

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 16 DECEMBER 2016

Statement from: Councillor R A Shore, Executive Councillor for Waste & Recycling

PRESENT SITUATION

Strategic Waste Considerations

The County housing profile and its subsequent effect upon Waste Management in Lincolnshire is a rapidly changing vista. Therefore, in order to anticipate change and to move Waste and Recycling forward in readiness, we are undergoing a Strategic Waste Options Review.

Lincolnshire County Council is the Waste Disposal Authority for Lincolnshire, providing waste services in conjunction with the seven District Council Waste Collection Authorities. On the south bank of the Humber, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Councils, as unitary authorities, combine the disposal and collection functions. The Environment Agency is the statutory regulator for all these functions.

All public services are facing considerable challenges in reducing costs and exploring new, more cost-effective ways of operating. This is likely to continue throughout the foreseeable future. A recent devolution bid with Government, covering all the authorities mentioned above points the way and offers a major opportunity to determine and implement a truly sustainable model of waste management that places service users first and is resilient to the current fiscal climate. Local unitary authorities are already enjoying considerable advantages of being able to determine the optimum methods of both collection and disposal of waste materials.

Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) waste services wishes to play a leading role in securing such benefits, aligned with the key economic objectives as set out in the Greater Lincolnshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. Whilst in the short term some relatively minor budget savings have been achieved by localised reductions in some aspects of service provision, there remains a huge opportunity to build upon this. In the longer term it is essential that LCC, hopefully in cooperation with others, is able to set out a strategic direction of travel. This should clearly identify the major strategic challenges facing us, as well as setting out the scope for improvements that can be made by LCC alone, by LCC in partnership with the seven Lincolnshire District Councils, and by all ten waste authorities in Greater Lincolnshire working together.

CHALLENGES

Lincolnshire Waste Partnership

An audit of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) and the present Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) has been undertaken by LCC's corporate audit service. I fully expect this to be the catalyst for progressing more

effective and efficient ways of delivering the collection and disposal waste services. This may also help us to grasp an opportunity to engage with North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire fully with co-ordinating waste management across Greater Lincolnshire.

Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy

We urgently need to renew the current, statutory, JMWMS and to refresh the capacity of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership to align with the key strategic drivers outlined below. This will also provide a structured environment within which the full range of service requirements can be fully evaluated and service design can be re-considered in line with commissioning priorities, such as a Lincolnshire owned Materials Reclamation facility to process our presented recyclables. A new strategy is critical to being able to identify solutions to existing pressures and prepare for future challenges and we need to consider and emphasise waste as a resource rather than simply a problem for disposal.

Renewing this agreed partnership strategy will enhance our ability to align objectives with the broader growth agenda, realising and demonstrating the contribution that waste management can make to the future direction of all Councils and all its partners.

Housing Growth

Greater Lincolnshire has an unprecedented level of future growth planned by 2036. Based on the 2014 Waste Needs Assessment, the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan forecasts an increase in local authority collected waste of 75,000 tonnes, and increase of 9.9% growth in commercial and industrial waste and an increase of Commercial & Domestic and of electrical waste by 2031 (excluding North and North East Lincolnshire).

This provides for a prediction of capacity gaps for waste across the period. These levels of growth provide the context for a review of our current approaches and for identification of preferred solutions, including any updated forecasts for waste needs relating to 2017 and onwards, and will be a key consideration in the new JMWMS.

Mixed Dry Recyclables (MDR)

Lincolnshire residents currently produce some 70,000 tonnes of dry recycling, which is being sampled by LCC and show high levels of contamination across all seven collection councils, which they were questioning. Consequently, a collection authority has had a sampling audit of its recycling and the results would be accepted by all councils as representative of the sampled contamination rates. This has confirmed our sampled high levels of contamination and there is now a clear acceptance for all councils to address this.

So our joint objective to make it 'simpler to recycle' possibly through a campaign perhaps with a tag line such as, 'Six Mix', which will identify the 6 best recyclable items - aluminium cans, tin cans, paper, glass, cardboard & white plastic milk containers. All other items including all other plastics will go in to the general waste

mix to be burned at the EfW. The objective being to promote this through County News and District Councils publications, so we can all be involved in helping ourselves to save money from processing lower recycling contamination. Other 'valuable' recyclable materials like textiles and electrical goods will be collected at Household Waste Recycling Centres. Whether this standardisation becomes accepted by a diverse county with Districts collecting differing ranges of recyclates is yet to be determined but the mood of partners is positive.

We are therefore progressing the development of a new Mixed Dry Recycling contract to have a new contract in place from April 2018, with hopefully lower contamination and we have a product, which the waste processors will be more interested in tendering for as it will be a better quality mix and therefore more valuable.

Landfill provision

It is important that provision for at least one landfill remains in Lincolnshire, in case there is a significant emergency such as disposing of waste after a tidal surge and the disposal of mattresses, which are both examples of waste that cannot be processed at the Energy from Waste facility.

Kerbside vs Co-Mingled Collections

It has been shown in many studies that Kerbside Collection and sorting is by far the best method to ensure quality of recycling contamination and this will be a key consideration of the JMWMS.

Our partners in the north of the county, are already enjoying the benefits of collecting at the kerbside and whilst this may increase collection costs, this has several advantages. Firstly, the product can be monitored in order to minimise contamination. Secondly, the items are collected separately and therefore saving on sorting costs. Thirdly, the public can be engaged at home and this will lead to much more effective recycling, which we know is something that the public in Lincolnshire are keen on achieving in order to help preserve precious resources.

Energy from Waste

As well as achieving its main purpose of processing the residual waste for the County and saving on crippling landfill costs, the EfW facility also generates electricity, which is exported to the national grid, and heat, which could be used for district heating. We have already completed an investigation in to where we can use the heat generated, which concluded that it was possible to travel the heat some considerable distances but the amount of cash resource to realise the required infrastructure for this was simply prohibitive at a time of financial constraints. However, destinations closer to home are more practical for both electricity and for heat. Therefore, we are continuing to look into opportunities with private and public businesses to take advantage of these generated by-products.

FUTURE AMBITIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Context

Consequently, from the issues detailed in this statement, we will need to work more collaboratively with all our partners, in consideration of the following critical factors:

- Continuing tight financial constraints, including the need to make further significant on-going budgetary reductions
- Changing waste streams and projected growth in waste as set out in the Waste and Minerals Local Plan
- The evolving devolution agenda, with potential for more integrated service delivery between waste authorities across the Greater Lincolnshire geography
- The County Council's move towards a more clearly defined commissioning model of service provision, through delivery of the Council Commissioning Strategies.
- Impacts of the referendum vote in favour of leaving the EU, with potential longer term changes in the legal requirements on waste authorities.
- Implementation of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and national policy focus on promoting economic growth.
- Mitigating against the impact of Housing Growth across Lincolnshire.

This means that a clear strategic approach to waste management is required, which identifies, assesses and manages these risks and opportunities which have arisen from these circumstances. Without this, Lincolnshire will be unable to prioritise and plan its approach to waste effectively. This makes it more likely that services will be shaped on an ad hoc basis, in response to immediate issues. This means that we need to be mindful of all the strategic and operational issues detailed throughout my statement and to be decisive in ensuring that we deliver an optimised and sustainable waste management for the benefit of all Lincolnshire residents.