

Warwickshire Waste Partnership

17 September 2014

Waste Strategic Review

Recommendations

- (1) That Members endorse the proposed work areas (listed in section 3 of this report) and ask the Sub Regional Strategic Officers Group to take the work forward.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 A strategic waste meeting was held on Friday 3 July to discuss opportunities for enhancing performance, customer satisfaction, income and joint working.
- 1.2 The following officers attended from each Authority:

Warwickshire County Council

Monica Fogarty - Strategic Director, Communities
Mark Ryder - Head of Service, Economic Growth (Chair)
Glenn Fleet - Group Manager, Waste Management

Warwick District Council

Chris Elliott - Chief Executive
Robert Hoof - Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services

Stratford-upon-Avon District Council

David Buckland - Assistant Chief Executive
Tony Perks - Head of Technical Services

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Jerry Hutchinson - Chief Executive
Richard Dobbs - Assistant Director, Streetscape

Both Rugby Borough and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's were unable to attend, so their comments have been included within the report

2.0 Areas for discussion at the meeting

- 2.1 Following the development of a draft scoping document to look at Partnership working across Warwickshire's waste services, the following areas were the basis of discussion at the meeting:

- A. Investigation of best practice within existing waste partnerships across the UK and other similar types of arrangements, such as joint waste committees or shared waste services. These arrangements may include wider waste related services such as street cleansing. Initial inquiries show that the Kent Waste Partnership (KWP), a partnership of 13 councils is on track to deliver cost savings of £100m during a 10-year period ending in 2021. Somerset Waste Partnership has achieved “initial and continued savings of £1.5m a year since 2007”.
- B. Review of opportunities to achieve efficiencies, improve customer satisfaction and service provision through partnership working on tenders and service delivery. Initial work could include collating current practices and services, reviewing lessons learned by other partnerships. For example each authority manages its own communications with residents about waste collection, recycling, reuse etc. Tailored communications per authority are essential, but there may be opportunities for both cashable and non-cashable savings to be made via reduced design costs through use of templates, advertising design and purchase, joint runs of generic items such as posters.
- C. Consideration of possible income generation opportunities through services like trade waste provision and sale of recyclables.
- D. Investigation of opportunities for developing joint infrastructure, that could reduce overall costs examples could include transfer stations and shared depots.
- E. Review into optimising savings between collection and disposal – looking at the whole cost not just unit costs.
- F. Research into behaviour change best practice across the UK and whether this could be implemented across Warwickshire, review of possible financial benefits across Warwickshire. For example initial savings may be available in communications, however communications support behaviour change and will be vital if the Partnership is to achieve its 65% re-use, recycling and composting target in 2020.
- G. Assessment of how to maximise performance across Warwickshire. The largest part of the savings and associated opportunities identified, already relate to achieving an overall 65% re-use, recycling and composting rate in Warwickshire. If the authorities managed to remove all recyclable material from the residual waste bin, then savings of £4.2m could be achieved across Warwickshire.
- H. Harmonisation of policy through removal of policies that encourage additional waste arising’s.
- I. The review could also consider whether working with neighbouring authorities would be beneficial.

3.0 Proposed work areas from meeting

3.1 At the end of the meeting it was agreed to put before the Waste Partnership the following investigative areas to be conducted by the Sub Regional Strategic Officers Group:

1. Research 'dirty MRF' technology¹ and investigate what the economics of salvaging recyclables from the residual bins would look like.
2. Carry out public consultation and fact finding to discover what is stopping people from recycling.
3. Run a pilot involving one collection round, a MRF provider and some form of community group or champion to see what could be achieved on a profit share basis.
4. Look at the possibility of a standard collection truck specification and a common maintenance contract or Local Authority Company.
5. Investigate the possibilities of providing transfer stations and estate rationalisation.
6. Consider how the recycling offer from flats can be improved.
7. Carry out a detailed comparison of the collection contracts to see what could be learned from each Authority such as why the WDC contract appears significantly cheaper than the other WCAs.

4.0 Comments from Authorities unable to attend the meeting

4.1 Since NBBC and RBC were unable to attend the meeting, their views were sought afterwards.

NBBC

- The Authority supports exploring all of the areas proposed although several have been looked at in detail in the past e.g. vehicle specifications, shared depots.

In relation to collection contracts; decisions relating to costs and approach to collections are of each District/Borough to make with them taking account of a raft of value for money issues – not just price. For example the geography of each area will have a significant impact on the approach each District/Borough feels to be best suited to its circumstances as will the ability to adapt to changing circumstances/situations.

¹ A 'dirty MRF' (Materials Recycling Facility) separates mixed solid waste into designated recyclable materials through a combination of manual and mechanical sorting.

While a comparison of overall costs might be something NBBC would be willing to participate in, detailed costing is something that both the private contractors and/or direct service organisations would not want to share with each other.

RBC

- Many of the topics have previously been investigated and considered when we travelled down the “Total Place” sub-regional working several years ago, but there may be merit in exploring some of these again.

The use of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership has always been the appropriate forum for this form of strategic discussion with elected members. However, officers cannot be able to engage in discussion regarding a single waste authority for Warwickshire, unless or until that debate and discussion has been held with our elected members. It was over this issue alone that caused Rugby to step backwards from our active engagement in other strategic aspects of the waste management agenda.

One other topic that we feel the WWP should research (linked to the obstacles to recycling) is whether the introduction of smaller capacity residual waste containers is counter-productive to achieving high quality recycling.

Background Papers

1. None.

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