



A Waste Development Framework for Surrey

**Local Committee for Woking
19 January 2005**

KEY ISSUE:

Consultation has been launched around four issues papers on the future approach to waste management and the identification of sites at which waste management activity can be undertaken.

SUMMARY:

This report summarises the policy proposals and the underlying reasons for them set out in the four issues papers looking at the future of waste management in Surrey. In particular, the identifies two potential sites for waste management activities in Woking although it proposes that only one, at Martyrs' Lane, should be safeguarded to ensure that it is available for this purpose.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Committee is recommended to support the approach to managing waste set out in the issue papers and authorise the Local Director to respond in detail via the on-line consultation mechanism that has been established.

1. Introduction and background

1.1 This paper summarises the draft Waste Framework which is currently the subject of public consultation with a closing date for submissions of 31st January, 2005

1.2 The Waste Framework consists of 4 issues papers which discuss various aspects of the Waste Local Development Framework that will replace the current Surrey waste Local Plan. The issue papers are entitled:

1. Waste minimisation, re-use and recycling and market development
2. The proximity principle and development control
3. Landfill
4. Identification of sites appropriate for the development of waste related activities

2. Paper 1

2.1 This paper identifies the scale of the issue facing the County which produced 3.2 million tonnes of waste in 2002 and also dealt with 1.3 million tonnes arising from London. Of this, a proportion is exported out of the county, notably hazardous waste and some green waste while the rest is recycled, recovered or landfilled. Waste is categorised as follows:

- Municipal Solid Waste – this is waste generated by households and, in 2002, of the 580,000 tonnes, 81.5% was landfilled and 18.5% recycled or composted.
- Commercial and Industrial Waste – approximately 740,000 tonnes was dealt with in 2002 with 57% being landfilled
- Construction and Demolition Waste – 1.9 million tonnes arose in 2002 of which 42% was recycled, 38% sent to landfill sites and 21% sent to exempt sites.

2.2 The volume of waste produced in the south east is increasing at more than 3% a year with an increase of 1.5% in Surrey in addition to the waste generated by new dwellings.

2.3 The paper then identifies some of the drivers for changes in the pattern of waste generation and disposal. First, the EU Waste Framework Directive sets up a system for the co-ordinated management of waste within the Community in order to limit waste production. It introduces a Waste Hierarchy to encourage;

Prevention or reduction of waste
 Recovery through re-use, recycling or reclamation
 Energy recovery from waste
 Disposal at landfill sites

Alongside these policies, there is to be market development activity to change markets and attitudes to encourage more sustainable waste management practices.

2.4 This is backed up by a Landfill Directive which, as well as containing provisions covering the location and technical specifications of landfill sites, sets demanding targets to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill. These targets have been included in the National waste Strategy, which requires:

- A reduction in the quantity of biodegradable waste disposed of to landfill to 75% of the 1995 levels by 2010
- A reduction in the quantity of biodegradable waste disposed of to landfill to 50% of the 1995 levels by 2013
- A reduction in the quantity of biodegradable waste disposed of to landfill to 35% of the 1995 levels by 2020

2.5 These targets are supported by a system of Landfill Allowances which allow local authorities to send specified volumes of waste to landfill and to trade unused capacity. Authorities can bank allowances or borrow against future entitlements where an investment strategy is likely to reduce future demand but, eventually, authorities will be fined for exceeding their allowance.

2.6 Clearly, minimising the amount of waste arising avoids the problem of disposal. There are a number of ways of approaching this including:

- Reducing material inputs – encouraging the purchase of products that eventually lead to less waste such as rechargeable batteries;
- Process change – find ways of producing products that produce less waste;
- Resource efficiency – using only the minimum amount of raw materials in producing products which leads to less waste; and
- Waste exchange – preventing discarded materials from becoming waste.

2.7 Local authorities are encouraged to develop partnerships with neighbouring authorities, businesses and community groups to find opportunities to minimise waste in a cost effective manner. These aims are also to be promoted by partnerships and through the raising of awareness and the exchange of best practice. There is thought to be scope for new businesses to start as the use of waste as a resource is accepted. Recycled material can have properties that give value in addition to the value inherent in the material itself. This view contrasts with the general opinion that recycled materials are of intrinsically poor quality and of low value. The development of markets for recycled material will help to stabilise the volatility in price that undermines existing recycling businesses.

