

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	10 SEPTEMBER 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE – FIRST REVIEW
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ENVIRONMENT & STRATEGIC HOUSING

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

The purpose is to endorse the first review of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire and agree its adoption.

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

THAT Cabinet endorse the review of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and agree the adoption of the revised strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Key Points Summary

- The Strategy sets out the long term aspirations for waste collection and disposal across the Partnership of all Local Councils in Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- It is a 30 year strategy first published in November 2004 and continuing until 2034
- The Strategy has been reviewed and updated in line with changes to government guidance and legislation and changes to service provision since publishing the original strategy in 2004.
- The revised Strategy supports the National Waste Strategy for England and Wales 2007 with the climate change agenda reflected more strongly through new principles, policies and targets. However the Waste Hierarchy still remains as a framework for delivering municipal waste management services.
- An important change to the Strategy is the introduction of the Core Collection Service where

all councils will collect the same recyclable materials.

Alternative Options

- 1 The Cabinet could choose not to approve the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy or could require the document to be amended. This option would delay any progress in developing a Residual Waste Treatment solution for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Choosing not to approve the strategy would also damage Herefordshire Council's reputation in its Partnership with Local Councils in Worcestershire.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The revised strategy represents the culmination of substantial work by the Joint Waste Resource Management Forum to update the present strategy to reflect significant changes in national policy, local policy, changing technology and progress in improving performance to date. Its formal adoption by all partner councils will show leadership and lend weight in consulting with our communities and other stakeholders.
- 3 Adoption of the strategy will allow Herefordshire Council to meet its obligations under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme.
- 4 The authority is already preparing to launch its new refuse and recycling collection contract in accordance with the aims and objectives of the revised strategy. This will help meet the strategy's combined recycling target for all councils of 43% by 2014. It is anticipated the scheme, with the support of residents, will increase the council's recycling to 40.7% in 2013/14.

Introduction and Background

- 5 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire was developed in Partnership with all members of the Joint Members Waste Resource Management Forum. It was adopted by all the Councils within Herefordshire & Worcestershire in 2004. This strategy sets down for the first time how all the Councils would work together in a coordinated manner to reduce the amount of waste being land-filled.
- 6 The present strategy, "Managing waste for a brighter future" was developed at a time when the amount of municipal waste collected and disposed of was increasing year on year. The strategy was founded on six key principles from which emanated eighteen key policies and eight specific targets. Applying the waste hierarchy, the strategy focused on restricting waste growth, increasing recycling and composting and reducing the amount of waste treated and ultimately disposed of to land-fill. The uppermost concern in producing this strategy was to meet restrictions on landfilling of municipal waste introduced under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme. Substantial financial penalties are incurred if restrictions are exceeded.
- 7 An integrated collection and disposal system known as the "Vision for Waste Collection" was central to future joint working. In this system, collection authorities would collect commingled dry recyclables and residual refuse from each household on alternate weeks. Commingled dry recyclables will be sorted in a reclamation facility, EnviroSort, currently under construction at Norton near Worcester. It was planned that residual waste would be treated using an autoclave process capable of reducing its bulk and producing a usable fibre by-product. Planning permission was gained for autoclave plants at Hartlebury in Worcestershire and Madley in Herefordshire but it has not proved possible to conclude a satisfactory contractual arrangement to construct them.

- 8 This Council's recycling and waste management performance has improved steadily each year since district wide kerbside recycling was introduced in 2004. Herefordshire's current recycling rate is forecast at almost 34% this year and the amount of waste collected has now fallen below 2001/2 levels. Other Councils in Worcestershire have also made substantial improvements which means that levels of municipal waste across the two Counties have begun to fall in recent years. Significant issues remain however, especially in relation to treatment and disposal of residual waste to meet future restrictions on landfill.
- 9 The original strategy contained a commitment to regular formal review on a three yearly basis recognising the dynamic nature of both waste management legislation and technology. The Joint Waste Resource Management Forum commenced its review of the strategy in 2006 which has taken longer than originally anticipated due to delays in the refresh of the overarching national government strategy, the Waste Strategy for England 2007.

Community Impact

- 10 For the revised joint strategy to be credible and robust, it was essential to be able demonstrate that it had been subject to rigorous, extensive and properly balanced consultation with the public and interested parties. A sequential, structured approach was adopted using an initial series of focus groups to identify key issues that were explored and quantified through a sample survey. This provided balanced and statistically valid feedback on the consultation draft enabling final refinement of the strategy document to fully reflect responses. The sequential approach was selected as it ensured that partners had the opportunity at a number of stages to endorse the evolving document to reduce the risks of non-adoption of the final strategy.
- 11 The consultation exercise concentrated on the changes to the strategy arising from the review process. In particular this focused on how the revisions addressed the issue of climate change which has become of much greater significance since the original strategy was adopted (and on which many Forum partners have now taken robust policy positions). There is also a focus on how the revised strategy has responded to the challenges posed in Waste Strategy for England 2007. It was not intended to consult upon aspects of the strategy that have not changed.
- 12 Independent specialists with appropriate knowledge and expertise in consultation on waste and environmental matters were engaged to lead this process. Support was provided through existing technical and communications resources.
- 13 The consultation process proved invaluable in developing the final revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy documents. The focus groups enabled the views of residents to be sought and without this opportunity they may not have provided their valuable input. There was an excellent response to the public postal survey with a response rate of over 20%. However, there was a limited response to the on-line questionnaire and ways of improving this response rate will be considered in future consultations. Responses were received from a variety of different stakeholders and interested parties which provided detailed and challenging comments reflecting a range of views and issues.

