

**REPLY BY THE MINISTER OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES
DEPARTMENT TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 6
OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY HUNTER ADAM**

Under the Waste Strategy agreed by the States in 2012, the principle of a Waste Hierarchy was accepted, Capital costs were agreed, an estimate of the likely Household costs were given, and Recycling targets were agreed.

The capital cost estimate to provide the required facilities has increased significantly, household cost estimates are considerably higher than those provided, and the recycling targets have not been achieved.

In the light of this, I would be obliged if you would answer the following questions, laid under Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation.

Question 1

What is the current combined cost of collection, processing and export of each type of the recyclable waste stream, and what destination treatment method is used for each of the recyclables exported?

Answer

Before I address the first question, I think it is important to correct a couple of points made in the preamble.

First, the assertion that household cost estimates are considerably higher than those provided (in 2012).

When the States approved the island's waste strategy, an estimate was provided that the average cost to households once the infrastructure and services were in place would be around £180 per annum (approx. £200 at 2015 prices).

In December 2014 the States approved the Department's charging proposals, which included an updated mid-range estimate of approximately £240 a year, per household. While Public Services is not insensitive to the budgetary pressures that many islanders may face, such an average increase is neither 'considerable' nor large when compared to other household expenditure. Indeed it is only the very low base cost for the unsustainable method of waste disposal the island has relied on for so long that exacerbates such increases.

Furthermore, it was made clear in 2012 that the estimates provided (for all scenarios) may change when costs became more refined as the procurement of infrastructure and services progressed. In that context, the Department considers that to present an additional 75p per week 'as considerably higher' risks overplaying the increase.

Second, you state that recycling targets have not been achieved. The Department appreciates you could not have been aware at the time of drafting your questions, but in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 50.2% of household waste was recycled. Therefore for that element of our waste, we have met our immediate target of 50%, and we hope to maintain that excellent achievement.

Moving on to your first question. The table below shows per tonne costs for the main household materials collected kerbside or at bring banks, for the period April 2014 to March 2015. These are inclusive of all collection, sorting, processing and transport costs. Following the introduction of the interim kerbside scheme, a number of these materials are now collected co-mingled. It is therefore not possible to provide a breakdown of cost for each of these, so this is presented as the overall per tonne cost for each "stream".

Recyclables	Cost per tonne
Paper & Cardboard (Clear kerbside bags and bring banks)	£163
Household plastic packaging, tins & cans, and drink cartons (Blue kerbside bags and bring banks)	£680
Glass	£105
Textiles	Charity run, no cost
Polystyrene	£5,670 (see note below)

The figures in the above table are not a good representation of the future costs for recycling these waste streams. We are currently operating an interim scheme on a short-term basis. Longer contracts for collection and processing should deliver lower costs, and additional recycling and less duplication of effort with the bring bank system will increase efficiency. As such, these figures are merely a snap shot of the costs over the first year of kerbside collections, and not a reflection of the longer term costs.

The comparatively high cost (on a per tonne basis) for expanded polystyrene also requires some clarification. This material is extremely lightweight (comprising ~98% air), so although large volumes are collected each year the tonnage is very small. This distorts the per tonne cost comparison, and does not reflect the benefit of diverting this material from landfill.

By way of illustration, assuming a typical density of 30 kg/m³, the 14 tonnes recycled in 2014 would equate to around 466m³. That is the equivalent in volume to a stack of standard 20 foot shipping containers, piled 14 containers high. That would be the volume of void space avoided at Mont Cuet each year, assuming that the material packed neatly into a single block – which of course is not the case, therefore the space saving would be even greater.

Recyclables	Destination	“Treatment method”
Paper	UK	Recycled - news print
Cardboard	UK	Recycled - new cardboard
Household plastic packaging	UK	Recycled - many uses, incl tubs, trays, pots etc
Tins/Cans	UK	Recycled - new steel or aluminium products
Drink Cartons	UK	Recycled/recovered - 75 to 85% is fibre, making new cardboard; aluminium content recycled; plastic used for various products or potentially some Energy from Waste.
Glass	On-island	Crushed for use as aggregate replacement
Textiles	UK (and onwards)	Reused (charity) or recycled
Polystyrene	UK	Recycled – insulation or building products

Question 2

Since February 2012 kerbside recycling has increased the recycled total amount by approximately 2-3% but still remains under 50%. In the same period, collection of glass has also increased by 2.9%.

What is the total cost of providing a kerbside collection facility from the time of its introduction?

Do you consider the increase in material collected by kerbside is worth the cost, (ie) is kerbside collection value for money?

Answer

As already mentioned, it was recently announced that in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 50.2% of household waste was recycled. Materials now collected at the doorstep saw an increase of close to 10%, which is not fully reflected in the headline recycling rate. Nevertheless this is a very significant contribution, and it is important to note that we have only just begun. Further increases are expected with future developments, including the introduction of the new charging system.

