

**Response to JMWMS Consultation
Surrey County Council (Waste Disposal Authority)**

Introduction

The WDA has a statutory responsibility for making arrangements for the disposal of municipal waste collected by district and borough councils and for providing Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) where members of the public can bring household waste materials for recycling and disposal.

In 2009/10, 555,000 tonnes of municipal waste required disposal. Continuing to landfill this waste is not an option both on environmental and financial grounds:

- The decomposition of biodegradable waste in landfill creates methane gas, which is around 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its global warming effect
- Sending materials to landfill is a waste of valuable resource
- Landfill tax continues to increase, from £48 per tonne in 2009/10 to £80 per tonne in 2014/15.

The WDA is committed to dealing with this waste in line with the waste hierarchy, which means reducing the amount of waste that is produced, reusing and recycling as much material as is practicable and recovering energy from the remaining waste.

The Secretary of State for Environment has recently announced a review of National Waste Policy aimed at key strategic objectives. In the view of the WDA, the JMWMS is therefore consistent with the strategic objectives.

Question 1. Targets

In 2006 our policy was to aspire to reach a long-term target of 60% recycling and composting by 2025. Recent progress and current performance in some districts and boroughs of over 60% recycling have led us to revise this policy.

Our new proposed policy is to commit significant efforts and resources to achieving and exceeding an overall household reuse, recycling and composting target of 70% by 2013/2014. To what extent do you agree with this revised policy?

The WDA aims to maximise the amount of material that can practicably be recycled. Since a 60% recycling target was set in 2006, a number of developments have taken place that have exceeded expectations. Our CRCs currently have a recycling rate of 63% and this is projected to continue to rise. New developments in collection arrangements continue to occur, for example Surrey Heath Borough Council recycled well over 60% of their household waste in the second half of last year. Most Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) in Surrey have increased or have advanced plans to increase their recycling rates significantly.

We therefore believe that it is inappropriate to keep a target that has started to be exceeded at CRCs and at borough councils. At the same time, we need to ensure that a revised target does not go excessively beyond currently identifiable mechanisms of achievement.

Our analysis has found that no council in the top quartile of English authorities is currently achieving a 70% recycling rate, nor do any have targets beyond 70%.

Additionally, no other country or region achieves recycling rates beyond 70% except in a small number of very specific locations. The SCC World Class Waste Solutions Cabinet report¹ identifies four key developments that support the achievement of a 70% recycling rate in Surrey:

- Further developments at CRCs
- Additional recycling of green waste captured at CRCs and kerbside
- Continued support for kerbside food waste collections
- Additional capture of dry recyclables at both CRCs and kerbside, supported by improved bulking and sorting facilities

The WDA therefore supports the revised policy, which requires the Surrey Waste Partnership to provide residents and waste authorities with the tools and knowledge to recycle more materials and to continue to innovate in our collection arrangements.

Question 2. Waste reduction programme

The revised waste reduction programme aims at providing all sectors of the community with the tools and knowledge to improve the way that they manage their waste in a sustainable and cost-effective way. Our proposed target is to reduce municipal waste by 15,000 tonnes by 2014. The draft strategy proposes a number of ways in which residents can contribute to this reduction target by changing their behaviour towards specific waste materials.

Given that the waste reduction programme will require additional resources, which TWO of the five priority areas listed below do you think will be most effective in helping to reach this target?

Food waste reduction

Green waste reduction

Reuse of bulky items such as furniture and white goods

Encouraging the use of reusable nappies

Junk mail reduction

Other (please specify)

The amount of waste produced in Surrey is dependent on a large number of factors that the Surrey Waste Partnership may or may not be able to influence, for example the development of internet shopping. Further, the impact of specific waste reduction initiatives can be difficult to measure against a backdrop of other initiatives.

Resources and efforts in this area therefore need to be focused on:

- Issues that the Surrey Waste Partnership has the ability to control and influence
- Areas of work that can demonstrate a significant and measurable impact on the amount of waste produced.

The Surrey Waste Partnership has developed an audience specific work programme that delivers a strong positive return on initial investment over the next three years. It focuses on providing communities with the tools and knowledge to reduce their waste in a way that provides individual, community and countywide benefit through financial and environmental savings.

In terms of maximum impact, we would prioritise working to reduce food and green waste, although not at the expense of other waste reduction initiatives where significant contributions can be made. This includes work on nappies, junk mail, reuse of furniture and white goods and other sectors of the community.