2.8 Despite minimisation strategies, the volume of waste is likely to grow and, therefore, the scope for reuse will also grow. This will, however, require sites and facilities. These considerations have prompted the preparation of draft policies, which have been summarised for this paper, as set out below:

Policy 1

The County Council will promote waste minimisation by:

- I. Working in partnership with the business community and the general public in Surrey to raise awareness, provide information and advice and inform purchasing and lifestyle decisions;
- II. Ensuring that waste minimisation is addressed in all contracts for works and services;
- III. Working in partnership with the other local planning authorities to influence and encourage developers and contractors to design and manage contracts for housing, commercial and other developments in ways that minimise waste in the construction process;
- IV. Leading by example in the management and delivery of its own services.

Policy 2

The County Council will promote and facilitate the reuse, recycling and recovery of resources from waste by:

- I. Working in partnership with the business community and the general public in Surrey to raise awareness, provide information and advice and inform purchasing and lifestyle decisions;
- II. Ensuring that reuse, recycling and recovery of resources from waste is addressed in all contracts for works and services;
- III. Encouraging developers and contractors to design housing, commercial and other developments to maximise the reuse, recycling and recovery of resources from waste;
- I. Working in partnership with other local planning authorities to require and secure contributions from developers towards the provision of reuse, recycling and civic amenity facilities to meet community needs; and
- II. Leading by example in the management and delivery of its own services.

Policy 3

The County Council will work in partnership with the business community and others to promote and, where appropriate, facilitate the development of the market for both the reuse of waste and recycled waste including by;

- I. Raising awareness, providing information and advice;
- II. Assisting with securing financial support for product development and marketing;
- III. Encouraging contracts for works and services in the public and private sectors to specify their use wherever possible; and
- IV. Leading by example in its own procurement practices.

Policy 4

Planning permissions will normally be granted to ensure sufficient waste management capacity to be provided to:

- I. Manage the equivalent of the waste arisings in Surrey together with a reducing contribution to meeting the landfill needs of wastes arising in London and;
- II. Contribute to achieving the regional targets for recycling, composting, recovery and diversion from landfill by ensuring a range of facilities is permitted.

3. Paper 2

3.1 This principle requires that waste is managed as near to its place of origin as practicably possible. This principle would appear to favour a larger number of smaller sites over a smaller number of larger sites as the former would be closer to the source of waste. However, the economies of scale of some larger sites, in terms of thermal efficiencies, can outweigh the environmental impact of additional transport. A balance needs to be struck between communities accepting local management of the waste that they generate and the environmental advantages of some larger management facilities.

3.2 The proximity principle is important for the County for both waste and development planning. The second consultation paper concentrates on the development control aspects and discusses how the principle should be accommodated. This starts with Development Plans which provide a description of the sorts of development that could be considered appropriate for different locations. These plans are supplemented by material planning considerations generated by planning applications and include matters such as the size and layout of a proposed development, its impact on the neighbourhood and the availability of necessary infrastructure.

3.3 Among other planning issues that need to be considered in relation to the proximity principle is the Green Belt and the Regional Waste Management Strategy recognises “the significant need for new waste management facilities” and “does not preclude waste-related developments in the Green Belt”. Another view is provided by the possibility of designating locations as Areas of Great Landscape Value where protection from development is more likely. Similarly, the need to conserve the natural heritage, including sites of special scientific interest, may preclude development.

3.4 Bearing this background in mind and the character of Surrey including the 73% of its area which falls within the Green Belt, the 25% which lies within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the 22% of the County that is woodland, the 8000+ listed buildings and the significant Areas of Great landscape Value, Paper 2 considers the issues that need to be resolved. These include:

- How to provide the necessary numerous waste management facilities in the County without compromising the County's natural assets;
- How to recognise that landfill is a temporary activity in any one location and that such activity does not fundamentally conflict with the aim of the Green Belt which is to prevent urban sprawl. The provision of recycling facilities at landfill sites could also be acceptable;
- How to reconcile the proximity principle with the principle of best practical environmental option (BPEO) to which planning applications for waste management facilities need to demonstrate they contribute.

