

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 7TH FEBRUARY 2001

NATIONAL WASTE STRATEGY: PROGRESS REPORT

Joint Report by the Director of Community Services and the Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise and update the Committee of a number of meetings concerning the progression of the National Waste Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This matter has been previously considered at meetings of the Community Services Committee on 7th June 2000, the Committee noted a Progress Report advising that Officers from the Council's Planning and Waste Management Services would be participating with colleagues in the other two Ayrshire Councils and Dumfries and Galloway Council with Officials of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency with a view to preparing a local Waste Strategy Plan by the end of the year.
- 2.2 The most recent meeting of the Officers Group was held in Prestwick on 12th January 2001.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Progress towards completion of the Waste Strategy Area Plan has been slower than originally anticipated. This is primarily due to the UK Government is yet to consider a decision on whether to use the option of a derogation which is available when the Directive is translated into legislation. If the derogation is to be used then the deadline dates for reducing the amounts of waste going to landfill can be delayed by up to four years. A decision is also awaited on a definition for "municipal" waste as this will have serious implications for the four local authorities.

If municipal waste is to include commercial waste collected by Councils (but not commercial waste collected by private contractors) then the private sector will enjoy a cost advantage which could see Councils losing their commercial waste business.

- 3.2 So far the Group has been able to agree on baseline data for the four authorities which would be used as a basis for declaring a 1995 figure for waste arisings. If accepted, this figure would then be used as a basis for implementation of the Landfill Directive.

3.3 Now that the baseline modelling data has been agreed by the four Councils, the Area Waste Strategy Group intends to develop a number of options which will allow compliance with the Directive (biodegradable waste to landfill to be reduced to 75% of the 1995 figure by either 2006 or 2010; 50% by either 2009 or 2013; and to 35% of the 1995 figure by either 2016 or 2020).

3.4 SEPA staff had hoped to produce a draft plan for the Area Waste Strategy Group by the end of March/April but it is now thought that this timetable is over-ambitious. Council Officers have stressed the need to keep Elected Members fully apprised of the work of the Sub-Group and SEPA have arranged a meeting in Perth on 22nd February 2001 to which all Scottish Authorities have been invited.

Council Officers have also stressed that options for diverting waste from landfills will inevitably attract widespread attention in the community and the media.

3.5 Conclusions contained within the Area Waste Plan will require to be incorporated into the Ayrshire Structure Plan to East Ayrshire Local Plan as appropriate.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 It is anticipated that the cost of providing Waste Treatment Plants to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill will mean significant increases in both revenue and capital expenditure for unitary authorities. Members are reminded that the Council will be the subject of fiscal penalties if the Council does not comply with the terms of the Directive. Adequate funding must therefore be provided to implement the Strategy through increased recycling etc.

5. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Nil.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Council continues to be represented by Officers of the Planning, Environmental Health and Waste Management Services at meetings of the Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway Waste Strategy Area Group.

6.2 The Group has now agreed on baseline data for a 1995 figure of Waste Arisings which can be considered by the Scottish Executive as applicable for the purposes of the EC Directive on Landfill.

6.3 The Waste Strategy Area Group will now consider a number of options which would accommodate the provisions of the Directive when implemented but work is hampered to some extent by the lack of a timetable for implementing the Directive and a clear definition of the types of waste to which the Directive will apply.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The Committee is invited to note the report.

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WS/JFC/RRS

12th January 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

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AGENDA