¹ Officer Report to Cabinet (2010), World Class Waste Solutions, Surrey County Council

Providing new parents and parents to be with the tools and knowledge to decide whether using real nappies is right for them will have a significant impact on nappy waste and also save parents who use real nappies money.

Junk mail is a source of frustration for many Surrey residents. Providing an easy solution that gives people more control over the mail they receive means that people are more inclined to think about recycling other materials that they would normally throw away. Junk mail is thus a 'gateway material' that can lead to further changes in how residents think about and manage their waste.

The Surrey Waste Partnership is working with the community sector to reuse more furniture and white goods. Items collected and repaired by charities in Surrey are sold to local residents at a price they can afford. Training opportunities are also provided for vulnerable people to assist them into employment.

General attitudes towards each of these materials influence the quantity of waste materials produced. These are determined by a number of factors and are deeply embedded in social situations, institutional contexts and cultural norms. Creating new social norms around waste reduction and reuse therefore requires a comprehensive approach that segregates the population and identifies and addresses key motivations and barriers.

Question 3. Waste collection

Currently all 11 waste collection authorities (district and borough councils) in Surrey collect waste for recycling separately from residual waste, but some collect more materials than others. It is clear from consultation with the public that there is an increased desire for local authorities to collect a wider range of recyclable materials; however, adding materials to the collection scheme requires additional resources and operational changes.

Which THREE of the following materials would you like your council to prioritise for separate collection in addition to the materials they already collect?

Glass

Drinks cartons

Plastic bottles

Other plastics

Mixed plastics (e.g. yogurt pots)

Metals, tins

Card

Food waste

Other (please specify)

Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) currently offer a range of recycling collection services, which results in recycling rates that vary significantly. Extensive analysis and discussions with WCAs have found that there is no one system that is most effective for the whole of Surrey, although benefits could be achieved by more effective joint operations between WCAs and with the WDA.

The WDA is committed to developing improved sorting and baling facilities at existing transfer stations. The precise configuration and scale of these facilities will be the product of joint business cases produced with WCAs based on each location. This will enable further materials to be collected for recycling by WCAs in a cost effective and sustainable way.

An analysis of Surrey's household waste carried out in 2008 found that around two thirds of the waste collected at kerbside was made up of food waste, garden waste and paper and card. The separate collection of food waste in particular has shown to improve performance in three ways:

- Reduction in volume of waste by exposing the level of food wasted
- Diversion of food from harmful landfill to recycling and energy recovery solutions
- Increase in recycling of other materials by reducing contamination and enabling complimentary systems to be developed.

The WDA would therefore prioritise the collection of food waste, green waste and paper and card for kerbside recycling as part of any integrated waste collection system.

Question 4. Dealing with residual waste

Residual waste is waste which cannot be recycled or composted. The new proposed policy acknowledges that by reducing and recycling more we will have less residual waste to deal with. Therefore the proposed policy is to develop advanced thermal treatment (gasification*) which is economically viable on a smaller scale than mass burn incineration. To what extent do you agree with this revised policy?

The WDA is committed to reducing the amount of waste produced, reusing and recycling as much material as is practicable and recovering energy from what is left. Our assessment indicates that after volume reduction and recycling, there will be 157,000 tonnes of material that need to be treated². Of this, our approach is to build an Advanced Thermal Treatment (ATT) plant that will turn 60,000 tonnes of this material into energy. The remaining 97,500 tonnes will be treated via out county energy from waste plants on an interim basis.

Advanced Thermal Treatment offers a number of potential advantages over other residual treatment technologies:

- It is economic at lower capacities
- It has low visual impact
- The recovery of energy is eligible for Renewable Obligation Certificates (earning government grants)
- The immediate combustion of gases avoids production of noxious by-products.

The specific ATT technology chosen incorporates a batch loading system which reduces the complexity (and cost) of the technology by removing the need for pre treatment and provides a more robust operation.

The WDA believes that the development of an ATT facility on this scale provides flexibility in the way that we manage our waste over the coming years and enables us to develop further community sized facilities as required. It also provides a clear incentive to continue to focus attention on reduction and recycling initiatives.

Conclusion

The WDA endorses the revised strategy, which it sees as a key vehicle for delivering a modern infrastructure for dealing with municipal waste economically and sustainably, supported by collaborative working.

² Officer Report to Cabinet (2010), World Class Waste Solutions, Surrey County Council