

INFORMATION NOTE 7

WASTE

South West Regional Assembly

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CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. State of the Region	3
3. Waste Issues	3
4. Process	3
5. Waste in the RSS	5
6. Evidence Base	6

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide a brief overview and explain the policy approach to waste in the Draft RSS. It summarises:

- The current state of the region in terms of waste
- The main issues with regard to waste
- The processes by which the key policies were formulated
- How the RSS addresses waste; and
- The evidence which justifies the policy

2. State of the Region

2.1 Each year the region produces around 2.5 million tonnes of domestic waste, 5.5 million tonnes of commercial and industrial waste and around 12 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste. 70% of municipal waste was landfilled in 2004/05 (reduced from 82% in 2001/02) and around 27% recycled (increased from 15% in 2001/02)¹. There is considerable variation² in recycling rates between local authority areas in the region. Around 40% of commercial waste was recycled and 43% landfilled in 2002/03. There is little change in these percentages for C&I since 1998/99. Very small amounts of municipal or C&I waste are thermally treated in the region.

3. Waste Issues

3.1 The diverse nature of the region means different solutions are likely to be appropriate for different parts of the region and the growing economy and population of the region set particular challenges for waste growth.

3.2 Whilst the region has a good record as a leading region for recycling, there is an over reliance on landfill, with virtually no thermal waste treatment in the region.

3.3 The need to rapidly move away from landfill to meet national and European legislative requirements and to reduce the impact of waste on the environment creates particular challenges in this region in the context of the above issues.

4. Process

4.1 Waste policies in the Regional Waste Strategy were developed through a comprehensive exercise in developing a regional waste strategy.

¹ State of the Environment in the South West 2006

² Between around 16% for the poorest performing authority to around 45% for the higher performers, from DEFRA news release 527/06

- 4.2 Work commenced on developing the regional vision for sustainable waste management in 2001 and was agreed and published in 2002 after extensive consultation³. The key theme of the vision is that “*the South West Region will become a minimum waste produce by 2030, with business and households maximising opportunities for reuse and recycling*”.
- 4.3 The work on the Vision was overseen by the SWRA Waste Members Group and approved by the full Assembly on 25th October 2002. Detailed work was led by the Assembly Secretariat with input from the RTAB and a vision working group that included a wider range of interested parties in the region.
- 4.4 A detailed technical study was undertaken in 2002/03, following government guidance⁴, to forecast future waste arisings and to look at the environmental, social and economic impacts of a range of waste management systems. The completed report was published in mid 2003⁵. Two scenarios performed consistently well against agreed evaluation criteria and the findings of the report were developed into a single preferred option that incorporated these two high performing options. The key elements of this option are:
- More emphasis should be put on source separated recycling to achieve a minimum of 45% waste recycling/composting
 - Facilities should be developed to enable further value to be recovered from mixed residual waste through mechanical and biological treatment; and/or
 - As much energy as possible should be recovered from residual waste through thermal treatment technologies
 - Only dispose of residues to landfill; and
 - Better use should be made of inert waste materials, particularly construction and demolition waste, to substitute for primary aggregates
- 4.5 Following this work, the regional waste strategy was drafted in 2003/04, and consulted on⁶ in early 2004. The work was overseen by the SWRA Waste Energy and Minerals (WEM) Members Group (which replaced the Waste Group), and the work was led by the Assembly Secretariat with close involvement of the RTAB. The final version took into account responses to the consultation exercise and, following recommendation by the WEM Group, the final version was agreed unanimously by the full Regional Assembly on 16th July 2004 and published in October 2004.⁷
- 4.6 Following publication of the waste strategy, a subgroup of the RTAB took forward work to draw out the land use elements of the waste strategy for

³ Including 5 month consultation period and sub-regional workshops

⁴ Planning for sustainable waste management, ODPM (2002)

⁵ http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/Technical%20Documents/04.07_Development_of_a_Waste_Management_Strategy_for_the_SW_Region_-_Phase_1_to_3.pdf and http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/Technical%20Documents/04.08_Development_of_a_Waste_Management_Strategy_for_the_SW_Region_-_Phase_4.pdf

⁶ Three month consultation period and sub-regional workshops

⁷ http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=500

incorporation into the draft RSS. These draft policies were considered and agreed by a joint meeting of WEM group and RSPTG group in July 2005.

- 4.7 Further work on hazardous waste was undertaken by RTAB in 2005. A report was published in September 2005⁸ and subsequently incorporated into the draft RSS.
- 4.8 Planning Policy Statement 10 on Waste (PPS10) was published by ODPM in July 2005. An internal review of the draft waste policies was undertaken in the light of the publication of PPS10 which concluded that the methodology of developing the policies was broadly in compliance with the PPS and the policies were consistent with national policy but taking into account regional needs and issues.
- 4.9 A further piece of work is currently underway to reconcile the sub-regional allocations in the draft RSS with existing capacity, to draw up figures for additional required capacity. This work is due to be completed early in the New Year.

5. Waste in the Draft RSS

- 5.1 Waste policy is contained in section 7 of the draft RSS in Policies W1 to W4, with links to Minerals Policy RE12 (also in section 7) on the provision of recycled and secondary aggregates and Policy G (in section 3) on sustainable construction.
- 5.2 Paragraph 7.4.1 sets out the overall waste vision and strategy in summary with cross reference to the detail contained in the regional waste strategy.
- 5.3 Policy W1 provides broad indicative allocations of waste management capacity required by county area and requires waste planning authorities to identify appropriate sites to accommodate these allocations in waste development frameworks.
- 5.4 Policy W2 sets out the types of sites that should be identified for waste facilities and in particular sets out a sequential approach to help identify sites to manage waste arisings from the SSCTs.
- 5.5 Policy W3 and paragraphs 7.4.10-12 set out requirements to develop capacity for stable non-reactive hazardous waste at existing and proposed landfill and to safeguard facilities for other hazardous waste (in particular fly ash residues from the thermal treatment of waste).
- 5.6 Policy W4 sets out a requirement for waste audits to be included as part of planning applications for larger scale developments to minimise waste during the development phase and also to address how waste from the development will be dealt with (such as by providing appropriate space for storage of segregated recyclable materials) during the operational phase of the development.

⁸ <http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/Technical%20Documents/HazardousWasteManagementReport.pdf>

5.7 Para 7.4.16 -4.4.17 identifies the issue of radioactive waste but in the absence of national guidance it was considered not possible for the RSS to contain more detail or relevant policy at this time.

6. Evidence base

6.1 The evidence base is identified throughout this document, but in summary the key documents are:

- PPS10, ODPM 2005
- PPS10 Companion Guide, ODPM 2005
- *Minimum Waste: Maximum Benefit, the regional vision for waste management*, SWRA 2002
- *From Rubbish to Resource, the regional waste strategy* , SWRA 2004
- *Developing a regional waste strategy for the South West Regional Assembly* (the BPEO Report), SWRA 2003
- Hazardous waste report, SWRTAB 2005

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