

The Milton Keynes Citizens' Advisory Group on Waste

FINAL REPORT



27 October 2005

This report has been developed for Milton Keynes Council

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Statement from *INFORM* Training & Communication

It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with Milton Keynes Citizen's Advisory Group over the past four and a half months. The amazing commitment of the group who re-arranged their lives, for example re-scheduling appointments, returning early from holiday and signing up to extra report writing sessions – and all this over and above the reading, research and consideration of issues between meetings – has resulted in a significant body of work relating to waste strategy in Milton Keynes.

The run up to the creation of this report has seen our role shift from facilitators to servants and gophers. This is exactly what we would have wished for and is a tribute to the confidence, skills and expertise that developed amongst the group.

This report captures just a flavour of how CAGoW reached its conclusions and represents over 750 hours of person time in the formal sessions, with at least the same again between formal meetings.

We trust this body of work will help MKC re-establish its unique position amongst local authorities as a leader by innovation. We look forward to hearing how it has helped guide the council to develop its new waste strategy.

Mo Shapiro & Mark Yoxon

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Native hardwood trees will be planted to make the CAGoW process carbon neutral (The CAGoW process is estimated to have produced 0.25 tonnes of carbon)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Report of the Citizens' Advisory Group on Waste - CAGoW

INTRODUCTION

The following report represents CAGoW's comments, conclusions and recommendations. It represents over 750 formal hours of facilitated consultation and deliberation, and most likely the same amount again informally.

As for all other UK local authorities, waste management represents a significant challenge in the years to come. A systematic and strategic approach is essential if the challenge is to be met in ways which satisfy diverse driving forces, including those set by the European Union, the UK Government and local needs. It must do this and seek to devise a waste strategy that improves the local and regional environment. If any approach is to succeed it must engage creatively with the local community. The CAGoW process, instigated by Milton Keynes Council (MKC), provided an innovative and proactive mechanism to take account of citizen's views and opinions.

It is intended that the guidance in this report will be used by MKC as it formulates its new waste strategy.

The comments, conclusions and recommendations are set out fully in section four and are summarised here:

Zero Waste (4.1)

As an aspiration it is commendable and needs to be backed up by considered actions at local and national level. All waste treatment options result in disposal needs. More infrastructure, education and incentivisation will be needed if more progress is to be made.

No incineration policy (4.2)

It is unfortunate that the recent rejected application for an incinerator in Bletchley was influenced by a relatively small number of people. Modern thermal waste treatment plant is safer and more efficient and should be considered as part of a wider deliberation of new technology options. Cost benefit analysis, relating treatment options to likely fines and potential council tax increases should be carried out. This needs to be supported by a wider public education programme.

Waste hierarchy (4.3)

The MK waste hierarchy seems effective and is well linked to EU and Government directives. It needs to take account of any technology or other changes at national and EU level. MKC should continue to be active lobbyists at national level, for example to deal with the increased environmental pressure of the South East house building programme. The hierarchy needs to be enforced to ensure local residents take account of it.

Reduction in the hazardousness of waste (4.4)

CAGoW is not convinced that this is happening. The public should be more effectively informed of what is and is not hazardous.

The report sets out five questions to illuminate the issues around hazardous waste issues in Milton Keynes.

Overall good environmental practice and sustainability (4.5)

The four aims set out by MKC are considered important aspirations. Thermal waste treatment should not be omitted from BPEO considerations, and regular review of associated transport options is needed to ensure good environmental practice.

Local self-sufficiency (4.6)

With the exception of hazardous waste and some recyclables, Milton Keynes is achieving its goal of self sufficiency. The effect of planned growth must be reviewed, and opportunities for co-operation with nearby local authorities explored.

An integrated waste management policy (4.7)

CAGoW believe the principles to be excellent as far as they go. Opportunities for recycling kitchen waste and excluded plastics and other varieties of waste should be investigated. More work is needed to examine modern technologies and seek guidance from other local authorities who have direct experience of such options. An inter-authority thermal waste policy should be considered.

Best value (4.8)

MKC should continue to make best use of Government grants and research the market for waste plant and operator companies. There is a need to persistently lobby Government for a national policy based on European and global best practice in waste management.

Flexibility and annual review (4.9)

CAGoW considered the existing review period to be effective. A balance between essential long (>20 year) contracts to encourage investment, and maintaining flexibility is difficult in practise but should be striven for.

Co-operation and partnerships (4.10)

Working together in partnership with other councils and, where appropriate, a diverse range of stakeholders such as environmental pressure groups, schools and businesses is essential to foster best practice. The generic outcomes of such work should be used in the process of lobbying Government.

Educating and influencing (4.11)

The excellent work with schools and the local community should continue. Key messages should be strengthened to displace outdated public perceptions. These include "More waste = higher local taxes" and consideration of advanced technologies and their safety. Information provision should mirror these key messages with audience focus and content of promotional material reviewed regularly. Lobbying at Government level on these issues as well as the special issues surrounding local expansion by engaging the waste industry and other councils should be extended.

"New resident starter packs" should be provided routinely and include generic MK waste management information, locations of CA sites and how to recycle.

Councillors should visit CA sites from time to time to "wave the flag".

Provision of composting facilities for council run care homes and sheltered housing should be considered.

Current targets (4.12)

Despite up to 67% of MSW being recyclable, the regional target of 40% (2010) & 60% (2025) are felt to be very ambitious and have significant cost implications. In CAGoW's opinion it is unlikely that they will be achieved without access to larger and more advanced treatment facilities.

