

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 FEBRUARY 2012**

### **Statement from: Councillor C L Strange, Executive Councillor for Waste Services and Green Issues**

The construction of the Energy from Waste Facility in North Hykeham is progressing well, and has benefited from the mild winter weather. The excitement that all of us feel, seeing the massive concrete base rising out of the ground, is tremendous, and to be involved with the construction of our County Council's biggest single investment project is an exhilarating experience – albeit amid the difficulties faced with diminished budgets. The main waste storage bunker is nearing completion; the majority of the supporting piles have been installed; the ground floor slab is well underway; and the structural steelwork of the building is being erected close behind. The internal waste processing equipment will start arriving on site in late February. The project remains on target and on budget, with full service still expected in December 2013.

I was talking to the lead member for Waste Services from another authority who wish to build a plant twice the size of ours, and the difficulties her authority is experiencing first with planning, and then with the terms they are being asked to agree to for PFI funding. Time and again, we should bless the foresight that our planning team had to table the patch of land for a possible waste site all those years ago - without that we would have been very much in the same position.

Good progress is also being made on the associated Waste Transfer Stations (WTS) in Grantham, Sleaford, Boston and Gainsborough. Grantham WTS is under construction; Sleaford is expected to commence with works shortly; and sites have been secured for Gainsborough and Boston. Planning applications for both Gainsborough and Boston have been submitted, and determination is imminent (decisions expected mid-Feb). All sites are on target to meet their April 2013 deadline, and will be ready to start transporting waste to the Energy from Waste facility when commissioning tests start.

As with many services of the Council, we in waste have had to take our fair share of Government cuts. However, we are working hard to ensure that our stated intention for 95% of our residents to have access to a site within a 12 mile radius of where they live is maintained. We have recently re-tendered our site operations and will have final costs confirmed within the next few weeks. This will allow us to establish more clearly what level of provision we can maintain whilst staying with our reduced budget. This approach has been supported by the Environmental Scrutiny Committee, with whom we have been working closely on this matter. The funding issue will be clearer within the next month, and our full proposals will be presented to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 2 March. An item will also be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (23 February), to be discussed by the representatives from all our district and city councils.

Household waste recycling figures remain encouraging, with the county recycling 52% of its waste. From December 2013, it is envisaged that the remaining waste, currently going to landfill, will be providing power through the new Energy from Waste facility at Station Road, Hykeham - first outlet being the National Grid. This will give Lincolnshire County Council a net gain of several million pounds in annual savings.

If Boston joined the other districts in recycling their green waste stream, our total recycling figures should improve by a couple of percentage points – this still excludes South Holland.

Wearing my 'other hat', I would like to offer a word of praise to West Lindsey, who now find themselves near the top of the league table, recycling a massive 56%. Congratulations to the team and their residents!

### **The Home Energy Lincolnshire Partnership – the HELP scheme**

By Christmas 2011, nearly 11,000 households in Lincolnshire had been supported by HELP in reducing their energy bills, and saving carbon. Nearly 13,000 cavity or loft insulations have been completed. We have targeted those most in need, and about two thirds of installations have been in homes which are occupied by those living on benefits, or occupied by the over 60's. This is particularly heartening as we were seeking to target households we believed to be in fuel poverty. Our estimates suggest that this will save Lincolnshire households an annual £1,850,625 on their fuel bills, and 10,220 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

We have also been busy improving our own energy efficiency and carbon management. Through our £900,000 revolving fund, we have invested in many short payback energy efficiency schemes, such as voltage and boiler optimisation, street lighting and office lighting - this has achieved annual energy bill savings of £300,000 for the council. There is still much to do.

We are also half way through a programme of implementing automatic metering for our buildings and schools, enabling us to pinpoint best value investment and communicate energy use more effectively. 800 plus meters are in place.

We have completed a pilot scheme supporting two clusters of schools (in Caistor and Lincoln) to look at reducing their energy and CO<sub>2</sub>. The scheme is being run in conjunction with the Carbon Trust, and has included pupil/staff training days in the schools, advice and support on a range of quick wins, and compilation of pupil led action plans. Having absorbed the lessons, we will work on how best to deliver further support to our schools on this important topic.

Finally, we have worked in partnership with Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation and Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation to put together a Framework for purchase of renewable energy saving schemes. As a result, we are in the middle of a programme which will see solar PV installed on about 20 district council buildings and, subject to planning permission, the Collection in Lincoln.