

REGIONAL WASTE STRATEGY - DRAFT UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Leaders Forum (4NW) are consulting on a proposed update to the Regional Waste Strategy published in 2004 to take account of the National Waste Strategy and European legislation which have been subsequently introduced. The consultation document contains revisions to the text of existing policy statements and includes three new policy statements relating to the re-use of waste, public sector involvement and reprocessing and recycling facilities.

When introduced, the updated Strategy will provide an interim framework for developing land use policies and will be a material consideration when determining planning applications until a full review is undertaken. It is also intended to be a key part of the evidence base for the emerging single Regional Strategy, which will be published for public consultation in the New Year.

The deadline for comments was 11 January 2010. Officers have submitted representations based on the Directors Comments set out in this report. It is recommended that Cabinet endorses these comments as the Council's formal response to the Regional Waste Strategy Update.

1 Background

- 1.1 The existing Regional Waste Strategy was published in September 2004 following Cabinet endorsement of supportive representations (Minute 298, Cabinet 23 October 2003 refers).
- 1.2 Comments are sought on the proposed update to the Strategy, which includes three new policy statements. Revisions to the text of the existing policy statements are also proposed. These are intended to take account of a number of EU Directives implemented through national legislation and the National Waste Strategy for England 2007. When introduced the revised Strategy will be material in future planning decisions.
- 1.3 The main drivers for change since 2004, such as the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008, seek the prevention, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste. There is also a greater impetus to develop new facilities to divert waste from landfill, driven through the introduction of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme in 2005, which penalises Local Authorities who exceed an allowance for disposing biodegradable solid waste to landfill. The standard rate of landfill tax is set to rise by £8 per tonne until 2013 when it will be £72 per tonne. Currently, there are almost 17,000 jobs in 750 businesses across the North West Waste Industry. It is estimated that the region's waste industry could be worth up to £2 billion per year.

- 1.4 The deadline for submitting representations is 11 January 2010. The final version of the updated Strategy is scheduled to be considered by 4NW Regional Leaders Board on 11 February 2010.
- 1.5 The core aims and objectives of the original Strategy are largely maintained within the update proposed. For example; support for systems that reduce waste generation and environmental impact, improve resource efficiency, stimulate investment and maximise economic opportunity will continue. The contents of the revised Strategy are set out below.

2 New Draft Policy Statements

- 2.1 New Policy Statement 4 would encourage a range of initiatives to help develop re-use and re-manufacture. Mobile phone reconditioning and the re-manufacture of printer accessories are types of industry that could be encouraged. The new statement is included to recognise the importance of re-use in the waste management hierarchy. The need to strengthen the evidence base on how re-use actually contributes to the regional economy is also noted.
- 2.2 The public sector would be expected to aim for exemplar status by using sustainable procurement to create less waste, to purchase sustainable products and to stimulate market need for products containing recycled material under proposed Policy Statement 13. This has been included to recognise the increasing focus of government policy on the role of the public sector in creating a more stable market for reprocessed waste.
- 2.3 Proposed Policy Statement 16 states that 'facilities for the re-processing and recycling of waste should be developed to address the capacity gaps for re-processing priority waste streams'. It is, however, recognised, that there are barriers in relation to economies of scale and market development.
- 2.4 The new proposed Policy Statements can be viewed in Table C2 on page 65 of the consultation document, which is attached to this report.

3 Revisions to Existing Policy Statements

- 3.1 The draft changes place greater emphasis on the importance of new waste management techniques and waste prevention initiatives. Delivery of the Strategy will be principally through Municipal Waste Management Strategies and Local Development Frameworks (Statements 1 & 2 refer).
- 3.2 In terms of waste prevention, the target is to achieve no growth in the current levels of all waste streams (Statement 3). No target date is, however, identified. The approach to achieving this will depend on the type of waste. In the case of municipal waste, there will be an emphasis on behavioural change campaigns supported by initiatives such as home composting and renewable nappy services.
- 3.3 The targets for recycling and composting household waste have increased from 35% to 40% by 2010 (Statement 5). The targets of 45% by 2015 and 55% by 2020 have been retained. 50% of all commercial and industrial waste is expected to be recycled by 2020 (Statement 7). The statutory requirement for Site Waste Management Plans

is also incorporated to encourage minimum waste levels in construction and demolition activities (Statement 11). Facilities for segregating recyclable waste are expected to be sited as close to the source as possible to prevent unnecessary transportation within the region (Statement 14).

