

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**THURSDAY 5TH NOVEMBER 2020**

The following questions were received from Mr. M Hunt CC

Wildflower Verges Schemes

“How many schemes have been agreed under the Leicestershire County Council Wildflower Verges scheme so far, with which Parish and District Councils commencing on what dates?”

Response:

The Wildflower Verges scheme last year proved very successful with 12 parishes taking part resulting in wildflower verges being produced in Broughton Astley, Sileby, Thurlaston, Sheepy Magna, Barkby & Barkbythorpe, Great Easton, Mountsorrel, Hallaton, Fleckney, Thurnby, Birstall and Kirby Muxloe.

This year's scheme is now open with the application deadline of 27th November 2020. We have already received expressions of interest from 12 parishes including Barlestone, East Goscote, Houghton on the Hill, Wymeswold, Glenfield, Countesthorpe, Hemington, Swinford, Glen Parva, Barrow upon Soar, Desford and Blaby. All locations will be assessed for suitability ready to be included in the grass cutting schedule starting March 2021.

“Resources and Waste Strategy & Recovery Standard (R1) for Energy from Waste Treatment

1. A paper came to committee in March 2019 outlining the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy; has there been any significant development of the strategy since and if so, where should we look to update ourselves?

Response

Government have taken forward commitments laid out in the Resources and Waste Strategy (released in December 2018). This includes consulting on major reforms to the way waste is managed, such as by introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, extending producer responsibility for packaging and consistent recycling collections. The second round of consultations with further detail on these is expected in March 2021 but the date is yet to be confirmed. Leicestershire County Council responded to the first round in May 2019. Government are seeking new powers through the Environment Bill to provide the legislative framework to realise the proposals to reform the waste system. This Environment Bill is now being considered again by a Public Bill Committee which is scheduled to report by Tuesday 1 December 2020. Further information can be found here;

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/environment.html>

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2. Amongst other detail the paper referred to: “the Government’s long term ambition is to maximise the amount of waste sent to recycling instead of incineration and landfill. They intend to drive greater efficiency of Energy from Waste (EfW) plants ...” (para 34); would this include the move to Recovery over Disposal characterised by so-called R1 operations as opposed to D10 operations for residual waste treatment?

Response

The majority of recently constructed Energy from Waste facilities, for treating residual waste, are designed to achieve the standards required to be considered a Recovery (R1) operation. These modern facilities generally can achieve such status through solely generating electricity from the burning of the waste, but significant amounts of waste heat are also generated from the process. Further efficiencies, are being encouraged by the Government, through supporting the capture of this heat and utilising it for beneficial purposes. Examples of such Combined Heat and Power (CHP) facilities exist in Nottingham and Sheffield where the heat is utilised in “District Heating Networks”.

3. I understand that to be classed as an R1 operation a waste treatment process (eg EfW/Incinerator) must meet the following criteria:
 - The combustion of waste must generate more energy than the consumption of energy by the process itself;
 - The greater part of the waste must be consumed during the operation;
 - The greater amount of the energy generated must be recovered and used (either as heat or electricity);
 - The waste must replace the use of a source of primary energy.

So where does Leicestershire County Council, which has been previously recorded as being technology neutral, stand on the move to R1, is this a standard we want our contractors to meet?

Response

Requiring all Contractors to meet R1 standards would move the Council away from the stated position of being ‘technology neutral’. R1 specifically relates to using waste principally as a fuel, or other means, to generate energy. There are other waste treatment processes that exist, such as mechanical biological treatment, that can manage residual waste but that would not fall within this criteria. Requiring R1

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status may not also be appropriate for all types of waste that might be managed by the Council due to its composition.

4. What are HM Government's current requirements to implement R1 standards and have they set a target for industry to move to R1 and away from Disposal standards?

Response

There is an obligation to consider and apply the Waste Hierarchy on any operator of a waste facility. As such, operators are required to move waste up the hierarchy where economically and technically feasible. There are no specific requirements on the operator to utilise R1 recovery processes over other disposal processes as this depends on the nature of the waste and, in some cases, disposal may be currently the only legally compliant method of managing such waste.

5. Are R1 standards a desirable or essential criteria of our present Residual Waste Procurement?

Response

For the residual waste procurement, it is set as a minimum requirement that any solution that burns or incinerates the waste (or a significant fraction of the waste) should utilise an R1 compliant facility as defined in the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC.

6. Are R1 standards required or expressly desired within the Local Waste Plan or will that be something we need to address in the next revision?"

Response

Government guidance for strategic plan making in respect of waste management is set out in government policy: the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the National Planning Policy for Waste (2014). Neither of these documents refer to R1 standard.

The adopted Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2019) contains policy W7 (Facilities for Energy and Value Recovery from Waste). This requires that planning permission will be granted for facilities that provide for energy or value recovery, subject to certain criteria. This criteria includes pre-sorting of waste, value recovery from by-products being maximised, energy recovery being maximised and any residue of the process being managed or made use of. As there is no requirement in national planning policy for facilities to meet R1 standards, this does not form part of the policy.

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Future revisions of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will need to conform to the latest government guidance (and any associated legislative requirements) at the time the plan is produced.

The R1 standard is defined in the European Union Waste Framework Directive and is a tool used by the Environment Agency (EA) for assessing the level of energy recovery from waste. It is unclear whether the standard will continue to be used by the EA after the country's exit from the European Union.