

NEWS RELEASE

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Beyond waste

Sustainable waste management is an important aspect of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision, which aims to shape the Region for the next 20 years.

West Midlands Regional Assembly, the body responsible for delivering this strategy, has identified waste management as a key area to enhance and improve. The West Midlands is the only region to have been identified as a 'Zero Waste Place' by Defra in its drive to implement government policy set out in Waste Strategy 2007.

The Spatial Strategy seeks to deliver sustainable development by considering waste as a resource and ensuring that waste disposal by landfill is the last option. The strategy also provides a policy framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste. Each Waste Planning Authority in the Region will be expected to manage an equivalent tonnage of waste to that arising within its boundary. In those areas currently unable to do this, there will need to be a major investment programme in new waste management facilities.

Working with the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands, the Assembly has brought the leaders of all the main waste management companies in the West Midlands together with leaders from the public sector and government agencies. Their aim is to identify and address the blockages to bringing forward new projects to manage waste as a resource and to recover energy from waste that otherwise would be sent to landfill.

One example is the Energy from Waste facility proposed in South Staffordshire. This month Staffordshire County Council's planning committee came to a unanimous decision to back the facility. In addition to diverting a significant amount of waste from landfill, the plant would generate enough energy for 24,000 homes. It is estimated to save the taxpayer £7.5 million a year for the next 25 years.

Cllr Rex Roberts Chairman of the Assembly's Regional Planning Partnership said: "Managing waste is important to all us regardless of where we live. The aim of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy is to see waste as a resource and move away from a reliance on landfill for our waste. Critical to this will be the provision of modern new

waste facilities that will enable waste to be handled and treated closer to where it arises.”

The closing day for submitting comments on West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision is 8 December 2008.

ENDS

Note for Editors:

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 elected members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's RDA, Advantage West Midlands.
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk.