

## **WASTE TRANSPORT TASK GROUP – UPDATE ON FINDINGS**

**Mole Valley Local Committee  
2 April 2003**

### **KEY ISSUE:**

This report provides an update on the continuing research being undertaken by the Task Group established at the Committee's October 2002 meeting to investigate the transport implications of waste management activity in Mole Valley.

### **SUMMARY**

The report sets out the results of initial investigations into the key issues reported to the Local Committee on 12 February this year. An annexe of data is attached and the report points to other data which is being pursued but also highlights the incomplete nature of the information that is available. A number of proposals for action are set out.

### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Committee is asked to**

- (i) **Note the report and offer any comments on the initial findings.**
- (ii) **Endorse the proposed actions set out at the end of the main report.**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Since identifying its key questions, as reported to the Committee on 12 February, officers and members of the group have been working with waste management experts in the two councils to explore the issues. This report sets out the progress made and suggests the most productive ways forward.
- 1.2 Because of the pressure of other commitments it has not been possible to reconvene the Task Group before the Local Committee meeting to examine the evidence enclosed in this report. We hope that a meeting with officers to explore the information and map a way forward in more detail will be held in the next few weeks. The conclusions contained in this report are not therefore, at this stage, the result of a consensus following discussion and are as much a recommendation to the Task Group as to the Local Committee itself.

## **BASIC INFORMATION**

- 2.1 One of the key concerns of the Task Group is that there is no clear picture of the waste management map – where the sites are, what they deal with and in what quantities, the source and destination of different types of waste etc.
- 2.2 It has quickly become clear that much of the information needed to explore the Task Group's concerns is fragmented or unavailable. The lack of information, and the accuracy of what is available, is a nationally recognised problem for the development and monitoring of waste strategies. The Environment Select Committee has expressed to the House of Commons its own disappointment that this is the case and urged that additional funding be made available to improve monitoring.
- 2.3 There is still however a significant amount of information in the public domain and the ANNEXE to this report reproduces an extract from the 2001 Annual Monitoring Report, produced by the County Council's Minerals and Waste Planning division. This shows the number, location and types of waste processes within Surrey. It also includes maps showing their distribution more graphically.
- 2.4 A key message emerging from this information is that there are a large number of contractors involved in waste management, ranging from large national companies to very local operators who may run only one site. In Mole Valley alone there are 13 separate operators.
- 2.5 Unfortunately, this information does not currently include details of the tonnages of waste handled by each site. Companies running the sites have been under no obligation to provide such information, however from this year this information has been requested and a clearer picture should emerge with the publication of the AMR for 2002.

- 2.6 Information on the tonnage of minerals extracted, and void landfill space, is not available either since this information is provided for monitoring purposes on a confidential basis.
- 2.7 Other information is being pursued and may be available in time for the task Group's next meeting. This includes:
- Information on the overall import / export of waste in Surrey (SCC ./ Environment Agency)
  - More information on tonnage, source and destination of waste from Refuse Transfer sites, including Epsom (SCC)
  - Information on tonnages and destination of recycleables collected (MVDC)
  - Information from the Waste Transfer Notes that businesses are required to keep as a document of their waste disposal (Environment Agency)
- 2.8 **Recommendation:** That the task group continues to gather such evidence as may be available but recognises that this continues to be a significant obstacle to an informed understanding of the characteristics of waste movements in the District. However more information should be available as a result of the current data collection.

## **WASTE VEHICLES AND CONTRACTUAL CONSTRAINTS**

- 3.1 One of the issues identified by the Task Group concerned the extent to which the contracting authorities could constrain and dictate the routes taken by companies transporting waste, and the constraints that might be imposed on driver behaviour. The former point was particularly concerned with the use of rural roads by large and heavy vehicles accessing waste sites, particularly landfill. The second point embraced a range of concerns from concerns over 'convoying' to individual driver behaviour which is seen by many to be intimidating. In part this is a consequence of waste vehicles tending to be large and, particularly in the case of inert waste, noisy, but there is a real body of evidence for less than discourteous, or even reckless, driving as well.
- 3.2 As previously noted, information on the nature, frequency and loads of waste transported is not readily available. Indicative figures sometimes appear as part of planning applications from individual operators.
- 3.3 Although only about 5% of the HGV traffic in Surrey is related to waste management, other road users see these vehicles as disproportionately threatening. However, operators may be unaware of this and are operating within commercial constraints that may not be recognized by others. It is clear that the most effective way forward at present is to seek a voluntary code of conduct and, to that end:
- 3.4 Investigations so far suggest that there is little control over the issues of concern, particularly driver behaviour and routing. Operator licenses are issued if there are no objections but not subject to conditions. Planning applications can impose some terms but GOISE have issued clear advice that

operators cannot be instructed to avoid certain roads and that routing restrictions should not be imposed and are not legally binding.

- 3.5 **Recommendation:** That those companies transporting waste within or through Mole Valley are invited to take part in a discussion with officers, Members and, if possible, representatives of affected communities. This should seek to clarify both the concerns of road users and residents, and the commercial constraints of operators, and seek a voluntary code of practice for individual and fleet driving practice.