Targets will need to be continuously assessed to take account of the expected population growth, alongside vigorous lobbying of Government. This will also mean taking into account "start-up" issues for new households, which is likely to generate more waste.

Once again, significant and effective progress is predicated on public acceptance and public participation. MKC should maintain and extend its awareness and education campaigns.

Options for dealing with waste in the future (4.13)

The number of different categories of materials diverted from the waste stream should be increased to include food waste and compostables.

CAGoW considers it essential to maintain weekly collections to ensure participation rates. Sacks should be more robust and bio-degradable. Reinstatement of community skips should be investigated.

MKC should consider compulsory recycling and realistic limitations on how much waste each household may produce. This needs to be implemented with sensitivity.

Partnerships with retailers should be investigated, for example local bring sites (bottle banks, etc.) and encouraging food retailers to address packaging waste issues.

All available treatment options, including thermal and those which have potential to generate power, must be considered.

CAGoW believes that some form of thermal treatment is essential if long term targets are to be met.

Selection of future waste management sites (4.14)

The long term planning for the growth of MK represents significant opportunities to ensure longer consultation, focus on MK residents needs where possible and strategic location of waste management sites in or near areas designated for expansion.

Consideration of a new facility and associated planning issues is an **urgent** priority given the finite life of the only local landfill site.

1.0 Introduction & Background

The process to establish a Citizens' Advisory Group on Waste (CAGoW) began in discussion with Milton Keynes Council (MKC) in April 2005 and the group was established in June 2005.

Milton Keynes Council has previously organised a number of one-off citizens' panels, gathering opinions on a number of issues relevant to the borough. It was felt however, that the most appropriate way to consult residents on the issues relating to waste management was to establish an independently facilitated panel and allow more time to develop the necessary knowledge and understanding of the complex issues surrounding waste management. In this way the CAGoW outcomes will then represent residents' informed and considered opinions.

CAGoW is an independent group, calling upon stakeholders and other interested parties as necessary to inform its view.

1.1 Recruitment

A representative sample of local residents was randomly recruited from the Milton Keynes Citizen's panel database to form the group. Recruitment was carried out by telephone and a correspondence questionnaire and the process was designed to ensure the formation of a group which represented a cross section of the population of Milton Keynes Borough.

Twenty-four citizens attended the opening briefing meeting addressed by MKC. The group then consolidated at twenty citizens for the remainder of the process. An individual attendance allowance was paid at each of the eleven meetings.

1.2 Format

INFORM Training & Communication was engaged by MKC to design and run the CAGoW process. They provided independent and impartial facilitation and support.

The CAGoW process was designed and organised to be open and participative with time for discussion, debate and interaction being paramount. For the most part, meetings took place at neutral venues.

Eleven full and four sub-group meetings took place between June and early October 2005. Meetings ranged from briefings by waste professionals, site visits, interviews, report writing and CAGoW deliberations on the outcomes of fact finding. This rigorous process represents over 750 hours of consultation and deliberation. It is estimated that at least the same time has been spent by CAGoW members between meetings on research, reading and telephone interviews. Figure 1 – The CAGoW Process provides an overview of the work of the group.

1.3 Method and results

This report describes the process developed for the consultation and sets out the key findings, recommendations and conclusions of the CAGoW.

The work involved substantial use of a range of stakeholder dialogue techniques. These were used both for the preparatory CAGoW sessions and subsequently to guide and develop the work.

1.4 Involvement

Care has been taken to ensure that the views of identified groups established by CAGoW early in the process, for example other high performing local authorities, have been considered.

2.0 The purpose of the work

The purpose of CAGoW was to advise Milton Keynes Council on its Municipal Waste Management Strategy (MWMS), prior to the re-tendering of waste collection and disposal contracts in 2006/7. For the Council, the MWMS will become a supplementary planning document in the Waste Development Plan (WDP). The MWMS and the WDP are being updated together.

The current MWMS was adopted by the Council in 2002, and requires updating with particular reference to the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS). The WDP replaces the Waste Local Plan which lasts until 2006.

The Council set CAGoW four key questions to respond to:

Citizens Advisory Group on Waste



We want your views on:

- **Our strategy policies & principles**
- **Targets for recycling/composting**
- **Options for future collection and disposal of waste**
- **Our approach to designating sites for waste management**



These were presented at the initial briefing meeting on the 9th June 2005 and supplementary PowerPoint slides provide detailed breakdown for each.

Subsequently, MKC Officers provided a comprehensive briefing document “Municipal Waste Strategy, background information for CAGoW”, expanding each area in detail.

3.0 The CAGoW Process

Following the briefing and task setting by MKC, CAGoW carried out its work in three phases:

Phase 1 Establish CAGoW and agree its operating criteria



Alongside this foundation work, general background information was gathered from three main sources:

- i. Detailed materials provided by MKC Officers
- ii Web and other searches by CAGoW members
- iii Establishing a CAGoW “Resource Box” (see Appendix 6.4)

Phase 2 Information gathering

A range of methods were used to gather information to extend members’ knowledge and understanding of waste management issues. These included:

- i. Briefing sessions – e.g. Defra / Enviros waste technologies briefing
- ii. Site visits – e.g. Newton Longville landfill site
- iii. Structured interviews – e.g. MKC Officers and Members. The group nominated three questioners for each interview and two members volunteered to note and report back the responses.
- iv. Correspondence – e.g. to top 5 local authorities

Phase 3 Making sense of the information

The final three meetings scoped and developed the CAGoW responses to the MKC brief. These findings, conclusions and recommendations are set out in Section 4 of this report.

