

WASTE PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Allan Holliday
LEAD OFFICER: Keith Parker
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Summary: This report is to inform members of progress made on the Copeland Interim Waste Strategy and of the current position in respect of Waste Management in Cumbria.

Recommendation: That

1. Members note the progress made to date on Copeland's approved Interim Waste Strategy.
2. Agree to the pooling of Cumbria's Waste Performance and Efficiency Grants for appropriate distribution by the Cumbria Waste Partnership.

Impact on delivering Copeland 2020 objectives: To minimise waste, maximise recycling and care for the environment are key objectives in the Corporate Plan

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): Delivering a more sustainable waste management system in Copeland impacts directly on nine best value performance indicators.

Financial and human resource implications: Failure of the District and County Council's in Cumbria to stem the waste growth and achieve the required levels of recycling and composting will result in fines of £150 per tonne being levied against Cumbria County Council, which will have a direct impact on the Council tax payers in Cumbria. In excess of £2million in grants is available over the next 2 years to support waste minimisation and recycling schemes thereby avoiding the £150 per tonne fines.

Project & Risk Management: Should the Council and its community not respond to current changes in waste management practices and embrace waste minimisation and recycling there is a risk Best Value Performance Indicators will not achieve the required levels.

Key Decision Status

- **Financial:** None
- **Ward:** None

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report is intended as an update on Copeland's waste management activities and associated performance but also as a progress report on the work of the Cumbria Waste Partnership and on Cumbria County Council's procurement process to secure a 25 year contract for managing the county's waste.

2.0 COPELAND'S STRATEGY

2.1 It is more than 12 months since members approved an interim Waste Strategy for Copeland pending the development of a new Cumbria Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. A Cumbria-wide strategy has not yet been completed and although joint working between the districts and the County has improved significantly in the last year, strategy development has been delayed to accommodate the county's procurement of a strategic partner for the next 25 years. A progress report on this activity follows later in this report. The following outlines objectives as set out in the Copeland specific interim strategy and the progress made to date.

2.2 *To develop and expand the dry kerbside collection service carried out by Doorstep Collections Ltd and provide 3 new recycling sites.* Substantial progress has been made on this objective. The kerbside service was extended to an additional 5000 properties in the Summer of 2005, so that the service which now collects food and drinks cans in addition to paper and glass is provided for 25,208 homes in Copeland. This figure representing 78% of homes in Copeland still falls short of the original target of 28,500 homes. With regards to recycling sites the waste team have been successful in locating new recycling sites at Sevenacres Caravan Park Gosforth, Sandwith and Whitehaven Swimming Pool in 2005/6, bringing the total to 55.

2.3 *As resources allow to extend green waste collections to further suitable properties (at least 1500 in 2005/6).* Members will be aware that the twin bin service is to be extended to an additional 3000 properties in 2006/7, largely due to funding from Cumbria County Council's Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant. An implementation plan is currently being developed by the project team with a target date of 1 May for commencement of collections. Unfortunately the promised consultancy support to assist with route scheduling from Defra's Waste Resources Action Programme has proven too difficult to secure within realistic timescales. This has delayed the scheduling work hence the 1 May start date. The additional properties will result in an additional 650 to 700 tonnes of green waste being collected for composting and increase Copeland's overall recycling rate by around 2%.

2.4 *To equalise service provision between wheeled bin and black sack collections by limiting the number of sacks collected weekly to 3 from September 2005 and 2 from April 2006.* This objective was delayed initially due to the lack of resources within the waste team. However members may recall that in the report to Executive in November 2005 seeking approval to accept the County Council's funding to extend wheeled bin collections, this objective was to be achieved concurrently with the bin roll-out. The intention was to manage a single step change so that publicity and awareness raising could be carried out simultaneously. Since the waste team will now be carrying out significant rescheduling work required to extend the twin bin scheme without external consultancy support, this objective will have to be further delayed. The project team implementing the twin bin extension are considering whether a staged introduction of sack restrictions by discrete area is more practicable.

2.5 *Edge of curtilage refuse collections to be implemented for all remaining properties by 31 December 2005.* This objective is largely being subsumed with the twin bin extension as the majority of households most likely to be included in this phase are also those whose refuse continues to be collected from its point of storage. This will allow a single step change to be effected.

2.6 *To investigate options to ensure cost-effective plastic recycling is implemented at the earliest opportunity.* Members will already be aware that a budget bid has been approved for 2006/7

that will enable plastic bottle recycling containers to be introduced initially to the main population centres in the Borough in April 2006. Preparatory work is already underway to allow the necessary infrastructure to be in place as quickly as possible after 1 April.

2.7 *The remaining strategy objectives relate to Meeting Customer Expectation and Public Awareness.* The waste team have been heavily involved in the Customer First Project aiming to improve customer satisfaction with the Council's waste services. A number of activities have been completed however this is an ongoing and continuous objective.

2.8 Despite some objectives still being incomplete, Copeland's recycling performance has improved dramatically in the last 2 years. Members may recall being almost bottom of the English League Table for Local Authority recycling in 2002/3 when Copeland was 386th out of 408 authorities. In the latest publication of the same English League Table, Copeland has improved its position significantly to 113th with an overall recycling (recycling and composting) rate higher than the national average.

