



HERTFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

MEMBERS' GROUP MONDAY 13TH OCTOBER 2008

Item 5iii: June Workshop Follow Up

Author: Duncan Jones (HWP – 01992 556150)

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), work programme following issues raised at the Governance workshop held in June.

Background

On the 16th June 2008 the HWP held a workshop to examine implications of Government proposals for the formation Joint Waste Authorities. This led to wider discussions on the Partnership and looked at areas identified by the stakeholders for further work.

Key areas of concern :-

- **HWP needs to improve programme / project management to link disposal and collection activity, spread best-practice and help under-performers to achieve better performance.**
- The Waste Partnership Development Manager is now in post and will shortly start providing programme management drawing together linkages between waste collection, recycling and disposal activities. The Development Manager will also provide an additional staff resource to support development work in each of the constituent authorities.
- Initial priorities will include roll-out of capital infrastructure projects approved under the Waste Infrastructure Capital Grant (WICG) programme for 2008/09.
- So far capital projects totalling £266k have been approved. Meetings are being scheduled on a 1 to 1 basis with Heads of Waste to examine bids for the remainder of 2008/09 as well as 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- These discussions will prioritise investment needs whilst at the same time supporting lower performers. Importantly this work will identify opportunities for joint working.

- **The HWP must demonstrate value for money through economies of scales and joint procurement, capitalising upon our combined market strengths.**
 - As part and parcel of work identifying opportunities for joint working officers will be assessing and, where feasible, procuring services and goods on a collective basis.
 - The Partnership is currently putting together performance indicators based on national requirements and local needs. Within this framework specific Value for Money indicators are being developed which will identify savings achieved through joint working.

- **Changes need to be implemented that improve information and awareness between Members and officers inside the HWP Authorities as well as to the general public.**
 - The Partnership's Waste Aware co-ordinator is currently provided through a mix of County, Borough and Hertfordshire Environmental Forum funding. The post is filled via secondment. The post holder has received a 'risk of redundancy' notice from his home Authority. The role will be reviewed with a view to it evolving to service internal information needs as well as communication with the general public. In addition this process will need to examine and confirm funding arrangements for the post in order that it can continue to provide vital support for the Partnership.
 - The HWP extranet has just been launched which will act as a central repository for documents (including copies of agendas from previous meetings) linked to the functioning of the Partnership providing an online reference resource.

- **The HWP decision making model needs to reflect trust and confidence in one another as well as the increasing pace and significance of these decisions which will test the Partnerships commitment to working together.**
 - The existing Partnership model has helped to support progress within Hertfordshire to achieve relatively good performance when it comes to recycling. Commitment to the targets detailed in the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy have also been underpinned through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
 - The MOU itself is shortly to be reinforced through the agreement of 'The Annex' which will further galvanise the constituent authorities efforts to work together in support of the wider operational and policy framework including the submission of the Outline Business Case in pursuit of new long term arrangements for residual waste.

- However, the scale of future challenges will raise questions over the Partnership's ability to respond to this agenda in increasingly short timescales. Whilst the current Partnership model retains local flexibility it could also be seen as a risk by external stakeholders such as DEFRA as well as potential service providers who increasingly look to regional contracts to deliver sustainable waste management services based on formal decision making models which will be perceived as reducing inherent levels of risk in any long term waste contract.
- **Whilst there is no consensus on a rapid move to form a Joint Waste Authority the partner Authorities recognise that governance arrangements for the HWP must be 'fit for purpose' in light of the issues identified above and the challenges (and short timescales) that lay ahead.**
- Whilst no consensus yet exists on moving to a Joint Waste Authority, the Partners nonetheless recognise the need for the Partnership to evolve in order that it can respond effectively to the sustainable waste management agenda. This will require consideration of new decision making models.
- However, even with unqualified unanimous support from all Partners the establishment of new Partnership arrangements which look to formalise joint decision making will be a timely process which does not compare well with the timescales for the procurement of residual waste technologies. For this reason it is recommended that the Partner Authorities start working through these issues as soon as possible.
- To initiate this work officers recommend putting together an assessment of different Partnership models which look to establish formal joint decision making whilst, where possible, retaining local accountability. However, to be clear this process initially does not have to aim at a single body responsible for all decisions with the Partnership area.
- Instead the process can start with some quick wins and to an extent already has with joint decisions being taken on issues like the Waste Infrastructure Capital Grant and the Alternative Financial Model; two mechanisms which have helped to stimulate better recycling performance across the County. Moving on from this the Partnership needs to tackle issues like a County wide policy on the provision of trade waste and recycling services as well as identify realistic opportunities for joint working (in addition to joint procurement) between 2 or more Partner Authorities.
- Through such an approach the 'mechanics' of more formalised joint decision making can start to be worked through albeit on a smaller scale. This in turn will inform the joint decision / procurement process when longer term strategic issues arise.

Recommendations

1. **The Members' Group is invited to comment on the actions detailed above and highlight any areas they feel need further work.**