These three phases of work are expanded in figures 1 – 3 overleaf and illustrate the process from its inception in June 2005 to the presentation of this report to MKC in October 2005.

Figure 1- The CAGoW Process

The Key Questions - We want your views on:

1. Our strategy policies & principles
2. Targets for recycling/composting
3. Options for future collection and disposal of waste
4. Our approach to designating sites for waste management

April

May
1st 1/2



Phase 1 – Establish CAGOW and agree its operating criteria

Induction & waste briefing Agree schedules & constraints

Agree “structure” of sessions Agree recording & reporting

Agree stakeholders, expertise and information sources



Phase 2 – Information gathering

Series of structured related interviews, visits with and information gathering with key stakeholders to provide knowledge and understanding of the issues

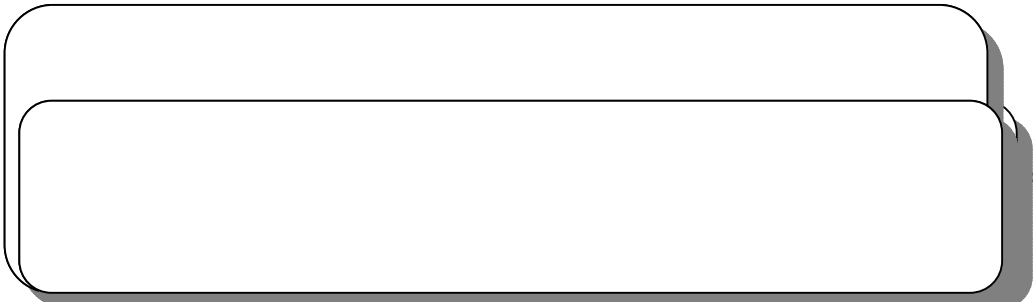
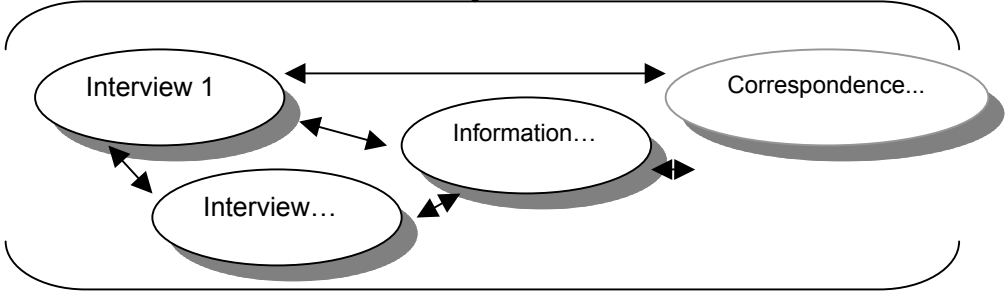


