

**JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY -
OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
WDA/23/10**

Recommendation

That:

1. Members agree Option Two as the preferred option for the delivery of the Public Consultation on the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy with a budget of £75,000 during 2010/11; and
2. Members delegate authority to the Director to agree the content of the public questionnaires/surveys for the Strategy Review, in consultation with the Authority's Lead Member for Strategy and Resources.

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Report of the Director

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise Members on the options available for the delivery of a Public Consultation exercise to inform the review of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside (JMWMS). Option Two is recommended to Members for approval. Members are requested to delegate authority to the Director to agree the content of the Consultation Survey.

2. Background

- 2.1 MWDA and the Merseyside Waste Collection Authorities are required by law (Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003) to produce a joint strategy for the management of municipal waste. The JMWMS for Merseyside was published in 2005 and included a commitment to a full review after five years.
- 2.2 The JMWMS 2008 was updated in 2007/8 and approved by Members on 1st February 2008 (Report WDA/04/08). The Strategy was published on 17th November following ratification by all Districts. The 2005 Strategy was subject to a full public consultation. As the aims and objectives of the original Strategy were maintained in the 2008 Update, it was not considered necessary to conduct a further public consultation nor undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 2.3 A full review of the JMWMS for Merseyside commenced in 2009 following agreement by Members of the findings of a scoping report (WDA/71/08) and a programme of projects was agreed for the review (WDA/08/09) including engagement and public consultation. The review focuses on the issues and options associated with the top three levels of the waste hierarchy i.e. waste prevention, reuse, recycling and composting, whilst recognising the impact of those activities on the amount of residual waste ultimately requiring treatment or disposal. The review is also considering key strategic factors such as climate change, carbon reduction and governance.

- 2.4 Elected Members and senior officers with responsibility for waste management across the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership (MHWP) who attended workshops in March 2010 have engaged in the development of options, mechanisms for delivery and considered other strategic areas for the revised Strategy. Members agreed the shortlist of outcome based options and mechanisms for delivery and areas for further exploration (now referred to as the “Options Short List”) at the Authority meeting in April 2010 (WDA/08/10). (See Appendix 1).
- 2.5 The options for Public Consultation being proposed in this report are only for Merseyside and do not include Halton Borough Council. Although it is a member of the MHWP, Halton is producing its own aligned Municipal Waste Management Strategy and has yet to identify and agree its own list of options to take forward. Should Halton agree with the Options Short List before MWDA issues an invitation to tender for Public Consultation on Merseyside, then it may be possible to include a costed option for Halton.

3. Options for Public Consultation

- 3.1 The rapidly changing policy context for waste and the need for increased efficiencies and performance are putting increased demands on the delivery of sustainable waste management. In meeting those demands, effective engagement with residents and stakeholders can generate significant benefits for MHWP including:
- developing the JMWMS to better reflect the views and aspiration and meet the needs of the wider community;
 - improve the quality of policy and decision making by drawing on local knowledge and minimising conflict;
 - raising awareness of waste management and wider related issues; and
 - promoting social cohesion by making real connections with communities and offering them a tangible stake in policy and decision making that affects their everyday lives.
- 3.2 In developing proposals for the Public Consultation, the Options Short List will inform the scope for the tender and the consultation methodology. However, given the current economic climate, Members have considered it important to review the requirements and costs for public consultation which maximise engagement and participation by the residents and other stakeholders on Merseyside whilst demonstrating Value for Money.

- 3.3 To enable Members to consider the options available to them, consultancies with experience in consultation, marketing and waste management were requested to submit advisory reports consisting of two options for public consultation against each of three financial bands:
- Up to £50,000
 - £50,000 to £75,000
 - 75,000 to £95,000
- 3.4 A copy of the technical brief and the names of the consultants invited to contribute are listed at Appendix 2 and 3. Nine of the thirteen consultancies responded positively and eight information submissions were received including one joint report.
- 3.5 In identifying the consultation options to recommend to Members, officers have taken into account key principles for community engagement in line with Cabinet Office guidelines, and current recognised best practice for public consultation. This recommends consultation programmes to:
- **Notify** and identify the stakeholders and local communities that are to be consulted;
 - **Inform** those being consulted about the proposals, what they are being consulted on, the parameters of the consultation and any constraints (financial, technical, political, geographical);
 - **Consult** the relevant stakeholders and the general public to obtain their views using a mix of techniques;
 - **Measure**, then analyse and document their responses;
 - **Report** back to the stakeholders and the local community about the views that were expressed and outline the response to these views;
 - **Respond** to the consultation by amending proposals or explaining if changes cannot be made;
 - **Publish** a detailed consultation report and outline the proposals with an explanation of how the consultation has influenced it; and.
 - **Consider** a twelve week consultation period as best practice.

In addition, this process recognises fully the requirements in each of the individual Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) that District Councils publish.

- 3.6 Officers were also mindful of the views from the Members workshop that methods of consultation, engaging with “hard to reach” communities and appropriate phrasing of questions were important in terms of the outcome of the consultation. Feedback was also given that questions should attempt to gauge tolerance levels to proposed changes to systems and methods of delivery and to be mindful of raising public expectations.
- 3.7 Table 1 below identifies the options for Members to consider. The costs are indicative only for a range of tools for quantitative data (e.g. questionnaires) and qualitative requirements (e.g. representative workshops). More detailed financial breakdowns will be provided at tendering stage. Further delivery flexibility and efficiency savings may be made where the appointed consultant works with the Partnership to utilise existing consultation methods and resources on Merseyside e.g. use of available data, websites, venues, exhibition stands and materials, senior waste officers and other staff resources which would be agreed with officers on the Strategy Review Steering Group.

