

**Minutes of Meeting of Regional Technical Advisory Body
20th September at NISP, Kings Norton (Birmingham)**

1. Attendance

Adrian Cooper	Chair - Shropshire CC
Amit Bratch	Dudley MBC
Bruce Braithwaite	Staffordshire CC and WMRA Policy Lead
Bryn Walters	East Midlands Regional Assembly
Chris Blakeley	WMRA
Dawn Harris	Walsall MBC
Delia Yapp	Shropshire CC
Mark Rowley	Sandwell MBC
Jenny Doyle	Cory Environmental/ ESA
Mohammed Salim	Sandwell MBC
Nick Dean	Worcestershire CC
Paul Sobczyk	Telford and Wrekin Council
Paul Knuckle	NISP
Peter Hopkins	Robert Hopkins Ltd
Rachael Pipkin	GOWM
Rebecca Gill	GOWM
Sally Robertson	BREW Centre
Shaun Denny	Sita/ ESA
Simone Aplin	EA
Susan Juned	NISP
Susan Kent	BREW Centre
Terry Burns	Herefordshire Council
Tim Baldwin	AWM
Peter Field	Technical Secretary

Apologies were received from Chris Crean, David Coxill, Brian Davies, David Piper, Derek Greedy, Gerald Owen, Graham Bailey, Jeff Rhodes and Richard Hammersley.

The chair thanked NISP for hosting the meeting.

2. Minutes of meeting on 27th June 2007

2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, subject to amending 'Foundry' to read 'Faraday' (para 6.1).

2.2 There was one matter arising:

Para 2.2 (Management of Low Level Radioactive Waste): Derek Greedy has been confirmed as a member of the Waste Strategy Programme Board, the next meeting of which is on 20th November.

3. BREW Centre: Presentation by Sally Robertson

3.1 Sally explained that the BREW Centre for Local Authorities (a consortium between NISP, the LGA and Oxfordshire County Council) is a pilot project that is now in its second year. It aims to promote resource efficiency, link local authorities with businesses, and deliver network development, regional events, case studies and trailblazing projects.

3.2 The Centre funded 13 Trailblazer projects in 2006/7 including the Processing Capacity Study in the West Midlands. £1.4m funding is available for a further 20 projects in

2007/08, and bids are being made for funding for projects in 2008/09 and from 2009/10 for multi-year projects. Projects can generally expect to receive £30K support, though some larger partnership projects, and (if approved by Defra) multi-year projects, could receive more. Innovation is favoured.

3.3 CB enquired about the relationship between BREW and the Regional Centre of Excellence. Sally explained that BREW focused on the relationship between local authorities and businesses, whereas the Centre of Excellence was primarily concerned with internal LA efficiencies, but that there was regular liaison between the two organizations.

3.4 The BREW Centre web site is at <http://www.eas.local.gov.uk/brew>.

Agreed:

Members are asked to visit the BREW web site and consider possible projects for discussion at the next meeting of RTAB.

4. Regional Waste Strategy/ Review of Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2: Draft Policies

4.1 BB introduced the latest draft of the proposed RSS Review waste policies and invited comments and suggestions for amendments. After discussion, it was agreed to recommend several amendments:

(a) Para 8.77: the final sentence should be deleted because it merely restates Government policy.

(b) Policy W1: it needs to be made clear that provision should be made for transfer and landfill, but that this should be additional to that provided to recycle, reuse and recover the waste arisings. It was felt that further information on the scale and nature of requirements for transfer facilities would be helpful, and that this may come out of the current project being carried out for AWM by SLR, due to report in mid October.

(c) Para 8.78: delete reference to the four Black Country Boroughs.

(d) Para 8.82: amend to clarify that WRATE applies only to municipal waste.

(e) Policy W2: the final clause should be deleted as it is too prescriptive and the substantive issue is dealt with in Policy W5.

(f) Policy W3: it was noted that whilst GOWM still have concerns that this policy provides insufficiently clear guidance for each local authority, other members of the RTAB considered the balance to be right; the matter is due to be considered further at a meeting in the near future. Amend to read regional or sub-regional.

(g) Policies W4 and W8: both refer to safeguarding existing sites, and consideration should be given to removing this duplication.

(h) Policy W6: clarification of the definition of 'open land' would be helpful, and 'agricultural diversification' should be a separate bullet point.

(i) Policy W9: delete reference to 'evidence of need'.

(j) Policies W10 and W11: consider possible duplication/ overlap; need to consider further in the absence of evidence of the need for capacity for 'other hazardous wastes; need to include reference to Stoke on Trent.

(k) Para 8.100: SA to advise on whether RGN3 is due to be reviewed.