3.0 CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL PROCUREMENT OF A STRATEGIC PARTNER

3.1 Cumbria County Council's procurement process to secure a 25-year contract for the management of Cumbria's waste is still progressing. Members will be aware that at the end of September the County received two tender submissions after three companies were invited to submit a bid, the third company decided not to do so. The two bids were then submitted to a lengthy evaluation exercise, being scored for a number of elements including financial and technical. Illustrating the improved trust between the county and districts and the importance placed on the Cumbria Waste Partnership, the districts were fully involved in the evaluation process. The resultant scores for the two companies from the evaluation although vastly different in their approach to the management of waste, were broadly comparable and there was no clear best option. Subsequently given the close nature of the scoring the County Council have decided to continue with a Best and Final Offer stage, negotiating with both bidders in order to obtain the most competitive and viable response.

3.2 Regardless of the choice of bidder, any new facility will have to go through the planning process before being built and commissioned and is therefore unlikely to be operational before 2011/12. It is therefore clear that the responsibility for achieving levels of recycling and composting required by the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) for the foreseeable future lies with the district councils working in partnership with the county council and not with the future contractor. The two companies bidding for the county's contract have stated they expect 50% of household waste to be recycled or composted before the remaining residual waste is sent for disposal.

3.3 The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) came into force on 1 April 2005 and is now largely driving the waste agenda for Cumbria. The LATS scheme imposes limits on the amount of biodegradable municipal waste that can be disposed of at landfill within each Waste Disposal Area. For each tonne of waste in excess of the target that is disposed of to landfill, the Government imposes a fine of £150. If less waste is sent to landfill than the target weight, the difference can be banked or traded with another authority. The limit for Cumbria for this year is 171,647 tonnes, which requires a significant reduction from the 237,000 tonnes sent for landfill disposal in 2004/5. Due to the efforts of the districts in minimising waste and increasing recycling and composting over recent years, projections for Cumbria show that the target for this year will be achieved. However in future years as the annual allowance is reduced year on year the county is likely to have fines averaging between £2 and £3 million each year a figure that will inevitably impact on levels of Council Tax.

4.0 WASTE PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY GRANT (WPEG)

4.1 For 2006/7, Cumbria as a whole has been awarded a total of £962,325 from DEFRA under the Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant, with a further £1,008,183 to follow in 2007/8. The following table shows how the award has been distributed across the Cumbrian authorities.

WPEG	2006/7 Award	2007/8 Award
Allerdale	77,734.22	81,426.12
Barrow	57,682.55	60,419.37
Carlisle	86,469.93	90,593.97
Copeland	58,375.99	61,154.52
Eden	42,708.70	44,733.05
South Lakes	84,860.72	88,877.77
District Total	407,832.11	427,204.80
Cumbria	554,493.77	580,979.05
Total	962,325.88	1,008,183.85

The Grant is intended to provide extra support for Local Authority waste minimisation, recycling and composting activities. Defra being keen to support and encourage joint working between authorities had indicated their preference to aggregate the grants due to each authority and make a single grant payment to the relevant Partnership. It was anticipated that a single payment would have been made to the Cumbria Waste Partnership for the total sum for 2006/7, however this is not the case for 2006/7 and each authority will be paid its individual grant.

4.2 Although the Cumbria Waste Partnership had already agreed in principle to pool the WPEG, at the January 2006 meeting, some members expressed reservations about such an arrangement and did not agree to fully pool the grant awarded for 2006/7. The Partnership has however agreed a compromise for this year only that Members are asked to approve. For 2006/7 Cumbria County Council's WPEG of £554,494 will be pooled and will be used to support appropriate district activities while the individual district grants will be ring-fenced only to be spent within that district. For 2007/8 and any further years of WPEG funding, Members are asked to agree to a wholly pooled Cumbria WPEG to be distributed appropriately by the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership Board. Despite initial concerns being expressed at the meeting, agreement to pool has already been approved by all of the other District Council's.

4.3 It is anticipated that Copeland's grant for 2006/7 of £58,376 will largely be spent on upgrading bring banks that are in a poor state of repair and for improving recycling sites in general.

5.0 CUMBRIA JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE STRATEGY

5.1 The development of a new Cumbria Joint Municipal Waste Strategy has proven to be an extremely slow process. This is partly due to awaiting the outcome of the county council's procurement process but also in dealing with the impact of LATS. Significant officer time has been dedicated both to understanding the impact of LATS and also on a practical level ensuring schemes and activities are in place that will enable Cumbria to stay within its landfill allowances.

5.2 Now the County's procurement process is at the "Best and Final Offer" stage and having general agreement to pool WPEG, there is an opportunity to develop the new waste management strategy. In addition, the Waste Partnership Officers Group have proposed achievable and realistic targets for increasing recycling and composting and reducing total

waste arisings. It is therefore anticipated that a fully costed Cumbria Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy will be produced by the end of March 2006.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members are asked to note the progress made in the last year on Copeland's Interim Waste Strategy and to approve the "pooling" arrangements for the Cumbria Waste Partnership as detailed in paragraph 4.2.

List of Appendices

List of Background Documents:

List of Consultees:

Corporate Team, Steven Tickner