



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Policy and Resources Committee – 2 June 2014

Northamptonshire Waste Partnership

Purpose of report

This report provides an update to Members on a significant change to the membership of the partnership and seeks the Committee's views on this Council's continued membership.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At the Annual General Meeting of The Northamptonshire Waste Partnership (NWP) on 3 June 2014, the Board will receive a report which considers the implications of Northampton Borough Council withdrawing from the NWP. In light of this decision, Members are requested to consider the continued membership of the NWP by this Council.

2.0 Background

2.1 The eight Northamptonshire authorities have been working collectively on waste issues since 1996 and within a more formal structure, NWP, since 2005. The NWP functions on all levels, with officer liaison groups and a Board made up of Councillors from each partner authority. In recent years NWP has on several occasions considered taking the next step of formally constituting the Board with the aim of creating a joint waste authority, an outcome which has not been supported by this Council and which is no longer on the agenda.

2.2 As a part of its budget setting process, Northampton Borough Council has decided to withdraw from the NWP, giving notice to leave at the end of this current financial year. This decision has implications for the future of the NWP, not least of which is funding. NBC also represents 30% of the households in the county, and their withdrawal will severely impact on the reach and influence of any campaigns.

2.3 As a partner authority we pay an annual contribution to the running of the partnership; currently this stands at £16,200 and for 2015/16 it will be £14,580. NWP funds are used to contribute to the employment costs of 4 members of staff. This includes an executive officer and 3 waste and energy education officers. The NWP also finances a variety of county-wide education campaigns, which have the objective of promoting recycling, composting and waste minimisation.

2.4 Senior Councillors who have represented the Council on the NWP have challenged the value that being a partner adds to this Council. It is true to say that this Council has benefited from government funding in respect of the roll-out of its current waste collection contract as a result of monies that were available through the NWP.

3.0 Issues to consider

3.1 The NWP memorandum of understanding states that any partner may withdraw from the partnership by giving not less than 6 months' notice in writing, but not before such a proposal has been considered by the partnership, and the withdrawal shall not take effect until the following 31st March. Therefore, if this Council is considering withdrawal from the partnership in April 2015, a decision and formal notification needs to happen now.

3.2 At the point that NBC leaves the partnership there will be in the region of £120,000 in

partnership reserves. NBC is seeking the return of one eighth of this. This may be agreed to on the basis that NBC contributes to any redundancy costs resulting from its withdrawal. This may be an approach that ENC also considers if the decision is taken to withdraw.

- 3.3 Being a member of the NWP affords ENC a stronger negotiating position with Northamptonshire County Council, the Waste Disposal Authority, particularly when changes are being proposed.
- 3.4 NCC will need to maintain dialogue with all the waste collection authorities whether a partnership exists or not, and this is an issue they will need to address with NBC. Currently this is also an issue that faces the authorities in Oxfordshire, where a similar partnership is being dissolved.
- 3.5 ENC is able, through the NWP, to respond to consultation documents and voice its opinion without having to do work individually. The Executive Officer canvasses the opinions of partners before compiling joint responses. This is a resource we currently do not have at ENC. Any withdrawal will impact on accessing external funding, something that Northamptonshire has benefited from through the NWP, albeit that individual authorities have not always benefited equitably or relative to their investment in the preparation of bids. Partnership bids are looked on more favourably by government and therefore we and the NWP may lose out on future funding opportunities.
- 3.6 ENC is the enviable position where it has a successful External Funding Manager whom we could utilise to identify and pursue funding opportunities that arise, working together with the Waste Manager.
- 3.7 The single biggest expense of the NWP is the contribution to the Waste Education Team, £64,000 per year (£8K per authority). If ENC were no longer a part of the NWP then the team would not visit schools in the district, thereby children would miss out on hearing the waste and recycling message from this specialist team. The Council may wish to consider maintaining funding for and hence access to the Waste Education Team.
- 3.8 If we withdrew from the partnership we would also no longer be able to tap into campaigns funded and delivered by the NWP, but equally the impact of these campaigns would be weaker without the involvement of the residents of Northampton and East Northamptonshire.
- 3.9 The NWP has been considering the future funding of the Waste Education Team and is looking to attract external funding. Members may wish to consider offering any monies that become available as its portion of the NWP reserves refund to the NWP to retain the services, including school visits, of the Waste Education Team in East Northamptonshire. A similar proposal has been suggested involving NBC. This could retain this valuable resource in the district until the end of the current waste contract and an educational and campaigning resource maybe something that Members may wish to include in the specification for any future contract.

4.0 Options and financial implications

- 4.1 In respect of this Council and its involvement with the NWP there are 3 options:
 - Withdraw from the NWP
 - Withdraw from the NWP but continue to put funding into the Waste Education Team
 - Remain as a partner of the NWP
- 4.2 Option 1 – withdraw from the NWP
This would realise the Council an annual saving of £14,580 from April 2015 together with a possible one-off refund of £15,000 from NWP reserves.

4.3 Option 2- withdraw from the NWP, continue to contribute to the Waste Education Team.
This would realise the Council an annual saving of £14,580 from April 2015 and the £15,000 refund from NWP reserves could be used to continue contributions to the costs of running the Waste Education Team through to April 2017.

4.4 Option 3- remain as a partner of the NWP

This would realise no financial savings.

5.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 There would be no equality or diversity issues arising from this report and its proposals.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 The only legal implications arising from this report and its proposals would be the satisfaction of any commitments set out in the NWP memorandum of understanding, section 3.1 refers.

7.0 Risk Management

7.1 The future of the partnership may be placed at risk with the withdrawal of one or more partners. This may result in the redundancy of existing staff and any costs associated with this action will need to be shared amongst the partners. Presently this could be addressed through the Partnership funding reserve.

8.0 Corporate Outcomes

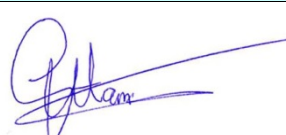
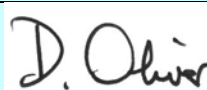
8.1 The recommended decisions help deliver the corporate outcome:

- Good Value for Money

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is recommended to

- (1) Consider which option, as set out in section 4, the Council wishes to pursue. *(Reason – to ensure that the Council gets good value for money from any investment in the NWP)*
- (2) Authorise the Head of Environmental Services to take the appropriate action to implement the Committee's decision.

Legal	Power: Environmental Protection Act 1990				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers:					
Person Originating Report: Mike Deacon, Head of Environmental Services, 01832 742060					
Date: 21 May 2014					
CFO 22/5/14		MO		CX 22/5/14	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)