- 3.4 While Waste Disposal Authorities are responsible for providing appropriate facilities within the administrative area, partnership working with neighbouring authorities will be an important consideration when working towards regional self sufficiency (Statement 15).
- 3.5 The targets for recovering value from municipal waste (including recycling and energy recovery, usually heat or electricity) are 53% by 2010; 67% by 2015; 75% by 2020 in line with national targets (Statement 8). The target for recovering value from commercial and industrial waste is 70% by 2020 (Statement 9). An un-numbered statement indicates that energy from waste should be part of an integrated approach that prioritises the reuse and recycling of waste (page 26).
- 3.6 The latest assessment suggests there is a 10 year landfill capacity for residual municipal and commercial & industrial waste if predicted medium to long term reductions are achieved. It is, therefore, intended to restrict the use of existing landfill capacity to the disposal of untreatable residues and to waste that has no value left, to extend the capacity at existing sites as a priority and to explore opportunities for new landfill capacity (Statement 10). Sub-regions with the least capacity for landfill self sufficiency will be expected to give high priority to finding additional internal capacity (section 5.5 refers).
- 3.7 It is noted that hazardous waste residues from thermal treatment and air pollution control technologies are likely to increase as energy recovery from waste becomes more established. The importance of the deep mine site at Minosus, Cheshire as a national facility for dealing with this type of waste is likely to increase. Other wastes such as automotive recyclate, fluorescent and elements of electrical goods are also increasingly being classified as hazardous. However, hazardous waste quantities have not increased overall and it is recommended that prevention is addressed when a full review of the Strategy is undertaken at a later stage (section 4.8 of the Update refers).
- 3.8 Development of new technologies to deal with all waste streams would be supported by the Strategy (Statement 18), including the evolving concept of integrated waste/reprocessing plants (Statement 17).

4 Delivering & Monitoring

- 4.1 Education and awareness is identified as one of the biggest barriers to meeting targets and greater efforts are suggested to publicise the negative effects of waste generation, the need for prevention and the relationship between managing waste and a low carbon economy. This is likely to be fundamental, as part of any future pre-application consultation, when new development is proposed (section 5.1 and 5.2 of the Update refers).
- 4.2 It is noted that new buildings and sites will be needed for sorting and bulking, in vessel composting, recycling and re-using, energy recovery and treatment and that facilities for delivering energy from waste and combined heat and power will need to be

integrated with higher urban densities if district heating systems are to be effective (sections 5.4 & 5.5.1 of the Update refers).

- 4.3 The Liverpool and Manchester Sub-Region has been identified in regional studies as the broad areas that will have the highest concentration of waste infrastructure. It is suggested that the creation of clusters be considered at sub regional and local levels alongside the potential for integration with residential and commercial development (section 5.5.2 refers).
- 4.4 Local Development Frameworks should be informed by areas of growth, which are likely to increase market demand. The adaptation of existing facilities should be considered before allocating new sites for development (section 5.5.2 refers).
- 4.5 The promotion of sustainable consumption and production, should ensure that waste resources used as feedstock come from sustainable sources and locations and that a reducing waste feedstock is not replaced by waste imported from other regions. Planning decisions must be well-informed to prevent the planning system becoming an unnecessary barrier to the growth and modernisation of the waste industry (section 5.5.3).
- 4.6 Extensive evidence and a detailed analysis of individual waste streams and future capacity will be needed in order to plan for new facilities. Criteria for classifying future facilities are proposed (section 5.5). Planning policy is also expected to recognise that sufficient capacity should be permitted to enable commercially viable facilities to operate.
- 4.7 The North West Regional Technical Advisory Body will continue to produce technical and monitoring reports to update the regional situation and inform regional decisions on waste planning matters (section 5.6.1 refers).
- 4.8 A series of appendices set out the approach to monitoring and implementation (page 35), organisations roles and responsibilities (page 39), a list of progress since 2004 (page 47), a summary of trends in waste streams (page 57), an audit trail of policy statement updates (page 61) and a list of the issues that will need to be dealt with through a future full review of the Strategy (page 67).

5 Directors Comments

- 5.1 The new policy statements (4, 13 and 16), which recognise the importance of re-using waste materials and the contribution local authorities can make through procurement in the interests of promoting sustainable waste management can be welcomed.
- 5.2 The general tenor of the Strategy Update would be in line with the spatial vision to be contained within the emerging Core Strategy for Wirral, which envisages that the quantity and proportion of waste going to landfill will have been minimised through the promotion of sustainable waste management and that a higher proportion will be re-used, recycled or re-processed, locally or within the wider sub-region by 2031. The emerging Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton will also seek to provide facilities to better promote recycling and reprocessing as an alternative to landfill.

- 5.3 Members will already be aware of the new materials recycling facility now operating at Bidston, that the amount of municipal waste in Wirral going to landfill has fallen by a third since 2004/05 and that the amount recycled and composted has more than trebled over the same period. As recycled waste amounted to 22% of total arisings in 2008/09 and the amount composted amounted to a further 14%, local performance should be within reach of the extended 40% target proposed in the Strategy Update.
- 5.4 The Strategy Update notes significant progress in the delivery of energy from waste facilities since 2004 (section 4.6 and Appendix B refer) but will continue to promote energy recovery to tackle any gaps between recycling and the remaining residual waste that cannot go to landfill due to the EU Landfill Directive targets.
- 5.5 The emerging Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton, which will be considered by Cabinet in February 2010, will address the local need for new facilities for municipal and commercial and industrial waste streams. It is recommended that evidence on the local need and capacity for new energy from waste facilities emerging from the preparation of the Joint Waste DPD should be taken into account in the future Strategy.
- 5.6 The statement that prioritises the reuse and recycling of waste should be supported. The indication that waste feedstock resources should come from sustainable sources and locations, that applicants should be able to demonstrate that alternative feedstock's are available if sources run out, and that feedstock should not be replaced by waste imported from other regions should also be welcomed.
- 5.7 In terms of the search for additional landfill, the Strategy Update should take into account the very real difficulty in finding acceptable sites for new landfill in densely developed metropolitan areas.
- 5.8 With the provisos outlined above, the contribution that the Strategy Update can make to future planning for waste management in the Region should be welcomed.
- 5.9 The Director of Technical Services has the following comments on the potential implications for the future of household waste collection schemes and the delivery of associated targets:

