

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

10 December 2013

Report of the Waste Task Group

Purpose of report

- 1 To present the recommendations of the Waste Task Group and seek endorsement for them.

Background

- 2 In 1996 the former County Council began delivery of the waste management services through a contract with Hills Waste Solutions. This contract covers landfill, waste transfer station and materials recovery facility operations, kerbside collection of dry recycling, composting facilities, household recycling centres and bring sites. The contract is due to come to an end in 2016 and there is no option for a contract extension.
- 3 In August 2012, the Service Director for Waste Management sought the views of the Environment Select Committee (the Committee) on the future options for the service delivery for waste and recycling collection and management. In response the Committee established the Waste Task Group.
- 4 The Task Group undertook an examination of the various options and over the course of four meetings developed a response to the service plans which was presented in its report to the Committee in April 2013.
- 5 Following the Council elections in May 2013, the Waste Task Group continued its work as a legacy topic with the following membership:

Cllr Jose Green (chairman)

Cllr Rosemary Brown

Cllr Alan Hill

Cllr Howard Marshall

Cllr Horace Prickett

Cllr Glenis Ansell (co-opted on to the Task Group in November 2013)

Task Group 2013

- 6 The Task Group met on four occasions between May 2013 and November 2013 and scrutinised:
 - the high level service specification for the new waste contracts;
 - the criteria to be used to develop the quality element of the tender evaluation models;
 - the proposed re-modelling of waste collection and recycling rounds.

- 7 The Task Group received evidence from:
Tracy Carter, Associate Director, Environment and Leisure
John Geary, Head of Waste Management Commissioning
Martin Litherland, Head of Waste Management Services
Dr Peter Alberry, consultant in power generation.

- 8 At the request of the Cabinet member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste, the future service delivery model for waste was scrutinised by the Committee at a meeting arranged for this purpose in July 2013. The Task Group engaged fully at the meeting and took consideration of the report and evidence presented by the Cabinet member in their subsequent discussions.

Task Group observations and views

- 9 The Task Group was pleased to note that:
 - The FCC contract had been extended to be coterminous with the Hills contract;
 - Any newly awarded contract would be in the order of 8 years; the Task Group does not favour long, possibly inflexible, contracts;
 - The contract had been divided into 5 lots to encourage competition and provide opportunities for smaller companies to enter the waste market;
 - The procurement plan included a 2-year mobilisation period to ensure that the provider(s) awarded the contract would have sufficient time to prepare prior to the start of the new contract in August 2016.

- 10 The proximity principle highlights a need to treat and/or dispose of waste as near to the place of production as possible, and waste planning authorities have had to have regard for it in identifying waste facilities. This recognises that transporting waste has environmental, social and economic costs. **The Task Group robustly supports adherence to the proximity principle.**

- 11 In support of this, the Task Group would like to see more Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) established around the county. The identification of approximately 30 sites in the Waste Sites Allocation Plan facilitates this option.

12 One of the key principles underlying waste management policy in the UK is to ensure that waste is dealt with as high up the Waste Hierarchy as possible. The Waste Hierarchy reflects the relative sustainability of the various waste management options as indicated below, with prevention being at the top of the hierarchy.

- 1 Prevention (reducing the generation of waste)
- 2 Re-use (preparing products for re-use)
- 3 Recycling (reprocessing products into products/materials)
- 4 Recovery (using waste for other purposes eg energy)
- 5 Disposal.

13 The Task Group supports this policy and would like to see a greater emphasis on the re-use of materials collected in Wiltshire, suggesting that items such as bicycles could be reclaimed for re-use.

14 The Task Group noted that, over time, there had been significant changes in the market for recyclables. Prices for some materials were high, the market was more stable and there was less risk in the market. The Task Group would like to see the Council benefit more from the sale of recyclables than it does at present. This could be through a percentage of sales income or through a payment made once a ceiling had been reached.

