

4. Recommended Option for Future Waste Management

4.1 Background

The complex nature of waste collections, handling, reuse, recycling, treatment and disposal means that Cumbria could meet statutory and local targets through a number of different routes. Seven possible options have been considered, each of which comprised of a set of variables which described: the method of waste collection; the level of commercial waste collection; the waste growth profile target; the way in which recyclables are marketed and how residual waste is handled.

The preferred option for the future management of Cumbria's waste has been developed through a process of debate within the partnership and a strategic environmental assessment (SEA), conducted by ERM Consulting. The full details of the assessment can be found in the environmental report associated with this strategy, available on the Resource Cumbria website – www.resourcecumbria.org.

In order to determine the recommended option for the Waste Management Strategy each option was assessed against a list of criteria agreed by the partnership at a workshop held on the 11th December 2006. The recommended option is the option which is demonstrated to have the most positive overall effect on the environment.

4.2 The Recommended Option

The recommended option demonstrates our commitment to pursue a strategy which sets challenging targets for reducing the amount of waste generated in the county and our willingness to make significant changes to waste collection and recycling to achieve targets, and cost and environmental benefits. The strategy will be implemented in conjunction with a private sector partner who will be vital in providing alternatives to landfill.

- a. **Adopt a Cumbria-wide common (method of) kerbside collection of dry recyclables and garden waste as far as reasonably practicable.**

A common method of kerbside collection was recommended by SLR Consultants following their study of kerbside collection in Cumbria in 2004. This would enable vehicles to cross authority boundaries. This cross-authority cooperation will help to provide a more cost-effective collection service.

- b. **Optimise the number of Recycle Points and Household Waste Recycling Centres, linking provision to the expansion of kerbside services and waste prevention initiatives.**

Simply increasing the number of Recycle Points and Household Waste Recycling Centres may not be the most effective way of increasing recycling and the cost-effectiveness of this service. Improvements need to be linked with proposed expansion of kerbside collection of recyclables and waste prevention initiatives.

- c. **Enhanced commercial waste recycling – targeting biodegradable materials.**

Developing recycling and composting of the 20,500 tonnes of commercial waste currently being handled will enable us to meet the Local Area Agreement (LAA) target of 40% recycling and composting of municipal waste by 2009/10. But it will come at a cost. This element will therefore be informed by research and development to be carried out under the LAA Pump Priming Grant.

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d. Reducing municipal waste produced by 1% per year through waste prevention.

Recent reductions in the rate of waste produced, and increasing confidence in the potential for waste prevention schemes to be effective, provide the basis for projecting a 1% per year reduction in municipal waste produced that has been incorporated in the Local Area Agreement.

e. Maximise the benefits of recycling and composting to the local and regional economy.

Research carried out by NorthWest Remade has demonstrated the potential to 'add value' to recycling and composting in Cumbria by handling and processing these materials within the local economy.

f. Increase treatment capacity to minimise landfill of municipal waste and accommodate third party wastes.

The treatment method and capacity of plant will be determined by negotiation with the contractors who have reached the 'preferred bidder stage' of the county council's procurement of a private sector partner. Bidders were asked to provide prices for the minimum capacity of plant required to meet legal obligations (i.e. LATS compliance). However, there must be recognition of the potential need for treatment capacity for third-party waste producers as the cost of landfill increases.

g. Further reduce reliance on landfill by increasing treatment capacity.

4.3 A Private Sector Partner

To help address these challenges the county council, working closely with the district councils is currently undertaking a waste management procurement project. The preferred partner will assist us in providing waste management facilities to ensure that waste is diverted from landfill and LATS penalties are avoided. They will also assist us in preventing waste, reducing total waste production, meeting recycling targets and increasing material reuse, recycling and composting.

