

Plymouth Waste Strategy Review: Cooperative Scrutiny Board Briefing Note

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Background

Plymouth's Municipal Waste Management Strategy (MWMS) was adopted in April 2007 and covers the period 2007 to 2030. Due to the long term timescale and the many factors that affect waste arisings, the strategy states that it will be the subject of review every 5 years. The aim of this review is to set out how and where Plymouth manages wastes and identify the City's future strategic waste management requirements which will inform the needs assessment of the Waste Development Plan, which provides planning guidance, policy and criteria for waste development across the City. As part of this review, these two strategic documents (i.e. the MWMS and the Waste Development Plan) will be integrated under a single document known as the Plymouth Plan, a draft plan document of which is scheduled for autumn 2014. The intention is that the Cooperative Scrutiny Group will inform, direct and support the review process.

AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited ('AMEC') has been appointed by Plymouth City Council to undertake the review of the Waste Strategy, update the supporting waste needs assessment, and identify any appropriate locations of waste management facilities. As such, AMEC with support from officers will provide guidance and technical advice and support to the Cooperative Scrutiny Group.

1.2 Purpose of Cooperative Scrutiny Review

A key aim of the review is to seek a fresh view and consider any innovative approaches to broaden sustainability benefits through waste management solutions, and achieve better resource management and generate added value in terms of local job creation, community involvement in waste minimisation and recycling activities, and reduce carbon impact.

The purpose of the Cooperative Scrutiny Review is two-fold:

- Facilitate the Waste Strategy review and stakeholder consultation process, which should be member rather than officer driven; and
- Undertake its normal scrutiny remit in respect of the Waste Strategy review.

2. Review of Current Waste Strategy

2.1 Achievements to Date

The current MWMS sets out a number of policies, progress against which is outlined in Table 2.1. The strategy runs until 2030 therefore progress against the majority of the policies remains ongoing, however it is important to note the delivery against two key policies, namely:

- The Council has achieved a recycling rate of 33% in 2012/13, achieving the targets set out in Policy 4 to increase recycling and composting; and
- The Council as part of the South West Devon Waste Partnership (SWDWP) has successfully procured a long term residual waste treatment facility with heat and electricity recovery using PFI grant support (Policy 9). The MVV North Yard Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at Devonport is currently under construction and due to become operational in 2015.



Table 2.1 Appraisal of Current MWMS Against Targets

| MWMS Current Policy | MWMS Planned Actions | Progress | Further Actions |
|---|--|--|---|
| Policy 1 – Promotion of Waste Minimisation through Education and Awareness. | Plymouth City Council will provide consistent, continuous educational and promotional material to assist the drive to reduce waste arisings and increase public awareness of the need to minimise waste. | Ongoing - Waste arisings have decreased by 15.5% from the initial waste strategy development but potential for further improvement. | Continue to promote waste reduction activities with an aim to minimise overall waste arisings. |
| Policy 2 – Promotion of Home Composting | Plymouth City Council will continue to promote home composting bins and providing educational support for their use. | Ongoing – The Council is continuing to provide support to residents through the website offering discounted home compost bins and advice on how to home compost. A total of 2,600 compost bins have been distributed since the strategy was adopted. | Continue to provide access to discounted home compost bins for residents and promote their use. Explore potential to develop co-operative community composting schemes |
| Policy 3 – Support for Community Sector Initiatives | The City Council will endeavour to give support to local groups promoting waste minimisation initiatives in Plymouth. | Ongoing – Support 3 rd sector & SMEs through re-use credits, free disposal and recycling for charities, CICs, SMEs undertaking reuse and recycling activities. One of the Council’s two HWRCs is now being run by a trust organisation. | Continue to provide support where a value for money (VFM) case can be demonstrated. |
| Policy 4 – Increase Recycling and Composting | Plymouth City Council will increase the percentage of household waste recycled or composted year on year. The Council has set the following recycling and composting targets for household waste: 30% by 2010 33% by 2015. | Attained – Council achieved a recycling rate of 33% in 2012/13. | Introduce a kerbside glass recycling collection service and strive to achieve the political commitment to recycle 40% by 2016 and 50% by 2020. |
| Policy 5 – Kerbside Collections | Plymouth City Council will work within the Best Value principles to ensure that all residents receive a high quality waste service at affordable cost. We will continually review the range of materials collected in the kerbside schemes and, where it is economically feasible to do so, will maximise the collection of recyclable material at the kerbside. | Ongoing – The kerbside garden waste collection service has been expanded to the whole city, kerbside glass collection trials have been introduced, and procurement for a new MRF to include glass recycling to enable it to be rolled out to the whole City is underway. | Complete the roll out of kerbside glass recycling. Consider the potential for a food waste collection service and/or other materials. |