Figure 2 – Inputs to the CAGoW Process

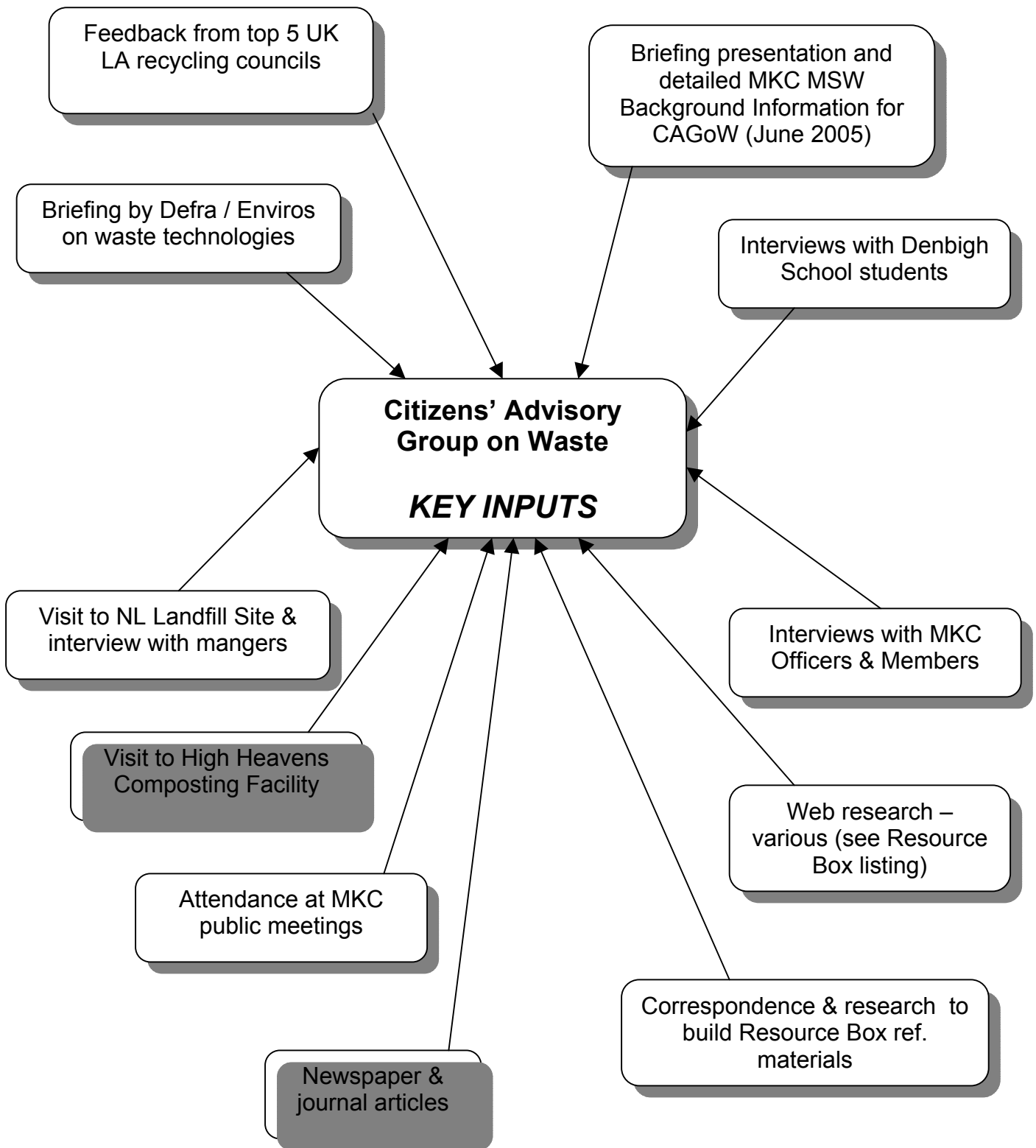
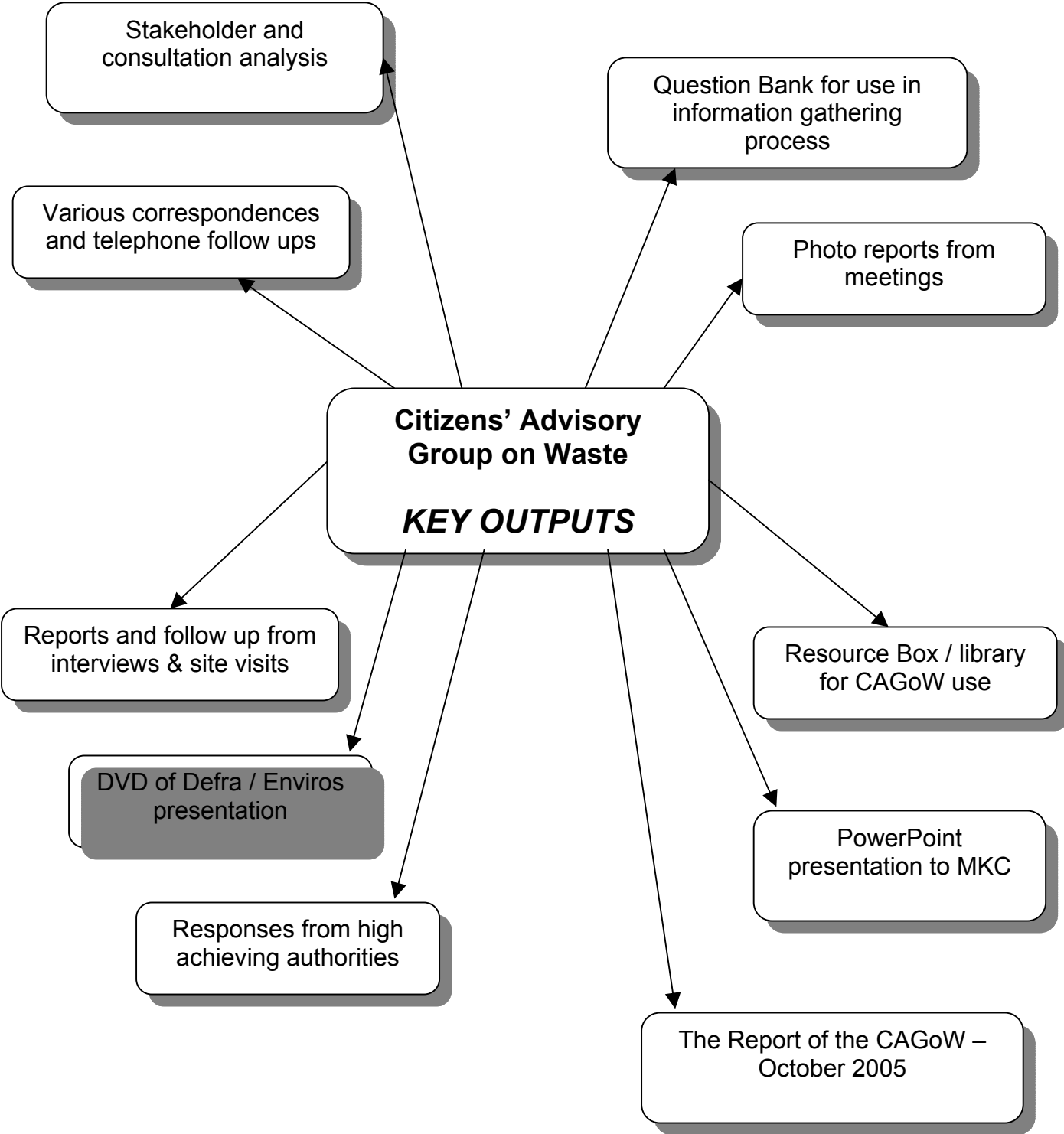


Figure 3 – Outputs from the CAGoW Process



4.0 Key Findings and Recommendations

These comments, conclusions and recommendations are based on the CAGoW considerations of the inputs set out in Table 2 above.

For clarity they are set out in order of the original MKC briefing presentation to CAGoW (09 June 2005) and by way of introduction are preceded by an overview of each area being discussed.

