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To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 8 April 2011

Subject: Review of the operation of Household Waste Recycling Centres in Kent

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the view of POSC on the approach to a proposed review of the Household Waste Recycling Centres in Kent.

1. Introduction

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) provide an integral part of the waste management service to Kent residents. The services provided at the sites complement waste collection authorities (WCA) collections, and other “bring site” activities i.e. local bottle banks etc. The HWRCs contribute by collecting 42% of the County’s recyclate. They provide places where residents may dispose of their household waste (recycling and residual) and in doing so fulfil our statutory obligation under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Kent County Council has developed a network of nineteen sites across the county at an annual net cost of £7.4m net per annum. During the budget setting process for 2011-13, the HWRC service identified a savings target of £290k to be achieved by 2012-13. It was agreed that a review of HWRCs should be commissioned to identify how this saving could be met.

The greatest cost in managing waste through the HWRCs is the treatment/disposal of the waste brought into the sites rather than the operating costs of the sites. It will therefore be important to consider ways in which we can limit the waste arisings of the sites, whilst being mindful of the alternative disposal routes that any resultant “diverted” waste might take. Residual waste is more expensive to dispose of than recyclate, and the review will need to examine ways to recycle more material or reduce the amount of residual waste.

Twelve of the HWRCs are operated through contracts which will expire in July 2013. Therefore the review needs to examine how the savings can be realised within the existing contracts and the outcomes of the review will inform the re-tendering process for new contracts, to identify further opportunities for additional

savings. Any changes to the current service could be trialled ahead of the main contract re-let in 2013 to evaluate customer, operational and cost impacts.

2. Scope of the review

The aim of the review is to identify the right level of HWRC service for Kent residents at the right cost. The review will include an assessment of the HWRC network in terms of economy (costs and income generation), efficiency (productivity), effectiveness (customer satisfaction, recycling rates, material types and capture) and location.

The review will examine the current provision and location of HWRCs, their operating policies, the potential for increasing income, as well as the options for making the required savings. The issues and questions that the review will examine include:

i) Current provision and location:

- Is the existing pattern and number of sites optimal for collecting recycle and household waste?
- Should all sites offer the same facilities?
- Should some sites operate differently?

ii) Operating policy:

- Should certain kinds of waste be excluded?
- What are the likely implications of excluding some kinds of waste?
- What potential is there for the sale of waste for reuse?
- Should access to the service be limited to Kent residents?
- Should opening times and days be changed?
- What potential is there for increased income?

The impacts of any future options will be fully evaluated and particular consideration will be given to the impact on waste collection authorities (Districts and Boroughs) and fly-tipping, as well as the required enforcement of any changes in operating policy.

The output of the review will be a report giving a series of recommendations on how the HWRC service needs to change to deliver the optimum service.

3. Timeline

The proposed timeline for the review is as follows:

Action	Date
a) Data gathering	April to June 2011
▪ Set up Informal Member Group (if agreed)	April 2011
▪ Engage with Waste Management staff	April/May 2011
▪ Review of data and analysis of options	April to June 2011
▪ Draft recommendations	June to August 2011

Action	Date
b) Equality Impact Assessment of possible changes, including consultation	June to August 2011
c) Agree draft recommendations	August 2011
d) Confirm review recommendations	Sept 2011
e) Policy decision (Members)	27 th Sept 2011 (POSC) October 2011 (Cabinet)
f) Implementation	Jan 2012 onwards

4. Key Risks

The main risks for this review have been identified as:

- i) The scope as laid out in this paper is not agreed - scope would need to be rewritten and agreement sought, and this could delay the delivery of the project.
- ii) The data needed for the review is not available – all the KCC data is available, but there are dependencies on provision of data by other Waste Disposal Authorities and these have already been contacted.
- iii) The scope of the review expands as the review progresses, jeopardising the delivery timescale – rigorous project management will be part of the review and if it was felt that more time was needed to meet the aims and objectives of the review, agreement to vary the timescale would be sought or additional resources requested to meet the original deadlines.
- iv) The review fails to meet its deadlines – rigorous project management will be used to ensure that targets are met or essential extensions agreed.
- v) The review fails to deliver the necessary savings – the business case for each of the recommendations will be fully explored to ensure that there is sufficient evidence of the likely savings.

A full list of risks for this review will be available on request.

5. Consultation

Equality impact assessments will be carried out on all potential recommendations to ensure that it is clear how each priority group might be adversely affected. Action has been built into the work plan to consult with both Waste Management staff and users of the sites to ensure that the review is well informed.

6. Informal Member Group

It is recommended that a cross-party Informal Member Group be convened to guide the work of the review and to consider the draft conclusions and recommendations to be made to Cabinet and Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Informal Member Group would, at a minimum, meet at the beginning of the review process (April) to agree the key questions of the review and the project plan, in July to receive the first draft recommendations and in late July/August to hear the results of the peer review and external consultation, and to inform the decision on what actions will be recommended.

7. Recommendations

The views of the Policy Overview Scrutiny Committee are sought on the approach to the review and agree that:-

- (a) The formation of an Informal Member Group to guide the review; and
- (b) The review recommendations be brought to the meeting of the Policy Overview Scrutiny Committee in September 2011.

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