephone (01235 540378).

**2.0 Recommendations**

*That Executive recommend to Council:*

- (a) *that Members confirm support for "No time To Waste" – The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy of August 2006 (The Strategy) and adopt its principles in the development of the Vale's strategy for waste management;*
- (b) *that Members note the outcome of the modelling work set out in Appendix A;*
- (c) *that Members recommend to the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) that on the basis of the results of the modelling work, the Strategy and the additional information presented in this report, Option 1 as detailed in the Appendix A is supported for further development in Oxfordshire;*
- (d) *that Members delegate to the Executive authority to agree the individual Action Plan for the Vale as required by The Strategy.*

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

This report relates to the Council's Vision Aims and Objectives.. It is particularly relevant to the corporate priority in respect of creating a Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Healthier Community and Environment (CGSH). It does not conflict with any Council Strategies but is related to published plans for Recycling. Furthermore, the report relates to existing policies on Waste Minimisation and Recycling.

## **4.0 Background**

- 4.1 A wide range of financial, environmental and customer service considerations have influenced the strategy employed by the Council in respect of waste minimisation, recycling and composting and residual waste collection. An extensive programme of joint working between the Oxfordshire Councils has led to a revised Oxfordshire joint household waste strategy. As one of the partner councils the Vale is invited to approve the new strategy, endorsed by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP).
- 4.2 In Summer 2005 OWP revised the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of 2001 which had underpinned the original agreement to work in partnership and sign-up to a joint strategy. At the same time a commitment to the shared use of specified funds for OWP related development projects was also agreed.
- 4.3 Work to review the current joint strategy, which was originally published and signed up to in 2002, commenced in earnest in Autumn 2005. The joint consultancy of ERM and Enviros Ltd., were appointed by OWP with DEFRA funding, and Oxfordshire County Council, to assist in this task. The work has consisted of a number of elements including: a review of the Vision, Aims and Objectives of the original joint strategy; the creation of criteria for strategy development; a review of corporate governance and financial arrangements for the Partnership; and a review of possible waste minimisation, collection and disposal scenarios post 2010
- 4.4 Also in Autumn 2005, the Audit Commission (AC) commenced an inspection of the Oxfordshire-wide waste partnership (i.e. not confined only to OWP). The AC programme comprised challenge and support activities followed by a formal inspection during Spring 2006. The AC inspection looked not only at the performance and prospects for OWP but also the performance of each individual Council's waste management services.
- 4.5 During 2006 a series of related joint development activities have taken place. These have involved officers and Members, OWP's appointed consultants, public stakeholder groups and the AC. The activities include: the joint detailed modelling of possible future wastes management ; a strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA); devising criteria for the assessment of modelled scenarios; and development of policies for the new joint strategy. At the same time joint working has begun to address measures to take the strategy forward effectively. These include improved corporate governance, project management and revised joint financial arrangements for waste management.
- 4.6 The net result of this joint working, challenge and inspection work is the final draft of No Time To Waste – the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste strategy (The Strategy). The draft was presented to OWP on 31<sup>st</sup> July and OWP resolved that the strategy be approved subject to minor amendments, and that the amended OWP strategy be presented to each of the partner councils during August/September for each authority to approve. OWP also acknowledged that delivery is a key issue with regard to some elements of the strategy and recognised the importance of impending work by county Treasurers on financial considerations to assist its delivery
- 4.7 The Strategy comprises a number of elements: the core strategy, which contains key objectives and policies; a county - wide Action Plan (Annex A to The Strategy), which sets out the route map to meet the objectives in the short, medium and long term; and five further detailed Annexes which address Waste Reduction and Re-Use measures, options for Recycling and Composting collections, Treatment and Disposal options, Community Engagement and Involvement measures and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). At the time of writing this report the SEA had not been released to OWP.

- 4.8 Paper copies of The Strategy have been provided for the Executive and Chair of Scrutiny . One copy has been made available in the Members Lounge and an electronic version is viewable as part of the Reports Pack for this Executive meeting. However, by agreement with OWP partners the financial information contained within Annex C to the Strategy has not been made publicly available .

