

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**NEIGHBOURHOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND
COMMUNITIES CABINET MEMBER**

RECEIPT OF PLASTERBOARD AT HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 The object of this report is to ensure that the council and its appointed contractor, SITA North Lincolnshire Limited, remain compliant with the requirements of the Environment Agency (EA) for the separate recovery and recycling or disposal of gypsum and other high sulphate-bearing waste (i.e. plasterboard).

1.2 The key points in this report are;

- Currently the council receives this form of plasterboard at all eight Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) in North Lincolnshire.
- From 1 April 2009 the Environment Agency has determined that this material cannot be landfilled with other biodegradable waste and as such the provision of separate collection facilities is required.
- Plasterboard is not household waste by definition and the council is under no obligation to collect or receive this material. This material should be treated in the same way as inert rubble and soil, for which a charge is levied.
- For practical purposes the reception of this material is limited to a single site, Cottage Beck HRC, in the same way the facility for asbestos is provided.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The landfilling of gypsum and other sulphate bearing wastes (i.e. plasterboard) with biodegradable waste has been prohibited in England and Wales since July 2005. However, the EA had been taking a pragmatic view that separate disposal was not required for small amounts of up to 10%.

- 2.2 Recent research by the EA into the relationship between sulphate in waste and the production of hydrogen sulphide gas has concluded that no practicable limit could be set for gypsum wastes.
- 2.3 The Environment Agency has now revised their guidance on the landfilling of plasterboard material. From 1 April 2009 this material will no longer be permitted to be landfilled with biodegradable waste. After this date, if this waste is deposited for disposal in the same landfill cell as biodegradable waste, the EA will look to take enforcement action.
- 2.3 The legal requirement to separate this waste material has prompted the appointed waste disposal contractor, SITA North Lincolnshire Limited, to write to the council for agreement on how to deal with the continued receipt of this material.
- 2.4 It is not known how much of this material the council currently receives at the network of HRCs as the material tends to be delivered in black bags along with other general waste.
- 2.5 This material is clearly associated with construction and demolition work and falls within the definition of industrial waste, and as such the council is not obliged to receive this material. However, as with other materials of this nature, eg brick rubble, the council has made provision to accept this material at a small charge.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To ban the deposit of all plasterboard at all Household Recycling Centres outright.
- 3.2 To levy a charge for this material in accordance with the charges made for inert materials, and provide a facility at a single site – Cottage Beck HRC.
- 3.3 To continue to allow plasterboard to be deposited free of charge at a single site – Cottage Beck HRC.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The agreement to the introduction of charges on 1 March 2004 for building and construction wastes acknowledged the fact this material is not household waste. Plasterboard falls within the same category and therefore not to charge for the receipt of this waste would be contrary to council policy.
- 4.2 Allowing plasterboard to be deposited at all HRCs is impractical due to the limited space available on most sites for the separate containers required. There will also be increased supervisory requirements and logistical problems associated with the low tonnages expected to be deposited.

4.3 Measures to restrict the broader municipal waste stream through the use of access control measures, including charging, are accepted as good practice across the UK. This is necessary to raise awareness of more sustainable waste management practices and to prevent the abuse of HRCs by commercial waste producers. Not to levy a charge would encourage those waste producers to use the site for free disposal.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 The cost of recycling separately recovered plasterboard is broadly equivalent to the current cost of landfilling mixed municipal wastes. SITA North Lincolnshire Limited has identified a local company which could recycle this material. Should this facility become unavailable in the future and another recycling facility cannot be sourced, the cost of landfilling this waste in accordance with the revised regulatory regime would be significantly higher.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 A possible consequence of any decision to levy charges may encourage some waste producers to seek possible alternative unlawful routes for disposal of their waste e.g. flytipping.

6.2 The new requirements to segregate this waste at the HRC and any agreed charges could be communicated to residents via the council's Direct magazine and the council's website, incurring no additional costs.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 The requirement to manage gypsum and sulphate-bearing wastes separately is a statutory requirement. Broad stakeholder consultation on this issue is not appropriate.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the council continues to allow the receipt for plasterboard but levies a charge in accordance with the current charges for inert waste and that receipt of this waste is restricted to a single site – Cottage Beck HRC. The charge will be applied from the 1 April 2009.

8.2 That the Neighbourhood Response Team monitors the impact, if any, of reported incidents of flytipping.

8.3 That the Waste Management Division undertakes all publicity for the scheme.

SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD & ENVIRONMENT

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Position Statement – Landfilling of gypsum waste including plasterboard.
November 2008 (Author – Environment Agency)