

Annex C

Strategic re-appraisal — stakeholder engagement report

February 2011

Background to strategic re-appraisal and stakeholder engagement of the Residual Waste Project

1. On 20th October 2010 Defra announced the withdrawal of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits from seven waste projects, including Gloucestershire's Residual Waste project. In light of this, a strategic re-appraisal to establish the most appropriate way forward for waste disposal in Gloucestershire has been conducted. Such a review is not unusual for a business critical project; it is recommended by the Office of Government Commerce.

Stakeholder engagement

2. As part of the strategic re-appraisal, members of the public and interest groups were invited to submit their views based on a series of themes:
 - Does Gloucestershire need an alternative to landfill?
 - What are the affordable alternatives to landfill, and can you give examples of where this has worked?
 - How would you make up for the loss of PFI credits to be able to afford the alternatives?
 - How will your alternative solution enable Gloucestershire to meet current government targets and future policy for waste disposal?
3. The engagement process was promoted through mail shots to interested parties, a press release, and information on how to get involved was published on the Recycle for Gloucestershire 'Real Rubbish' web page, http://www.recycleforgloucestershire.com/real_rubbish

Responses received

4. A total of 22 written responses were received from 12 groups or organisations and 10 individuals (see Appendix 1). The responses and the issues raised were reviewed by the Residual Waste Project Team and wider Waste Management Team.
5. A summary of responses to the four themes is outlined below. Issues raised that were outside of the scope of the four themes have also been captured and considered as part of the delivering wider strategic objectives and policies adopted as part of the Gloucestershire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

Summary response to main questions posed

Does Gloucestershire need an alternative to landfill?

6. Many of the responses agree that Gloucestershire requires an alternative to landfill. Some responses suggested that landfill will always be part of the solution for waste which cannot be reused, recycled or composted. Some were in favour of sending biodegradable municipal waste that has been stabilised to landfill as they felt this would no longer contribute to climate change. Some responses stated opposition to the landfill of hazardous materials in hazardous landfill sites.

What are the affordable alternatives to landfill, and can you give examples of where this has worked?

7. A number of the points raised:
 - a. the potential for community schemes;
 - b. further recycling, increasing rates to 70% or above;
 - c. joint working with district councils and other organisations;
 - d. improved waste collection services;
 - e. using anaerobic digestion for the treatment of organic waste to produce a renewable energy source; and
 - f. a resource recovery park.
8. The following proposed residual waste technology solutions were included in responses:
 - a. Mechanical Biological Treatment: often including anaerobic digestion as the biological treatment process with the output going to landfill (in some cases spread to land). Some responses suggested the creation of a refuse derived fuel. Advanced Thermal Treatment (ATT) was also mentioned as an end process for final energy recovery.
 - b. ATT as a complete solution: this was suggested as being implemented at a smaller scale making use of the heat energy produced.
 - c. Incineration: as a short to medium term solution at facilities out of county and also within the county. A number of responses were opposed to the incineration process raising concern over, for example, health issues, and the creation of hazardous waste.
 - d. Small scale and dispersed residual waste facilities at a district level or at least, under 50,000 tonnes per annum capacity.

How would you make up for the loss of PFI credits to be able to afford the alternatives?

9. Some responses suggested that the Authority should procure shorter term contracts which they believed were cheaper and more flexible; borrow from the Public Works Loans Board; use the authority's strategic reserve for landfill cost escalation or sell assets.

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How will your alternative solution enable Gloucestershire to meet current government targets and future policy for waste disposal?

10. Generally responses referred back to the waste hierarchy, increasing recycling rates, use of anaerobic digestion to produce energy and a drive towards zero waste. It was suggested that the remaining residual waste could be managed using smaller dispersed facilities. Many responses felt that the reduction of waste to landfill via these means would ensure the authority met government targets.
11. Some responses suggested that the Authority should defer any decision on this project until after the national waste policy review which is due to be released later this year.

Summary of themes arising from the responses

12. A number of issues that were raised are already being addressed or are included within the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The seven waste authorities are already working hard to provide recycling, collection and disposal services to achieve a minimum of 60% recycling by 2020 and have a vision to use landfill as a last resort. The council and its district partners may wish to increase awareness to ensure all residents understand what services and opportunities are already provided.
13. A number of stakeholders suggested that the council aim towards a zero waste strategy. The council's overall objective is to push waste as far as possible up the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle and recover. The council has invested, and will continue to invest, in all of these areas. Whilst recycling often gets the most attention, the county council also recognises that opportunities to 'reduce' need to be further developed. We welcome such initiatives as 'light weighting' where the weight of containers is reduced and initiatives to reduce packaging. In addition, the council recognises the need to continue to promote community based schemes and other waste minimisation initiatives.
14. A number of stakeholders called for the council to increase recycling. Gloucestershire has increased recycling from 24% in 2004/5 to 49% in the year to date. The current recycling target is 60% by 2020. Gloucestershire County Councils has a further aspiration to achieve 70% recycling by 2030. Whilst some respondents quoted high recycling rates in other countries most of these were based on a different evaluation methodology than that used in the UK. The council notes that the top 5 European countries have an average of 60% recycling when compared using UK criteria, but recover 37% of their waste through thermal treatment.

