

LEICESTERSHIRE ENVIRONMENT BOARD

27th FEBRUARY 2013

STRATEGIC JOINT WORKING IN WASTE – ROUTE MAP

REPORT OF THE WASTE & STREET SCENE GROUP

Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek endorsement from the Environment Board to commence a programme of work to explore strategic joint working options in waste, using the 'Route Map' process, outlined below.

Background

- 2.1 The Leicestershire Waste Partnership (the Partnership) has a strategic mandate through the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy (the Strategy) to, "Consider opportunities for greater joint working / more efficient delivery of services (including greater harmonisation of collection services)". This is reflected in the Action Plan for 2012/13 to 2013/14 through the action, "Seek opportunities to explore strategic joint working options". This action is retained within the updated Action Plan that is considered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 2.2 The Waste & Street Scene group has considered the issue, and has identified an approach to identify options and analyse whether they would be suitable for local authorities in Leicestershire.

Strategic Joint Working

- 3.1 The term 'strategic joint working' has been used in this context to differentiate high-level, long-term joint working options, from the operational joint working activities which the Partnership already undertakes. A more precise definition is challenging as there are a broad range of options that the Partnership could take, but broadly speaking they all involve delivering services jointly in some way. A programme of work is required to better understand what options exist.
- 3.2 Typically, there are two primary drivers for partnerships to work together at a more strategic level; to increase performance levels and to reduce costs through more efficient delivery of services. The

Partnership already has high levels of performance (although meeting future targets remains challenging), so it is likely that for any of the strategic joint working options available to be viable they would need to produce considerable cost savings, above what could ordinarily be achieved, if implemented.

- 3.3 There are many options available to the Partnership, ranging from maintaining current levels of joint working, through to all eight partners authorities delivering services jointly, with numerous potential options in between. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' approach for any partnership to adopt as various factors will inform the applicability and benefits to be gained, including current performance levels, service costs, service levels, demographics, geography and political appetite.

The Route Map Process

- 4.1 The process of identifying and analysing these options will be a large, complex piece of work and it is important that a mechanism is used that expedites this activity, whilst maintaining a high level of quality and transparency in the approach.
- 4.2 The Waste & Street Scene group has identified an approach that will allow the Partnership to undertake the work in a cost effective way- the 'Route Map' produced by Improvement and Efficiency South East (iESE). iESE, formerly the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, with a national lead on waste issues, now exists as a not-for-profit, local authority owned company. It is well known for supporting partnership working, and has supported other partnerships in the development of their own strategic joint working programmes.
- 4.3 The Route Map is a free online toolkit that provides a framework to guide partnerships through the process of identifying and analysing their options, and implementing preferred options where applicable. The main advantages to use of the Route Map are as follows:
 - It is split into five stages, with each stage culminating in a report that outlines progress and makes a recommendation of whether to proceed to the next stage. This will enable the Partnership to evaluate whether the process has demonstrated enough potential before moving on to the next stage (which would require more resource input).
 - It has been developed on the experience of others, allowing the Partnership to learn from their experience and avoid pitfalls.
 - It provides a transparent approach as it is accessible through the www.win.org.uk website by anybody with a local authority email account.

- It provides a common language for those working on the project.
- Resources, such as template reports and Excel models, are available free of charge.
- It is designed as a guide rather than a prescriptive process.

- 4.4 The Route Map is comprised of five stages, as summarised below:
- Stage 1- The main focus is gathering relevant background information on what other partnerships have done and on our own local authorities; this will consider things such as current service delivery, performance, financial position, and appetite for further joint working. This will allow the multitude of options to be reduced to a more manageable number.
- Stage 2- The remaining options are reduced further to those that are most likely to be beneficial and acceptable to all partner authorities and an outline business case is produced in order to better understand the magnitude of the savings possible.
- Stage 3- Should the Partnership consider that there is sufficient potential to continue with the project, a dedicated team is set up to consider the detail. As well as waste expertise, other disciplines will be called upon (e.g. the support of finance officers and legal support).
- Stage 4- A full business case is developed for the preferred option to allow a final decision to be made.
- Stage 5- Implementation of the preferred option if agreed.
- 4.5 Given the importance and complexity of the project, Stages 1 to 4 could feasibly take between one and two years to complete, although it is difficult to estimate with accuracy at this stage, and a high number of options to be considered would lengthen the process. The time needed for implementation (Stage 5) would vary depending on the change being made.
- 4.6 Should the Board endorse this approach, it is envisaged that Stage 1 would commence immediately and be completed in time for a report to the next meeting of the Board in June. At this point it may be proposed to proceed to Stage 2, although it is not possible to accurately estimate the duration of this phase until Stage 1 is complete (as Stage 1 will inform the number of options that need to be considered).
- 4.7 A high-level plan for Stage 1 of the process is included as the Appendix to this report. Much of the work required in Stage 1 will be desk based and will be conducted primarily by the Waste Partnership Manager. It is not envisaged that there will be any significant financial costs in completing this stage.

