



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Health and Environmental Services Committee
Subject:	Establishment of Member/Officer Waste Working Group
Date:	4 th August, 2010
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health & Environmental Services, Ext 3260
Contact Officer:	Tim Walker, Head of Waste Management, Ext 3311

Relevant Background Information

Members may recall that the Health and Environmental Services Committee approved, in June 2007, the establishment of an all-party working group on the waste plan implementation to act as a reference point for work on waste management within the Department.

This group met briefly to discuss the implementation of the Council's waste plan but its discussions were effectively overtaken by the establishment of an ad hoc officer/member working group to consider proposals for the arc21 residual waste treatment facilities, and the subsequent party group briefings.

Given the corporate priority which the Council is continuing to afford to waste management, the current proportion of the budget allocated to this function, the significant forthcoming policy decisions, the persistent compliance issues in terms of meeting the EU Landfill and Waste Framework Directives and how the Council can best respond to these issues in the medium term, it is considered important that this all party group should be reconvened.

Key Issues

The Waste Management Service works closely in partnership with a number of organisations, including the Council's Cleansing Services and arc21, in order to develop proposals and influence the present and emerging waste management agenda in Northern Ireland. There is a need to plan ahead in the medium and longer term to ensure that the services provided are designed to optimise compliance with EU and UK legislation and to minimise financial risks.

Nationally, the waste management agenda continues to develop and continuing to comply with Northern Ireland Landfill Allowances Scheme (NILAS) and the EU Landfill Directive is becoming increasingly challenging for the Council. This situation is likely to only become more stringent as new targets are set from the EU Waste Framework Directive (see separate NILAS and recycling rate updates report this month) and new responses will need to be developed by the Council.

It is considered that the all-party working group on waste plan implementation should be reconvened with a broader remit to consider not only implementation issues, but also the wider strategic issues influencing the Waste Plan and local policy. In this regard, it is recommended that the group should be re-branded as the all-party waste working group and that the Chair and Deputy Chair (or their nominees), and a member from each of the party groups not represented by the Chair and Deputy Chair, should be represented on this group.

The establishment of the group will help improve the Council's planning and implementation for both compliance with the new and emerging legislation and the other changes likely to arise in other areas of waste management. It will also provide a reference point for proposals prior to their submission for consideration by the Committee.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to approve the re-instatement of the all-party waste working group.

The Committee is also requested to nominate the Chair and Deputy Chair (or their nominees), and a member from each of the party groups not represented by the Chair and Deputy Chair, to the all-party waste working group.

It is recommended that the Group be established for a period of two years, with a review of the continued requirement taking place prior to 30th September 2012.

Decision Tracking

The Director will liaise with the Chairman to set a date, establish suitable terms of reference and restart the all-party waste working group.

The Head of Waste Management will ensure that a review of the working group is undertaken prior to 30th September 2012 and that the findings and recommendations are reported to Committee.