The paper then turns these issues into draft policies, which have themselves been summarised in this paper, as follows:

Policy 1

In considering proposals for planning permission for waste management facilities, the County Council will apply the proximity principle by taking into account site specific factors such as traffic generation, suitability of road and rail links and the scale of the proposed development as well as the site's location relative to the types and sources of waste and markets for recovered or recycled materials and the contribution that the sites make to needs of Surrey.

Policy 2

The County Council may, in granting planning permissions for waste developments, impose conditions limiting the origins of some or all of the waste to be managed at the facility in order to secure the implementation of the proximity principle.

Policy 3

Planning permission will not normally be granted for waste related development where this would endanger, or have a significant adverse impact on, the character, quality, interest or setting of a wide range of important or protected areas, sites or buildings. In assessing each development proposal, the County Council will normally pay due regard to prevailing national policy and guidance appropriate both to the areas and features of acknowledged importance and to the proposed means of dealing with waste. It will also take into account whether any significant adverse impact identified could be controlled to acceptable levels.

Policy 4

Proposals for new waste water and sewage treatment plant, extensions to existing works or facilities for the co-disposal of sewage and other wastes will normally be permitted where the County Council is satisfied that the development is either needed to treat Surrey's arisings or, in the case of arisings from elsewhere, the need cannot be practicably and reasonably met at another site. Wherever practical and economical, biogas should be recovered for use as an energy source.

Policy 5

Permission will not normally be granted for waste related development in the Green Belt except in a number of specified cases. These include at sites which the Waste Plan will identify; landfilling to restore mineral workings which will facilitate an after-use appropriate to a Green Belt location; landraising; recycling facilities at a landfill site for as long as the landfill site is operating; open windrow composting, subject to various restrictions; reuse or redevelopment of existing buildings and any other developments which would maintain openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Policy 6

Planning permission for waste related development will normally be granted provided it can be demonstrated that it contributes to the best practical environmental option for waste management in Surrey and that any material adverse impacts of the development can be controlled to achieve levels that will not significantly adversely affect people, land, infrastructure and resources.

4. Paper 3

4.1 Despite the emphasis on minimisation, reuse and recycling, there will always be an amount of residual waste that will need to be disposed of in landfill. As described earlier, there are national and regional targets for reducing landfill and these vary according to the type of waste concerned but all require very substantial reductions in the volume of waste sent to landfill over the next 15 years. At the same time, a study to estimate the capacity of identified landfill sites for non-hazardous waste (biodegradable, mainly residual Municipal Solid Waste and Commercial and Industrial Waste) and inert waste (non-biodegradable mainly Construction and Demolition waste).

4.2 The study suggested that there will be a shortfall between demand and capacity for non-hazardous landfill after about 2013.2014 when existing sites are expected to close. The extent of the shortfall and, therefore, the new capacity needed will depend on the levels of recycling and recovery but it is likely that an additional 2.3 to 3.8 million cubic meters of voidspace will needed up to 2020 which equates one or two new sites. Similarly, a shortfall for inert waste is expected after about 2007 with a projected need for between 4.7 and 5.5 million cubic meters of voidspace up to 2020.

4.3 In the waste disposal hierarchy, landfill is the option of last resort. Policies are being developed that identify landfill as appropriate only for waste that cannot be re-used, recycled, or processed to recover energy or materials. At the same time, however, work is progressing to try to identify new landfill sites or preferred areas for landfill. Sometimes, landfill is seen as a beneficial activity helping to restore land. The danger in such circumstances is that the desire to progress the beneficial use may encourage putting materials that could be re-used etc. into the landfill site. Similarly, adjacent residents often want a landfill use to be completed as quickly as

possible, which may also promote landfilling rather than more sustainable disposal options. As well as undermining policy and making it more difficult to achieve the ambitious targets in national and regional strategies, this would also have the effect of using up landfill capacity more quickly than necessary and generating a demand for further sites to be identified.

