

Improved Joint Working Project Executive Summary

The Surrey Waste Partnership (SWP) has a successful track record of working together, currently under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and is keen to determine how it can identify and implement further efficiency gains and other benefits associated with working more closely together. To this end the partnership has commissioned AEA to work with the partnership's improving joint working project team to develop opportunities that, by a staged process, lead to maximised efficiencies and efficient, advanced partnership working.

Project Process

There have been four main phases of work during the project: 1) data gathering, 2) priorities development, 3) data evaluation and opportunities development, and 4) presentation of opportunities which are detailed below:

1. Key data was collected by partnership project team officers from all authorities;
2. A workshop was held with the wider members group, selected officers, and key stakeholders representative of the partnership to provide an opportunity to learn more about joint working and efficiency gains, hear about case studies from other authorities and have an opportunity to inform the process by telling the project team what was important to them (priorities) and what was the relative importance (weighting) of that priority in terms of developing opportunities for joint working and efficiency gains;
3. Using the key data collected, the AEA team evaluated, using the priorities and weightings provided by stakeholders, and developed opportunities for consideration. The top three priorities ("perceived value for money", "cost" and "environmental benefits") were applied to all opportunities and, where appropriate, other priorities selected by the stakeholders were also applied; and
4. A second workshop was held to present to the partnership stakeholder group the opportunities developed for discussion and consideration.

Key Recommendations

This report highlights a number of recommendations concerning how the partnership should move forward to achieve a greater level of joint working and associated efficiency gains.

Short Term Opportunities (1-2 years)

- Data sharing between the partnership authorities to inform contract negotiations for the current and future sale of recyclable materials
- Negotiation of "best price" with all current contractors and service providers
- Benchmarking for each authority to identify local efficiency gains, including e.g. common procurement of consumable materials (sacks, bins, boxes etc.)
- Maximising recycling by increasing the partnerships recycling rate by at least 5% per year to 2015 and encouraging waste reduction to achieve a 2% per annum reduction in total waste
- Optimise recycling collections through the introduction of new materials at the kerbside including batteries, textiles and food waste (where appropriate and feasible)
- Investigation of joint infrastructure arrangements and alignment or integration with street scene services
- Considering a more developed funding arrangement that includes the redistribution of some savings from the WDA to WCAs in addition to achieving efficiencies
- Development of recyclable materials consortia for key recyclable materials including paper
- Development of an Intermediate Inter Authority Agreement (IIAA) to encourage joint working through the sale of recyclable materials

Medium Term Opportunities (2 - 7 years)

- Movement towards harmonised collection systems with all authorities on an Alternate Weekly Collection, with weekly food collections and, dual stream recycling¹, collecting a wide range of high quality recyclable materials, with strong policy and enforcement
- Continued efforts to maximise recycling and minimise overall waste arisings with a focus on hard to reach areas and flats
- Contract Alignment to enable joint working and procurement to start
- Development of joint services for bulky waste and clinical waste
- By the end of the medium term the development of an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) to supersede the IIAA and to firm up a more developed funding arrangement that includes the redistribution of some savings from the WDA to WCAs
- Development of a suite of model contract documents that the Surrey Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) can utilise
- Joint contracting of services for adjoining authorities, utilising in-house or external service providers, as appropriate
- Maximised recycling and recovery from new waste treatment infrastructure coming online

Long Term Opportunities (7 - 15 years)

- Joint collection authorities (horizontal alignment structure)
- Realising Maximum recycling and recovery from the new waste treatment infrastructure that has come on line

Efficiencies Realised

From our analysis of the data provided we believe that if the 70% recycling target is met by 2014/15 - assuming a 5% year on year increase from the 2010/11 baseline, recyclable material sales are maximised through negotiation of the best price within the partnership and local efficiencies are maximised, then approximately £19m (cumulative over the 5 years) can be saved by the partnership. Further efficiencies can be gained post 2014/15 by greater joint working to further sell recyclable materials and procure services together. The scale of these additional efficiencies will be dependent upon the starting point for each of the individual authorities but will require a greater level of joint working to realise them.

Next Steps

Many opportunities are available for improved joint working and efficiency gains in the short term. The presentation of the recommendations in this report is such that the current structure of the partnership will allow a natural progression to a more formalised structure and greater governance as different projects progress. The move to an IIAA should prove to be a positive step to enhance the sale of recyclable materials and the joint delivery of some services and will follow the same natural timeline as the planning process for these activities. The partnership should note that the faster they can move towards high levels of recycling, service harmonisation and increased levels of joint working then the greater the savings that are available. Opportunities need to be pursued as soon as possible.

¹ A dual stream system is undertaken by some local authorities across the UK. Here paper and card is segregated from commingled dry recyclable materials. This enhances the income derived from paper and card, a material stream which has held its price well (with some market fluctuations)