## 5 **Strategic Considerations for the Vale**

- 5.1 The Council's OWP Member and officers have been engaged in and have influenced the development of The Strategy and supporting work. It is therefore hoped that the final strategy would be such that the Council will be able to adopt it as its own. However, in doing so inevitably there are a number of Vale-specific considerations that must be addressed.
- 5.2 The Council's Corporate Vision and Aims and its Corporate Priorities (including CGSH) are entirely supportive of the general principles within The Strategy. Likewise, the Council's Policy Framework gives prominence to Waste Minimisation whilst still committing to recycling targets. It also supports partnership working, committing support to the two MOUs (2000 and 2005) and the original joint strategy of 2002
- 5.3 The Council's Medium Term Plan includes provision for continuation of current service commitments to 2010. It does not however, provide for major changes to service delivery beyond this.
- 5.4 Current Service Parameters provide for a weekly black sack kerbside collection for all households and a weekly green box kerbside collection for 99% of households. The latter is fortified by weekly collection of recyclables from Mini Recycling Centres (MRCs) for households with communal waste storage facilities and Vale owned bring sites at locations across the Vale. A wide range of materials are collected in green boxes although these do not include plastics other than types 1 and 2 (bottles). Brown wheelies for fortnightly garden waste and cardboard kerbside collection are now available on a subscription basis for 90% of Vale households. Uptake is currently approx. 7800 and increasing. The only other green collection service is via prepaid sacks which are collected with the black sacks and are taken to landfill
- 5.5 The current Best Value combined recycling target is 29%. It is expected that this will be met in 2006/7 The Local Area Agreement (LAA) includes a non stretch target for recycling and composting County-wide to 38% by 2009 and a stretch target of 4,875 tonnes of non biodegradable waste to be recycled County-wide by 2009 The Vale's contribution has not yet been calculated but is expected to be achievable within existing service parameters
- 5.6 The AC inspection of OWP 2006 included an assessment of individual Councils' waste services. The inspection overall was positive, finding that the Vale's services overall had more strengths than weaknesses. Areas for improvement include faster progress on recycling and composting percentages, scope for further minimisation of waste and limited financial capacity to deliver significant improvement in waste collection.
- 5.7 Public opinion has been tested in the past on specific waste service related matters. In addition Vale residents took part in the County- wide public No Time To Waste public engagement exercise. These have shown general support for waste minimisation measures and more recycling, especially doorstep collections, to include plastics.
- 5.8 Vale household waste tonnages have increased at a lower rate than the rest of the UK for several years. This is in part due to the Council's waste policy and strategy. Nevertheless, local population and household growth will continue as with much of South East England.

- 5.9 Thus, even with a sustainable policy base, the Vale's waste strategy will need to address waste growth in the medium to long term and the required diversion of Biodegradable waste away from Landfill. This will include waste collection and increased recycling & composting in the Vale. Appendix A explains the detailed modelling exercise into future waste collection and treatment options, compares their benefits and disadvantages and concludes that option I should be supported for further development.
- 5.10 Appendix B sets out the relative predicted costs for the Vale which are associated with the modelled options. By agreement with OWP this Appendix has not been made publicly available and is not included with this report.

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Background Papers: OWP Strategy

## **Appendix A**

### **Implications for Future Waste Collection and Treatment Services**

The evaluation of collection and disposal options has been carried out by ERM Ltd, and Enviro Consulting Ltd. The consultants have been working closely with OWP throughout the process and have had input from Officers, Members and a Community Panel that was established specifically to support the process.

The review began by identifying the visions and aims for future service provision. A series of strategic options to achieve these aims were then developed. The process was taken through a series of stages, focusing first on the potential to reduce and reuse waste, then on options for recycling and composting and, finally, on recovery and disposal options for residual wastes. The potential impact of each option was evaluated against a number of environmental, social and financial criteria to inform the Strategy's direction and future planning and procurement decisions.

The review has taken into consideration national and regional waste policy and has sought advice directly from Government on specific issues such as collection and treatment of organic waste. In doing so, the review has been enabled to incorporate recent changes to policy and has been advised that DEFRA encourages all waste partnerships to consider the waste hierarchy, and not opt for high recycling and composting over waste minimisation. The absence of green waste collections at the kerbside is seen as part of a waste minimisation strategy.

The review process has acted as a tool which has enabled the comparison and evaluation of different collection options. However, it should be noted that the results of this modelling are based upon assumptions and the Council will not know the market costs of these options until tenders have been submitted.

Exempt Appendix B shows the modelled options and cost implications of each of the above options compared with the current baseline budgets. The modelled costs have been verified by the Oxfordshire Treasurer's Association for accuracy and robustness.

Annex 1 to this Appendix highlights the drivers for change arising from the OWP strategy that need to be considered when reviewing these collections.

