

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 JUNE 2008

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

7. UPDATE ON THE PROCUREMENT OF A SUITABLE COMPOSTING PLANT AND/OR TRANSFER FACILITY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

'D' RECOMMENDATION - that the progress of the County Council with the provision of a new facility be noted.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To advise the Committee of progress with this project as requested at the last meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives

Pride in East Herts

Improve standards of the neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.

Caring about what's built and where

Care for and improve our natural and built environment.

3.0 Background

3.1 In January 2008 the Council agreed to maximise its recycling and composting services by adopting an Alternate Weekly Collection scheme once the infrastructure was in place to allow this. This included a requirement to collect food waste and cardboard in the brown bin, which cannot be implemented until new 'in-vessel' composting plants, meeting Animal By-Products Regulations (ABPR), are in place. These are being delivered by Hertfordshire County Council as part of County wide procurement exercise. A processing plant for the western districts has been operational for some time, however, attempts to procure a plant for the eastern districts, initially at Mill Green, Hatfield and then at Ryemeads,

Hoddesdon met with planning objections and other problems and were not able to be progressed. The County Council was obliged to re-tender the contract and embarked on a further procurement process last autumn with the aim of providing a new plant by winter 2008/09.

4.0 Report

- 4.1 The County Council has now received eleven tenders for the provision of 'in-vessel' facilities. Five of the tenderers proposed to construct new sites in Hertfordshire, two proposed to construct new sites in Bedfordshire and one proposes to construct a new site in Essex. The remainder proposed the use of existing out of County facilities, all of which are, unfortunately, a significant distance from Hertfordshire but could operate with transfer arrangements within Hertfordshire.
- 4.2 Planning decisions on waste infrastructure are taken by the County Council and each of the proposed sites has been considered by the County Development Unit. All the sites proposed for composting facilities within the County are in green belt and all would either require an applicant to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances which would justify the granting of permission or that those very special circumstances would need to be 'compelling'. There are four potential sites within the eastern area that could be used by the four districts that do not currently have access to 'in-vessel' composting facilities. Further discussion have been taking place with the County Development Unit, with the Highway Authority to discuss access and with the Environment Agency to discuss water protection and licensing.
- 4.3 Only one other viable facility has been proposed which could serve the north eastern part of the County, just over the boarder in Essex.
- 4.4 The County Council has received planning permission to construct a transfer station for organic waste on a site in Cranborne Road, Potters Bar, should it be required.
- 4.5 Broxbourne, East Herts, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield. have been asked to provide details of their costs in using a composting facility sited at the most likely options in support of the procurement decision.
- 4.6 The County Council has advised that it aims to award contract(s) by the end of May and has indicated that, subject to planning

considerations it is possible to provide a new facility by winter 2008/09.

4.7 At the time of writing the selection process had yet to be completed and to provide details of specific sites and tenderers may be prejudicial to contract negotiation. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting provided a contract awards has been made by then.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 No additional consultation has been undertaken by East Herts Council with respect to the issues covered in this report. The selected site(s) will be subject to consultation as part of the formal Planning process.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 There are none.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The distance travelled to the chosen composting facilities has a direct effect on the efficiency of collection rounds and therefore potentially on costs. It is not possible to provide facilities that suit every authority and therefore some compromises will be required. Officers from the affected authorities are providing cost information to the County Council to ensure that these are considered as part of the procurement process. A further report will be brought to Members should there be any additional costs for East Herts Council.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 There are none.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 Should an in-vessel composting facility fail to be delivered and operational by winter 2008/09, this will impact upon the ability of this Council to deliver it's recycling strategy in the agreed timescales. Further updates will be provided at Executive Meetings over the coming months.

Background Papers

Report of the Refuse and Recycling Task Group 4 December 2007.

Contact Member: Councillor Terence Milner – Executive Member for Environment and Conservation.

Contact Officer: Cliff Cardoza – Head of Environmental Services – Extn: 1698.

Report Author: Cliff Cardoza – Head of Environmental Services – Extn: 1698.