

INTEGRATED WASTE STRATEGY FOR LEEDS 2005-35

Summary of Consultation Responses – July 2006

Overview of Consultation Programme

The following report provides a summary of the key responses from the consultation on the draft Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-35 carried out by Leeds City Council between December 2005 and June 2006. It is estimated that the people of Leeds and other key stakeholders were provided with over 800,000 opportunities to participate in this exercise, and the programme of consultation implemented was one of the most extensive ever conducted by the Authority. Some of the key activities undertaken are listed below:

- Distributed information and a questionnaire on key issues to all households
- Circulated a community leaflet, with key messages and a short questionnaire, to libraries, one stop centres, community groups, tenant/resident associations, etc.
- Provided exhibition stands at various venues across the city and participated in environmental debates within local communities
- Consulted with residents via a door knocking campaign in selected areas
- Re-developed existing website information, and hosted an on-line survey throughout the consultation period
- Held a high profile media launch in Leeds City Centre, and secured extensive local television, press and radio coverage of key issues
- Conducted a Citizens' Panel survey using a demographically representative sample of residents
- Delivered presentations and Q&A sessions at community forums throughout Leeds
- Consulted with representatives of a wide range of minority groups
- Consulted with children and young people using presentations and special questionnaires (including a poster design competition)
- Held a series of seminars for Elected Members to ensure involvement and engagement in the key issues and decisions facing the Authority
- Commissioned a Scrutiny Board Inquiry by Elected Members into the development of the Waste Strategy, including site visits to Energy from Waste, Mechanical Biological Treatment and landfill facilities
- Consulted statutory consultees, Yorks & Humber Government Office, Yorks & Humber Regional Assembly, regional local authorities and waste contractors
- Consulted environmental pressure groups

The responses to the consultation were extensive, and it is not possible to represent all of the individual issues in this report. However, these issues have all been considered and addressed, where appropriate, in the final version of the Waste Strategy.

General - Vision, Key Principles and Key Themes

Responses to the consultation demonstrated significant support for the proposals and targets set out within the Waste Strategy, and its commitment to driving waste management up the waste hierarchy.

As a part of the consultation, residents were asked to comment on what they felt was the most important issue in dealing with waste. Responses were as follows:

- Reducing the amount of waste that we make - 33%
- Recycling as much as we can - 48%
- Reducing landfill - 14%
- Dealing with waste in the most cost effective way - 5%

These results demonstrate a strong commitment to recycling from the people of Leeds. The fact that a greater proportion of respondents saw recycling as more important than reducing waste confirms that there needs to be a strong emphasis in the Strategy on educating the public regarding the importance of waste reduction and engaging them in activities to achieve this.

Feedback indicated the need for a wider range of specific targets to be introduced into the Strategy, and for greater clarity on how the partnerships with external organisations referred to within the Strategy will work in practice.

A greater emphasis on how the proximity principle has been used in the development of the Strategy was also called for, particularly in relation to assessing the impacts of the transportation of waste.

Education and Awareness

The importance of public education in achieving the aims set out in the Waste Strategy was widely acknowledged, and the focus on this within the Strategy was strongly supported.

It was suggested that a shift in the use of language, such as moving from talking about 'dealing with waste' to 'maximising resources', would support the achievement of the attitudinal change required.

The importance of promoting waste reduction and recycling in schools was highlighted, and the Council was urged to increase its involvement with and influence over this stakeholder group. Clearer plans for linking into the expertise of national waste education organisations were recommended

Waste Prevention

Some stakeholder groups challenged the waste reduction targets set out within the Strategy, suggesting that they should be more stretching, in spite of historical growth and the projected high housing and population growth in Leeds.

Feedback also called for an expansion of the list of re-use items currently identified, and of the availability of re-use schemes. More work on achieving a reduction in the use of disposable nappies was also requested.

Market Development and Procurement

Stakeholders commenting on this section of the Strategy welcomed the development of policies to influence the development of industries for reprocessing recyclable products and the markets for recycled products. However, more detail on specific proposals and targets was requested.

Recycling and Composting

There was strong support from the public and other stakeholders for proposals to achieve significant increases in recycling levels. The results of the resident survey showed the following levels of support for specific proposals to increase recycling:

- 85% agreed that they would recycle more if a wider range of materials was collected from their property
- 81% thought that the Council should provide regular garden waste collections
- 63% agreed that they would recycle more if their green bin was collected more often
- 55% felt that, if their green bin was emptied more regularly, they would be happy for their black bin to be emptied less often

Residents also showed significant interest in receiving a kerbside collection of glass via the green bins. Feedback from environmental pressure groups called for higher recycling and composting targets to be set.

Medium and Long Term Recovery Options

The resident survey showed significant support for the preferred residual waste treatment option included in the draft Strategy, with 84% of respondents stating that an Energy from Waste facility was the right choice for dealing with non-recycled waste. 4% of respondents were not in favour of this option.

Environmental pressure groups expressed opposition to this form of waste treatment, favouring Mechanical Biological Treatment, and challenged the process for selecting the preferred technical option. Although they cited emissions and health impacts as causes for concern, this was not a significant issue for other stakeholders. A concern expressed by the public was that Energy from Waste should not act as a disincentive to recycling.

Enforcement

Proposals to develop enforcement policies and activities to support waste reduction and recycling education were welcomed. Support was shown for the introduction of variable charging for waste, although this is not included as a specific proposal within the Strategy.

Planning

The importance of developing planning policies and plans that support the delivery of the Waste Strategy was strongly emphasised. It was also recommended that the role of Development Control in contributing to waste prevention and recycling targets receive a greater emphasis.

Commercial and Industrial Waste

Positive comments were received in response to the inclusion of a dedicated key theme in the Strategy on commercial and industrial waste, although it was noted that the policies within this section may need to be strengthened further following Defra's national waste strategy review. It was recommended that aspirational targets be introduced, along with a clearer strategy for lobbying Government regarding commercial and industrial waste.

Other Issues

A number of stakeholders suggested that more detail should be included within the Waste Strategy to show how the Council intended to link into the work of the community and voluntary sectors.