

Report of: Interim City Works Business Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 11th September 2006

Item No:

Scrutiny: Environment

Title of Report : The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy



Purpose of report: To present the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy to the Board for their agreement.



Key decision: Yes



Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jean Fooks

Scrutiny Responsibility: Environment



Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by:

Councillor Jean Fooks, Portfolio Holder
Sharon Cosgrove, Strategic Director

Isay Cane, Legal Services
Mike Baish, Financial Services



Policy Framework: Section 3.2.5 of the Oxford Plan



Recommendation(s):

Present the Executive Board:-



- i) agree the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy
 - ii) receive further reports on the formation of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Joint Committee and issues connected with its governance and financial arrangements
- Urge the Oxfordshire County Council to consider the provision of treatment facilities for kitchen waste as a priority in their plans for treatment/disposal of waste.

Introduction

1. The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) consists of representatives from all District authorities in Oxfordshire and the Oxfordshire County Council. These representatives are the Executive Board or Cabinet Members with responsibility for waste and Oxford's present representative is Cllr Jean Fooks.
2. The present partnership was formed in 2003 and all members (including Oxford City) are signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 1) which establishes a voluntary commitment to joint working in respect of waste management. The OWP is not a formally constituted body and currently has no executive powers.
3. Under the present local government structure, the districts have responsibility for waste collection services, and the county council for waste disposal. One of the main functions of the OWP over the recent past has been to develop a long term (25 years) waste strategy for Oxfordshire which recognises the interdependence between collection and disposal functions and that is also designed to meet the need for increased recycling and diversion of waste from landfill in accordance with Government imposed targets.

The Strategy

4. Appendix 2 to this report together with its annexes is the strategy that has recently been approved by the OWP and is now being recommended to all of its constituent members. All of the Districts and the County Council will be considering the strategy during their August and September committee cycles.
5. Annex F is intended to be the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the proposals that have been raised in the Strategy. At the time of issue of this report, this assessment was still awaited from the external consultants engaged to prepare the draft. It is hoped to receive it within a few days and it will be forwarded to Members as soon as it is received.
6. Annex C is an assessment of the various waste and recycling collection and disposal/treatment options that have been considered in formulating the strategy. Confidential financial information has been removed from table 3 on page C6, but this is reproduced in Part II of the agenda.

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Highlights

7. The strategy document points out that presently Oxfordshire performs well in that it produces less waste per head than any other English county, and as a whole is recycling (or composting) over 33% of its waste which places it in the top quartile of English counties.
8. Recent targets that have been introduced nationally by the Government mean that Oxfordshire has to reduce the amount of bio-degradable waste (this includes paper and other organic wastes which are assumed to form 68% of the total waste stream) being landfilled from the present 142,500 tonnes per year to:-
 - 121,700 tonnes by 2009/10
 - 81,000 tonnes by 2012/13
 - 56,700 tonnes by 2019/20
9. If the present level of landfilling of waste is continued then the County will be facing fines of at least £150 for each tonne of waste that is landfilled over and above the targets. This would lead to a fine of £3.1 million in 2009/10 (which equates to £13 a year on the council tax of a Band D property) rising to £12.8 million by 2019/20.

Alternatively it may be possible to buy permits from other authorities that are under their targets, but it is anticipated that the cost of these will in any event be close to the fine level.
10. Even if Oxfordshire was able to maximise its overall recycling level it would still not meet the landfill targets that have been set, so that some other form of treatment for residual waste that is not recycled or composted will be necessary.
11. In order to address these issues, the strategy contains 14 policies (see page 14 of the core strategy document) which in general it is thought Members will wish to support. There is also an action plan at Annex A.
12. The attention of Members is particularly drawn to the following policies:-
 - **No.5.** that the OWP will seek to reduce the growth of municipal waste across the County to 0% per person per annum by 2012. Without intervention it is estimated that waste will grow at the rate of 0.34% per household. Annex B is a Waste Reduction & Reuse Plan which develops 18 various approaches to waste reduction in Oxfordshire.