Table 1: Options for Public Consultation

Options	Methodology for 12 week consultation period	Comment
<p>Option One.</p> <p>Up to £50,000</p>	<p>Newspaper adverts/Press Releases</p> <p>Posters, leaflets, and/or emails to promote consultation and opportunities to be involved.</p> <p>Use of existing websites/online questionnaire/survey. Static exhibition (in each Local Authority area)</p> <p>Citizens Panels or Focus Groups or Workshops (One in each LA area as appropriate. Small groups mixture of stakeholders)</p>	<p>This option aims to use existing structures (websites, community group meetings, members’ briefings, newsletters) and resources for the provision of information.</p> <p>Greater focus on questionnaires and receiving quantitative data from communities and residents who usually engage in consultations.</p> <p>Option includes an appropriate single event in each LA area to allow for</p>

	Postal survey to homes (Freepost) (approx 10000)	limited exploration of key issues with representative sample of local population but limited opportunities for engagement work with hard to reach groups.
Option 2. £50,000 to £75,000	As option 1 plus: Additional newspaper adverts and introduce radio adverts Greater number of postal and online surveys, newsletters, posters and leaflets Greater number of events held in each LA area through workshops and focus groups, booster hard to reach interviews, road shows/information stalls, face to face surveys (door to door or on-street approx 1000), on the spot interviews at HWRCs. Freephone New media techniques	As above with a mixture of traditional and new consultation techniques to get a wider range of views and data from those who traditionally engage in consultation but further reach into the community for views that might not usually be heard. More focus groups and stakeholder workshops held to allow detailed exploration of key issues, Introduced Freephone and Freepost enhance the accessibility of the process and new media techniques and platforms e.g. social networking sites and mobile phone texts. Road shows/information stalls to target specific areas, face to face contact, provision of information and opportunity for feedback.
Option Three £75,000 to £95,000	As Options 1 and 2 plus: Greater advertising – press and local radio and other media	This option aims to maximise the reach into the community and generate excellent quantitative and qualitative data. It offers greater use of

	<p>More postal and online surveys, newsletters, posters and leaflets</p> <p>Greater number of events held in each LA area through stakeholder workshops, targeted discussion sessions (4 in each LA area) and public drop in sessions.</p> <p>Face to face opinion survey with residents and stakeholders (sample 2000 people)</p>	<p>local media and a formal representative face to face opinion survey to supplement and test the representativeness of the data from the online questionnaire and focus groups.</p> <p>Targeted discussion sessions with visits to hard to reach groups or specific communities.</p> <p>The public drop in sessions would include access to exhibition material, access to questionnaires and surveys with face to face facilitated support. These are largely self selecting in terms of who attends.</p>
<p>Common elements to all options</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client liaison and project management • Background research and Stakeholder mapping • Non-technical stakeholder consultation document/newsletter • Media relations to raise awareness of consultation and promote opportunities for engagement. • Senior Officer involvement at public workshops (unlikely at focus groups) • Managing expectations • Incentives to attend representative workshops/focus groups • Data analysis • Publication of a consultation findings report and newsletter 		

4. Risk Implications

4.1

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Con- sequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
Failure to address negative responses from media and stakeholders	3	5	15	Ensure that the media are made a key part of the campaign and alongside communications with residents and other stakeholders ensure they are provided with clear facts about the positive benefits for Merseyside.
Failure to consult residents and stake-holders appropriately resulting in a strategy which fails to deliver waste services that meet the needs of residents and the Waste Partnership	2	5	10	Effective public consultation programme, appropriate Member engagement, scrutiny panels, joint communications
Failure to commit the necessary financial resources to the review.	2	4	8	Gain Directors/Members/LA support and commitments through budget, service plan, tenders and Project Initiation processes.
Failure to consider the impact of other waste management consultations during the Strategy review e.g. Waste	1	4	.4	Ensure regular communications with other teams working on these projects and set timetable for Strategy Review to avoid conflicts and

Local Development Document; planning applications and procurement.				confusion for residents, partners and other stakeholders.
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5. HR Implications

5.1 There are no HR implications associated with this report.

6. Environmental Implications

6.1 A related Sustainability Appraisal and statutory Strategic Environmental Assessment are to be conducted to assess the environmental impacts of the options being considered for the Strategy. This work will feed into the public consultation including a specific SEA workshop with stakeholders and statutory consultees.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 This report specifically considers the financial costs of the options for public consultation. The Authority budget provision for the Strategy review in 2010/11 is £175,000. The two key work programmes for this financial year are:

- Detailed Options analysis (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal and the review of the 5 District Council Action Plans); and
- Public Consultation.

7.2 The indicative costs for the detailed Options Appraisal (£75,000) together with the use of Option Two for the Public Consultation will require a budget of £150,000 for delivery. This offers an identified saving to the Authority of £25,000 from the Strategy budget this financial year.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Authority Members are recommended to approve Option Two in the table above with a budget of up to £75,000 to conduct a public consultation with residents and stakeholders on Merseyside on the JMWMS.

- 8.2 Option Two combines the use of existing resources and traditional consultation methods alongside new techniques. The Partnership will obtain valuable quantitative data through questionnaires and surveys whilst taking the opportunity to receive qualitative information through stakeholder engagement and focus groups with representative samples of the population. These meetings will allow for the detailed examination of some complex waste management issues and options with local people (e.g. how waste management can contribute to the Low Carbon and Resource Management agendas, the future for recycling and governance issues).
- 8.3 Equally, Option Two enables the Partnership to engage efficiently and effectively with a wider audience and gain a valuable level of input from hard to reach communities. This will help to ensure an informed response from residents and other stakeholders to further develop the revised Strategy.
- 8.4 Finally, Option Two allows for a quality consultation to be conducted on Merseyside whilst offering value for money with an identified saving of £25,000 this financial year.

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The background documents to this report are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of The Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.