

WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Press release

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COUNTY COUNCIL UNVEILS FIRST STAGE IN ITS FUTURE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Plans that will transform the way we deal with waste in Wiltshire were unveiled today as county councillors took a key step towards the award of waste management contracts worth more than £300 million.

The waste management blueprint aims to boost the proportion of the county's waste that is recycled or converted into energy and massively cut the amount buried in landfill.

Wiltshire currently recycles almost 32 per cent of its household rubbish – around 90,000 tonnes per annum. However, the remainder is buried in landfill at Compton Bassett near Calne. But tough EU legislation aimed at cutting levels of landfill means the county, along with authorities nationwide, would face crippling fines if it does not find new ways of disposing of its rubbish.

If the latest plans go ahead, more than 100,000 tonnes of rubbish would be diverted from landfill each year and would instead be converted into energy.

Negotiations and tenders for this landfill diversion project have lasted more than a year. And while the contracts have not yet been signed, the county council's Cabinet has today given the green light to tenders from the Marlborough-based Hills Group, provided agreement can be reached on outstanding details.

The county council plans to commission two contracts:

Contract 1: The building of a mechanical biological treatment plant (MBT) at Brook Lane in Westbury, which would from 2008 handle 60,000 tonnes per year of household waste from West Wiltshire. The process involves mechanical and natural biological treatment, enabling further material to be diverted from the rubbish before it is converted into a concentrated organic fuel known as solid recovered fuel (SRF) As little as 10 per cent of the original may end up in landfill.

Up to 30,000 tonnes of the solid recovered fuel would be transported from the plant to the nearby Lafarge cement works where it would be used as an alternative fuel for the cement-making process, so reducing consumption of coal and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Refuse collection vehicles currently take West Wiltshire's waste for landfilling at Compton Bassett – a round trip of up to 38 miles.

Contract 2: Transportation from 2008 of 50,000 tonnes per annum of household waste from the Salisbury district to a new energy from waste (EfW) plant, which is being built by Lakeside Energy from Waste Ltd at Colnbrook near Slough in Berkshire.

“Moving away from landfill is something we all have to do. There are no longer any choices,” said county council spokesperson Toby Sturgis. “We are already doing really well in achieving high recycling rates but these projects will take us a major step into the future, not just in reducing landfill but in drawing value from our waste and reducing the consumption of valuable fossil fuels.

“These projects represent a bold move which will keep Wiltshire amongst the leaders in moving away from landfill. We have so far spent more than a year

undertaking a rigorous procurement process to make sure we get the right services at the right cost for Wiltshire.”

The Hills Group, which is the county’s existing recycling and waste contractor, would be commissioned to build and operate the £12 million MBT plant and to deal with transportation. The building of the plant would be subject to planning permission and its operation to Environment Agency licensing

The MBT project would involve a purpose-built plant employing the latest technology from specialist Italian company EntSORGA. It would be sited on the Brook Lane Industrial Estate at Westbury and is scheduled to be operational by 2008.

Use of the new SRF from the MBT plant would be dependent upon Lafarge Cement achieving permission from the Environment Agency, which would require a trial burning period.

The delivery of 50,000 tonnes of Salisbury district household waste for incineration at Colnbrook would involve an estimated total of eight lorry loads per working day running from Hills’ waste transfer station at Thorny Down on the A30 east of Salisbury. The likely route would be via the A343, A303, M3 and M25. The vehicles concerned are currently taking Salisbury waste to landfill near Calne - a round trip of 76 miles.

Wiltshire would be one of a number of local authorities that will benefit from the 400,000 tonnes-per-annum energy from waste plant being built by Lakeside Energy. Designed to meet stringent emission controls, it will generate some 31.6 megawatts of electricity for the national grid – sufficient to serve 32,000 households.

Hills Group managing director, Alan Pardoe, said: "Wiltshire is already doing very well on the recycling front and will do better yet - but that won't be enough to meet the increasingly tough demands of the EU Landfill Directive. I believe that these new projects carry with them the prospect for Wiltshire of achieving the diversion targets for the next few years plus the added benefits of generating energy and reducing the use of fossil fuels."

Lafarge which has been exploring the use of a range of alternative fuels at Westbury, welcomed today's announcement.

"We are excited to be working with Hills and Wiltshire County Council on an innovative scheme that will provide an integrated local solution to a local waste disposal problem," said Westbury works manager Real Simard.

Ends

For more information please contact the Communications Unit at Wiltshire County Council on 01225 756190. See below for more contacts.

Notes to editors:

1: The diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill is a key objective under the EU Landfill Directive. In the United Kingdom, by 2010, biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill must be reduced to 75 per cent of the amount landfilled in 1995; by 2013 this is reduced to 50 per cent and by 2020 to 35 per cent.

2: From April 2005, any council that fails to reach government targets aimed at reducing the use of landfill faces fines of £150 a tonne. Without the new projects, Wiltshire would face fines of £7m in 2009 -10, which could escalate quickly if the government chose to increase the level of fines.

3: Wiltshire currently recycles almost 32 per cent of its rubbish. More than 83 per cent of households in Wiltshire are already served by a kerbside collection scheme and this is scheduled to increase to 86 per cent by early 2006 with proposals to increase coverage further. The county also has a network of 10 household recycling centres which are recycling up to 80 per cent of the materials they receive plus more than 300

neighbourhood bring sites. More information from www.wiltshire.gov.uk and www.wasteinwiltshire.com.

4: The family-owned Hills Group is one of Wiltshire's oldest companies. As Wiltshire's recycling contractor, it operates the kerbside collection scheme, runs household recycling centres and banks, and operates a large materials recycling "factory" and composting operation at Compton Bassett. More information from www.hills-group.co.uk or call Barrie Hedges on 07899 923756.

5: Lafarge Cement is Britain's leading cement manufacturer. Westbury is one of its eight UK cement works. The plant already uses tyres as an alternative fuel – an Environment Agency approved trial showed that the overall environmental impact of the works reduced by a quarter as a result of the switch from burning coal and petroleum coke alone. It is also saving up to 20,000 tonnes of fossil fuels every year for future generations while helping to tackle a major disposal problem. More information from www.lafargecement.co.uk or call PR & Communications Manager Alistair Gale on 01235-448657 (Mob: 07711-440736)

6: The technology proposed by Entsorga for Wiltshire uses the natural bacteria within the waste, but controlling and encouraging it to decompose more quickly to produce a dry and sanitised material that can be safely handled. This whole process is carried out in a sealed building over a 14-day period. Any odour is removed using special biofilters. Once the material is dried it is further processed to remove metals, leaving a fine residue as a refuse derived fuel. For more information click on www.entsorga.it or call Daryl Hill on 07768 810814.

7. Lakeside EfW is a joint venture between Grundon Waste Management and Viridor Waste Management. Contact Ruth Roll, Lakeside Energy from Waste Ltd 01327 844074