## **STRATEGIC AND PLANNING CONTEXT**

- 4.1 The Local Committee, in its Generic mode, has already made representations to the SCC Executive in respect to the designation of mineral extraction sites within the draft Surrey Strategic Plan as suitable for landfill use. Their concern was about the impact on rural areas of the commitment that “land in existing waste management use will be kept for waste use”. It is unclear how “existing” is defined in this context. The Committee urged the SCC Executive to expedite a review of the Waste Local Plan to include site-specific information.
- 4.2 The concern at the heart of this is many of these sites were chosen as a result of the presence of minerals and may be wholly unsuitable as a repository for waste, either because they are in the heart of the greenbelt, or are accessible only by rural roads which are not designed for heavy vehicles.
- 4.3 The consultation on the Local Mineral Plan, which is currently being developed may provide another opportunity for the concerns of the Local Committee to be registered. An initial issues and options consultation is expected in June, with the deposit draft being published before the end of the financial year.
- 4.4 The Strategic Plan identifies sites that might be used and these would then be tested through the planning process should any company wish to take advantage of any of these sites. If planning permission is granted in respect to applications for waste use this can include constraints on times of operation, noise levels, vehicle movements at sensitive times of day etc. However, as things stand, some applications that are initially turned down, may be upheld on appeal, often without constraining terms or conditions. Since many potential sites have been established through long-term, uncontested use, rather than a considered planning application there are clear risks for greenbelt and heavy traffic on minor roads arising from this.
- 4.5 **Recommendation:** That the Local Committee seeks an opportunity to influence the Local Mineral Plan and reiterate its concerns about the routine designation of mineral extraction sites for landfill use, particularly in rural areas. Also, that the Task Group’s concern about the Planning process in this regard are explored with officers

## **SPECIALIST WASTE AND RECYCLING**

- 5.1 One of the Task Group's concerns was the extent to which local residents and companies were aware of how and where specialist waste needed to be taken. There was also concern that the increased level of fly-tipping indicated an unwillingness to pay more recent levies on the disposal of inert waste in landfill sites, or private disposal of white goods and other items covered by tighter legislation.
- 5.2 Initial investigations suggest that there is a fairly poor understanding amongst local traders and companies of where specific types of waste need to be disposed. SCC as the Waste Disposal Authority, do produce the Waste Wise Business Manual but it may be that an awareness campaign is needed.
- 5.3 Because of the nature of processing waste which has either hazardous, or specialist reclamation characteristics, there are only a limited number of plants that can be commercially viable. We have started to map the wider network of sites where materials such as glass, plastics, metals and hazardous chemicals can be processed and this information will be available to the Task group shortly.
- 5.4 It is clear that for many categories of recycleable waste the final destination is well beyond Surrey's boundaries. The development of The MRF may create economies of scale in transportation to final processing plants but there is no obvious way in which the distances travelled can be avoided. It is proposed to investigate the network of recycling polices and processes within Mole Valley next
- 5.6 The Task Group is also seeking information on illegal dumping and fly-tipping of waste. This may in some cases be the result of uncertainty over where waste can be taken, but may also be caused by a reluctance to pay recently introduced charges. It is unclear whether there are transport implications arising from this but it is recognised as a growing, and costly, problem.
- 5.7 **Recommendation:** That a public waste disposal awareness campaign is developed, with a particular emphasis on local traders and manufacturers. This should be done in conjunction with the two Town Centre Managers. Also that information is gathered on recycling in the District for the Task Group to consider.

## **LANDFILL TAX CREDITS**

- 6.1 As a side issue resulting from discussions with Waste Management officers, a survey of landfill tax credit use has been initiated with companies running landfill sites and waste transfer facilities in Surrey. These companies qualify for landfill tax credits which can provide funding for community projects. Whilst it is believed that larger companies make use of these, though not necessarily in Surrey, it is suspected that those generated by smaller operators may not be used and therefore revert to the Exchequer. Although individually small these sums may cumulate to a significant fund across the

county. The use of these credits will be limited to community projects from 31 March 2003 and operators have been advised of the Councils' interest in accessing this money and willingness to provide administrative support in ensuring that it is used.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 The group will meet again in April to discuss the information so far compiled with officers and agree a way forward. There is a firm belief that the task group has considerable scope to continue and develop its brief.
- 7.2 The initial priorities identified in this report are:
- To continue to compile information on waste flows etc.
  - To convene a round table discussion between vehicle operators and representatives of affected communities to discuss a voluntary code of conduct
  - To ensure that the Local Mineral Plan reflects traffic issues
  - To explore the concerns arising from planning practice
  - To encourage a renewed publicity campaign on waste disposal, especially with the commercial sector
  - To concentrate on developing a clearer understanding of the recycling processes in the District
- 7.3 A further progress report will be brought to the Local Committee's next Transportation meeting in July.

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| <b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b> | <b>12 February Mole Valley Local Committee</b> |

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ANNEXE:

NB: A large table of information included in the agenda papers is available on request.