Key Considerations

- 14 Since the original strategy was developed and adopted, government has refreshed the national waste strategy with the publication of Waste Strategy for England 2007. This focuses much more on the contribution made by waste collection, treatment and disposal to climate change. It also set out to break the link between economic growth and the growth in waste production, by seeing waste as a resource from which value can be derived. Targets for recycling, diversion of waste from landfill and recovery of value from waste set out in Waste Strategy for England are now

more demanding than those established previously. The draft revised joint strategy takes on board this revised national position.

- 15 Since 2004, the issue of climate change has become of increasing concern and importance. Councils in Herefordshire and Worcestershire have adopted robust policies and strategies to meet obligations and targets placed upon them to contribute towards reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases and to mitigating the effects of climate change. New National Indicators require councils to measure their performance in relation to greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.
- 16 Statutory Guidance has been issued by central government on the production of joint municipal waste management strategies subsequent to the adoption of our original joint strategy. These strategies have also become subject to assessment in accordance with Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment legislation. These requirements have meant that it has been necessary to change the format of the strategy, which is also of considerably greater size.
- 17 The revised strategy now comprises a Headline Strategy (Appendix 1) and a series of detailed supporting documents:
 - Annex A Waste Growth
 - Annex B Waste Prevention Options Appraisal
 - Annex C Recycling & Composting Options Appraisal
 - Annex D Residual Waste Options Appraisal
 - Annex E Scoping Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - Annex F Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - Annex G Where Are We Now
 - Annex H Consultation (Appendix 2)
 - Annex I Action Plan (Appendix 3)
 - Annex J Glossary & Abbreviations
- 18 The revised strategy builds upon the strengths and successes of the original strategy. Commitment to the waste hierarchy remains a key principle. This is reflected in policies focusing on reducing the amount of waste arising, increasing the proportion recycled and from which value is derived and minimising the amount of waste that is landfilled. These are described in more detail in Annexes B, C and D.
- 19 The “Vision for waste collection” has been replaced by a policy of providing a **core service** to all households of kerbside services for commingled recyclables and residual waste together with additional services for other waste streams that may be provided on a charged for basis. The previous blanket approach of alternating weekly collections has been replaced with a focus on waste reduction being achieved by all authorities increasing the amount recycled and restricting either residual waste collection frequency and/or container capacity.
- 20 The prescriptive approach to treatment of residual waste by an autoclave process has been removed from the draft revised strategy. There is now a new policy to increase diversion away from landfill supported by a Residual Options Appraisal (Annex D). This provides a detailed appraisal for waste treatment options capable of increasing the value derived from the residual waste stream. The appraisal informs the method for future treatment of residual waste, proposals for which are expected to come forward from the Waste Disposal Contractor (Severn Waste Services). The robustness of the strategy is important in supporting necessary applications for planning consent.
- 21 Targets within the revised strategy are presented on a pooled basis. Each partner Council will have an identified contribution to meeting these targets. This Council’s contribution to meeting the

pooled 43% recycling target by 31st March 2014 will be fulfilled by increasing our overall recycling & composting rate to 40.7%.

Financial Implications

22 This strategy and the proposed revisions to it, have significant resource implications for this Council. The authority is already preparing to launch its new refuse and recycling collection contract to include countywide kerbside recycling. However particular consideration should be given to the likely increase in cost to the authority through increased investment in waste disposal infrastructure required to meet government targets as set out in the revised strategy.

23 These increased costs have to be counterbalanced by the even higher costs that the Council would incur by not increasing the levels of diversion of household waste from landfill. The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme penalties and annually increasing Landfill Tax will both impose significantly higher costs on the authority than the costs of developing a waste treatment infrastructure to divert waste from landfill.

Legal Implications

24 It is a requirement under “The Guidance on Municipal Waste Management Strategies” issued by DEFRA in July 2005 that Herefordshire Council has a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The Legal Services Team of Worcestershire County Council have considered the Strategy and have recommended and agreed amendments to the Strategy. Because the Strategy has been developed through a partnership of Herefordshire Council, Worcestershire County Council and the District Councils of Worcestershire the Legal Team in Worcestershire have taken the role of reviewing the Strategy.

Risk Management

25 There is a risk that reductions in municipal waste to landfill are not achieved because the revised strategy fails to properly take account of views of, and engage local communities and other stakeholders. Endorsement of consultation draft revised strategy shows clear leadership prior to extensive structured public consultation will reduce this risk.

26 Failure to be supported or implemented by all signatory Councils can be avoided by showing clear leadership and commitment to the revised strategy.

27 There is a risk of not achieving reductions in municipal waste to landfill because revised strategy fails to be robust enough to support application(s) for planning approval for residual waste treatment facilities. This can be mitigated by endorsement of the extensive, structured public consultation and thus ensure final adopted revised strategy is robust and well supported.

Consultees

Endorsement of the revised strategy has been sought from all member councils of the Joint Waste Resource Management Forum.

Appendices

Appendix 1 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire – First Review - Headline Strategy November 2009

Appendix 2 Consultation – Annex H

Appendix 3 Action Plan – Annex I

Background Papers

The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire – First Review - November 2009

- Headline Strategy
- Annex A Waste Growth
- Annex B Waste Prevention
- Annex C Recycling & Composting
- Annex D Residual Options Appraisal
- Annex E Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Annex F Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Annex G Achievements So Far
- Annex H Consultation Report
- Annex I Action Plan
- Annex J Glossary and Abbreviations

Joint Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire 2004 “Managing waste for a brighter future”

Waste Strategy for England 2007