

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
12 SEPTEMBER 2016

DRY RECYCLING CREDITS MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY SAVINGS

DRAFT MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which sought members' views on the proposals to achieve savings on dry recycling credits identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed by the County Council. Subsequent to publishing of the report, a report to the Cabinet on the same issue had been published, which the Committee also considered as part of its deliberations. A copy of both reports is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. B. L. Pain CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Waste Management to the meeting. The Lead Member emphasised that the new approach to dry recycling credits had been under review since May 2015 and an ongoing dialogue had taken place with the district councils since this time. The proposals outlined in both reports, had followed a lengthy consultation process. It was noted that none of the options contained in the report were without risk, however the Council and Department were required to reduce their budgets to meet the Council's MTFS and the wider emerging financial challenge and the recommended way forward to pursue Option 4 would achieve the largest saving of all the options considered. The Lead Member, in recognising the difficult position, suggested that a new way of incentivising dry recycling credits was required at a national level as waste levels were known to be on the increase.

Arising from a discussion it was noted that the proposed direction of travel had been proposed with the County Council's challenging financial position in mind. The district councils had been involved in an ongoing dialogue regarding the plans, via the delivery of a number of workshop sessions. The pursuit of Option 4 had been independently assessed as balancing risk against the potential for significant savings.

A view was expressed that the high point of recycling levels in the County had probably been reached and that this was as a result of the public being educated to separate their recycling from their landfill waste. Though Option 2 would not achieve the same level of savings as Option 4, it would achieve the Department's initial savings target of just over £1 million. It was suggested that by pursuing Option 2, the Council would be giving the district councils the benefit of time to acclimatise and think through their approach going forward. A further view was expressed that, the pursuit of Option 4 may lead to an increase in tipping charges for the Council were the public to become less inclined to recycle.

Some members also felt that more needed work needed to be done with the manufacturers of products and packaging in an effort to reduce the potential for waste at source.

It was subsequently moved by Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC and seconded by Mr. G. A. Boulter CC:-

“That the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports ‘Option 2: Reach local agreements to reduce the value of the recycling credits’ as outlined on paragraph 30 of the Cabinet report.”

In response to the concerns expressed, the Lead Member suggested that, as a result of not being a single waste authority, the Council was unable to look at the whole system for waste collection and disposal. The sovereignty of the districts as waste collection authorities therefore had to be recognised. He added that residents had become frustrated by the varying collection practices across different districts, though the Council would continue to promote recycling in an effort to reduce landfill waste.

A view was expressed that the circumstances under which the proposals were made reflected very different needs for recycling which the current strategy no longer addressed and the approach offered by Option 4 was a long-term one that was sustainable.

Accordingly, an amendment was moved by Mr. D. Jennings CC and seconded by Mr. J. G. Coxon CC: -

That the motion be amended to read as follows:-

“That the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports ‘Option 4: The County Council to procure capacity for all Waste Collection Authority dry recycling and direct the Waste Collection Authorities to use it’ as outlined on paragraph 32 of the Cabinet report.”

The amendment was put and not carried, three members voting for the amendment and six against.

The original motion was then put and carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports ‘Option 2: Reach local agreements to reduce the value of the recycling credits’ as outlined on paragraph 30 of the Cabinet report;
- (b) That the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 16 September.