In total, 66 different options were modelled and evaluated with 9 being taken forward for further analysis. The table overleaf shows the different collection options and the associated benefits and disadvantages of each of them. For ease, similar options have been grouped together:

Option	Recycling Rate	Collection Regime	Advantages	Disadvantages
A	32% -36%	Fortnightly residual Fortnightly co-mingled recycling	Encourages participation through restricted residual collections.	This option would not meet statutory recycling targets or the Landfill Diversion targets. In addition, it does not fulfil the requirements of some residents to have an organic waste collection.
B E G (C)	45 -54%	Fortnightly residual Fortnightly co-mingled recycling Fortnightly kerbside sort recycling (Option C only) Fortnightly organic collections.	Achieves high levels of recycling and composting across the District. Encourages participation through restricted residual collections.	Option C is not practical as it does not provide enough receptacle capacity for fortnightly recycling. Option B E G - whilst they achieve high levels of recycling they do not encourage waste minimisation, which is at the top of the waste hierarchy and Vale policy. In areas where this system is used there is a high level of waste collected per head
F	50% -53%	Weekly residual Fortnightly recycling Fortnightly organic	Maintains weekly residual collection	Would not achieve recycling and diversion targets without a costly treatment facility as the potential to put all waste in residual sacks remains. Maintaining weekly residual collection is extremely costly.
D	52%- 55%	Fortnightly residual Weekly co-mingled recycling Fortnightly organic collections	Maintains weekly recycling collection	Maintain weekly recycling collection in this manner is costly and has a high number of vehicle movements.
H I	46% -51%	Fortnightly residual Weekly co-mingled recycling Weekly food collection Chargeable green collection (8000 households)	Maintains weekly recycling collection and introduces weekly food collection for composting. Encourages waste minimisation by limiting overall bin capacity and by limiting green waste arisings.	Kerbside green waste collections are chargeable and for 8000 properties within this modelled option. However, any future contract would have a mechanism to expand this scheme further. Need to be supported by strong policies on the collection of green waste in residual bins to ensure that waste minimisation effects occur.

The evaluation of the collection options for the Vale shows that there are two favoured groups of options (B/E/G and H/I) that will achieve the diversion and recycling targets set out in the OWP strategy and fulfil the needs of residents in terms of maximising recycling and

minimising the amount of waste sent to landfill. The next section of this report analyses and compares these two options in detail.

In both of these options, residual waste is collected on a fortnightly basis. Maintaining a weekly collection would not only increase costs, but it would also allow recyclable waste to be sent to landfill. Fortnightly collections encourage residents to consider the waste they are generating and what can be recycled. Fortnightly collections of residual waste also help to minimise the amount of waste collected as the capacity to generate waste is limited. Residual waste would be placed in the existing wheelie bins. At the Leader's meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006, it was agreed that all councils in Oxfordshire were minded to move towards a fortnightly collection of residual waste, with a separate collection of dry recyclables and this has also been echoed in the OWP Strategy Action Plan which states that:

"District Councils to have costed implementation programmes in place for introduction of fortnightly residual waste collections and District-specific dry recyclables/ garden/ kitchen waste collections that collectively deliver Policy 6 targets."

The frequency of recycling collections differs between the two options. Option B/E/G has a fortnightly collection of recycling that would have to be collected in a wheeled bin to enable residents to have enough capacity to store recycling for a two week period. Whilst this avoids some of the handling issues surrounding the recycling boxes, it causes issues of storage for some residents and also causes difficulties when collecting glass. To collect glass in a co-mingled collection, there would need to be a sophisticated materials recycling facility in the area. Option H/I maintains a weekly collection of recycling across the District. By adopting this approach the Council would be able to use existing receptacles for this collection service, and maintain the same level of service provision..

There are also differences in the way that organic waste would be collected in each of the options. In Option B/E/G, each household would receive a third wheelie bin for the fortnightly co-mingled collection of garden and food waste. The fortnightly collection of food waste tends to be an area of concern for residents, especially over the summer months. In practice, this type of collection system tends to capture only 50% of food waste as householders place their food waste in the organic bin one week, and the residual bin the next to avoid waste waiting two weeks for collection. In this option, garden waste is collected with the food waste from every household on a fortnightly basis. By offering a third bin, residents have increased capacity for their waste, and trends show this leads to increased waste arisings.

Option H/I deals with food waste differently, and offers residents a weekly collection from the kerbside. This avoids the issues of biodegradable waste waiting two weeks for collection, and increases the capture rate of this material. Food waste is collected in a dedicated 25litre bin at the kerbside, and residents are provided with a kitchen caddy to collect the waste in the house. In this option, garden waste is collected on a chargeable basis from up to 8000 households. This approach supports the waste hierarchy and minimisation policies, to encourage householders to continue to compost their organic waste at home, and avoids the waste growth associated with the three bin system.