| MWMS Current Policy | MWMS Planned Actions | Progress | Further Actions |
|---|---|--|--|
| Policy 6 – Bring Sites (recycling banks) | Plymouth City Council intend to enhance and promote the network of bring facilities throughout the City, ensuring the most efficient and effective distribution. | Mixed – Refurbishment and review of bank allocation was completed in 2008, however tonnages collected through the bring bank network have decreased. | Review the requirement, in light of the provision of kerbside glass recycling for households and commercial premises, for the provision of the 116 bring banks with regards to the numbers, locations and materials collected. |
| Policy 7 – Household Waste Recycling Centres (formerly Civic Amenity Recycling Centres) | Plymouth City Council will continually review their Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) provision to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to satisfy the service needs. A review of site layout and the provision of adequate recycling facilities will be undertaken in an attempt to maximise the capture of recyclable material at the two existing sites. | Ongoing – Chelson Meadow HWRC was fully rebuilt in 2010 and HWRC recycling & composting rate has risen from 41% to 62% in 2012/13. Further operational changes have been made recently to improve cost effectiveness of service. | Review the provision of HWRCs, the range of material collected, and the service delivery at the sites to continue the increase in the levels of recycling and diversion at the HWRCs. |
| Policy 8 – Waste Disposal to Landfill | Plymouth City Council will endeavour to reduce the proportion of municipal waste disposed of to landfill year on year. | Ongoing – Levels of material landfilled has reduced by approximately 25K tpa to 2012/13. | The Council aims for zero waste to landfill with the EfW facility guaranteeing 97% diversion from landfill from 2015. It will continue to investigate waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and composting schemes in order to divert all material from landfill. |
| Policy 9 – Residual Waste Treatment Facility | Plymouth City Council will procure a waste treatment facility for the processing of municipal waste not recovered through recycling and composting systems. Recovery of energy from the waste should be maximised where possible. | Attained – SWDWP procured an EfW with heat and electricity recovery with PFI grant support. Facility is currently under construction and due to become operational in 2015. | Ensure that the opportunity provided by this facility is maximised by the Authority. |
| Policy 10 – Commercial Waste Services | The Council will continue to deliver an effective commercial waste collection service, and will look into the introduction of a recycling service. The Council will hold periodic reviews to ensure that the service is efficient and cost effective. | Ongoing – The Council operates a commercial waste collection service and has implemented the option for the collection of recyclables from commercial premises. | Continue to operate the service with the view to increasing the take up of the commercial residual waste and recycling services. |



| MWMS Current Policy | MWMS Planned Actions | Progress | Further Actions |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Policy 11 - Partnership | The Council will continue to investigate the possibility of joint working with other authorities within the sub region. | Ongoing – The Authority has very successfully worked with Devon and Torbay to procure the EfW facility. Liaises with Devon authorities and undertakes joint waste minimisation, recycling and promotional activities. | Continue to investigate the potential for joint working in other aspects of waste management as the options arise. |
| Policy 12 – Strategy Review | The Council will undertake periodic reviews of the waste strategy every 5 years, in addition to reviews following any Strategy Trigger Points. Progress against the Strategy Action Plan will be monitored annually. | Current periodic review in progress. | Retain review provision. |

2.2 Waste Strategy Review Elements

In the context of the Waste Strategy review, it is important to understand that a number of elements of Plymouth’s waste management delivery are now fixed or provide some constraint given that these were set out in the MWMS 2007 and have been delivered. This is particularly the case with regards to the treatment of residual wastes and to a lesser extent the collection of mixed dry recyclates which are to be sorted via a new MRF that is about to be procured. Any changes to these elements would impact either on recently procured positions or current procurements placing considerable risk upon the Council and potentially exposing it to considerable costs.

As such, the review of the Waste Strategy will need to be focussed on the remaining elements of the waste management system typically covering smaller, harder to access tonnages; the exceptions being the collection of organic wastes and food waste collection. The table below identifies those elements of household and commercial wastes within the MWMS 2007 which are fixed or constrained as well as those elements which can be reviewed with some initial suggestions as to how these could be taken forward in a different / innovative way. In addition, due consideration will need to be given to any new Council aspirations, such as a zero waste to landfill target and supporting local indicators.