Section 1.5 - Key Messages

- 5.10 Wirral welcomes the focus on sustainable consumption and prevention and the recognition that key drivers for waste strategy are improved environmental quality and reducing carbon emissions. However, this key message may be difficult to achieve if we continue to focus on tonnage based recycling targets as set out by Government through National Indicator 192 and echoed by the RWS (the suggested response to Statement 5 provides further details, below).
- 5.11 Wirral recognises the value of community recycling groups (as detailed in the eighth paragraph of this section 1.5). However, to develop these groups often requires funding and dedicated resource that will be less likely to be available from local authority budgets in future (unless these organisations can present a clear sustainable business case for their ventures). There are good examples of where such organisations have succeeded and support from the region should be directed

towards the sharing of good practice and skills amongst the third sector as well as from expertise within the private/public sector field.

Section 4.5 - Statement 5

- 5.12 There is a large difference between local authorities as to what can be considered a realistic recycling target. If the region is to meet a long term target of 55% then a minimum "dry" recycling target should be set, to ensure that future improvements to recycling schemes are of the most benefit to the environment. Perhaps this approach will allow less reliance than some districts place on collecting green waste (garden waste). Consideration may be given as to whether kitchen waste should be included.
- 5.13 Some top performing districts within the North West are succeeding due to high tonnages of garden waste collected, rather than dry recyclables. There should not be an expectation that urban districts can achieve the same overall recycling and composting targets as the more rural neighbours.
- 5.14 Districts are beginning to notice changes in the make-up of recyclable materials collected. Glass is reducing due to a move by manufacturers towards "light weighting" and use of alternative, lighter materials. Paper has reduced due to the recession as newspapers are lighter and less junk mail is distributed. Such changes make it more difficult to hit the higher targets. More emphasis should be placed on minimising waste although we appreciate that this is currently being considered by Government through the Waste Framework Directive.

Section 4.5 - Statement 6

- 5.15 The carbon benefits of the diversion of green waste from landfill should be properly calculated. In reality, the large amounts of garden waste districts are now collecting is far in excess of that ever sent to landfill. Most residents enjoy a kerbside collection, and many have given up their compost heaps, where other kitchen waste may also have been diverted. If we are to see a behavioural change with regards to real resident responsibility for the waste they create, encouraging further garden waste diversion through kerbside collection schemes could be counter-productive. As local authorities become under greater financial pressure, free garden waste collections offered by the majority of LA's may be stopped in favour of focussing on other priorities. This may make 55% an unrealistic recycling target, even with the introduction of food waste collections. The carbon impact of collecting garden waste, as opposed to encouraging home composting/ banning from residual collection needs to be determined, obviously accounting for waste diverted to HWRC'S. If districts spent half of what they do collecting garden waste on waste prevention initiatives, there may be much greater environmental benefits in the longer term.
- 5.16 The final sentence under Statement 6 referring to public sector only recycling 87% is perhaps a little misleading. Obviously this relates to waste arising from public sector activity - i.e. hospitals, government buildings etc. However, this may give the impression that this includes municipal waste collections and lead to some confusion.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7 Staffing Implications

7.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly out of this report.

8 Equal Opportunities Implications

8.1 There are no equal opportunity implications arising directly out of this report.

9 Community Safety Implications

9.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly out of this report.

10 Local Agenda 21 Implications

10.1 The Strategy Update seeks to promote sustainable waste management.

11 Planning Implications

11.1 When introduced, the revised Regional Waste Strategy will be a material consideration in future planning decisions.

12 Anti-poverty Implications

12.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly out of this report.

13 Human Rights Implications

13.1 There are no human rights implications arising directly out of this report.

14 Social Inclusion Implications

14.1 There are no social inclusion implications arising directly out of this report.

15 Local Member Support Implications

15.1 There are no specific Ward Member implications arising directly out of this report.

16 Background Papers

16.1 A copy of the Updated North West Regional Waste Strategy - Consultation Draft is attached to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet endorses the Directors Comments set out in section 5 of this report as the Council's formal response to the Regional Waste Strategy Update.

J.Wilkie

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report has been prepared by the Forward Planning Section in Corporate Services who can be contacted on 691 8129 and by Environment and Waste Services in Technical Services who can be contacted on 606 2453.