Support for waste minimisation was echoed by the Leaders Group on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006, where it was agreed to emphasise adherence to the waste hierarchy, with waste minimisation at the top of the list.

In light of the relationship to the waste hierarchy, financial implications of the different collection options and the need to meet the diversion and recycling targets, Officers recommend that Option I to Members as it provides a solution to the Council that is cost effective, enables high levels of service provision and satisfies users needs.

Having received the results of the modelling exercise, the waste collection authorities in Oxfordshire have been asked to indicate to the County Council (the Waste Disposal Authority) by September 2006 which collection regime they prefer and the associated tonnages to enable the County Council to commence their procurement process for treatment and disposal facilities. The County Council is remaining technology neutral throughout this process and will provide the market with tonnage information for them to design potential solutions for the residual waste streams.

Once a collection option has been selected by the Vale confirmation of the likely tonnages will be sent to Oxfordshire County Council. In parallel, Officers will draft a performance specification for the new collection system and will commence a procurement programme for the introduction of the chosen service by 2010. A joint procurement study with West Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire District Councils has been proposed to begin in 2006/07 for new contract renewal post 2010, with market testing to take place in 2008.

Officers will also develop a detailed implementation plan for Members in Autumn 2006, detailing proposals for the introduction of the new collection scheme. However, it should be noted that the availability of a treatment facility for kitchen waste is critical to the introduction of any of the above schemes. Currently there is no such facility in the local area, but Officers will discuss potential options for an interim solution with the County Council.

#### Financial Implications

The cost implications of the modelled options for the Vale are contained in Exempt Appendix B.



## The key strategic drivers for the Council to consider in selecting a new collection service (from OWP Action Plan policies)

Policy	Details
<b>Working in partnership</b>	
1	Encourage the efficient use of resources, reduce resource consumption and take responsibility for the wastes they produce.
2	Lobby Government to focus on waste as an integral part of sustainable resource management.
<b>Waste prevention and reuse</b>	
3	Help householders and individuals to reduce and manage their wastes through the provision of advice and appropriate services.
4	Encourage the controlled reuse and reclamation of items through the provision of advice and appropriate services.
5	Seek to reduce the growth of municipal waste across the County to 0% per annum by 2012, in accordance with regional policy
<b>Recycling and Composting</b>	
6	Provide an integrated system of collection and processing of household waste which will achieve, as a minimum, the Waste Strategy 2000 recycling and composting targets for household waste*: By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2010: recycle or compost at least 40% of household waste; By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015: recycle or compost at least 45% of household waste; By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020: recycle or compost at least 55% of household waste.  (*This policy will be revised as appropriate with revisions to Waste Strategy 2000.)
7	Ensure that recycling facilities are available to all residents.
8	Encourage householders and businesses to separate waste for recycling collections by providing targeted information and awareness-raising campaigns.
13	Assist the development of local markets for recovered materials.
<b>Residual Waste and Sustainable Waste Management</b>	
9	Provide a system for recovering value from residual wastes in order to meet LATS targets
10	Ensure the availability of landfill sites for the disposal of residual waste, where necessary.
11	Seek to provide waste management services for specialized, potentially polluting material streams, such as hazardous waste and waste electrical and electronic equipment, which meet and exceed legislative requirements.
12	Ensure that waste facilities are suitably sized and distributed with the aim of minimising the transport of waste, working with the waste planning authority. Facilities will be well related to areas of population, given the environmental and amenity constraints, and the availability of suitable sites.
14	Develop methods of working together to improve the level of service through effective and efficient use of resources within Oxfordshire.
<b>Targets</b>	
EU Directive	Maximum amount of biodegradable wastes to be landfilled in Oxfordshire: 142,500 tonnes in 2005/06 121,700 tonnes by 2009-10; 81,000 tonnes by 2012-13; 56,700 tonnes by 2019-20.
LAA	The 6 Oxfordshire authorities have jointly agreed to a target to: Reach a countywide 38% recycling or composting of household waste by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2009

LAA	The 6 Oxfordshire authorities have also agreed to an LAA stretch target: Recycling an extra 4,875 tonnes of non-biodegradable waste between 2006/07 and 2008/09
OWP Action Plan	OWP Action Plan Targets: 2009 - Recycle or compost 38% of household waste 2009/10 – Reduce biodegradable wastes to landfill to 121,700 tonnes 2010 – Recycle or compost at least 40% of household waste 2010 – Increase recycling and composting participation rates by 10% 2010 – Achieve 100% coverage for recycling collections across the County.