Table 2.2 Waste Strategy Review Elements

| Waste Strategy Element | Review Status | Implications of Change / Options for Review |
|--|---|--|
| Residual Waste | Fixed MMV North Yard facility procured and under construction. Operational 2015. | N/A. Composition of residual waste is flexible but significant cost implications if minimum tonnages are not delivered. |
| Mixed Dry Recyclates (including glass) | Fixed A MRF capable of sorting mixed recycling including glass collected at the kerbside is currently being procured. | N/A. Potentially significant cost implications if materials collected change. |
| Green waste (gardens/parks) | Constrained but subject to review | Review current collection systems and composting treatment options. Seek opportunities to develop community composting schemes. |
| Food waste collections | Constrained but subject to review | Options for food waste include collect either co-mingled with green waste to IVC or collect separately to AD but need to recognise logistical and economic implications. Any changes to the management of food waste could potentially impinge on agreed minimum contracted tonnages which would have cost implications. |

Table 2.3 (continued) Waste Strategy Review Elements

| Waste Strategy Element | Review Status | Implications of Change / Options for Review |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| HWRCs collected materials | Subject to review | Review the range of materials collected at HWRCs and policies for charging, acceptance of commercial wastes from SMEs, etc. |
| Peripheral household waste streams (e.g. batteries, electrical, WEEE furniture, bulky waste recycling etc) | Subject to review | Review of the range of peripheral household waste streams collected; Identify innovative solutions through seeking to work in partnership with the 3 rd sector and local communities. |

In light of the above, this review of the Waste Strategy provides an opportunity to consider the Council’s requirements with regards to service developments. With the removal of formal targets from central government (BVPI and NI targets) it allows the Council to determine the basis on which it implements any service developments, i.e. should the assessment be on the basis of a tonnage increase in recycling/diversion from landfill or should it include additional beneficial considerations such as social benefit, employment/training opportunities, carbon reduction, etc, and to discuss the potential service developments that could be considered for the remaining elements of the waste stream, i.e. those elements which are not subject to current procurement agreements. This will facilitate identifying potential service development options and policies the Council may wish to develop based on their wider strategic requirements, and set out a framework for assessing the viability of their implementation.

3. Waste Strategy Review Consultation

It is best practise to undertake appropriate stakeholder consultation as part of the review of the Waste Strategy; therefore it is proposed to hold a Stakeholder Workshop. This workshop would not only form part of the evidence base for the review of the Waste Strategy, but also for the Cooperative Scrutiny Board.

Facilitated and delivered by AMEC, the purpose of the workshop would be twofold: first, to ensure the objectives and criteria of the Waste Strategy are ‘fit for purpose’ and whether they require any amendments and if so what; and secondly, to prioritise an identified suite of waste service development options with the aim of refining those options, including some justification for that refinement. The outcome would then inform an evaluation of the refined options and subsequently inform the Waste Strategy review. A report on the outcome of the Stakeholder Workshop would be prepared by AMEC and published to form part of the evidence base for the Waste Strategy review.

As well as reviewing and drawing from an existing PCC consultation database, it would be helpful to know which stakeholders in particular PCC want to attend and to canvas them accordingly. Suggested invitees include:

- Members;

- Citizens' Panel;
- List of consultees who have previously provided multiple responses to previous (waste) consultations;
- Major waste creators / providers, e.g. waster operators, University, Primary Care Trust, Services (doctors, fire, police), local pressure groups, Friends of the Earth, etc; and
- Statutory consultees, e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, etc.

It is worth noting that even when seeking to canvas / target stakeholders rather than opting to an open door / walk-in approach, these stakeholders are members of the public. Ideally the stakeholder workshop needs to be focussed and by opting for an invite only approach there is the ability to ensure the 'right' people attend.

The advantages of such an approach is that, as well as ensuring meaningful and focussed discussions with stakeholders, the outcomes of the stakeholder workshop will demonstrably add value to the Waste Strategy review process.

It is expected such an event would be held at an appropriate venue in Plymouth during the week commencing 24th March 2014.

4. Questions which Scrutiny may wish to consider?

- Is the proposed consultation approach the right one?
- Which (additional) stakeholders should be canvassed and invited to the proposed Stakeholder Workshop in the w/c 24th March 2014?

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