

Annex 1 – ISOS Press Release

Eight companies to be invited to propose how to treat Oxfordshire's waste

The process of deciding on how Oxfordshire's waste will be treated in the future, when severe limits are put on landfill, has taken a step forward.

Oxfordshire County Council has completed the first stage of buying a new waste treatment technology and has decided to invite eight companies to submit proposals for alternatives to landfill.

Only the waste that remains after recycling and composting will be treated using the new technology. This will help to avoid government fines that start in 2009.

Last year Oxfordshire produced the lowest amount of waste per person of any county in the country. The county is one of the top performers for recycling and composting at just over 38% in 2006/07. However, this is well short of the levels of the best European countries who recycle around 50% and use technology to dispose of the rest.

The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership accordingly agreed targets of zero increase in waste per person and to increase recycling to 40% by 2009/10 and at least 55% by 2019/20.

The council placed an advert in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) to formally begin the procurement process at the end of March 2007.

Of the 14 companies who expressed an interest, eight have qualified to take part in the next stage. Next month these companies will be invited to submit outline proposals for treating residual household waste for consideration by the council.

The eight companies are:

- Cory Environmental
- Covanta Energy
- Global Renewables
- Hills Industries
- SITA
- Veolia
- Viridor
- Waste Recycling Group

The eight companies listed can offer a range of technologies that can treat biodegradable wastes so that they need not be landfilled, and which also produce a usable product such as electricity, compost or gas.

The council is neutral between these technologies provided they do the job safely, cleanly and at reasonable cost. This list of companies ensures that a range of technology solutions can be considered through the next stage of the process.

Councillor Roger Belson, the cabinet member for sustainable development said: "I am pleased with the level of interest the industry has shown in our contract. I am also confident that the eight companies who have qualified will allow a choice of technologies to be considered so that we can find the right solution to meet Oxfordshire's needs and at a price that provides value for money. I am looking forward to seeing what the companies come up with in the autumn.

"What ever is chosen will not be in place until 2012 at the earliest, and so to avoid government fines in the short term we will also be procuring capacity to compost or treat food waste, to be in place during 2009.

"In the meantime, it is most important that all of us continue our good work in reducing the waste we produce and increasing what we recycle. That is the building block for providing a sustainable and affordable solution for dealing with our waste in the future."