

Briefing note for Cllr Tony Cummings, Bury Council meeting, 11th
December 2013

GMWDA Update

The main challenge for the Authority in recent months has been to identify potential budget savings to reduce the levy payments for Districts, and the Authority has agreed to a 12.5% saving target with AGMA, the same as that faced by Bury.

This is a particularly challenging target for the Authority in the short term, due to the nature of the Contract, which represents over 95% of the Authority's total spending. Despite the relatively fixed nature of the Contract, the Authority has begun to explore some difficult decisions in this area to maximise the savings that can be delivered in the short term. Early in the New Year, the Authority aims to set out how it will provide Districts with a 0% levy increase in 2014/15, and hopefully a levy reduction in 2015/16.

Despite the budget pressures, the focus continues to be to drive up recycling to 50% by 2015/16, increase landfill diversion to at least 75% by 2015/16, thereby reducing the financial and environmental burdens of dealing with the 1.1 million tonnes of waste the conurbation produces each year.

Bury's recycling performance has continuously improved - from 25.8% in 2010/11 to 43% last year. For 2013 (to October), Bury's recycling rate is up to 45.25%. This ranks Bury third out of the nine Greater Manchester Authorities. (*Stockport and Trafford currently lead the nine Authorities, with recycling rates of 64% and 57% from April 2013 to the end of October 2013.*)

The last couple of years have been strong for the Authority overall, with the conurbation-wide recycling rate now at 44.33% from April 2013 to October 2013, with landfill diversion at 53% in the same period. *(For comparison, these figures were 27% and 37% respectively in 2006/2007, before the start of the Contract.)*

Whilst there has been some delay in finalising construction of the thermal power station at Runcorn this facility will begin commissioning in the next month, and our studies indicate that once online, the facility will boost landfill diversion. This represents a considerable environmental benefit in reducing carbon dioxide in Greater Manchester.

Other initiatives to report are:-

The 'our aim is zero waste' campaign to reduce the amount of waste landfilled. Big improvements in performance both overall and for Bury in particular, show that not only are the new facilities that have been constructed having a benefit, but also that the changes in collection practices and the communications campaigns that have been run have had a great effect.

The new In-Vessel Composting facility at Salford Road, Over Hulton in Bolton has been completed, and most of Bury's green and food waste is now processed at this facility. All of the facilities to which Bury delivers its waste are now completed, and at this point the Authority is working with its contractor to fully optimise the facilities to deliver the strongest possible performance.

Significant work is being put into improving recycling in low-performing areas - for example the EU-funded LIFE+ project. This project secured over half a million pounds of funding to deliver communications campaigns specifically targeted at low-performing areas across Greater Manchester. So far, in Bury this project has

established “recycling ambassadors” in flats across Bury ; a recycling rewards campaign in Radcliffe and a culture-based campaign with the Jinnah Centre and with Asian communities around the town centre that will run until mid-January 2014.

However, the biggest gains can be made through improving the engagement with local residents to make them enthusiastic and accurate recyclers all of the time. Of course, as our performance in recycling shows, many residents of Bury already are enthusiastic and accurate recyclers, but we still only capture just over half of the potential recycle that is put out each week in the four bins. The enthusiasm for recycling in Bury is demonstrated by the sales of the Revive compost, which is made from the green and food waste delivered to the IVC facilities. This is an excellent demonstration for residents of the beneficial products that can come out of their efforts to recycle.

It is also hoped that in 2015 the more successful campaigns that were not run in Bury can be repeated here, to help to further boost recycling.

In summary, by using our sustainable waste management facilities to their maximum potential and fully engaging the public in recycling, it is expected that Greater Manchester can achieve 50% recycling and 90% landfill diversion by 2015/16; which would be an achievement that everyone in Greater Manchester could be proud of. This will also generate significant savings, which can be passed through to Districts in the form of lower levies, so pushing recycling and landfill diversion continues to make sound financial sense.