

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee

Cabinet

Date of Committee

12th January 2006

Report Title

Response to Defra Consultation on Options for Local Authority Statutory Performance Standards on Recycling and Composting in 2007/08

Summary

This report provides a summary of the Government’s proposals for recycling and composting targets for 2007/08. No further stretching targets are proposed. The Government’s preferred option is to leave targets at the current 2005/06 levels, retaining the 30% upper limit for high performing authorities and for low performing authorities to reach recycling and composting levels of 18% or 20% by 2007/08. Responses to the consultation questions are detailed within the report.

For further information please contact

Kalen Wood
Waste Management
Tel. 01926 418064
kalenwood@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?

Yes/No

Background Papers

None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

Other Committees

.....

Local Member(s)

(With brief comments, if appropriate)

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Other Elected Members

Councillor C K N Browne
Councillor Mrs E M Goode
Councillor Mrs J Lea } for information

Cabinet Member
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

Councillor M L M Heatley – I look forward to the results of the consultation process by Defra.

Chief Executive

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Legal

I Marriott – comments incorporated.

Finance

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Other Chief Officers

.....

District Councils

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Health Authority

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Police

.....

Other Bodies/Individuals

.....

FINAL DECISION

YES/NO (If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

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To Council

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To Cabinet

.....

To an O & S Committee

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To an Area Committee

.....

Further Consultation

.....

Cabinet – 12th January 2006

Response to Defra Consultation on Options for Local Authority Statutory Performance Standards on Recycling and Composting in 2007/08

Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy

Recommendation

That the proposed responses to the consultation questions are supported.

1. Background

- 1.1 All local authorities in England and Wales were set statutory recycling and composting targets for the years 2003/04 and 2005/06.
- 1.2 The targets for The County Council and District Councils are shown in the table below:-

| | 2003/04 Target | 2005/06 Target | Current Recycling rates |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| North Warwickshire Borough Council | 10% | 18% | 21% |
| Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council | 10% | 18% | 22% |
| Rugby Borough Council | 10% | 18% | 16% |
| Stratford on Avon District Council | 24% | 30% (was 36%) | 34% |
| Warwick District Council | 18% | 27% | 27% |
| Warwickshire County Council | 16% | 24% | 28% |

2. Proposals for Future Recycling and Composting Targets

- 2.1 The Government has issued a consultation paper on setting recycling and composting targets for 2007/08. A series of options have been proposed.
- 2.2 The options proposed are as follows:-

- (i) **Option 1:** *Do Nothing* – set no targets for 2007/08.
- (ii) **Option 2:** *Maintain the level of recycling performance at 2005/06 levels – any authority that fails to meet its 2005/06 target would be required to meet the 2005/06 target in 2007/08.*
- (iii) **Option 3:** *Maintain the level of recycling performance at 2005/06 levels and increasing the floor level of recycling to 20% - This would have the effect of increasing the statutory performance standard for 143 local authorities whose current 2005/06 target is less than 18%. This option would help to close the gap between high and low performing authorities.*
- (iv) **Option 4:** *Maintain the levels of recycling performance at 2005/06 levels, increasing the floor level of recycling to 20% and removing the 30% cap from those authorities from those authorities originally given targets in excess of 30%. (Stratford would return to 36%).*

2.3 None of the proposed options set higher targets than the ones originally set for 2005/06.

3. Potential Implications of the Proposals

- 3.1 As it can be seen in the table in 1.2, all of the Warwickshire authorities are expected exceed their 2005/06 targets. Therefore the proposed options 1-4 would not have any impact on the Warwickshire authorities.
- 3.2 Setting no further targets for 2007/08 may mean that there is little incentive to increase or invest in recycling until more stretching targets are set. This could have implications for the County as a whole meeting its landfill diversion targets.

4. Responses to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Consultation Questions

Question 1: Do you agree with the assessment that it is not a realistic proposal to not set any further recycling and composting targets for local authorities?

The County Council agrees. Failure to set further targets may result in a loss of impetus in developing recycling and composting initiatives, ultimately leading to reduction in recycling and composting. It may also result in public apathy towards recycling if the public become aware that there are no longer targets to reach. It may be construed as recycling no longer being a priority.

It is also a concern that not having targets will impede progression towards meeting our landfill diversion targets for municipal biodegradable waste.

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal to maintain the 2005/06 recycling and composting targets for 2007/08?

The County Council does not support this approach for the reasons cited in Q1 above.

Question 3: Do you feel that any further modifications should be made to this proposal to focus on targets for 2007/08?

Refer to answer to Q5

Question 4: Do you agree with the Government's preferred option to maintain the level of recycling performance at 2005/06 levels and increase the floor recycling target from 18% to 20% for 2007/08?

The County Council welcomes the option to encourage a more level playing field for recycling with the poorer performing authorities being required to reach recycling levels of 20% by 2007/08.

Question 5: Do you feel that any further modifications should be made to the proposal to focus on any future targets?

Future recycling and composting targets should be linked to delivering landfill diversion targets for diverting municipal biodegradable waste away from landfill.

Question 6: Do you agree with the recommended approach to not remove the 30% cap on recycling and composting targets for 2007/08?

The only authority in Warwickshire that has been set a recycling target above 30% is Stratford on Avon District Council (36%). They have already reached this level of recycling. Removal of the 30% cap, would therefore have little impact on the Warwickshire authorities. The County Council does acknowledge that it can be difficult for higher performing authorities to increase levels further. However it is a concern that the Government has not set more challenging targets particularly in light of attaining landfill diversion targets.

Question 7: Do you feel that any further modifications could be made to the proposal to make it more acceptable to Government and the local authorities concerned?

Refer to Q11

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposal to allow pooling arrangements similar to those previously deployed?

The County Council has no objections to pooled recycling and composting targets.

Question 9: Do you agree that any local authority failing to meet its statutory performance standards for recycling and composting can expect to receive some form of engagement or intervention from Government?

The County Council does agree that a failing local authority should receive some form of engagement from the Government. However a flexible approach should be adopted as it is readily acknowledged that typically it is harder for high performing authorities to reach higher recycling levels than it is for lower performing authorities to improve their performance. Persistent non-performance should be specifically targeted.

Question 10: Do you have any specific comments on the form of engagement of intervention used?

The County Council does not have any specific comments on the form of intervention to be used.

Question 11: Which of the options (one to four) is your preferred approach to setting targets in 2007/08?

As previously mentioned Options 1-4 will have no impact on the Warwickshire Authorities as they are likely to meet or exceeded their recycling and composting targets for 2005/06. The County Council is concerned that by not setting further stretched targets, there will be less incentive to invest in further recycling schemes and initiatives, which could adversely affect the ability to reach landfill diversion targets. This could result in significant additional expenditure for Waste Disposal Authorities if they wish Waste Collection Authorities to increase recycling and composting over and above statutory targets, as the Waste Disposal Authorities will have to pay for Waste Collection Authorities to exceed their statutory targets.

JOHN DEEGAN
Strategic Director of Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

21st December 2005