4.4 Sites for future landfill and for waste treatment facilities should be identified through a policy approach that describes the features that sites should have and through a criteria based approach to assess the impact of potential sites. Accordingly, the following policies (which have been summarised here) have been proposed:

Policy 1

The County Council will normally only grant planning permission for waste disposal by landfilling or landraising at sites (yet to be identified) or in the preferred areas (yet to be identified) provided that it is satisfied that the waste concerned cannot practicably be re-used etc. and that the development will restore mineral working sites or substantially improve the quality of the land or facilitate an appropriate afteruse.

Policy 2

In considering the need for development involving landfilling or landraising, the County Council will normally have regard to the remaining capacity of existing and other permitted landfilling and landraising facilities in the county and any information from regional monitoring relating to landfill needs arising from London.

Policy 3

The County Council may, in granting planning permission for landfilling or landraising developments impose conditions limiting both the types and quantities of waste to be deposited in order to conserve capacity for waste that cannot be re0used etc.

Policy 4

Proposals for landfilling or landraising should normally incorporate finished levels that are compatible with the surrounding area; include proposals for aftercare and long term management and make provision where practical and economical for landfill gas to be recovered and used as an energy source.

5. Paper 4

5.1 Up till now, consideration of sites for waste management purposes has been conducted against criteria-based policies. It has now been strongly recommended

by the Local Plan Inspector that specific sites for the development of waste management facilities should be identified. When a site is identified, it means that the principle of developing that site is accepted although details such as scale and appearance are still to be agreed. This approach gives some certainty to both the industry and local residents. However, it is also possible to adopt, in addition to a site specific approach, a criteria based policy. This allows for preferred sites for development to be identified but also provides criteria against which to judge other sites that might be suggested for development. This could happen if preferred sites are for some reason not available and allows some flexibility to respond to future circumstances while giving a degree of certainty.

5.2 As well as proximity which was discussed earlier, there is also a growing importance attached to the concept of self sufficiency. This requires that authorities provide for sufficient capacity to manage the equivalent volume of waste as arising in their area. The idea of equivalence is introduced as cross boarder transportation of waste is inevitable in the case of some specialist forms of material and desirable when arisings are collected closer to a neighbouring authority's facility which can be utilised with shorter journeys.

5.3 A needs assessment of future demand has been completed which suggests that there is demand for more recycling, composting, recovery and disposal facilities across the County. The number of additional sites depends on the rate of growth in waste arisings, the size of the facilities developed and the types of processes used to manage and dispose of waste. However, there is a need for a geographical spread of sites to accord with the proximity principle.

5.4 A large number of sites have been identified to allow for some being unavailable for development. These sites were identified from previous site assessment work carried out by the County Council, through consultation with the Boroughs and Districts and with the 30 or so companies currently operating waste management sites in the County. A small number of ad hoc suggestions from potential developers will also be looked at.

5.5 Generally, it is preferable for new waste management sites to be located in urban areas as these sites can satisfy the proximity principle. Approximately 50 urban sites/industrial estates were visited and assessed. It became clear that there are very few urban locations available in Surrey for waste management development. Whilst several of the locations visited were thought to have suitable layouts, only five had plots available at the time of the visits. The availability of plots, however, is very changeable and plots thought to be suitable for waste management activities are also likely to be suitable for other purposes and may well not remain available for long.

5.6 All of the sites were assessed using the same criteria including site area; surrounding uses; traffic and transport; planning policy; planning history; landscape designations; Ecology and Nature Classification; Agricultural Land Classification; groundwater quality; surface water quality; flooding; historic environment; recreational activities; air quality/noise/environmental nuisance; proximity to waste

arisings; proximity to existing waste management facilities and visual/landscape impact.

5.7 33 sites have been fully assessed to date. An officer assessment of whether a site is suitable to be safeguarded for development of a waste management facility has been made although no formal decision has been made in relation to any of these sites. In the case of some of the sites not recommended for safeguarding, this may be due to the sites not being available rather than them not being suitable.

