

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT

COUNCIL

WASTE

MINIMISATION

STRATEGY

November 2004

WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY

Sustainable waste management relies on a successful waste reduction policy. Landfill Directive targets are tough demands to be met and the only way to meet them is to reduce the waste produced by the residents of South Kesteven.

Waste reduction is at the top of the waste hierarchy, and is at the core of any waste management strategy. However, it is recognised that there is a limit to the influence that we, as a Local Authority, can do. We have a duty to collect household waste placed out for collection, therefore waste minimisation depends on Central Government, industry, householders and Local Authorities to make it achievable. Central Government has increased legislation to try and allow Local Authorities to be more involved in the waste collection, including the Waste Minimisation Act 1998 which allows the Authority to specify the receptacle for collections and the Waste Strategy 2000 which highlights the need for waste minimisation.

Over the last fifty years there has been dramatic changes in lifestyle – more variety of products, the development of new materials and an increase in disposable incomes – which has led to a growth in waste produced. It is only more recently that it has been realised that this rate of growth must end, and that it cannot be sustained, not only for disposal issues – where will this waste go? – but for conservation of resources. There has to be a move towards waste reduction, meaning people are going to have to buy less initially and re-use more. This is a shift in the culture that we have created and raised our children in for the last half a century, therefore it is going to be a challenge to reverse. It requires education, from an early age, not only of householders but also Central Government, industry and Local Authorities.

For an immediate effect, a huge effort has got to be made by the householder. Their purchasing power can influence industry and Central Government to take long-term action, and their behaviour will form the trends of the future.

Waste minimisation is not easy, especially with the ‘throw-away’ culture that now exists, promoted by the large number of disposal products now on the market.

Of course, householders cannot be solely responsible for the long-term sustainability of waste management; Government has to play a key role in reversing the trend and ending this growth of waste. Central Government has to lead the way, and steps such as the implementation of the Waste Minimisation Act 1998, are working towards this aim.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990

This Act states that:

'...the authority may, by notice served on him, require the occupier to place the waste for collection in receptacles of a kind and number specified.' (Section 46, Subsection 1)

This enables us, as the Collection Authority, to state the receptacle for collection, i.e. black bags, and also limit the number that will be collected.

WASTE MINIMISATION ACT 1998

This allows Local Authorities to promote waste reduction schemes and campaigns, whilst supporting other legislation enabling Local Council's to determine the form of collection of waste and the receptacle in which it is collected. The Act's main priority is to give the powers to Local Authorities, both Waste Collection and Waste Disposal Authorities, to take steps to minimise the generation of waste (household, commercial and industrial).

WASTE STRATEGY 2000

This sets out Central Government's vision for managing waste and resources. It sets out the changes that are needed to deliver more sustainable development. It also highlights the waste hierarchy and its importance.

It strives to break the link between economic growth and increased waste.

It acknowledges the need for businesses, households, the community sector and local authorities to be involved for a successful waste management facility and structure.

Though household waste is only a small proportion of the waste stream, this Strategy sets recycling and composting targets for England and then individual statutory targets for local authorities.

PACKAGING DIRECTIVES

Waste reduction relies on the waste being minimised from the source. Many products are packaging excessively, but new Directives are aimed at targeting manufacturers in their behaviour. This reduces the waste passed onto the consumer, but also increases the energy and raw materials saved.

EU states are required to achieve certain packaging waste recovery targets. The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 have been implemented, and should help to show a reduction in the packaging waste disposed of by householders.

OTHER EUROPEAN DIRECTIVES

The End-Of-Life Vehicles Directive states that vehicles should be designed with recyclability and re-use in mind, hence reducing the amount of waste produced from vehicles in the future.

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Goods Directive has made a proposal to minimise the environmental effect of waste electrical items. This has stated that recycling facilities have to be available and targets for re-use have been set for producers.

ZERO WASTE

A culture that sees all waste as a resource and therefore having value is a concept now being adopted by many Local Authorities.

The Government has yet to offer any guidance how this is going to be achieved, but the 'Zero Waste Charter' sets a number of targets including zero waste by 2020, and would require, from 2006, the banning of landfilling biodegradable waste that has not been pre-treated.

Though it is a desirable concept, it is still very unlikely to be achievable. Therefore it is necessary to work towards 'Minimum Waste'. This is whereby the amount of waste produced is kept to a minimum, and as much as possible thereafter it is re-used or recycled. South Kesteven will work towards 'Minimum Waste', working closely with the householders of the District.

TARGETS AND AIMS

South Kesteven in the past has seen a 3% growth in waste produced per annum, however, in 2003/4, there was for the first time a reduction in our total waste produced. Local Authorities are under increasing pressure for this to continue; therefore we must be working towards a zero growth in our waste produced from 2003/4 figures.

AIM: To maintain waste production at 2003/4 levels.

Under powers given to us as a Waste Collection Authority by the Environmental Protection Act 1990, we would be able to restrict the amount of waste we collect. This would be through limiting the number of bags collected. This could be a bold, yet successful, move to waste reduction. Many authorities already limit the amount of waste they collect (West Lindsey will not accept side waste).

A sensible number of bags would be three per household per week, as this is the average capacity of a 180 litre wheeled bin, which is popularly used by other authorities restricting the waste they collect. This would not only target waste reduction, but also increase recycling, since people would be more aware of the waste they produce and their responsibilities for its disposal.

A practical way of ensuring that this method works, the Council can issue each household with 3 black bags per week, but then will only collect the SKDC bags.