15. The Waste Core Strategy estimates that landfill has a capacity of at least 10-13 years based on current throughputs. As one respondent identifies, if recycling is increased further, this will potentially increase the longevity of any landfill. However many recognised that landfill was neither environmentally or financially sustainable.
16. The importance of joint working was highlighted by many. The council acknowledges the need for all councils to work towards the highest levels of recycling possible whilst ensuring that such services provides a quality service to the customer. Such services also need to balance the financial constraints that the public sector has to work under.
17. Concerns were also expressed about the varied collection systems across the county. The county council, and some of the district councils, are working together to form a joint waste partnership, which will allow the councils to look at efficiency savings including assets and, ultimately, collection systems. This will allow the councils to look at efficiency savings including common collection systems and common assets, with the aim of improving customer experience, increasing recycling rates and reducing costs.
18. Some stakeholders called for the council to take advantage of emerging technologies. The strategic re-appraisal has included a review of the waste treatment technologies to ascertain if there were any new technologies which had not previously been considered. No new technologies were identified. This conclusion is supported by the fact that of that 95% of the waste treatment facilities planned or under construction in the UK are either Energy from Waste or Mechanical Biological Treatment. It should also be noted that in advertising this contract the council was technology neutral and did not prescribe the technology which bidders had to use.
19. A number of responses called for the use of Anaerobic Digestion (AD). This can only be used for the organic fraction of the waste, and preferably when it is collected separately. By April 2011 the council will be making incentive payments to the four district councils who collect this type of waste. To date, this waste is collected by three district councils and treated by the county council using in-vessel composting in Gloucestershire. The county council is due to renew its current contracts in 2013 and is working with the university sector to evaluate the potential of AD. Options being considered include both dispersed solutions and the use of biogas as a potential fuel.
20. There was also a call for the use of Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) but recognition that this still left a residue (of up to 75% of the original tonnage) that would be sent to landfill. Some respondents felt that this was also financially unsustainable because the amount landfilled attracted tax at the full landfill rate.
21. The disposal of Air Pollution Control (APC) residue (a product of incineration flue gas cleaning systems) in hazardous landfill and the impact this may have on human health and the environment was also a concern for stakeholders. The county council has appointed Professor Roy Harrison (one of the UK's leading experts on air quality) as an independent adviser on the impact on human health and the environment of any waste treatment facility.

Conclusion and recommendations

22. Formal consultation was not a requirement of the strategic re-appraisal; however the stakeholder engagement conducted provided an opportunity for interest groups and individuals to contribute. Responses were received from most interest groups known to the authority.
23. Based on the responses, officers have taken forward the following themes for further investigation:
 - a. Current waste strategy and vision — to raise awareness of the current waste management strategy, vision and current plans for increasing recycling.
 - b. Joint working and improvement in collection systems — to continue to work in partnership with district councils to review opportunities to increase waste reduction and recycling rates.
 - c. Anaerobic Digestion — to explore the potential for Anaerobic Digestion being used as a treatment technology for food waste.
 - d. Case studies — to review all community based schemes and incentive schemes highlighted by stakeholders to understand if these can be replicated in Gloucestershire e.g. Cwm Harry, Presteigne.
 - e. Resource Recovery Park — to explore the opportunity of developing a resource recovery park, and the potential to work with universities/other organisations to establish the feasibility of such a park.

Appendix 1: List of Stakeholders who responded to the Strategic Re-appraisal

Name	Organisation (O)/Individual (I)	O/I
Cllr Anthony Blackburn	Gloucestershire County Council Councillor	Individual
Cllr Venk Sheno	Forest of Dean District Council Councillor	Individual
Chris Harmer	Stroud District and Gloucestershire Green Parties	Organisation
Chris Bosley	Tewkesbury Borough Council (Gloucestershire Waste Partnership member)	Individual
Diane Mautterer	Voluntary Community Sector Environment Strategy Group	Organisation
Sue Oppenheimer	GlosVAIN	Organisation
Cllr Roger Whyborn	Cheltenham Borough Council Councillor	Individual
Cllr Ceri Jones	Gloucestershire County Council Councillor	Individual
Barbara Farmer	SWARD	Organisation
David Sutton	Gloucester City Council, (Gloucestershire Waste Partnership member)	Organisation
Humphrey Cook	Haresfield Parish Council	Organisation
Nick Dummett	CPRE	Organisation
Cllr Sarah Lunnon	Gloucestershire County Council Councillor	Individual
Cllr Mike Skinner	Gloucestershire County Council Councillor	Individual
Diana Shirley	GlosAIN	Organisation
Cllr Libby Bird	Stroud District Council Councillor	Individual
Clive Emberey	Javelin Park Community Forum member	Individual
Alistair Holl	Cory Environmental Ltd	Organisation
Jason Pacey	Javelin Park Community Forum via 3G Communications	Organisation
Ralph Young	Cotswold District Council, (Gloucestershire Waste Partnership member)	Organisation
Cllr Bill Crowther	Gloucestershire County Council Councillor	Individual
Mary Newton	Gloucestershire Friends of the Earth Network	Organisation