The total cost of the kerbside scheme for the first 12 months, excluding initial costs such as leaflets, bag design and distribution, was £1.102 million. Again, it should be stressed this is the first year of a short-term, interim scheme, and a longer term arrangement would be expected to deliver better value.

In assessing value for money, one has to look at the overall waste strategy, and the contribution that all the individual elements make to the strategy as a whole, rather than in isolation.

It can be argued that kerbside recycling collection may not represent best value for money just to collect an additional 30 tonnes of milk cartons a year, or just another 70 tonnes of tins/cans a year, or just another 100 tonnes of plastic bottles a year. However in the first 12 months of kerbside recycling, we collected an additional 500 tonnes of materials overall. Parish waste sent to Mont Cuét was also down by hundreds of tonnes. More islanders are now recycling than ever before, and recycling more than ever before. Recycling has never been easier or more convenient, and when we introduce bag charges in future, all islanders will have a financial incentive (and reward) to do so, and fewer barriers to prevent them. If we can also introduce separate food waste collection, they will be able to further reduce the material that they throw away. By doing so, our requirement for export will reduce, and so too will the prospect of requiring a large scale, costly on-island end-treatment facility in future. That will deliver the best value for money for the island as a whole, and kerbside recycling is a key element of it.

On that basis, we consider the cost of kerbside will be value for money, but we also acknowledge this is still early days and there is much more we can deliver through improvements to the way we collect and charge for waste.

Question 3

I understand that some recyclable waste streams, (i.e) Milk Cartons, Polystyrene, Paper, and Cardboard, are of questionable value from an environmental impact perspective. As we must export our waste, thus adding environmental cost, it is questionable whether recycling and export is justified in terms of the environmental impact.

Life cycle analysis is necessary to assess the true cost of recycling and its true environmental value.

What are the individual life cycle analyses for the materials that are currently separated and exported for recycling?

Answer

We have not conducted individual life cycle analyses for all types of recyclables. However in developing the waste strategy, we conducted detailed life cycle analysis on a wide range of different waste management scenarios. That considered the relative impacts of dealing with all recyclables, and all other elements of the waste stream, based on different collection models, treatment options, and recycling levels - amongst other variables. This also took full account of local factors, such as the island's electricity mix and transport requirements. That detailed assessment is available on the States of Guernsey website.

There are two key points to note from this work. First is that in considering the global warming potential, all of the scenarios considered performed better at higher levels of recycling. Second, the impact of transportation on each of the scenarios was negligible.

Question 4

Life cycle analysis must factor in the true costs of transporting recyclables from Guernsey for treatment/disposal.

If facilities for incineration were available in Guernsey, how would this change the relative merits of recycling coupled with export versus incineration on Island?

Answer

The life cycle analysis work referred to above considered scenarios including energy from waste both on-island or via export. In terms of environmental impact, there was very little to choose between these two options. However in both cases, their performance improved with increased recycling.

Question 5

As we have been advised on numerous occasions it is not now possible to provide the originally agreed waste strategy for the forecast Capital or revenue cost estimate, in fact a key element of the strategy was In vessel Composting of Food Waste which is no longer included due to cost.

With the changes in capital and revenue costs in implementing the Waste Strategy, is a further States Report not essential within the next 2 to 3 months to allow this Assembly to reassess the situation?

Could you please therefore confirm when a fully revised and costed waste strategy will be presented to this Assembly in the form of a States Report.

Answer

Given that the Department's focus is on delivering the objectives and targets set out in the waste strategy approved by the States, and within the financial limits that has been previously agreed by the States, we currently see no need for this to be referred back to the Assembly. Delegated authority has been given to Treasury & Resources to approve the business cases that Public Services will put forward before any capital investment, and we will progress these in due course.

I am not aware of 'numerous occasions' that Public Services has advised that it is not now possible to provide the originally agreed strategy within the cost estimates provided. In 2013, as part of the SCIP process, the Department advised States Members that the costs contained in the February 2012 report had underestimated the capital investment requirements. That was true of all of the shortlisted scenarios contained in that report, not just the chosen option. However the estimated total lifetime costs of the approved strategy had not changed significantly, because estimates for the export element of the strategy had reduced. The revised capital budget was subsequently endorsed by the Assembly. We will update States Members of the outcome from the current procurement phase, although we currently do not expect that to require a States debate.

Based on the estimates received to design, build and operate an In-Vessel Composing Facility on-island, the Department does not believe that represents best value. Options for exporting this material for processing are therefore being investigated. That does not change the overall scope of the waste strategy, it simply looks to achieve the same objectives in a different way. While technically this method is feasible, the same value for money assessment needs to be made once more detailed costings have been provided.

Date of Receipt of the Question: 6th July 2015

Date of Reply: 21st July 2015

Estimate cost: £965