

Questions & Answers

Thank you for showing your interest in Project Reduce and we welcome you to this special question and answer newsletter.

In this issue we will aim to provide you with answers to the most common questions that we receive about the project and its plans for a long term solution to residual or 'black bag' waste.

The questions that appear here are some of those posed by residents, environmental groups, councillors and members of the public.



We welcome your own questions, comments and feedback on any of the issues that are raised here and we will answer them to the best of our ability, allowing for the confidential nature of some of the information. The different ways that you can contact us are shown on the last page. We hope that you find this newsletter interesting and informative.

Andrew Wood – Project Director

About the project

What is Project Reduce?

Project Reduce is a partnership between Milton Keynes Council and Northamptonshire County Council that was established in 2008.

Our aim is to find a long-term solution to the problem of what to do with all the waste that cannot be re-used or recycled, known as residual or 'black bag' waste.

Why Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire?

The two authorities have similar views on how to deal with waste in the long-term and agreed that by working together they could obtain a better quality and more cost

effective solution than if they worked separately.

Why does it need to be a partnership?

By joining together, the two authorities were able to put forward a stronger case for government funding to create the infrastructure needed to instigate the change needed. In 2008 we were awarded £138 million in private finance initiative (PFI) credits to help fund the best solution.

Why is this such a long process?

It is important to ensure that we get the best possible long-term outcome for the residents in both authorities.

There are substantial technical, legal and financial considerations when entering into such a substantial contract. We must also comply with regulations set down by the government in relation to projects of this nature.

It is also important to note that no construction or planning can take place prior to the announcement of the winning bid in April 2011.



The problem with landfill

Why is there a problem?

Everything that currently cannot be re-used or recycled in both Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire is currently being landfilled; all of it. Last year this worked out to 257,000 tonnes a year or roughly 787,000 bags being buried per week, every week.

Disposal sites across the UK are becoming scarce, and increasingly expensive. If in 2014 as a partnership we landfilled the same amount as we did in 2008/9, the tax bill alone would amount to £20.6million or £52 extra for every person in tax.

With further rises in landfill tax likely, this is a problem that is not going away and we have to tackle head on.

Why can't we just recycle and compost more?

Both councils already exceed their targets for recycling and composting with Northamptonshire recycling 46% and Milton Keynes 38% (2008/9 figures). The problem is that approximately 50% of the contents of our black bags cannot be recycled as the facilities or technology does not exist and therefore the waste is sent straight to landfill.

As a result, the UK is producing 29.1%* of the total greenhouse gas emissions from Landfill across all of Europe.

787,000
the amount of black sacks going to landfill every week of last year

29.1%
The percentage of Europe's greenhouse gasses come from UK Landfill emissions

*2007 report by European Environment Agency

About the Solution

What do you mean by a solution?

The term solution really means what we are actually going to do to minimise the waste going to landfill. It is important to all of us that we see all types of waste as a resource; we are looking at different options of treating the waste to make the most use of it.

Why can't we dig another landfill site?

All central and local government policies are strongly against the continued use or development of new landfill sites. Few permits are being granted and the government is placing heavy taxes on landfilling waste, £48 per tonne now and reaching £80 per tonne by 2014.

So what are the possible solutions to the problem?

As we are still in negotiations with four bidders we cannot talk specifically about any of the solutions that they are providing, but whatever is finally chosen will be in accordance with the policies of both councils. An announcement will be made in September of the two remaining bidders, but details of the winning bid and the proposed solution may not be available until the preferred bidder is announced in April 2011.

Nationally, a range of technologies are being used to address the problem. They can be used alone or in conjunction with each other. Examples of these include:

Mechanical Treatment

Sorting waste into different components for recycling or future processing

Biological Treatment

Breaking down biodegradable waste into compost or soil conditioner for crops

Mechanical / Biological Treatment

A combination of the two options above that convert mixed waste into fuel for industrial use or energy production

Thermal Treatment

Electricity and heat energy is generated through the combustion of fuel derived from waste.

Advanced Thermal Treatment

The level of combustion is controlled and a gas is produced which is then used to generate electricity.

What is the reduction in landfill likely to be?

Initial indications are that our project, in combination with existing recycling initiatives will divert over 80% of all the landfill generated by the two authorities. This figure is an approximate and the final figure is likely to be higher.

Where would these facilities be built?

Milton Keynes Council owns a site in Dickens Road, Old Wolverton and Northamptonshire County Council has put forward land close to the A45. Both sites have been identified in the authorities waste development plans. However, bidders can bring forward proposed sites of their own during the bidding process, so it is by no means certain at this stage that either of the council's sites will be used.

When will the new facilities be up and running?

2014 is the first year that they will be in place.

Will there be new jobs created through the project?

Each of the remaining bidders will provide employment both for the short term ie during the construction period and also in the longer term in order to operate and maintain their facilities. Approximate numbers will only be known once the final solution has been chosen.



Will the existing landfills close down?

In reality, many of the landfills in the area are virtually full and would be closing in the near future if we continued to fill them at the current rate; so by taking action now we can make sure that we do not rely on this traditional and increasingly costly form of waste disposal.

How long will the facilities be operational?

The contract will run for 25 to 30 years beginning in 2014

View and download our information leaflet from the website



How can I get involved?

A questionnaire has been drawn up to gather information and contacts so that we can feed back comments and questions into the project and send out important information whenever it becomes available. You can find a copy of the

questionnaire on our website and the Project Team will then be able to make sure you are hearing about the Project's progress in a way that suits you.

A full public consultation will take place in Spring 2011,

when the approved bidder is expected to seek planning permission for their project. All the latest news and information is available from our website, including details of the Core Stakeholder Group; a committee comprising of councillors from each of the political parties from both authorities, as

well as from the Northamptonshire districts and boroughs.

Our website offers the chance to sign up for alerts and updates and provides information on the project and useful links

Contact Us

In addition to signing up for alerts and newsletters via our website you can also call the project team or send us an email.

www.projectreduce.co.uk

E: team@projectreduce.co.uk

T: 0845 2011222

Project Reduce Timetable

Two remaining bidders announced	Early September 2010
Preferred bidder is announced	April 2011
Contract awarded and planning applications submitted	November 2011
Operations commence	Winter 2014