

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Waste Strategy Working Group** held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 29 March 2018 at 2.00 pm.

Present:-

Mr J Gray
Mr A Henderson
Mrs L MacDonald

Mr H Morrison
Mrs T Robertson
Mr G Ross

In attendance:-

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mr M MacLeod, Head of Planning and Environment, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental and Amenity Services, Community Services
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service
Mr A Bentley, Principal Waste Management Officer, Community Services
Mr E Huc, Waste Management Officer (Strategy), Community Services
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Service

Also in attendance:-

Mr D Jamieson } SLR Consulting
Mr M Nevin }

Business

1. Appointment of Chair

Mr A Henderson, having been duly nominated and seconded, was unanimously appointed Chairman.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce, Mr I Cockburn and Ms M Smith.

3. Declarations of Interest

The Working Group **NOTED** that Mr G Ross had declared a financial interest in any item concerning environmental matters as a relative worked for Environmental Consultants in England but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in discussion.

4. Remit

The Working Group **NOTED** that, as agreed at the Highland Council on 8 March 2018, the Remit of the Working Group was to oversee the key actions in relation to the Council's Waste Strategy.

5. Waste Strategy – Briefing Note

There had been circulated Report No WS/01/18 dated January 2018 by the Director of Community Services.

The issue of Waste Management had been considered by the Highland Council for some time and this had led to an Outline Business Case being prepared. The preferred option was for waste to be treated in a centrally located facility in the Highlands to create Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) for export. Following on, a Final Business Case had then been prepared considering three options, namely:-

Option 1 – Do minimum

Option 2 – A centralised Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) recovering recyclates and exporting RDF

Option 3 - Constructing an Energy from Waste (EfW) facility collocated on the same site as an MRF, using the RDF generated there.

The consultants had developed costs, based over a 25 year period, detailing the risks associated with each option and the next steps the Council needed to take. However, one of the most pressing issues was the ban on landfilling waste from 1 January 2021, only 2¾ years away. Consequently the proposal was to have a report submitted to the next Environment, Development and Infrastructure (EDI) Committee on 17 May 2018 to:-

- a. update the Committee on interim arrangements being implemented to ensure that the Council's would continue to meet its responsibilities under the relevant legislation; and
- b. obtain agreement on longer term proposals for managing the Council's waste.

The Working Group **NOTED** the Briefing Note.

6. Presentation by SLR on Recommendations within Final Business Case

There had been circulated Report No WS/02/18 dated February 2018 by the Director of Community Services. Representatives from SLR Consulting were also in attendance to provide a presentation.

During their detailed presentation, SLR Consulting reminded Members of the Council's current Waste management and landfill arrangements. The key policy and regulatory needs were well known and, to find a sustainable solution, waste projections up until 2040 had been made. In considering the 3 possible options they had examined technical costs, possible funding, risks and a timeline delivery route. In summary, a 2 phase solution was recommended where, initially, Option 1 – the bulking, transfer and haulage of collected waste to 3rd parties elsewhere in Scotland – would be adopted. This would necessitate a centralised Waste Transfer Station in the Inverness area but this was a facility which would be required regardless. In the medium/long term though consideration should be given to Option 2 - the pre-treatment of collected waste at a centralised Mechanical treatment plant to recover recyclates, reject material and create RDF material. Option 1 was estimated to cost £3.2m, Option 2 £6.5m and Option 3 £80m. However, Members were assured that, in the Capital Programme, £6.5m had been established to meet the costs of this.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- a position statement was requested, and provided, regarding the planning appeal by CPH (Highlands) Ltd for the development of a 100ktpa EfW plant at Invergordon. The outcome of this appeal could impact on the Council but, it was

pointed out, the Council could not afford to wait for the Reporter's decision and the costs of transporting waste to Invergordon would be considerable;

- there was a need for a Transfer Station in Inverness regardless;
- although a Transfer Station was modest in size, there was potential for it to meet opposition. A careful approach was needed to ensure a robust case was in place and to educate the public about the need for such a facility;
- confirmation was sought, and received, that overall the additional costs of Option 2, over a 25 year period, were relatively minimal;
- Options 1 and 2 were deliverable within the timeframe:
- the Design/Technology complexity of all three options were low to medium; and
- while a local authority could run a transfer station, the operation of an EfW plant was specialised and would be better undertaken by a private operator on a long term agreement with the Council.

The Working Group **NOTED**:-

- i. the Executive Summary of the Residual Waste: Final Outline Business Case; and
- ii. the presentation.

7. Officer Working Group - Update on Progress

The Director of Community Services and the Head of Planning and Environment provided an update on progress of the Officer Working Group including:-

- a) Finance
- b) Planning
 - i. Site Criteria
 - ii. Development Control Process
 - iii. Risk Management With regard to Planning
- c) Land acquisition/Economic Development (Development and Regeneration)
 - i. Availability of suitable sites based on parameters identified

During discussion of the above, the following points were raised:-

- the finance paper circulated to the Officer Working Group detailing current and projected costs would also be circulated to the Waste Strategy Group;
- it was confirmed that a 2 hectare site was required. In this regards, when looking to the medium/long term, ideally the Transfer Station and EfW sites should be co-located;
- the dualling of the A9/A96 might open up potential sites but this would take place too far in the future;
- Moray Council was approaching the issue of waste jointly with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils so Highland would require to find its own solution;
- Inverness was the most suitable location for a Transfer Station as it was the source of the biggest amount of waste production, its close proximity to transport links, the port facilities and the waste depot already in place. If it was located elsewhere it would require the rerouting of refuse collection. However, it was recognised that the scoping exercise carried out by the Development and Infrastructure Service would, taking various factors into consideration, identify the most suitable locations;

- the Inverness City Deal and the proposed Kessock Bridge interchange could provide opportunities in that area. In this regard, Officers confirmed that they were working closely with Transport Scotland;
- despite the availability of recycling facilities there was still 32k tonnes of residual waste produced in Inverness and therefore it was important to communicate the need to provide these facilities, and the options available, while still having a strategy in place to encourage people to recycle as much as possible; and
- Members were comfortable with the general direction of travel, recognising that the work needed to be done at pace. For the next meeting the draft EDI report would be available for the Working Group to discuss the recommendations.

The Working Group **AGREED**:-

- i. the finance paper detailing current and projected costs be circulated to the Waste Strategy Group;
- ii. the draft EDI report be submitted to the next Working Group meeting for consideration;
- iii. that a communication strategy be prepared;
- iv. to hold a briefing with the City of Inverness Area Members before the EDI Committee on 17 May; and
- v. bearing in mind the 3 options, that Officers continue with the Site Search, recognising that Inverness was the prime location.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **AGREED** that the next meeting take place on 23 April 2018 at 3 p.m.

The meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.