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- **No 6.** that the OWP will provide an integrated system of collection and processing of household waste which will achieve as a minimum:-

	40% recycling or composting	by 2010
	45%	by 2015
and	55%	by 2020

13. To achieve these recycling targets it is proposed that all households in the County will be provided with

- A fortnightly collection of residual waste;
- Dry recyclable collections;
- A garden waste collection either free or on a paid for basis;
- A food waste collection (dependent on available treatment infrastructure) and
- Increased recyclable material streams at Waste Recycling Centres

14. Annex D of the Strategy discusses the various residual waste treatment options that are available, without favouring any particular approach. The County Council are shortly to commence a tender programme which will invite proposals for a facility or facilities on a technology neutral basis.

Additionally they will be issuing separate tenders at the appropriate time for the other facilities that will be required such as transfer stations, material recovery facilities (recycling sorting plants) and garden and kitchen waste facilities, that with the residual treatment facility will form the complete approach to recycling and disposal.

15. One area that is of particular interest to Oxford concerns the treatment of kitchen waste (or combined garden waste & kitchen waste) to produce compost which would require an in-vessel or similar composting system. This is an area of development that would be particularly attractive to most of the Districts, and would allow the collection of kitchen waste from households either as a stand alone service or combined with garden waste collections. This would have a significant effect on recycling rates and provide householders with yet another opportunity to recycle and divert more waste from landfill. It is suggested that the County Council be urged to consider the provision of in-vessel composting facilities as a matter of priority

16. In order to deliver the Strategy it is proposed that a number of changes will be required to the OWP and the way it works:-

- a) it has been agreed in principle by the Leaders of the Oxfordshire authorities that the OWP be reconstituted as a formal joint

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committee with all the normal public access arrangements. Its remit would be to ensure and monitor action planning and project delivery;

- b) that a full time Partnership Officer will be appointed to progress the work and provide support for the joint committee;
- c) that governance arrangements for the conduct of business for the joint committee be developed and agreed;
- d) that financial arrangements be developed to ensure that budgetary considerations are dealt with equitably and create the right incentives to ensure delivery;
- e) that each authority prepares a local action plan flowing out of the generic action plan included in the Strategy.

These matters will be the subject of further reports to the Board for their approval as they are developed.

17 In terms of what the Strategy means for Oxford, Members will be aware that detailed plans for the implementation of the new recycling and waste collection services are well advanced, with the first phase (extension of the garden waste and cardboard collection service Citywide) commencing in the next two weeks. Complete implementation will be achieved by spring of 2007 and by that time it is anticipated that the City will be recycling at the rate of 36 – 40%. This will place the City as one of the forerunners in the County in implementation of the service changes required to implement the strategy and achieve the targets that have been set.

There will be work to be done in respect of waste reduction and minimisation, but Members will know that Oxford already has a very low waste generation rate.

18 In more general terms, it is felt that the Strategy and its associated action plans form a good basis for co-ordinating the collection and treatment/disposal functions countywide and will provide a route to meeting the landfill diversion targets that have been imposed by Government. This should avoid the imposition of severe financial penalties and in the longer term may lead to overall efficiencies and the provision of consistent and comprehensive services to the people of Oxfordshire as a whole. Having said this, the Strategy makes clear that it favours the development of services that are unified and not necessarily uniform, thus allowing for some individuality amongst Districts

19 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The new recycling scheme which goes a significant way to meeting any obligations Oxford may have under the Strategy, is fully funded in the 2006/07 capital and revenue budgets.

The Board will be asked to consider further reports in due course on the proposed Joint Committee for co-ordinating waste management in the County, and its governance and financial arrangements. These may have financial implications for the Council and will be reported on when these aspects have been further developed.

20 Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

21 Recommendations:-

That Executive Board

- i) agree the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy;
- ii) receive further reports on the formation of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Joint Committee and issues connected with its governance and financial arrangements;
- iii) urge the Oxfordshire County Council to consider the provision of treatment facilities for kitchen waste as a priority in their plans for treatment/disposal of waste.

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