15 The Task Group was invited to provide its views on the weighting of price versus quality in respect of the 5 contract lots for the waste service. Each member contributed their individual figures for this exercise and a consensus view reached, shown below.

Contract lot	Suggested Price:Quality ratio
Lot 1 - Recycling and transfer facilities	40:60
Lot 2 – Management of Council-owned household recycling centres	40:60
Lot 3 – Garden waste composting services	50:50
Lot 4 – Treatment and disposal of residual waste	35:65
Lot 5 – Waste collection services	30:70

The Task Group acknowledged that the Council had a very good waste service at present and wanted to see the quality of the service retained; this is reflected in the weightings above.

16 The Task Group was satisfied that the proposed re-modelling of waste collection and recycling rounds was being handled well. They were pleased to note that any newly devised rounds would be checked against drivers' local knowledge and also that rounds would be developed to reduce travel.

17 It was noted that a Communications Strategy was being developed in respect of the re-design of the collection rounds; the Task Group expressed the wish to consider the Strategy once available.

- 18 The Task Group received a presentation from Dr Peter Alberry on the 'Macro Economics of Wiltshire's Waste'. Dr Alberry's views coincided with those of the Task Group in that he advocated the development of a number of MRFs around the county to reduce both costs and environmental impact. He demonstrated that significant profits were being made by waste companies and encouraged the Council to gain as much advantage as possible from these, again, reflecting the views of the Task Group.
- 19 The Task Group has worked closely with officers and discussed its draft recommendations with them from the outset. This has enabled them to take early account of the Task Group's views when preparing their own reports.
- 20 The Task Group was gratified to note that many of the suggestions made by the Task Group had been taken into account in the report to Cabinet on the delivery of the waste services. It was also pleased that the majority of the issues it had raised had been incorporated in Briefing Note 168 – Future Delivery of Waste Services in Wiltshire – update (Appendix 1).
- 21 The Task Group would like to thank all those that provided evidence to them and the Cabinet member for giving them the opportunity to have input into the early stages of the contract development.

Recommendations

- 22 The Task Group recommends that:
 - a) Relevant references to the requirement for adherence to the proximity principle should be inserted in the service specification under section 6 (Sites used for the delivery of services). The service specification is included for reference in Appendix 2. In addition, it should focus not only on existing MRF sites, but should encourage additional sites to be considered and/or sought in areas where there is no existing provision, in order to adhere to the proximity principle.
 - b) The service specification should include the requirement for operators to make greater efforts to re-claim objects for re-use eg bicycles in section 4 (Scope of the service).
 - c) The Council should benefit more than at present from the sale of recyclables, which might be a percentage of sale income or through a payment made once a specified ceiling had been reached. It would also like the Council to receive some benefit from any unexpected revenue and therefore would like to see a mechanism included in section 11 (service requirements) and section 26 (Innovation and efficiency) of the service specification whereby these could be achieved.
 - d) The layout of new, and where possible existing, household recycling centres (HRC) are designed to make them function more efficiently and easier for the public to use, eg 'drive-up' slopes which enable cars to park

above the level of skips. The Task Group cited the HRC at Everleigh as an example of good design.

- e) The Task Group scrutinises the communications strategy in respect of the new collection rounds as soon as it is available.
- f) The Task Group found the presentation from Dr Peter Alberry very informative. It recommends that a wider audience should be made aware of his work, including those with direct responsibility for waste in Wiltshire.
- g) That following completion of its remaining activity, the scrutiny of the communications strategy linked to the remodelling of the service, the Task Group will have completed its work. However, the final award of contract to be determined by Cabinet will no doubt be of interest to those members who contributed to the Task Group.

Proposal

- 23 To endorse the recommendations in paragraph 22 and refer them to the Cabinet member for response.
-

Cllr Jose Green, chairman – Waste Task Group

Report author: Maggie McDonald, Senior Scrutiny Officer
01225 713679 maggie.mcdonald@wiltshire.gov.uk