

# FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005

## BRIEFING

## Joint Municipal Waste Strategy

### NOTE:

Forward Plan ref: ES-04/05-296

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background to the requirement for a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy and the information to be used by this authority and by the West London Waste Authority (WLWA) in assessing the actions necessary to ensure that West London is able to meet the demands of the European Union Landfill Directive using the best practicable environmental options without incurring excessive cost.

### 2.0 Detail

- 2.1 The need for a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy (JMWS) arises because of:
- (i) The Mayor of London's municipal waste strategy policy number 44 "The Mayor seeks that all two-tier waste authorities in London have a joint municipal waste management strategy, in line with the Government Guidance. This must demonstrate how they will work together to deliver the Mayor's Municipal Waste Management Strategy". The Mayor initially was looking for these joint strategies to be prepared by September 2004.
  - (ii) The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, which includes a requirement for joint municipal waste strategies to be produced by waste authorities in some two-tier areas. These joint municipal waste strategies are to be in place by 18 months after the passing of the Act (i.e. by April 2005); though the Secretary of State may make Regulations to permit a longer period (which now seems likely).
  - (iii) The central purpose of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act - i.e. to progressively and substantially reduce the tonnage of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) disposed of to landfill over the next sixteen years as required by the EU Landfill Directive. This is to be implemented through the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) under which waste disposal authorities will be subject to heavy financial penalties if they landfill BMW in excess of their annually diminishing allocation of allowances. To respond to the impending pressures from LATS and from the Government's decision to steeply increase Landfill Tax in the next few years, the WLWA and the constituent boroughs need to make progress with joint decision making on longer term waste management arrangements for the area through a JMWS.
- 2.2 The West London Waste Authority (WLWA) is a statutory authority in its own right responsible for the disposal of waste generated by the West London boroughs of Brent, Hounslow, Ealing, Hillingdon, Harrow and Richmond Upon Thames. Each of the constituent boroughs nominates a Member to serve on the WLWA Board and Councillor Lesley Jones represents this authority.

- 2.3 It was agreed by the WLWA Board that consultants be engaged to advise the authority and the constituent boroughs on a framework for the development of the strategy. A first summary report was presented to the Board at its June meeting and a workshop was held on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004 for borough Environment portfolio holders and Officers and WLWA Board Members and Officers. The purpose of the workshop was to establish what the key issues are and to bring those issues into the realm of political discussion early in the process. To that end, this report represents a first step in the process within L. B. Brent.
- 2.4 If the strategy produced is to be deliverable, it must involve a significant amount of Public consultation. The means by which the work involved in producing the strategy and undertaking that consultation are to be funded is through the WLWA and hence via the levy on constituent boroughs. The WLWA have undertaken the procurement of advisers and facilitators but the process will require significant and sustained input from senior officers of each constituent borough. Part of the funding to be made available via the WLWA will be needed to allow the preparation of statistical information and to back-up the loss of officers' availability.
- 2.5 It is intended that the Strategy will be produced over the next 6 months with a first draft for consultation ready in June 2005. Regular reports will therefore need to be made to the Executive over the coming months.
- 2.6 Of particular value to the strategy preparation is a document produced for WLWA by the consultants Environmental Resources Management (ERM) titled '**West London Waste Authority & Constituent Boroughs: Municipal Waste Management Strategy Baseline Report**'. This document provides an introduction to all of the municipal waste management options and the outline requirements of a strategy to be designed specifically for the WLWA area.
- 2.7 A copy of the above document is available for inspection.
- 2.8 The process of drawing up a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy will coincide with the development of a Municipal Waste Strategy for Brent.
- 2.9 It is proposed to have a Draft Brent Municipal Waste Strategy available for consultation by July 2005 and this will be the subject of future reports to the Executive. Within this process, it will be necessary to agree a procurement approach for the renewal of the waste contracts by 2007.

### **3.0 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no direct or immediate financial implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 However, any failure by the WLWA to provide adequate disposal facilities to deal with any waste that is not recycled or disposed of by other means and for which landfill permits have not been allocated, will result in a need to either purchase permits or to pay penalty charges.
- 3.3 How this position affects the WLWA's Boroughs will depend upon the success of constituent authorities in meeting their individual recycling targets and the rate of production of waste but could come into effect within 2 to 4 years. The probable cost cannot be quantified but permits are expected to be available at between £90 and £160 per tonne. The penalty charge will be £150 per tonne. At the lowest rate, that is twice the current cost, at worst the WLWA could face increased costs of up to £6 million over the next five years.

- 3.4 The proposed Joint Municipal Waste Strategy will help the Borough meet the statutory requirements under the EU Landfill Directive and the Government's Waste Strategy.
- 3.5 The WLWA will undertake the procurement of advisers and facilitators but the process will require significant and sustained input from senior officers of each constituent borough.

#### **4.0 Environmental Implications**

- 4.1 These proposals will directly address the Council's Environmental Policy.
- 4.2 Adopting a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for the collection and disposal of the Borough's domestic waste will not only secure a sustainable disposal route for this waste, but also help the Council deliver its wider environmental objectives.
- 4.3 Sustainable management of waste reduces the Borough's Climate Change contribution, and helps close the materials loop. Landfill waste releases CO<sub>2</sub> and methane, both powerful "greenhouse gases". Adopting sustainable waste treatment processes other than landfill, such as composting and anaerobic digestion, reduces gas emissions and saves raw materials thus avoiding all accompanying environmental impacts.
- 4.4 The adoption of a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy will, perhaps most importantly, help reduce the amount of household waste being sent to landfill.

#### **5.0 Background Papers**

- 5.1 Details of documents:

***'West London Waste Authority & Constituent Boroughs: Municipal Waste Management Strategy Baseline Report'*** ERM Consulting January 2005

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