4.1 Zero Waste

- An aspiration like “zero accidents” or “zero defects”
- Means zero residual waste for disposal
- No target is currently set
- Milton Keynes Council cannot achieve it alone; national policy/legislative change is needed
- Milton Keynes Council has signed the Zero Waste Charter:

Zero Waste Charter (Signed by Milton Keynes Council in 2002)

Calls on Government to:

1. Set a target of Zero Waste for all municipal waste in Britain by 2020 (50% by 2010 and 75% by 2015).
2. Extend the doorstep collection of dry recyclables to every home in Britain without delay.
3. Provide doorstep collection of organic waste, and establish a network of local closed vessel compost plants.
4. Convert civic amenity sites into re-use and recycling centres.
5. Ban from 2006 the landfilling of biological waste which has not been treated and neutralised.
6. Ban any new thermal treatment of mixed waste and limit disposal contracts to a maximum of 10 years.
7. Extend the Landfill Tax into a disposal tax. Increase its level, and use it to fund the Zero Waste programmes.
8. Extend Producer Responsibility legislation to all products/materials that are hazardous or difficult to recycle.
9. Open up waste planning to greater public participation and end the commercial confidentiality of waste contracts.
10. Establish a Zero Waste Agency to promote resource efficiency and act as a guardian of public health.

CAGoW Comment

The Zero Waste Charter is presented as an idealistic aspiration that could, presumably, help people to focus on an eventual untreated landfill waste reduction. In practice, without significant innovative long-term programmes of advanced waste treatment, and action by central government to address a number of issues, it may achieve very little. Actions always speak louder than words.

6 Conclusion

CAGoW strongly supports the Zero Waste Charter. We wish to emphasise that all forms of waste treatment have end products which need to be disposed of; e.g. incineration has an end product which may be hazardous, but could well be neutral or inert.

Markets need to be found for recyclable and re-usable products, e.g. bikes, spectacles, etc.

Recommendations

- 4.1.1. Promote more re-use/recycling, e.g. old bikes to other children or play organisations – form local links with organisations such as Age Concern, who are operating a nationwide re-use / recycling programme.
- 4.1.2. More education of householders – e.g. beer mats could be distributed in local pubs as an information channel.
- 4.1.3. Give householders incentives to reduce waste.
- 4.1.4. Competitions to help areas achieve their recycling targets.
- 4.1.5. How about a slogan competition? (E.g. “Your council needs you – make war on waste!”)

4.2 No Incineration Policy, 9th July 2002

“That this Council is opposed to the incineration of commercial and household waste anywhere within the Borough of Milton Keynes and will maintain this position unless or until such time as residents are convinced that it is safe.”

CAGoW adopted the EC Waste Incineration Directive (2000/76) definition for incineration:

Incineration plant means any stationary or mobile technical unit and equipment dedicated to the thermal treatment of waste with or without recovery of the combustion heat generated. This includes the incineration by oxidation of waste as well as other thermal treatment processes such as pyrolysis gasification or plasma processes insofar as the substances resulting from the treatment are subsequently incinerated.

This definition of ‘incineration plant’ makes it clear that thermal treatment has to occur. It clarifies that technologies such as pyrolysis, gasification and plasma are included within this definition provided that the substances resulting from the first stage of treatment are themselves incinerated.

The aim of this Directive is to minimise the impact of negative environmental effects on the environment and human health resulting from emissions to air, soil, surface and ground water from the incineration and co-incineration of waste.

CAGoW Comment

Following the application for an incinerator in Bletchley, the Council’s policy was apparently influenced by a small number of people. There was no education of people about alternatives. Public perception is that there are still issues about safety from emissions from any incinerator, although the council’s own environmental officers considered the proposed facility to be safe.

Conclusions

Modern thermal waste treatment plants have large capacities, which may be made available to other councils, from whom MKC earn money. Modern thermal waste treatment plants are more efficient and safer than in the past. If thermal waste treatment or advance thermal treatment (ATT) is an option, work needs to be started soon. The Newton Longville site could also be used for ATT plant.

Recommendations

- 4.2.1. Infrastructure and access needs to be improved for existing landfill sites – *may need co-operation between adjacent councils. (E.g. railway line and new roads).*
- 4.2.2. New technology options should be evaluated.
- 4.2.3. Review of the No Incineration policy is paramount; the Council has a duty to evaluate all methods of waste treatment in order to reduce the risk of Council Tax increases triggered by landfill fines.
- 4.2.4. Local people must be educated not only on thermal waste treatment but on all other new methods of waste treatment.

4.3 Waste Hierarchy

Conventional

- Reduce
- Reuse
- Recycle/Compost
- Recover Energy
- Disposal/Landfill

Milton Keynes

- Reduce
- Reuse
- Recycle/Compost
- Reduce and Stabilise
 - Reducing hazardousness
 - May or may not recover energy
- Disposal/Landfill

CAGoW Comment

We consider it to be a good thing that the Waste Hierarchy has evolved effectively from the targets set by EU and government directives; but the Council should continuously return to Government (and the EU) for further consultations on policy direction as technology and other circumstances change.

However, the Waste Hierarchy policy is not being enforced, and local residents are not being encouraged to observe it.

Recommendations

- 4.3.1 The council must put pressure on central government to ensure that the enforced house building policy should take into account the increased environmental pressures.
- 4.3.2 More government cash must be provided to fund waste education campaigns and initiatives, covering both new and existing residents.

- 4.3.3 The Council should continue to provide free collection of large objects – if not, fly-tipping will only increase.

