

Summary of JMWMS Consultation November 2006 – January 2007

In November 2006 the Gloucestershire Waste Partnership (GWP) published its draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS). The strategy was made available for consultation between November 2006 and January 2007. Feedback on the nine strategic objectives was invited from the general public and key stakeholders. The JMWMS has been revised in light of views expressed through this process.

Public Consultation

The following methods were used to consult the general public on the relevant strategy objectives. These methods provided quantitative data to ensure we obtained views from a representative sample of Gloucestershire residents.

Method	Notes	Scope	Number of responses
Self completion questionnaires	Mailed to a random sample of Gloucestershire Residents	4000 randomly selected residents	1220
Self completion questionnaire	Made available via the Internet, council offices and libraries	Internet users and visitors to libraries and council offices	521
Community Panel Workshops	Focus group consisting of members of the general public	9 people who had been briefed on the strategy	N/A
Great Gloucestershire Debate	An initiative to get people talking about important local issues and signpost people to the strategy consultation. ¹	Anyone living and working in Gloucestershire with an interest in waste	See footnote 1

Stakeholder Consultation

The following methods were used to consult other stakeholders on the relevant strategy objectives. These approaches elicited comments at a higher level of detail than the general public consultation.

Method	Notes	Scope	Response
Stakeholder workshop	Topic of discussion limited to those objectives felt to be most relevant to each group	Sessions with Non Governmental Organisations, Industry and Council Members	NGO representatives: 15 Industry representatives: 16 Members: 57 Officers: 16

¹ The debate was a strategic partnership initiative which was focused on waste issues in parallel with the formal consultation. This had the effect of raising awareness and participation in the consultation itself via the self-completion questionnaire.

Ad hoc feedback	Received via letters and emails	Feedback in response to the strategy consultation	0
Self completion questionnaire	Mailed to all Parish Councils in the county.	282 Parish Councils	35

The survey has yielded a large amount of useful information regarding opinions on the priorities put forward in the JMWMS and waste services in general. The patterns of results are broadly consistent across the four avenues through which the survey was disseminated: the random survey, web survey, library survey and parish survey. These views were echoed by workshop participants. Essentially the same messages can be taken from all of these surveys, and this gives confidence that the results are robust and sufficiently representative.

The key messages to emerge from the consultation are summarised as follows;

There is little disagreement about the importance of any of the core objectives covered in the survey: Reducing waste; Education, Recycling and Composting as much as possible; Reducing Hazardous Waste; Recovering Value; and Working Together. The objectives that were viewed as least important still received over 90% support, and therefore the survey provides no grounds for questioning or omitting any of these objectives.

In terms of measures to increase recycling, the message that appeared to come through clearly is that people want a wider range of materials to be collected in the kerbside collections (e.g. plastics and cardboard), and that providing clearer information on the recycling systems would help them to recycle more. This combined with the fact that fewer people thought that more frequent recycling collections or larger containers for recycling would be an incentive suggests that dissatisfaction with current systems is not the most significant restraining factor, in terms of performance.

Food waste collections appear to be the most controversial service proposal. Approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they would use such a service. While this appears a relatively low number it is in line with the upper end of food waste participation figures from other schemes in the UK. The main reasons for people saying they would not use a foodwaste collection service include the fact that households already home compost and perceptions of flies, vermin, smell and inconvenience. Clearly if participation figures are to be raised above current reported levels, these perceptions of food waste collection services are ones that must be overcome.

The issue of compulsory recycling is one that seems to receive a consistently high level of support, with 72% of respondents in this survey agreeing that

recycling should be compulsory, a figure that is in line with other surveys conducted in the UK. Although support for such a measure may seem surprising, it is perhaps less so when one considers that most people perceive themselves as good recyclers and therefore would not consider that they would be affected by such an initiative. The support for compulsory recycling becomes slightly less clear when the issue of financial penalties is put forward, with people clearly feeling less comfortable about such a prospect despite the fact that 'compulsory recycling' logically implies a sanction of some sort (of which a fine is the only sort allowed under the EPA) if it is to be enforced. Taken together these results suggest that as long as fines are rare, and used only as a last resort to ensure compliance where all other efforts have failed, compulsory recycling is likely to be a relatively popular initiative.

The issue of fortnightly or Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC) was addressed only indirectly in the survey. The focus was on determining which services residents felt would be most useful in the context of an AWC service. What is apparent from the survey results is that the prospect of a shift to AWC does not make food waste collection services appear more attractive. This seems to contradict evidence from actual food waste collection services that are in operation elsewhere with participation rates virtual double in schemes where residual waste is collected fortnightly compared to schemes where it is collected weekly. On the other hand garden waste collections, which were the most popular AWC related initiative among respondents, are in fact likely to be less impacted by the frequency of residual collection, as garden waste collection schemes are generally popular wherever they are introduced. It would therefore appear from the responses to this question that, although the question was asked in reference to AWC, most people have simply answered it in accordance with how they feel about the proposed schemes generally. The results are probably therefore best interpreted as providing some indication of the relative popularity of these services rather than as an indicator of how people will respond to such services following the introduction of an AWC scheme.

Summary of JMWMS revision following consultation

The consultation identified a number of recommended amendments to the draft JMWMS. These are summarised in the following table along with an overview of how they have been taken into account.

