

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

To be held on Tuesday 26th July, 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

RECYCLING

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a capital programme supplementary estimate for recycling in the current financial year in order to be able to significantly improve the Council's recycling performance, both in the current year and in 2006/07.

This paper has been brought direct to the Council because negotiations with partners concerning various financial matters had not been concluded in time to report to the last Community Development Executive Committee. As the report will reveal, there is not time to wait for the next meeting of the Community Development Executive Committee before taking the action proposed in the report.

2. Financial and Manpower Implications

There are significant financial and manpower implications arising from this report, and the report seeks to explain those implications.

3. Background

The Council has a statutory target to recycle 25% of household waste by the end of 2005/06. That target will not be reached. In this situation the Council should attempt to do two things; take such action as will bring recycling rates as close as possible to the target, and have a robust strategy for achieving and even exceeding the 25% target in place.

The Council's previous recycling strategy relied on the provision of a household recycling centre (HRC) at Tidworth to reach the 25% target. We now know that even if such a centre was provided any recycling derived from the centre would not count towards Kennet target.

The Council has a new Waste, Recycling and Reduction Strategy that is currently going through a consultation process. In brief that strategy includes the following key elements:

- continuation of neighbourhood recycling sites where residents can bring their recyclables;

- the provision of a kerbside collection of mixed recyclables for 90% of residents, introduced in phases;
- the provision of a garden waste wheeled bin scheme;
- the provision of a refuse wheeled bin for most households coterminous with the move to collecting recyclables and household waste on alternative weeks.

The expectation is that the first three elements described above will achieve recycling rates of between 20% and 25% of household waste. It is the fourth element, alternate weekly collection that will guarantee, (on the basis of experience in other district councils) that the 25% target is reached, and indeed the expectation is that this will achieve recycling rates for household refuse of over 30%.

Given the above, it clearly makes sense to move to a position where alternate weekly collections are introduced as soon as possible. However, in order for this to be achieved the provision of the kerbside collection service for recyclables must be well-established and working smoothly. This in turn suggests that the Council should move to the collection of mixed recyclables from 90% of households as soon as possible to allow a good lead in time for alternate weekly collections.

While the need to increase recycling rates is an important driver, there is a countervailing financial constraint. The Council is simply not in the position on revenue account to be able to throw money at the issue. Given that fact, officers have been in discussion with our key partners for some time in an attempt to balance the need for recycling progress with the need for economy. Those discussions have been very fruitful, and our partners, Wiltshire County Council and Hills Minerals and Waste (the County Council's recycling contractor) have been very supportive.

4. Proposals to Accelerate the Implementation of the Council's Waste, Recycling and Reduction Strategy

The principal proposal involves bringing forward the kerbside collection of mixed recyclables from 90% of households from June/July 2006 to October 2005. This would be followed by the introduction of alternate weekly collections in July 2006.

The financial implications of the above proposals are set out at Appendix A to the report for the financial years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08. The key issues arising from Appendix A are:

- the effect of the proposals is revenue neutral for the Council;
- the County Council is planning to support the Council's proposals with very significant revenue (£184,000) and capital (£1,300,000) funding;

- Hills Minerals and Waste is playing its part by providing a sensible payment for the recyclables delivered to it by the Council;
- the Council needs to make capital investment in new vehicles in 2005/06 of £285,000 (for which there is no budget) and £391,000 in 2006/07;
- the sooner the Council moves towards its ultimate position, of alternate weekly collections, the sooner the Council can rationalise its human and physical recycling and waste collection resources and thereby save money.

The only obstacle to bringing the above proposals into effect is the need for a supplementary capital budget for the provision of three side-loading refuse vehicles at an estimated capital cost of £285,000, and a recommendation will be made to the Council to agree a supplementary estimate for this purpose.

5. Staffing Issues

In order to introduce 90% kerbside collection of mixed recyclables in October 2005 the Council would need to employ four more HGV drivers and an additional eight loaders. As appendix A shows three of those drivers and seven loaders would need to be on temporary contracts because staff numbers can be reduced when alternate weekly collections are introduced in July 2006. Under the Council's scheme of delegation the Environment and Amenity Services Manager could in theory take on the additional staff under his delegated powers because there are no revenue implications arising. However, it is felt that the changes envisaged are of a scale that renders this course of action inappropriate, and Council approval will be sought instead in a recommendation arising from this report.