4.2 The Group expressed their thanks to BB for the hard work he had put into the RSS Review on their behalf.

Agreed:

BB to give consideration to further amendments in line with the above.

5. Presentation by Peter Jones of Biffa: the New Resource Economy – Forward Trends from an Operator Perspective

5.1 Peter suggested that we are close to a 'tipping point' as the landfill escalator progressively brings alternatives to landfill closer to economic viability. Planning decisions need to be taken from 2007 to achieve investment on the ground from 2011. The industry will need to make investments totalling £10-15bn to move to new technologies by 2015. Climate change and an emerging energy gap are contributing to the urgency of the situation.

5.2 Biffa's approach is a 'mix and match' solution, comprising energy, composting and recycling facilities and avoiding large mass burn plants. Large scale (20ha) sites capable of combining these facilities, located close to motorways, waterways and railways and co-locating with large energy users, are preferred.

5.3 CB suggested, and it was generally agreed, that the key messages from the presentation (particularly the relationship between waste and energy) need to be communicated to Government in the Region, and links should be made with the current debate about large scale new housing development in the RSS Review.

5.4 The Chair thanked Peter for his stimulating presentation and invited further discussion at the separate session planned for the afternoon. Paper copies of Peter's slide presentation were made available.

6. Progress with Waste Core Strategies

6.1 The Chair invited members to provide an update of the situation in each part of the region:

(a) Shropshire: the Sustainable Resource Management Core Strategy has been withdrawn and consideration is being given with Telford & Wrekin to the scope for a Joint Core Strategy. The situation is further complicated by the possibility of the County becoming a unitary authority.

(b) Herefordshire: the UDP has been adopted recently, and Core Strategy development is at a very early stage.

(c) Black Country: consultation on Issues and Options has now closed. A Stakeholders Event is planned for 17th October, and Preferred Options are due to be published in January 2008.

(d) Worcestershire: Have asked that the Core Strategy is withdrawn, and will recommence work following advice from GOWM.

(e) Telford & Wrekin: as Shropshire.

(f) Staffordshire: Preparing a Joint Core Strategy with Stoke on Trent; now subject to a 2 year delay, anticipating adoption in 2011.

(g) Warwickshire: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment now underway.

6.2 The Chair outlined the outcomes from the meeting of the POS Waste Planning Advisory Group on 13th July, noting that a note of the meeting had been previously circulated. Nationally, experience is similar to that in the West Midlands. It is clear that there have been differences of interpretation of the guidance and the meeting had been held to assist DCLG, PINS and LPAs to iron out some of the major issues. One key issue is the definition of 'strategic sites', and whether these should be identified in core strategies. There is a potential conflict between identifying a single site for a strategic purpose and the PFI procurement process, as revealed by correspondence between Oxfordshire and DCLG.

6.3 The Chair noted that there is a danger that guidance is regarded as 'absolute rules', resulting in a lack of flexibility and ultimately less successful planning.

6.4 RP asked whether there was effective engagement between the waste industry and LPAs in plan preparation. SD replied that the industry has insufficient resources to engage on matters other than those where it has a clear and specific commercial interest.

6.5 ND queried whether the employment land provision included in the RSS Review made specific allowance for land for waste facilities. The general view was that it didn't, and that to do so would be difficult, requiring detailed consideration of the mix of plant types and sizes. SA commented that EA has published information on the land take of different types of facilities. The Enviro 2005 report similarly provides case study information on site characteristics.

7. Other RTABs Business

East Midlands

Bryn Walters explained that the RSS Examination in Public had closed on 2nd August, waste having been examined on 21st June. The Panel Report is expected in late October, Proposed Changes are expected in early 2008 with approval in September 2008. The panel had been concerned to establish that the RSS conformed to PPS10, expressed concerns about the quality of waste data, and commented that there was a need for closer inter-regional relationships and more information about inter-regional waste movements.

[Agreed:](#)

[Bryn Walters to be invited to attend RTAB when the Panel Report has been published.](#)

North Wales

The Chair explained that the Review of the North Wales Waste Strategy is now at Options stage, and Preferred Options are in preparation.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 SA informed the group that the EA was currently carrying out a consultation on fees and charges. The Agency can provide data on waste managed by individual WPA in 2006.

8.2 MR stated that Sandwell Council had agreed to make a CPO on 12.8 ha of land at Hill Top for municipal waste management purposes.

8.3 Tim Baldwin informed the Group that the president of Chinook Sciences (Rodex technology) was visiting the area and arrangements could be made to meet him. Members should contact TB if they wanted to follow this up.

7. Next Meetings

7.1 Future dates are:

<p>Thursday 8th November 2007 (am) – possibly at Bulmers, Hereford Thursday 24th January 2008 (am)</p>

PF 26/9/07