4.4 Reduction in the Hazardousness of Waste

“The Council will strive to reduce the hazardousness of waste which is produced and disposed of within the Borough of Milton Keynes.”

CAGoW Comment

We have not heard any evidence from MK officers or councillors about reduction of such waste within the boundaries.

Conclusions

Newton Longville landfill management tell us that there is insufficient volume of hazardous waste to justify opening a new Hazardous Waste unit. It appears therefore that the Council’s policy in this area is effective.

Recommendations

- 4.4.1. The public should be better educated on what is and is not hazardous waste, and how it is treated.
- 4.4.2. The capacity of current hazardous waste arrangements should be reviewed for the projected housing expansion.

CAGoW feels that further questions need to be answered, in the area of Hazardous Waste management. This process should not delay action on our report, but we hope that these questions will be followed up on as soon as is reasonably possible, and the answers used to inform and modify the Council’s Hazardous Waste policy as appropriate.

1. Where does the Borough’s hazardous waste currently go?
2. How much does its disposal cost the Council?
3. How much do we create?
4. By what means is the council ‘striving’ to reduce it?
5. What are the locations of ‘old’ hazardous waste sites in the Borough? (E.g. Bletchley, until July 2004; are there others, possibly unregistered?)

4.5 Overall Good Environmental Practice and Sustainability

Includes:

- Reviewing Transport and energy use
- Use of the “proximity principle”
- “Best Practicable Environmental Option”
- Conservation of good quality agricultural land, and resources such as minerals and water.

CAGoW Comment

We agree that all four aims are important and should be striven for. However, it appears that we have not asked any searching questions on the principles.

Extra transport usage will reduce with the opening of the rebuilt recycling plant in MK.

Recommendations

- 4.5.1. Thermal waste treatment should not be omitted from the consideration of BPEO.
- 4.5.2. A regular review of transport options is required to ensure the sustainability of good environmental practice, e.g.:
 - Using lorries to transport waste may not be as environmentally friendly as building new facilities, or utilising existing rail links or canals
 - New transport technologies (e.g. hybrid electric/diesel) may become viable in future.

4.6 Local self-sufficiency

“Milton Keynes will aim for self sufficiency in waste disposal within its own borders. Cross border movements are not excluded, but generally should not be more than 30 miles (recyclables excepted).”

CAGoW Comment

It would appear that MK is achieving its goal of waste disposal self sufficiency, in that movements of local waste are confined within its boundaries, with the exception of hazardous waste and some recyclables.

Recommendations

- 4.6.1. The effect of the projected growth of Milton Keynes on this strategy must be reviewed
- 4.6.2. Co-operation with nearby authorities may help overall good environmental practice, even at the expense of self sufficiency; but in order to achieve this, the Council would have to review its No Incineration policy.

4.7 An Integrated Waste Management Policy

“The Council will use the principle of ‘Integrated Waste Management’ – i.e. the integration of different waste management methods – to give the greatest environmental benefit.”

CAGoW Comment

The principles used at present are excellent as far as they go.

Recommendations

- 4.7.1. Look into recycling of kitchen waste – encourage methods such as vermiculture, or smaller composting bins for flat-dwellers
- 4.7.2. Examine modern technologies, including incineration; pyrolysis and gasification (a plant is being built in Bristol); and “Ecodeco” (a fluidised bed technology, which will be used in two London boroughs).
- 4.7.3. Consider recycling margarine boxes, plastic bottle caps, and other varieties of waste that are currently not recyclable in MK.

- 4.7.4. Examine solutions used by other councils that are already successfully practising the above.
- 4.7.5. The report “Delivering Landfill Directive: The role of new and emerging technologies”, commissioned by the Strategy Unit, is recommended reading for Council Members.
- 4.7.6. Integrate with Buckinghamshire waste, by negotiating and agreeing an inter-authority thermal waste policy.

4.8 Best Value

“The Council will obtain best value by securing economic, efficient and effective services”

CAGoW Comment

The best sustainable options for waste management which take into account BPEO, will rarely be the cheapest solutions. Invariably, such lower-cost methods can become unsatisfactory and more expensive to remedy.

“To know the price of everything is to know the value of nothing.”

Recommendations

- 4.8.1. As stated above: make best use of Government grants, trading allowances, grant for electricity production, PPI., etc.
- 4.8.2. Research the market for plant and operator companies, perhaps via independent professional research consultants
- 4.8.3. There is a need for national policy: examine superior waste management strategies achieved in other countries, and lobby Government on the success of such systems.
- 4.8.4. A national strategy for large regional or national treatment plants may achieve economies of scale, but would require a review of the self-sufficiency policy.

4.9 Flexibility and Annual Review

“Annual review by officers, 3 year review by councillors”

CAGoW Comment

These review periods are reasonable and sensible.

Recommendations

- 4.9.1. Write contracts with clear objectives and criteria for review.
- 4.9.2. Long term – 20+ years – is essential to provide contractors with sufficient incentive
- 4.9.3. Include effective deterrent for non-compliance
- 4.9.4. Flexibility may be difficult, but should be striven for. Contracts must allow commercial contractors to share in any financial benefit from changing circumstances and new technology options, and for the Council to bear a fair share of any burden imposed.

