



## **HERTFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP**

### **MEMBERS' GROUP 26th October 2009**

#### **Item 10: Trade Waste Recycling in Hertfordshire**

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#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. To provide further information on the current services and advice provided by the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership to businesses regarding waste management and recycling opportunities.
- 1.2. To identify any gaps in the information available to businesses in managing their waste, including an overview of publicity provided by the HWP and other organisations regarding local authority and private sector waste services.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1. A report on the feasibility of providing trade recycling and disposal services for small and medium-sized businesses at Hertfordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) was presented to the Directors' Group meeting in June, where, following discussion it was re-affirmed that provision of trade waste services should not entail any cost to taxpayers.
- 2.2. The report was also presented to the Members' Group meeting in July at which it was agreed that providing such a service is not currently a viable proposition without considerable capital investment to upgrade the HWRC network.
- 2.3. However, concerns were raised that, following legislation banning plasterboard and gypsum-based material from landfill, instances of fly-tipping of this material had increased in some areas, and that as much as possible should be done to provide information on recycling and disposal facilities for small businesses, most notably for plasterboard and asbestos.
- 2.4. A new work stream to look at the issue of fly tipping (reported elsewhere on the agenda) will assess the extent of the problem as well as what changes could be made to the way the issue is managed across the two-tier structure to provide a better overall response.

2.5. A recycling service is provided at ten HWRCs for plasterboard and other gypsum material from householders. A collection service is also provided for householders with small quantities of asbestos arising within the home. No Council in Hertfordshire provides a recycling or disposal service for these materials from businesses.

### **3. Current provision of advice for businesses**

3.1 Operated under the auspices of the HWP, the County Council provides a WasteAware telephone helpline to manage waste and recycling enquiries from residents, businesses and schools. Businesses with a particular material to recycle or dispose of can receive advice on how best to manage it through this helpline.

3.1 Advisors operating the helpline have access to a directory of businesses including listings for local and regional waste management companies that can recycle, for instance, office-type wastes, such as paper and cardboard, as well as other materials.

3.2 In addition to compliment the helpline and also hosted by the County Council, the HWP operates the WasteAware website, through which businesses can access a range of external online databases listing possible local disposal and recycling outlets including :-

- NetRegs: Provided by the Environment Agency, businesses can search using their postcode for their nearest companies able to either collect or receive a particular material. All companies listed hold a Waste Management Licence, ensuring businesses can deal with their waste responsibly.
- 'Recycle at Work': Provided by the Waste & Resources Action Programme, (WRAP), businesses can find their nearest companies recycling a range of office-based waste materials.

3.3 More particular to this report, information is also available through :-

- WRAP's Plasterboard Recycler Directory: Lists all UK companies able to collect or receive plasterboard for recycling, some of which collect all over the country. It also details which receptacles can be provided; bags, bins or skips.
- Asbestos Removal Contractors Association: Contains a dedicated page about companies in Hertfordshire able to collect and dispose of asbestos material safely and legally.

Both directories are also accessible through the WasteAware website, along with advice issued by the Health & Safety Executive on dealing with fly-tipped asbestos, and on asbestos disposal.

#### **4. Commercial waste recycling services provided by Councils in Hertfordshire**

- 4.1 Currently, five of Hertfordshire's Waste Collection Authorities provide a commercial glass recycling service; three for cardboard; two for paper and one for food waste arising from town markets.
- 4.2 Legislation which came into force in April 2009 effectively banning plasterboard from landfill has led to Hertfordshire County Council installing facilities into some HWRCs for the separate collection of this material. Due to space restrictions, this could only be implemented at ten of the nineteen HWRCs, for a material equating to just 0.5% of the total waste received.
- 4.3 A recent report published by Defra states that plasterboard recycling may become problematic for Waste Disposal Authorities across the country, as the composition of the material is changing, and further separation at the point of collection may be necessary. The report also states that moves have been made to increase recycling capacity through manufacturer take back schemes.
- 4.4 As reported at the Members' Group meeting in July, an effective commercial waste recycling service through the HWRCs would need to provide at least three additional containers on site, which only the Waterdale HWRC could accommodate. Significant capital investment and extra space would need to be sought to put in place extra containers and a weighbridge.
- 4.5 There are several private sector companies in Hertfordshire who are able to either collect or provide a recycling service for a wide variety of commercial waste.
- 4.6 A study undertaken on behalf of Thurrock Council in 2007 regarding businesses and recycling showed the following:
  - Most businesses are interested in recycling paper (77% of respondents), cardboard (70%) and plastic bottles (29%).
  - 71% of businesses would prefer recycling collections from their premises.
- 4.7 Another study carried out on behalf of Plymouth Council showed that plasterboard (and other non-combustible waste) makes up no more than 0.3% of trade waste from retail, 0.6% from catering outlets and 0.6% of office-based companies. In 2008/09, just over 30,000 tonnes of trade waste was collected by Hertfordshire's Councils. This totals less than 200 tonnes of plasterboard. To put this into perspective, more than 200 tonnes has been collected at the HWRCs since the change in legislation came into force in April this year.
- 4.8 In light of this, the vast majority of small and medium businesses will not produce plasterboard for disposal; being limited to large businesses and the construction industry. However, the minority with plasterboard to dispose of may prefer to have the waste collected from their premises, and there are several companies able to provide such a service in Hertfordshire.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1. There is insufficient space and resources available to accommodate a recycling and disposal service for businesses at the HWRCs. Whilst some District and Borough Council trade recycling collections are in place, they are not necessarily uniform, and businesses in certain areas of the county do not receive any recycling service through their local authority at all. Similarly, prices charged for collection schemes can vary.
- 5.2. Advice is already available to Hertfordshire businesses in managing their waste responsibly through the WasteAware helpline and website. Extensive work has been undertaken by WRAP and the Environment Agency to ensure up-to-date information is available to the private sector should it need advice on the disposal or recycling of certain waste materials.
- 5.3. That said given the volume of information now available online as detailed above it is recognised that the HWP needs to continue to develop its online resources to make accessing such information as easy and as straight forward as possible.
- 5.4. To this end over the coming months HWP officers in conjunction with colleagues will look at how the WasteAware website interface can be improved to make it more user friendly for businesses looking to access information on the disposal and recycling of commercial and industrial wastes.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1. That the Members' Group notes the range of information and services already available with respect to commercial and industrial waste disposal and recycling for Hertfordshire's businesses.
- 6.2. That the Members' Group endorse the approach detailed in paragraph 5.4 with respect to redevelopment of the WasteAware website user interface to make it easier for businesses to access information on commercial and industrial waste disposal and recycling.