- 4.8 Included in Stage 1 are informal interviews with selected individuals at each authority, designed to better understand the current background situation (such as service delivery) and appetite for further partnership working. Interviewees are likely to include Elected Members (councillors) and officers with a responsibility for waste, along with a senior officer such as a director. The views will be used to help shape later stages of the process, but interviewees will *not* be asked to provide a definitive position from their local authority at this stage in the absence of the detailed information that will be produced during later stages of the work. The interviews will be conducted by the Waste Partnership Manager, who by virtue of being jointly funded by all partner authorities, is ideally placed to provide impartial support to the process.

Links to other Environment Board Partnerships

- 5.1 There are no immediate links between the programme of work and other partnerships, however, links may develop at a later stage, particularly if Stage 5 is reached and new services are introduced.

Where Next?

- 6.1 Subject to endorsement by the Environment Board, Stage 1 of the work will commence immediately. It is provisionally planned to hold interviews between March and May, subject to availability of interviewees.
- 6.2 Upon completion of Stage 1, a report will be submitted to the Environment Board summarising the findings and recommending either halting the process (in the absence of compelling evidence to continue) or proceeding to Stage 2.

Conclusion

- 7.1 The Partnership has a strategic mandate to consider options for strategic joint working. The Waste and Street Scene group considers that the Route Map provides an effective means by which the programme of work can be delivered. Whilst delivery of a complex work programme will still be challenging, it offers a number of advantages over the alternative, namely, for the Partnership to develop its own process without being able to benefit from knowledge of the pitfalls experienced by others.

- 7.2 At this stage, it is important to recognise that whilst the potential for the programme to lead to significant change in service delivery exists, it could equally demonstrate that service are already run at optimum efficiency and that significant service changes are not required.

Appendix

Strategic Joint Working Stage 1 Summary Plan

Recommendation

It is recommended that

- (1) The Board endorses the commencement of the Strategic Joint Working programme, and the use of the Route Map process.
- (2) A further report is submitted to the Board on the outcome of Stage 1 of the Route Map process.

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Appendix A – Strategic Joint Working, Stage 1, Summary Plan

Ref.	Task	Nov '12			Dec '12				Jan '13				Feb '13			Mar '13			Apr '13			May '13			Jun '13													
		12/11/12	19/11/12	26/11/12	03/12/12	10/12/12	17/12/12	24/12/12	31/12/12	07/01/13	14/01/13	21/01/13	28/01/13	04/02/13	11/02/13	18/02/13	25/02/13	04/03/13	11/03/13	18/03/13	25/03/13	01/04/13	08/04/13	15/04/13	22/04/13	29/04/13	06/05/13	13/05/13	20/05/13	27/05/13	03/06/13	10/06/13	17/06/13	24/06/13				
1	Mandate to investigate advanced partnership (historic through Strategy)																																					
2	W&SS: Consideration of approach to SJW	■																																				
3	Executive: Update and confirm agenda items for next two Board meetings								■																													
4	W&SS: Agreement of Route Map report, S1 Plan and Engagement Plan										■																											
5	Develop background information and case studies												■	■	■																							
6	Board: To seek endorsement of SJW Programme using Route Map															■																						
7	W&SS: Input into Stage 1 as required inc. options and horizon scanning																	■																				
8	Interviews																	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
9	Executive: Update in advance of Board meeting																																					
10	W&SS: To seek endorsement of Stage 1 draft Report																																					■
11	Board: To seek endorsement of Stage 1 Report																																					■