4.10 Co-operation and Partnerships

“Where appropriate, form partnerships with voluntary, private & other public sector organisations”

Recommendations

- 4.10.1. Work together with other councils and voluntary pressure groups (e.g. Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Age Concern) to exert pressure on central government for legislation to empower councils to take financial actions, (e.g. local taxes on plastic bags, council tax variation as an incentive to better recycling)
- 4.10.2. Partner with businesses to encourage “green” initiatives – more ‘Bring’ sites, businesses collecting local domestic recyclable waste, bale cardboard & wood as Woolworths used to, etc.
- 4.10.3. Help schools to re-use unwanted wood, plastics, etc. for resistant materials lessons
- 4.10.4. Partner with voluntary pressure groups to publicise the value of safe heat treatment technologies
- 4.10.5. Partner with large retailers (liaise with WRAP) to put pressure on manufacturers to reduce packaging.

4.11 Educating and Influencing

“The Council will use its influence, particularly in its roles as an educator, an information provider, a purchaser, a major supplier of contracts, a planner and an enforcer to increase the effectiveness of its waste strategy”

Recommendations

Education

- 4.11.1 Continue education push in schools – “get them early”. Children are generally very environmentally aware, this **must** continue to be encouraged. Also, make sure that the schools themselves practise what they preach, and that children can see for themselves that recycling and re-use is working.
- 4.11.2 C.A. site operatives need better training and education on waste management, so that they can clearly explain what can be accepted, where to put it, and why.
- 4.11.3 Work with the waste industry to educate MPs, other Councils and the public on the facts of modern thermal waste treatment or ATT plants – most people’s perception of their nature is very outdated.
- 4.11.4 CAGoW feels strongly that the policy that “Incineration [will not be adopted] unless or until such time as residents are convinced that it is safe” is effectively burying our head in the sand unless positive action is taken to influence public opinion. The Council must look at all the advanced technologies now being deployed, and educate the public in their safety and efficiency.

Information Provision

- 4.11.5 Let the public know that non-incinerator heat treatments (e.g. gasification, pyrolysis) are safe when properly managed, if they will not accept an incinerator. They need to know of other options.
- 4.11.6 Publicity on the locations of Civic Amenity sites could be a lot better than it is.
- 4.11.7 Create 'new resident starter packs', with details of the waste management strategy amongst other things. We understand that these are already provided for new estates, but estate agents could be used as a delivery channel for a similar pack for people who move into existing houses – the estate agents can get good PR by helping with the council's green initiative.
- 4.11.8 Keep pushing the message that more waste produced equals higher Council Tax, as a direct result of the government's strategy on fining Councils that do not reach their limits.
- 4.11.9 Keep publicising what can and cannot be recycled, reused or reduced, and how to store it in the boxes & bags.
- 4.11.10 Regularly review waste management publicity leaflets, and other publicity channels, for continuing accuracy to take account of legislative and technological changes.
- 4.11.11 "Wave the flag". Councillors should visit Civic Amenity sites from time to time, in their official capacity, to tell the staff that their efforts are appreciated.

Purchasing and Contracts

- 4.11.12 Ensure that all the Council's contracts have appropriate "green" clauses, with relevant incentives and penalties.

Planning

- 4.11.13 Maintain the pressure on central Government to ensure that the plans to expand Milton Keynes by a further 70,000 houses requires funding for sufficient infrastructure.

Enforcement

- 4.11.14 In council-run care housing & sheltered housing, provide central composting facilities for the homes' gardens.
- 4.11.15 "Practice what you preach": in council-run community centres, there must be provision for recycling.

(Extras, if not listed elsewhere, as an Enforcement point)

If and when suitable legislation makes it possible, create local competitive schemes for better waste management, using (for example) Council Tax rebates or extra money to improve local public gardens, to reward effective neighbourhoods. This could be based on the scheme to recover Council Tax from non-paying residents, which was publicised in the Citizen of Tuesday 6th September.

4.12 Current Targets

Recycling

2 Statutory targets:

To recycle 33% of household waste by 2003/4 (24% achieved)

To recycle 36% of household waste by 2006 (currently 26.5% in 2004/5)

Capped at 30% (by DEFRA)

Landfill

- Objective: To comply with EC Landfill Directive
- UK has challenging targets
- Must reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) landfilled to:
 - 75% of its 1995 level by 2010
 - 50% of its 1995 level by 2013
 - 35% of its 1995 level by 2020

CAGoW Comment

In view of the recent capping of the MKC recycling target at 30% - apparently because we could struggle to reach 36% by 2006 – it would appear that the regional 2010 target of 40% and 2025 target of 60% are very ambitious. Lowering the bar is not the best way to reach a challenging target. It is estimated that 67% of MSW is recyclable.

Achieving the BMW landfill targets will require access to larger and more advanced treatment facilities; this is self-evident. Failure to do so will result in increased Council Tax to pay the fines.

Recommendations

- 4.12.1 These targets will have significant cost implications – economies of scale derived from large advanced facilities could help offset costs, and attract funding by private initiative or by PPPIV.
- 4.12.2 The Council needs to continuously assess targets based on the expected growth of MK. Consideration must be given to the 'start-up' waste of new houses – packaging from house moves and new appliances, etc., as well as builders' waste. The Council must continue to make strong representations to Government on this subject.
- 4.12.3 The planned growth and the demographic make-up of MK are unique in the UK; this must be reflected in targets and extra funding. Keep up the pressure on Government to recognise this fact.
- 4.12.4 We understand that many parts of the EU and USA achieve much higher recycling targets, often with shorter development lead times. The planning process must be improved to shorten UK lead times, which will attract more investors. Government must be lobbied to permit this.
- 4.12.5 In the long run, significant progress relies on public acceptance and participation. A good way to achieve this might be to work with celebrities.

