

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 12 JUNE 2014

DISSOLUTION OF THE OXFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

Report by Interim Deputy Director for Environment & Economy – Strategy & Infrastructure Planning

Introduction

1. Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) is made up of the County and District Councils of Oxfordshire. OWP became a statutory joint committee in April 2007, with powers to develop and implement a sustainable waste management strategy for Oxfordshire. A Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) was developed and adopted in 2007 and reviewed in 2013. Oxfordshire Councils worked together through OWP to manage and improve waste management within the county by implementing the JMWMS.

Background

2. On 4 April 2014 OWP voted to dissolve itself as soon as possible in accordance with Clause 25.1 of the Joint Committee Agreement. It was recognised that the partnership had worked well and delivered impressive results with recycling rates across the county having improved from 30 to 60% over a 5 year period, but that coordination could continue in an informal way and that there was no longer a need for a formally constituted partnership.

Exempt Information

3. None

Corporate Policies

4. The dissolution of the partnership will mean there are no longer any formal commitments to the strategic policies within the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS), however it is anticipated that all local authorities will continue to support them. The policies within the JMWMS will no longer be annually refreshed and no replacement will be prepared in 2017 when the next 5 year review point is reached.

Financial Implications

5. The dissolution of OWP will save OCC around £125,000 in contributions each year.

The financial liabilities for 2014/15 as presented to OWP in April 2014 are set out in Annex 1. It is anticipated that the OWP reserve will cover the costs and a small underspend may be due to partners. The underspend and any unallocated New Initiatives Funding (NIF) will be distributed back to partners in the proportion set out in the partnership contribution.

6. The partnership has a contractual liability though a one year contract extension offered to Groundwork South. This is currently held by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of OWP, and OCC have agreed to take on the management of this contract until the contract ends in April 2015. Future contract payments under this agreement are included within Annex 1.
7. The Partnership also has a contract for advertising on Heart Radio. This ends in summer 2014 and management will again be taken over by OCC.

Staffing Implications

8. OWP currently employs two full time members of staff though Cherwell District Council which acts as the employing authority for OWP. Following the decision of the OWP on 4 April they have been issued with notice of redundancy. Redundancy payments are included within Annex 1. All partner authorities have committed to offering assistance in finding alternative employment.

Risks

9. There is a risk that dissolving the partnership will result in the councils acting unilaterally. To mitigate this coordinated working will continue informally. Officer working groups will continue to meet on a regular basis and councillors are recommended to meet at least twice a year to jointly consider matters related to waste, energy and the natural environment.
10. There is also a risk that a reduction in communications will result in increased waste arisings and reduced recycling rates, resulting in higher waste disposal costs for the County Council. Coordinated working will help to ensure campaigns are well publicised however it may be necessary to review budget in this area in the future if recycling rates drop.

Future working arrangements

11. To mitigate both of these risks it was agreed that informal partnership working will be maintained with councilors meeting at least twice a year. The remit and terms of reference for this group are currently being developed and will include commitments on waste taken from the joint strategy. Officer groups will be maintained and meet at a suitable frequency reporting to a senior officer group who will meet quarterly.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to support:**
- (a) **the dissolution of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership in line with the termination date notified by the Host Authority;**
 - (b) **the proposed informal coordinated working arrangements to progress work between the County Council as Waste Disposal Authority and the Districts/City Councils as Waste Collection Authorities.**

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Background papers: Nil

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Annex 1: OWP Financial Liabilities for 14/15
(as presented at the OWP meeting on 4 April 2014)

OWP financial liabilities for 2014/15 (assuming Partnership dissolution in April 2014)

<u>Item</u>	<u>2014/15 Liability</u>	<u>2014/15 budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Salaries (and on-costs)	£41,943	£103,006	-£61,063	Notice period and redundancy costs for OWP Coordinator and Communications Officer. Notice period includes NI and pension contributions.
Training and support costs	£96	£2,720	-£2,624	Training courses booked for April 2014
OWP Employing Authority costs	£867	£3,502	-£2,635	One quarter of annual budget allocation for close down costs incurred April-Jun 2014
OWP Host Authority admin costs	£525	£2,123	-£1,597	One quarter of annual budget allocation for close down costs incurred April-Jun 2014
OWP Accounting Authority costs	£525	£2,123	-£1,597	One quarter of annual budget allocation for close down costs incurred April-Jun 2014
OWP Auditing Authority costs	£3,091	£3,122	-£31	2013/14 internal and external audits.
Sub-total Core Budget	£47,047	£116,595	-£69,548	
Development Budget				
Environmental Education	£60,964	£60,964	£0	OWP agreed on 17th Jan 2014 to offer a one year contract extension to Groundwork, who have accepted.
Home composting	£0	£11,100	-£11,100	
Communications Plan	£4,194	£70,000	-£65,806	Monthly payment to Global Radio for "Limited Edition" ad package. Annual subscription ends June 2014.
Keep Britain Tidy - countywide membership	£0	£0	£0	
Sub-total Development Budget	£65,158	£142,064	-£76,906	
Total Expenditure	£112,205	£258,659	-£146,454	
Reserve carried forward from 2012/13	£74,072			
Anticipated 2013/14 outturn to be added to reserve	£39,702			
Total budget required (with full use of existing reserves)	-£1,569			
Partner Council contributions required				
OCC	-£784.45			
Districts	-£156.89			per district