Other aspects of human resource implications in the longer term, (i.e. for 2006/07) are set out at Appendix B to the report.

6. Other Operational Matters

The interest in, and take up of, the current garden waste collection service has been such that the intention would be to introduce a second round in 2006/07. This is certainly something that the County Council is anxious for us to do, and is offering to pay for the necessary green wheeled bins.

In order to provide as inclusive a waste and recycling strategy as possible, part of the operational changes for 2006/07 would be to acquire and run two small vehicles for collecting material from isolated and difficult to reach properties where it would not be operationally efficient to send a large vehicle.

While the Council is most concerned with domestic household recycling, the County Council has a wider agenda, the need to reduce municipal waste generally, and this includes trade waste collected by Kennet. The County

Council would wish to support the provision of a recycling service to commercial premises in Kennet and this is reflected in the figures at Appendix A.

All three of the changes here are included in the overall financial picture given at Appendix A, and are part of the revenue cost neutral position.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED THAT:

- (1) The Council approve the acceleration of the introduction of kerbside collection of mixed recyclables from July 2006 to October 2005, and consequent upon that decision it is further recommended that the Council approve a capital supplementary estimate of £285,000 for the purchase of three side-loading refuse collection vehicles.
- (2) The Council approve the appointment of four additional drivers and eight additional loaders in order to provide this service from October 2005.
- (3) The remaining proposals in this report be included in Service Development Plans for 2006/07.
- (4) The draft Kennet Waste, Recycling and Reduction Strategy be amended to take account of the proposals in this report.

Director of Resources

APPENDIX B

RECYCLING STAFFING MATTERS

Operational Staff

October 2005: Additional HGV Drivers required for a kerbside, co-mingled recyclables collection service to 90% of households. Four.

Additional loaders required for a kerbside, co-mingled recyclables collection service to 90% of households. Eight.

These staff would be appointed on temporary contracts because of the need to reduce staffing numbers when alternate weekly collection service is introduced. Opportunities to fill vacant posts arising from natural wastage would be provided to the best performing staff.

July 2006: Reduction in the number of operational staff needed because of the end of duplication of recycling and waste collection resources. Drivers, minus three. Loaders, minus seven.

April 2006: Two additional drivers required for 7.5 tonne vehicles needed to provide a collection and recycling service to isolated and difficult to reach properties.

Support Staff

April 2005: Appointment of second vehicle fitter. With the introduction of alternate weekly collection, operating with the minimum number of rounds necessary to do the work, it is imperative that collection vehicles remain operational at all times, and this in turn will necessitate additional pro-active maintenance of the fleet. The public perception and use of the recycling service in particular will be seriously damaged if there are breaks in service caused by non-availability of vehicles. This would be equally damaging if normal refuse collection is disrupted because of the fortnightly period between each general waste collection visit.

April 2005: Additional administrative support officer. Experience with the introduction of the garden waste collection service has taught us that the successful introduction and maintenance of the service is dependent upon good quality and sufficient administrative support, to handle enquiries, record and manage service requests and other issues, collect money and schedule and allocate resources such as bins and boxes.

April 2005: Conversion of part-time recycling education officer from part-time to full-time. With the Council having gone to so much trouble to afford the opportunity to recycle, it makes sense to increase the resource available to educate and encourage people to recycle to achieve as much benefit, in terms of volumes recycled, from that investment.

April 2005: Employment of a Yardman to manage the Kennet House depot, to be responsible for taking delivery of, storage and subsequent use of materials, meet the Council's obligations for Kennet House as a waste transfer station, generally keep the depot facilities tidy and well-organised. Currently there is £10,500 p.a. in the budget to take on casual labour or use overtime to carry out some of the above functions, but this is not satisfactory, and senior managers are often distracted from more important work to carry out such functions, an inappropriate use of their time.