- At the local level, publicise good practice by celebrities who live in MK
- At the national level, work with other councils to get the issues into the plotlines of soaps such as East Enders – if such things were discussed (informatively) in the Queen Vic, *including the likely effect of landfill fines on Council Tax*, the debate would reach a lot more people than articles in the MK Citizen!

4.13 Options for Dealing with Waste in the Future

- Collection Options
 - Change materials collected for recycling / composting?
 - Change frequency of collection?
 - Change containers used for collection?
- Treatment Options
 - Large range of treatment options
 - Subject of forthcoming “teach-in”

Recommendations

Collection

- 4.13.1. The number of different categories of materials recycled should be increased – it should be borne in mind that even if a treatment process is not in itself economic, its marginal cost may still be less than the fines that are the alternative; so the Council might subsidise such treatments and still save money overall. There should not be too many categories, to avoid confusing householders. We suggest categories such as:
- Glass (must be separate for safety reasons)
 - Dry recyclables that can be mechanically sorted (paper, card, plastic, metal)
 - Food waste & compostables
 - Hazardous items such as batteries, motor oil, paint, etc. – if these were regularly collected on the normal round, it would prompt better participation than requiring such items to be taken to a C.A. site.
 - Large items (as already collected)
- 4.13.2. We consider it essential to maintain weekly collections – longer intervals or alternating collections breed confusion and reduce participation.
- 4.13.3. It appears that boxes or ‘wheelie bins’ are more popular than sacks. If sacks are used, they should be more robust while remaining biodegradable – e.g. cornstarch is used as a refuse sack material in parts of North America.

- 4.13.4. The Council should give consideration to reinstating the use of community skips – people who cannot (or cannot be bothered to) travel to C.A. sites will often still use skips if these are provided.
- 4.13.5. The Council should consider compulsory recycling, and (realistic) limitations on how much waste each household may produce without attracting a charge – but this must be approached sympathetically so as not to encourage fly-tipping. It is probably more productive to emphasise incentives for good practice rather than penalties for bad practice.
- The current charging pilot scheme in the London Borough of Barnet should be monitored.
- 4.13.6. Education (of the public, but also of Council members) is important to reinforce continuing improvements in waste management.
- 4.13.7. Adopt the North American principle that requires ‘fast food’ sellers to collect waste that derives from their products when it is discarded near them. (McDonalds, for example, already do this in the UK).
- 4.13.8. Encourage large local retailers to offer space for bring sites (bottle banks, clothing banks, etc.). Similarly, encourage large employers to site such facilities in their estates for their own staff to use. An incentive might be to create a ‘good corporate citizenship’ award with plenty of positive publicity for participating businesses.

Treatment

- 4.13.9. All available treatment options (including thermal) must continue to be considered while current strategies are pursued, and new technology monitored.
- After the DEFRA “teach-in”, we have considered all the options, e.g. Anaerobic Digestion, Mechanical Biological Treatment, Ecodeco, Materials Recycling Facilities, etc. **It is our considered opinion, if the long term targets are to be achieved, that some form of thermal waste treatment will be unavoidable.**
- 4.13.10. Processes which can generate electricity and thus benefit from ROCs (Renewables Obligation Certificates), should always be considered. Options include:
- gasification
 - pyrolysis
 - anaerobic digestion (A-D)
- We are informed that electricity production at Newton Longville will shortly be producing around 10Mw of electricity, bringing in an income estimated to be in excess of £3.5m per annum.

- 4.13.11. An A-D plant is likely to be the cheapest option to bring online in a short timescale if collection of food waste is to be continued after the pilot. Other technologies can then be monitored as they move on from pilot schemes.

4.14 Selection of Future Waste Management Sites

To provide sufficient sites for waste management facilities of the right type, in the right place, at the right time

Recommendations

- 4.14.1. We recommend a longer consultation period than has previously been typical, giving time to educate and inform the public and counteracting claims that plans are being 'railroaded through'.
- 4.14.2. The interests of local residents should be put first *where possible*. Undue influence from outside pressure groups in public meetings could be avoided, for example, by issuing 'voting slips' to residents in advance of such meetings.
- 4.14.3. Treatment plants should be designed to have the minimum realistic level of impact on landscape, and to be as eye-pleasing as is reasonably possible.
- 4.14.4. The council must ensure that the location of Civic Amenity sites is included in the long term planning for the growth of MK, right from the beginning.
- 4.14.5. Consider construction of waste management sites in or near areas designated for city expansion; then new residents arriving later in the area will have less grounds for protest, as the location of the sites will be an existing part of their decision to move here. This will be all the more so if plants are built as CHP (Combined Heat & Power) facilities, thus reducing local household heating bills.
- 4.14.6. Given that the Newton Longville landfill site is estimated by WRG to have only 10 years' useful lifetime remaining, consideration must be given to where the next 'big hole in the ground' might be placed.
- 4.14.7. If there are to be no new sites of significant capacity constructed within the borough boundaries, then planning for access to sites elsewhere must start immediately – planning permission must be sought, transport infrastructure built, and a review of the self-sufficiency principle must be undertaken.

5.0 Monitoring

Over the past four months the Citizens' Advisory Group on Waste has developed significant expertise, as demonstrated by this report, on municipal waste strategy issues. The group would welcome the opportunity to continue its involvement with MKC to review progress in the evolution of the new council waste strategy and as a sounding board.

It is suggested that CAGoW meet with MKC in the spring of 2006 to review progress.