An alternative to combat waste increases is to make refuse collections on an alternative weekly collection. This would highlight to the public the necessity to reduce their waste output since they have increased storage responsibilities. Again this would have a strong impact on the recycling rate, as more people would be searching for alternatives for their disposal needs.

TARGET: To consider the possibilities of restricting the amount of waste collected from households.

The current arrangement for collection of garden waste is that residents have to pay for the collection, through the purchase of a green bag. This is an ongoing problem since many continue to place garden waste out in the black bags, therefore not paying the charges. It is believed that there is approximately 150 – 200 tonnes per annum of green waste disposed of in the incorrect way.

TARGET: To eliminate the abuse of the black bags for garden waste.

POLICY STATEMENT To introduce a labelling system whereby the collection staff attach a large sticker on the offending bag explaining why it has not been collected. Possible wording – 'THIS BAG HAS BEEN LEFT AS IT CONTAINS GARDEN WASTE. Please contact the Recycling Help line on 01476 406279 for details of your nearest retailer'.

Waste reduction involves public awareness and support, led by a strong educational campaign. The success of waste minimisation is teaching the

public about being more aware of their shopping power, their effect on waste production and the subsequent effect they have on the environment - locally, nationally and globally. However, the problem lies in the fact that many people see waste as the Council's responsibility, and do not want to take ownership of the problem.

TARGET: To have a continued waste awareness campaign aimed at ALL residents of South Kesteven. The target of the campaign should be educating people of their powers and decisions open to them. Shoppers should be educated on smart shopping techniques and reducing their waste production. This aim is therefore to reduce the amount of waste produced. The effectiveness of this can be measured through careful monitoring of the tonnages collected from the area of the campaign. The success of an educational campaign is long-term, and therefore short-term targets are difficult to set and monitor, however, if the waste levels do not continue to rise, in line with economic growth (approximately 3% per annum), then the education can be deemed a success.

There are a number of areas which can be targeted for campaigns, such as home composting, using washable nappies, furniture re-use schemes, smart shopping advice and junk mail reduction companies. These can be done as individual projects or as a waste minimisation general campaign.

AIM: To promote home composting and aim to sell 500 composters per annum.

TARGET: To promote washable nappies, encouraging links with the local hospitals and maternity groups. We should maintain working relationships with the Waste Reduction and Recycling Group and joint working to promote the use of real nappies.

TARGET: To promote and encourage community groups to re-use furniture rather than sending them to landfill. The aim is to reduce furniture disposal via the bulky item collection.

TARGET: To encourage people to register with Mail Preference Service (MPS) to reduce the amount of unwanted mail they receive.

Work is also being done with children to promote waste awareness, including reduction, reuse and recycling. This involves the Recycling Officer visiting schools and children's groups such as Cubs and Brownies, and making presentations about waste, also papermaking and 'waste crafts'.

AIM: To visit 50 schools and children groups per annum to promote the Three R's, but mainly waste reduction.

The success of a campaign relies much on targeting the type of promotion to the right type of audience, from children to householders, schools to businesses. This will allow the success of the campaign to be accurately measured, and therefore being able to assess the future benefit of similar promotional initiatives.

As part of the long-term promotion of waste issues, including waste minimisation, recycling, flytipping etc. the Council has purchased a promotional trailer. This allows officers to interact with members of the public in a novel and unique way. The trailer can be easily adapted to focus on different audience groups, from school children to young mothers to businesses. It is recognised that the campaign needs to be specific to the audience at the time, and therefore the design of the trailer will allow this to be possible. The trailer will be used at a variety of locations in order to reach these audience groups.

There are many ways to portray a waste reduction message, from the traditional leaflets and media, to more interactive methods, such as road shows, and the Internet. These will be used as felt suitable, and according to the budget implications at the time.

TARGET: To use a variety of media types to promote waste minimisation.

The Council does not currently collect business and commercial waste, however, it is believed that approximately 15% of businesses in South Kesteven are abusing the black bag collections. This would equate to approximately 165 tonnes of waste per annum.

TARGET: To approach the businesses of South Kesteven and ensure that they all have the correct Trade Waste arrangements in place, hence not abusing the black bag system.

RE-USE

In the past, it was everyday behaviour to make use of products as much as possible, with initiatives such as the deposit refund scheme for drinks bottles, milk man deliveries, and refillable containers, however, in recent years these have gradually disappeared. It has been recognised in the waste hierarchy that re-use is an essential part to a sustainable waste management plan.

TARGET: To promote the use of home delivery programmes to reduce the amount of packaging and waste produced, also to encourage the re-use of materials.

Many products are designed to be re-used, though due to the ease of other product availability, these are often not the consumers' first choice. Some products may have alternative uses after their initial use, such as plastic bags as bin liners, or glass jars as storage containers.

TARGET: To campaign to Central Government to enforce packaging rules.

TARGET: To educate the public on how to re-use items, rather than continue this 'throw-away' culture.

Other methods of re-use are through car boot sales, second-hand shops, and charity shops. There is also the possibility of a Furniture Exchange within the District, based in Sleaford. This would offer residents of South Kesteven the opportunity to donate their furniture to allow others to re-use it. This scheme also accepts furniture that does not meet fire regulations, as they have the staff to refurbish in order to meet the guidelines.

TARGET: To promote car boot sales and charity shops within the South Kesteven District Council area. To have a 'notice board' on the South Kesteven District Council web site with details of the local sales and shops. To ensure the public have knowledge of their options, and ensuring Council officers advise the public before arranging disposal.

TARGET: To support local charities and their re-use potential.

POLICY STATEMENT

South Kesteven District Council will promote re-use of goods, and encourage the establishment of facilities to enable goods to be re-used, repaired and exchanged.