

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 20 MAY 2011**

**Statement from: Cllr C L Strange, Executive Councillor for Waste Services & Green Issues**

The official ceremony to commence construction at the Energy from Waste Facility at North Hykeham will have passed between preparation of my Statement and the Council meeting. However, I am sure it will have been a successful event, but we should not think that we can now sit back and watch everything fall into place over the next 30 months. This is a massive project, arguably the largest that Lincolnshire County Council has ever undertaken, and there are bound to be some challenges along the way. Even on completion, the facility will have to be fed 24/7 – with some up to 150,000 tonnes of residual waste having to be transported from our five new transfer sites, strategically located to minimise road miles and cost. This is not unlike a military operation and, on this occasion, there will be little room for error. We are working closely with our district colleagues – once again proving the real value of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership.

I have to say how refreshing it has been to work with such a committed group, not easy as our partners work on very tight financial lines, and are answerable at all times to their fellow district and city councillors.

With the expertise of several highly motivated officers, and the support of all four political parties at County Hall and the surrounding area, we have been able to carry this venture forward in what, I am assured, is a record timescale. But the talking is over, and there is now the need to press forward and deliver, in order to minimise the ever growing burden of landfill tax and, indeed, the elimination of harmful methane from landfill.

Procurement of the remaining transfer site at Boston is progressing well, although securing a site in Gainsborough is still presenting us with a challenge. Grantham and Sleaford sites are moving forward through the planning process and, of course, Louth is already in operation.

The opening of our latest Household Waste Recycling Centre at The Rasens was a happy day. LCC Chairman, Councillor Peter Bedford, accompanied by civic leaders from Market, Middle and West Rasen, jointly cut the tape - our biggest problem was locating four pairs of civic scissors! We were honoured with the company of the Chairman's Lady, and a goodly turn out from the surrounding parishes. This is a smaller site than most, but it is well equipped with skips and compactors. Initially operating on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only, we will see how our ratepayers react. If these days are found to be acceptable, and do not provide problems with fly tipping, then we will move forward to limited opening elsewhere - there is simply no point in opening on days that are not used by residents. Although we expect that Lincoln HWRC, and one other in the south of the county, will remain open every day, this is a decision for the future and, no doubt, will be discussed in depth by the Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

Recycling rates are holding up well, with West Lindsey now recycling around 60%, as a result of their new three bin system.

The team are still exploring possibilities for a HWR site in the south of the county, as we appreciate there is a real demand in this area. With local contracts due for renewal in one year's time, we will continue with present arrangements until that time.

## **Green issues**

The Council continues to develop and implement its Environmental Policy. In order to meet commitments in the Nottingham declaration on climate change and Carbon Management Plan, there is ongoing work across the Council to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions - saving energy and money and ensuring we are planning to adapt to a changing climate.

Through our revolving carbon fund, we have invested nearly £900,000 in buildings and schools over the last three years in technologies such as voltage and boiler optimisation, lighting, and insulation. Those investments are saving us £300,000 every year. We are close to completing the installation of over 1,000 'smart' gas and electric meters in our schools and buildings which will provide us with better information and understanding and enable us to invest more wisely in our worst performing buildings

We continue to work to raise public awareness on environmental issues. Amongst other things six 'Cutting Lincolnshire's Carbon' (CLiC) supplements have appeared in the Lincolnshire Echo, and the 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign directly reached nearly 6,000 Lincolnshire residents – helping an average family save up to £50 per month – as well as further reducing waste to landfill.

In conjunction with Economic Development colleagues, work has been ongoing to support businesses in increasing their resource efficiency (directly benefiting their bottom line) and promoting low carbon, green technologies that can create jobs and environmental benefits for Lincolnshire.

Working in partnership with Stagecoach we will soon have 11 bio-methane powered buses on our roads – potentially reducing dependence on oil whilst providing a source for anaerobic digestion outlets in the County.