



Real Rubbish: Frequently Asked Questions

July 2009

1. What is residual waste or 'real rubbish'?

It is the waste left over after we have recycled and composted as much as we can.

2. Why can't we recycle and compost all of our waste?

About 70 per cent of household waste can be recycled or composted. Not everything can be recycled because they are made of more than one material. This means it takes so much energy to recycle that it outweighs the benefit. For example, a biscuit packet can be made of plastic film and paper, which cannot be easily separated.

3. Why don't we continue to landfill the waste we cannot recycle or compost?

Disposing of untreated waste to landfill is both environmentally damaging and very expensive. When untreated waste is buried underground, it produces methane. This greenhouse gas is 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide and is one of the contributing factors of climate change. In addition, this year the county council has to pay landfill tax to the government at £40 for every tonne of waste that goes to landfill. This figure is increasing by £8 each year. Councils have also been set limits by central government on how much rubbish they can send to landfill. This limit decreases each year and the council faces fines of £150 for every tonne over the quota set. We are also running out of landfill space.

4. What if we continue as we are and don't choose an alternative to landfill?

Continuing to landfill large amounts of waste is not sustainable, as space is running out and it is harmful to the environment. Also if we do nothing, costs for waste management will increase dramatically because landfill is becoming increasingly expensive. The financial burden to the council taxpayer may be huge and could result in major cutbacks to other council services.

5. Why can't we take our waste to an already established facility outside the county?

We haven't ruled out this option although it isn't one we are actively encouraging. We have explored joining up with other local authorities nearby in the same situation, but they have either been in different phases of the procurement process or want to specify a technology to the waste industry. We don't believe this is the right approach for Gloucestershire, as we want to look seriously at all the technology and site options.

6. What alternatives to landfill are we looking at in Gloucestershire?

Gloucestershire County Council has looked into a wide range of technology options, which include, as examples:

- a. **Two forms of Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT).** This involves the materials being separated by machinery. The biodegradable (the bit that rots) part of the waste can produce compost that can be suitable for certain types of land, for example quarries or contaminated land. Other MBT processes can involve the waste being transformed into a fuel, which can then be burnt under strictly controlled conditions to generate power.
- b. **Autoclave.** This process cleans the different types of waste by using pressurised steam. The waste is then separated by machinery into materials that can be recycled and also a fibre fuel that can be used to generate power..
- c. **Energy from waste.** This involves the burning of waste under strictly controlled conditions to reduce its volume and hazardous properties. This generates electricity and/or steam for heating.
- d. **Advanced Thermal Treatment.** A newer generation of energy from waste technology that produces gases under conditions of very low oxygen. This can then be used to produce electricity and/or steam for heating.

The government department, Defra, has produced a series of books to help explain about the different technologies. For more details on all of these

technologies visit

http://www.recycleforgloucestershire.com/real_rubbish/downloads.html

Although these technologies have been considered, the county council will not be telling private companies which technologies to use as we are technology neutral. Instead we will set out what Gloucestershire needs to achieve and the waste industry will then have to demonstrate to us that their solution is the best way to solve our problem.

7. Wouldn't you still have to landfill some waste after it was treated using these technologies?

Yes, however the amount of waste will be massively reduced. This means environmental benefits as we landfill less, reducing methane production and our impact on climate change.

8. How much waste will the facility or facilities take?

The district councils and the county council have all agreed a target to recycle and compost a minimum of 60 per cent of household waste by 2020. Even if we achieve this, we estimate that we will still be left with approximately 150,000 tonnes of waste to deal with.

9. With recycling rates increasing, what happens if the facility or facilities don't have enough waste to be cost effective?

We will make sure that the contract with the private company that will run the facility or facilities is flexible. Any shortfall of waste could be made up with waste that can't be recycled from Gloucestershire's local businesses. We will continue to increase overall recycling and composting rates as much as we can.

10. Where would the facility be based and is there an option of having more than one?

The Waste Local Plan (WLP), adopted in 2004, identifies a site at Javelin Park within Stroud district, south of Gloucester; which the council purchased in January 2009. A requirement of our recent government grant to support the project was that the council owned a suitable site before it began procurement (see question 23). That is why we had to purchase Javelin Park when we did. We are open to suggestions for alternative site locations from companies interested in running the contract as we are site neutral. We are also open to the possibility of having more than one facility in Gloucestershire.

The WLP is being replaced by the Waste Core Strategy (WCS). Its main aim is to provide the planning framework for sustainable waste management in Gloucestershire in the period up to 2026. It deals with the management of all types of waste, not just household waste. An important role of the WCS is to identify the most suitable sites in Gloucestershire for waste management, based on land use planning and deliverability grounds.

11. Are there potential health risks for residents living near a facility?

Waste Management companies have to comply with strict guidelines imposed by the Environment Agency.

12. What about incinerators? Don't they pollute the atmosphere and contribute to ill health?

The European Waste Incineration Directive, which became law in 2002, imposed stricter emission levels and increased the monitoring of facilities. Emissions of dioxins from Energy from Waste facilities have fallen by 99.8% in the last 20 years. An independent study, published by the government department Defra in 2004, found that Energy from Waste facilities are not a major contributor to air pollution. It concluded that there was no consistent or convincing evidence of a link with adverse health effects. This view is shared by the Environment Agency and Health Protection Agency.

13. Will a waste facility generate extra smell?

Any facility will use the latest technology. Any buildings where waste is taken will use negative air pressure to prevent smells being released into the atmosphere. This will be effective, even when the doors of the facility are opened.

14. Will a waste facility attract vermin?

No, waste will be properly managed at the facility. Our contract will ensure that effective vermin control is in place.

