

1. WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

- **Numbers of Businesses in UK.** According to the latest available DTI/SBS SME statistics, there are 4,360,475 businesses operating in the UK. Of these 4,323,450 or 99% are small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. There are 28,820 medium-sized businesses with between 50 and 249 employees and only 8,200 large businesses with more than 250 employees.
- **Business vs Household Waste.** Defra News Release 128/06: states that for every ONE tonne of household waste produced, a further TEN tonnes of commercial and industrial waste is produced.
- **Commercial Waste is growing.** Defra News Release adds *“modelling indicates that commercial waste is likely to grow from 2002 levels by 13% by 2010, 33% by 2015 and 52% by 2020.”*
- **Small Enterprises produce 40%.** The Defra Consultation Document (p74) that businesses with less than 50 employees produced about 40% of commercial and industrial waste in 2002/03 and there has been no significant change in this figure over time. They add *“smaller businesses often have particular difficulties in obtaining affordable recycling and recovery services.”*
- **Government Funding for waste reduction.** Defra has funded a Business Resource Efficiency & Waste Programme (BREW) with £95 million to cover green business support services – including WRAP, the Waste and Resources Action Programme with a range of projects including SME Waste Collection Pilots and market development for business wastes.
- **SME Recycling Feasibility Study.** WRAP stated recently that *“SMEs have often found themselves with limited recycling services due to the lack of cost effectiveness of small scale collections. Lack of incentive within existing financial and logistical arrangements and lack of internal resources and capacity to implement and manage schemes.”* They are initiating several feasibility studies.
- **North Yorkshire waste production.** Currently about 350,000 tonnes of waste are produced each year and this is rising by approximately 3.5%. North Yorkshire is the 6th largest domestic waste producer per head in the UK and around 70% of all UK waste is currently sent to landfill.
- **North Yorkshire & Harrogate Current Policy.** Locally all the emphasis appears to be on Household Waste collection and recycling schemes in order to reduce landfill tax penalties on the District and County Councils. The District Council has invested heavily in kerb-side collection system for segregated household waste whilst the County Council have upgraded the Wetherby Road “Tip” that is now designated as a Household Waste Recycling Centre – and is about to open a second on the north west side of Harrogate – from which Traders are excluded at busy times and charged for recycling at any time.
- **North Yorkshire & Harrogate Future Policy.** Both the County and the District have undertaken extensive consultation exercises during the past year but their emphasis is entirely on household waste recycling. They have stated categorically that neither the District nor County Council have any obligation to collect, recycle or dispose of commercial waste from business premises without making a charge for the service. The fact that businesses pay Business rates is irrelevant in their view.
- **Future Government Policy.** The current Defra Consultation Document “Review of England’s Waste Disposal Strategy shows that the Government recognises the need for local authorities to cooperate in the handling of commercial business waste (“non-municipal”) in conjunction with the handling of “municipal” or household waste. This will require a significant change in our local Council Policy.
- **Action Plan Objectives:** The purpose of this Action Plan is to outline a new local strategy whereby the smaller businesses that predominate in Harrogate District could be encouraged to sort and recycle waste materials if the District and the County could be persuaded to collect and dispose of them economically, along the lines proposed by the Government’s new Strategy.

2. WHAT SHOULD HARROGATE BUSINESSES DO ABOUT WASTE?

All businesses should endeavour to recycle as much of their waste material as possible for two principle reasons: Firstly to conserve natural resources and energy and secondly to reduce the volume of landfill.

Segregation of Waste

We recommend that all Harrogate businesses large and small should segregate their waste materials into the following categories as appropriate to the business and collect it tidily in suitable containers awaiting collection or delivery to the HWRC.

- **Paper.** Clean waste printed paper, wrapping paper, magazines, leaflets, flyers, catalogues and newspapers – ideally stored in empty photocopier paper boxes. (Note: Shredded paper and Telephone Directories are not acceptable for recycling.)
- **Cardboard.** Clean empty boxes flattened, stacked and tied into a bundle.
- **Plastics.** Clean empty bags, boxes, bottles, tubes, plastic cups, etc – with any non-plastics caps removed. Ideally stored in large plastic bags.
- **Cartridges.** Empty laser and ink jet toner cartridges – ideally in their original cartons for re-use.
- **Glass.** Empty bottles drained of fluid with any metal caps removed - ideally stored in re-usable plastic crates as originally supplied. (But NOT broken glass, fluorescent lights, bulbs etc.
- **Aluminium.** Empty drinks cans, washed food trays, washed foil bottle tops, aerosols, etc – ideally stored in a large plastic bag.
- **Heavy Metals.** Scrap engineering components, metal offcuts, empty steel cans, drums, etc – ideally stored in a small skip.
- **Textiles.** Old clothing, fabrics, curtains, cloths, etc. – ideally in a large fabric sack.
- **Green Waste.** Grass cuttings, Hedge cuttings, twigs small branches, leaves, cut flowers, prunings, plants, etc – ideally in a proper brown-lidded Green Waste Recycling Bin.

Collection Services

Harrogate Chamber is compiling a list of Companies who will collect the various types of segregated waste materials for recycling. This service may be free or charged at a nominal rate, depending upon the quality, quantity and frequency of collection. Details of any known collectors should be passed to the Chamber so that their requirements and contact details can be posted on the Chamber Web site for all to use.