Recommendation	Reasoning	How have we addressed this ?
<p>1. Maintain most existing core objectives.</p>	<p>Most core objectives of the strategy (Reducing Waste, Education, Recycling and Composting as much as possible, Reducing Hazardous Waste, Recovering Value, Working Together and Closing the Loop) attracted widespread support, and there are strong grounds for adopting these objectives either as they stand, or with only minor changes to the wording. See recommendation 5 below for the</p>	<p>Accepted. All existing objectives have been maintained. (See recommendation 5 below for further information).</p>

	exception.	
2. Amend Objective 3 wording to reflect the need to optimise collection systems rather than specify system configurations.	Public opinion is that the range of recyclables collected from households should be increased. Objective 3 could be reworded to reflect the intention (stated elsewhere in the strategy) to maximise the range and quantity of materials separately collected. The point was made in the consultation workshops that reference to 'three streams' appears to restrict the number of streams that are collected, and consideration should be given to amending this wording so that it reflects the need to optimise collection systems, rather than specify system configurations.	Accepted. This has also been reflected in other sections of the strategy, allowing greater flexibility to adopt the most appropriate collection systems as circumstances and technologies change over time.
3. Develop a strong public education programme to accompany service changes.	Separate collections of foodwaste are supported by the consultation, albeit with some reservations. There is clearly some apprehension and lack of understanding on the part of householders about such a service and how it will work. A programme of education will therefore be important to address residents concerns regarding convenience, smell, vermin and flies if such a service is to be successfully introduced. Education on why it is important to compost food waste is also important.	Accepted. This has already been reflected in the headline strategy and no further changes have been made to this document. It is intended that education and communication features strongly in the future planning of service changes, and this will be a feature of future implementation plans.
4. Consider compulsory recycling.	Compulsory Recycling should be carefully considered by GWP districts as it is not only proven to be effective in raising recycling rates elsewhere, but is also likely to enjoy strong popular support, based on the results of the survey.	No change made. Whilst this may be considered in the future (in support of other objectives), the strategy has not been amended to make this specific commitment at this stage.
5. Remove Objective 6 'Delivering the strategy' and incorporate this into section 6 'How are we going to get there ?' Consider the same for Objective 7.	The question of the appropriateness of Objective 6 'Delivering the Strategy' as a separate objective was raised in the consultation and this deserves serious consideration. Delivery of the strategy is more of a method through which the objectives of the strategy can be achieved than an objective in itself, and it may be more appropriate to include this in Section 6 "How are we going to get there?" This same line of reasoning could also be applied to Objective 7 'Working in Partnership'.	No change made. We believe that mechanisms around strategy delivery and partnership working are of sufficient current importance to maintain their development as specific objectives. Once these have been well established, consideration will be given to reviewing them in future revisions.
6. Clarify leadership.	The strategy should set out more clearly the role and mandate of	Accepted. Section 3.2 has been extended to provide more detail

	GWP, so that it is clear how this strategy will be taken forward and the status that the GWP has amongst member authorities. A theme that emerged at several points was the need for strong leadership to drive the strategy forward. The strategy should state clearly where this leadership will come from.	on the role of GWP and the optimisation of joint working.
7. Consider other ways of removing hazardous waste from the residual waste stream.	One suggestion to emerge from the consultation was that separation of hazardous materials for reuse, recycling, and treatment should be made compulsory, rather than left to 'education'. This could be given further consideration, and may be relatively easy to implement in the context of compulsory recycling (provided appropriate collection systems are in place. This will support Objective 9 "Depollution of the Waste Stream".	No change has been made to the headline strategy, and 'Depollution of the Waste Stream' is maintained as specific objective. Any future service changes will be identified in the annual action planning process as options and technologies develop.
8. Consider adopting a stronger emphasis on working with supply chains (eg retailers) to reduce the amount of materials entering the waste stream.	The view that businesses (particularly retailers) should play a more active role in reducing waste came through consistently in the consultation. It was felt that business is responsible for producing materials (particularly packaging) that householders must ultimately dispose of and that there is a need for waste prevention to begin further up the supply chain. Working with business is touched on in Objective 7 of the strategy but it may be worthwhile for this to be emphasised more strongly under Objective 2 (Reduction First).	Accepted. Objective 2 has been strengthened to state our recognition of the role businesses may play in waste reduction. Any future actions which arise from this will be detailed in the action planning process.
9. Clarify timescales for action.	The point was raised that the strategy does not make it clear <u>when</u> things are going to be done. Whilst timeframes are determined within the targets section and in the ongoing action plans, we could consider drawing the time dimension out more strongly in the strategy itself through inclusion of a graphical timeline and by drawing clearer links between the objectives, targets and implementation actions.	Accepted. A timeline in graphical format has been added. See figure 6 in Volume 1 Headline Strategy.
10. Review the wording of objective 5 – is there a better way of presenting this	There were clearly a variety of messages from the consultation regarding treatment of residual wastes, and no clear consensus emerged. Industry desired a more definite commitment to specific	Accepted. Objective 5 has been rephrased to present a clearer logic.

objective ?	technologies, while NGOs felt that no commitment should be made. On this basis no clear recommendation can be given on Objective 5, beyond reviewing the wording of the objective.	
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