15. Will traffic levels near the plant increase significantly and cause chaos on the roads?

No. As part of the planning process, a detailed traffic assessment will be carried out. Any new facilities would not be operational until 2015 and any necessary road improvement work will be carried out well before then to make sure there is enough capacity on the road network.

16. What will any facility look like?

Modern waste facilities are designed to blend in with the latest style of industrial architecture. As part of the planning process, an Environmental Impact Assessment will be carried out on the site. This aims to make sure the building is appropriate to its surroundings.

17. Who will decide which technology we should go for?

Gloucestershire County Council is the waste disposal authority and your elected members will make the final decision. Officers will make a recommendation to elected members based on how well the ideas submitted by the waste industry meet our needs, based on an evaluation framework (see question 19). The final decision has to be agreed by the Cabinet and Full Council and is likely to be in the Spring of 2011.

18. Reports in the media suggest Gloucestershire will opt for an incinerator. Has a decision already been made?

No decision has been made. This is pure speculation. We will consider all technologies that the waste industry proposes which meet Gloucestershire's needs.

19. What factors will be considered when deciding which technology to choose?

An evaluation framework has been developed, which will be used to evaluate the bids put forward by the waste industry. It covers technical, legal, financial issues including environmental impact and affordability.

20. How did the council develop this evaluation framework?

The council started with its own ideas on what was important and then we incorporated the advice from our legal, financial and technical consultants who work on similar projects across the UK. It also took the priorities and issues outlined as part of previous consultation on technology options. Once there was a broad outline, the council took the main issues from the framework and asked stakeholders (including members of the public, county councillors, environmental groups and waste companies) what they thought were the most important through an extensive consultation exercise this summer. This informed the evaluation framework further.

21. When will a final decision be made on the technology to be used?

A decision will be made by Spring 2011. Shortly afterwards a contract will be awarded to the successful company.

22. Who will decide where the facility or facilities get built?

The county council will sign a contract with the successful company for their solution which will include proposed locations for the facilities. This means that your county councillors will ultimately decide the solution for Gloucestershire (what it is and where it is).

In addition, before anything can be built, any facilities will require planning consent; this is also decided by a group of county councillors who sit on the Planning committee.

Gloucestershire County Council is the waste planning authority and it is their responsibility to produce the Waste Core Strategy (see question 10) and to deal with planning applications for waste. The county council's planning responsibilities are independent of the county council's waste management team, which manages the project.

If the best solution is located within the county, then the company (who's solution was selected by the council) will have to submit a planning application for each site that it wants to use.

Your elected members from the Planning Committee will make a decision on planning grounds, based on all the information provided as part of the planning application process, as to whether or not a facility can be built at a particular site or sites. This will be an open process that will allow for public consultation.

23. How much will a waste facility or facilities cost and who will be paying for it?

To set up and run any new facility or facilities over 25 years which will deal with all our residual waste is estimated to cost between £650 and £800 million. The council has been awarded a government grant of £92 million which is worth £171 million over the life of the contract. This will reduce the cost to between £479 and £629 million. The rest will be funded through the council's budget collected through council tax. This is an awful lot of money, but because of the increasing financial cost of landfill, we will still be paying less than we would pay if we carry on landfilling our waste.

24. Isn't 25 years too long to be tied into a commercial contract with a waste company?

A long-term contract with a company is more cost effective and offers the best value for council taxpayers.

25. With so much money being invested in this project, will it be at the detriment of recycling facilities?

Not at all. We are still committed to reaching our target of recycling and composting a minimum of 60 per cent of waste by 2020. We will continue to promote our 3R's campaign - to reduce, re-use and recycle as much as we can. This has been agreed by all of the districts councils, who have signed up to a long-term plan to deal with Gloucestershire's waste called the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

26. How many jobs will a waste facility or facilities create?

The development of a new waste facility or facilities could create about 250 jobs.

27. So where exactly are you in the process right now?

In January 2009, the council asked waste companies via a notice in Official Journal of the European Union to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) if they were interested in bidding for this long term residual waste management contract. The PQQ asks companies for the technical, financial and legal information about the company. This information is assessed to make sure that the companies have the experience to do the job. It doesn't ask about the technologies or sites any company might suggest, just about the company itself. The council has made a long-list of ten companies to go through to the next stage in the process.

The next stage is called the Invitation to submit Outline Solutions (ISOS) stage. These companies will be asked to give the council an outline of what their solution for the county is. Industry may offer a range of technologies to ensure we can divert waste from landfill.

The ISOS stage is also the first time that we get to meet with the companies and discuss their outline proposals for dealing with Gloucestershire's waste.

28. Which are the ten companies?

- Biffa Waste Services
- Cory Environmental Management
- Covanta Energy
- John Laing Investments
- MVV Umwelt GmbH
- Sustainable Solutions for Gloucestershire
- Urbaser S.A.
- Veolia ES Aurora
- Viridor Waste Management
- Waste Recycling Group

29. What sort of technology they will be proposing? Are there more than just incineration providers being invited to submit outline solutions?

At this stage we cannot speculate, but the companies have experience of using a range of technology solutions. Please see question 6 for more information on technologies

30. Are there any companies that submitted a PQQ that are not being invited to the next stage?

Three companies are not being invited through to the next stage. We cannot release their names or go into the reasons why at this stage as this information is commercially sensitive.

31. What happens next?

In autumn 2009 we hope all ten companies will submit their outline solutions to deal with Gloucestershire's real rubbish. The council will then evaluate these proposals and decide which companies will be asked to go through to the next stage (this is known as the invitation to submit detailed solutions) in December 2009.

32. How can I find our more information?

www.recycleforgloucestershire.com/real_rubbish has all the latest information on the project including downloads and timelines. You can also email or write to us at the address below:

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