The sites within Woking that have been assessed are:

Day's Rail Aggregate Depot (not recommended for safeguarding); and
Martyrs' Lane (recommended for safeguarding)

5.8 In the future, waste management facilities, especially those dealing with re-use, recycling and recovery, are most likely to succeed if they are based near industries using raw materials and it would make economic sense to cluster such industries together in a resource park or around disassembly plants.

5.9 Composting is becoming more important given the drive to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill. There is, however, some concern voiced by the Environment Agency regarding bio-aerosols that can be emitted from open windrow compost sites and it is recommended that such sites should be a minimum of 250m away from housing.

5.10 Thermal treatment of waste can also reduce the volume going to landfill. In Surrey, there are likely to be limited opportunities for siting thermal treatment facilities and, in order to give certainty to both the public and the waste management industry, it is suggested that opportunities should be limited to named preferred sites.

5.11 All sites identified as being suitable for waste management facilities, may well be capable of supporting alternative development opportunities. Given the need for additional waste sites, there may be merit in safeguarding the identified sites to prevent development for other purposes. Draft policies on these issues have been summarised below:

Policy 1

Planning permission for the improvement or extension of existing civic amenity sites or the provision of new sites will normally be granted at existing or proposed waste management sites subject to time limiting civic amenity site use at landfill sites to the duration of the landfill use. Permission will also normally be granted for land that is or has been used or allocated in a local plan for industrial or storage purposes and at sites identified in any Action Plan.

Policy 2

Planning permission for resource parks, dis-assembly plants and other similar facilities engaged in adding value to waste will normally be granted at sites to be identified, sites used or allocated for industrial or storage purposes or identified in an Action Plan.

Policy 3

Planning permissions for development involving recycling, storage, transfer, materials recovery and processing (excluding thermal treatment) of waste will normally be granted at sites to be identified, land used or allocated for industrial or storage purposes, land in the countryside that has previously been developed, at a waste disposal landfill site for the duration of the landfill operation and at sites identified in an Action Plan.

Policy 4

Planning permission for open windrow composting will normally be granted at a waste disposal landfill site for the duration of the landfill operation, at any other site in the countryside where the land has previously been developed or at sites in the countryside involving small scale composting of waste for use on agricultural land.

Policy 5

Planning permissions for development involving thermal treatment of waste will normally be given at sites to be specified provided the development meets the criteria to be agreed.

Policy 6

The County Council will safeguard the preferred sites shown on the proposals map from other forms of development by making representations to the appropriate planning authority on relevant planning applications.

6. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

6.1 The draft framework sets out the problem of ever increasing volumes of waste, the finite capacity for landfill disposal and the consequent set of directives, strategies and targets designed to encourage local authorities to devise more sustainable disposal practices. In particular, the framework seeks to reconcile the need for more sites for waste management with development control policies across the County. It does this by suggesting a number of sites which are recommended to be safeguarded to allow more and more local waste management facilities to provide some certainty to the public and the industry about the location of new capacity and by allowing a degree of flexibility through a criteria-based approach to further sites which may be the subject of development proposals. As such, the mix of approaches stands a good chance of providing sufficient sites in appropriate

locations to enable the County to meet the demanding targets for reducing landfill volumes.

6.2 The prospect of proposals for thermal treatment plants arising at a number of locations has been addressed through proposals to identify a comparatively small number of sites at which such development proposals might be acceptable.

6.3 For Woking, the only site that is recommended to be safeguarded for potential expansion is the current civic amenity site at Martyrs' Lane. The Committee has previously been critical of the quality of the site, its access and arrangements for disposal and a report on improvements is scheduled to appear elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting. Identification of Martyrs' Lane for potential expansion to include better re-use, recycling and recovery facilities could address any issues outstanding from the immediately proposed improvements.

6.4 Finally, the plans are congruent with the proposals under development by Woking Borough Council which satisfy both the self sufficiency and proximity principles.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That Committee is recommended to support the approach to managing waste set out in the issue papers and authorise the Local Director to respond in detail via the on-line consultation mechanism that has been established.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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