Waste Disposal Services

We propose that the Harrogate Borough Council and the North Yorkshire County Council should both offer a FREE disposal service for waste materials from small businesses that cannot be economically recycled, as detailed in the next Section of the Action Plan.

3. WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCIL DO ABOUT BUSINESS WASTE?

Currently both the Harrogate Borough Council and the North Yorkshire County Council have stated categorically that they have no obligation to collect, recycle or dispose of commercial waste from business premises without making a charge for the service. The fact that businesses pay Business rates is irrelevant in their view.

In 2005, Harrogate Borough Council published and consulted on a draft Waste Action Plan 2005-2010 with admirable objectives BUT it virtually ignored business waste recycling or disposal – despite the fact that national statistics quoted in Section 1 indicate that it is ten times the volume of domestic waste.

We propose that both Borough and County Councils should extend their present “household” waste collection and recycling service to include small businesses for whom commercial recycling is neither practical nor economic due to the small quantities involved at any one location. This will help the Councils to exceed the increasing Government-set recycling targets for the percentage of waste which is recycled. The Council has just achieved the target of 21% for 2005/06 whereas they only achieved 14.5% in 2003/04. These targets are expected to increase in the future to 30% for 2007/08 and 40%-50% from 2009/2010 onwards. It would seem virtually impossible to achieve such high levels of recycling for household refuse alone.

Harrogate Borough Council is urged to offer small businesses a collection service as an extension of their current Household Collection Service for recyclable paper, metal and green waste.

Harrogate Borough Council currently has over 100 Mini Recycling Centres with facilities to recycle glass, cans, paper and textiles collected in large plastic dump bins or skips. They are urged to extend these Mini Recycling Centres to cover the main Business Parks and Industrial Estates in the District

North Yorkshire County Council currently penalise any traders who wish to deliver materials for recycling or waste disposal at their Household Waste Recycling Centres such as the Stonefall Site on Wetherby Road. They are urged to grant exemption from such charges to any businesses who take to the site modest quantities of segregated waste materials for recycling. As at present a limitation of permitted vehicle size is a simple way of restricting this free service to small quantities of waste material

4. WHAT SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT DO ABOUT BUSINESS WASTE?

Historically, Government policy on waste disposal has been largely focussed on a penalty regime comprising Landfill Taxes on major businesses and waste disposal companies plus sanctions on local authorities who fail to achieve recycling targets. According to a Defra News Release, Landfill Tax rose from £18 to £21 per tonne in April 2006 and it is due to increase by at least £3 per year until a rate of £35 per tonne is reached.

Since publication of the Government’s Waste Strategy 2000, a substantial range of new policy instruments has been introduced, including the landfill tax escalator, the landfill allowance trading scheme, the aggregates levy, regulations to implement a number of EU directives on waste in specific sectors, including packaging and vehicles, and a new planning policy statement covering waste.

More recently, new institutional arrangements have been established, aimed among other things at strengthening capacity and improving efficiency in local authorities, developing markets for waste materials and increasing public awareness of waste, notably through Defra’s waste implementation programme (WIP) and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) with additional funding for local authorities (including the Private Finance Initiative).

In his foreword to the Consultation Document, the Minister for Waste Management Ben Bradshaw said that the Government needed to adapt and broaden their approach in three key respects:-

- *Firstly, we need to produce less waste in the first place. We have made only limited progress so far in decoupling waste creation from economic growth. We need to put more emphasis on buying and making products which create less waste and in providing the right signals to achieve this.*

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- *Secondly, we need a more joined-up approach to waste, especially to secure more integration in the way we deal with waste treated by local authorities and waste which comes from business.*
- *Finally, and most importantly for securing long-term sustainability, we need to shift our thinking towards treating waste more clearly as a resource. So materials that are left over after they have been first used, whether by households or businesses, should be seen not so much as a problem but far more as an opportunity, for re-use or conversion, into whatever form will give us the most economic, social and environmental gains.*

Waste prevention

This already stands at the top of the waste hierarchy but the Government admits that only limited progress has been made in decoupling waste generation from economic growth. This needs to be tackled as part of a Sustainable Consumption and Production agenda and further action is proposed on:

- prioritising products where waste impacts need to be tackled;
- extending product stewardship by producers and retailers and reducing waste impacts through eco-design;
- promoting re-use and re-manufacture with support from the BREW programme;
- further engaging businesses (including SMEs) to stimulate resource efficiency through advice services.

Waste Recycling

For the waste that is produced there is a need to recover more resources. Amongst other planned actions the Government have made specific proposals for:

- seeing waste as a resource and extending a recycling and re-use culture beyond the home to workplaces, shopping and leisure activities;
- piloting more recycling services for small businesses;
- continuing to develop markets for recycled materials.

Regional Responsibilities

The Government plans to strengthen regional working including better partnership between local authorities at the regional and sub-regional level in procuring waste management facilities. Specifically this includes the following objectives:

- funding the Regional Development Agencies to co-ordinate business waste and resource management at regional level in partnership with local authorities and private and voluntary sector;
- highlighting sustainable waste management in the non-municipal sectors with greater integration of planning and procurement between municipal and some non-municipal waste;
- recognizing that non-municipal wastes are over ten times the size of household waste including commercial, industrial, construction, demolition, mining and quarry wastes which have varying characteristics;
- creating a wider strategic role for local authorities (in partnerships) to facilitate more integrated management of different waste streams;
- improving the interaction of producers and compliance organisations with local authorities to deliver EU and national targets.

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