

**Minutes of Meeting of Regional Technical Advisory Body  
23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007**

**1. Attendance**

Bruce Braithwaite	Staffordshire County Council
Rod Gifford	Giffords Recycling Ltd
Neil Cross	Government Office West Midlands
James Woodcock	NISP
Tim Baldwin	Advantage West Midlands
Claire Atkins	Advantage West Midlands
Simon Slater	Advantage West Midlands
Chris Blakeley	West Midlands Regional Assembly
Chris Crean	Friends of the Earth
Richard Hammersley	Planning Aid
Rebecca Carter	Groundwork WM
Jeff Rhodes	ESA (Biffa)
Peter Hopkins	Robert Hopkins Ltd
Mohammed Salim	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Adrian Cooper	Shropshire County Council
Eddie West	Shropshire County Council
Derek Greedy	Warwickshire County Council
Dawn Harris	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Katherine Kynaston	Telford & Wrekin Council
Nick Dean	Worcestershire County Council
David Piper	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Katie Dickson	Wolverhampton City Council
Peter Field	Technical Secretary

Apologies were received from Tony Ashfield, David Coxill, Jane Wormald, Susan Juned, James Dennison, Gerald Owen and Jenny Doyle.

The chair thanked Rod Gifford and his staff for their help and hospitality in agreeing to host the meeting.

**2. Minutes of meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2006**

2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. There were several matters arising:

- a) Low level radioactive waste: there will be a presentation to the national network of RTAB Chairs on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2007.
- b) RSS Technical report – this was published without further amendment.
- c) Consultation on planning and pollution control – a revised response was sent on behalf of RTAB.
- d) Conference on Waste, 27<sup>th</sup> February – the keynote speaker will be Richard Hargreaves of Bulmers; everyone is encouraged to attend.

**3. Review of Regional Economic Strategy**

3.1 The Chair introduced this item by emphasising the importance of ensuring co-ordination between the reviews of RSS and RES. RTAB could respond to the consultation on RSS Phase 2 in relation for example to employment issues (deadline

5<sup>th</sup> March 2007), and to the RES policy choices consultation (deadline 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007).

3.2 Dr Simon Slater (AWM) gave a presentation on the key themes of the RES (enterprise, innovation, skills, economic activity, quality of life, infrastructure, the role of places, and the role of sectors), the main issues regarding each, and the contribution that waste management might make to the region's economic performance. He suggested that RTAB might wish to make contact with the external reference group via the Environment Agency and Sustainability West Midlands who were members, and that in making its response, RTAB should think about what it would like to see in the Draft RES.

3.3 In a wide-ranging discussion of the issues, the following points were made:

- (a) The RES should stress the importance for all businesses to minimise their waste costs. This will have increasingly important 'bottom line' implications, and is fundamental to the desire to achieve a low carbon economy. A key theme for the RES should be the efficient use of resources.
- (b) The RES should recognise that waste management is essentially an economic activity. Recycling should be regarded as a significant growth industry in the Region. There is a need for an additional 10 million tonnes pa of recycling capacity if landfill diversion targets are to be achieved. At £30 per tonne for treatment, this equates to a £300m pa business opportunity – which will increase in 6 years to £500m pa with the escalation of Landfill Tax. Taking into multiplier effects and the added value to manufacturing of re-using waste materials, this represents a major economic activity for the region with significant potential for expanding existing and creating new businesses, developing new products and processes, and generating additional employment.
- (c) There is a continuing need for the Region to stimulate the market for recycled materials. The export of recycled materials (eg plastics) to distant markets may be regarded as a lost resource to the Region. The economics of transport can mean that unit costs to transport recycle short distances within the UK are greater than for longer distances eg to Singapore, China and India, where economies of scale can be achieved.
- (d) There is still resistance in the Region to the specification of recycled material (eg to the use of recycled wood as a substitute for bark in landscaping). However, as local markets are stimulated the economic equation may change in favour of the more local use of recycled materials. (Current legislation and regulations regarding the definition of 'waste' can be counter-productive. It is noted that the EU's Environmental Thematic Strategy will consider this and RTAB fully supports an early and satisfactory resolution to this matter.)
- (e) Energy and waste considerations are closely inter-related. Waste is a potential source of renewable energy and can contribute to carbon reduction. The importance to investment decisions of a reliable source of feedstock is recognised, as is the potential conflict between waste minimisation efforts and the availability of waste as a feedstock. Whilst re-use and recycling are generally more sustainable, a residue of waste from these processes is inevitable and this may be regarded as a potentially reliable and secure source of fuel. (Technical work prepared for the RSS Review has estimated the amount of residue that will have to be planned for.) The public perception of energy from waste plants is very negative, and the economic cost of transporting waste to energy plants

outside the Region can be prohibitive. There could be economic as well as environmental benefits in developing more localised, smaller scale plants within the Region. There is an opportunity to develop the market to realise this potential.

- (f) There is a need to maintain flexibility in the procurement of waste treatment in the region. Whilst long term contracts will be required in order to secure the necessary scale of investment, renegotiation options will be important to take advantage of new technologies.
- (g) There is a need for public education and promotional work to ensure that people are aware of the implications of more sustainable waste management, and to dispel misconceptions and perceptions about the nature of waste management processes. Public perceptions need to be addressed. The very use of the term 'waste' can generate adverse reaction, whereas 'recycling' has a much more positive image. Rebranding and remarketing of the waste management industry would help to address this. One example is the success of a local company specialising in recycling wood in securing a contract in Singapore for the supply of recycled material; avoidance of the use of the word 'waste' was felt to be instrumental in this success. Conversely, the resistance in some quarters to changes in terminology, for example from 'waste management' into 'resource management', is unhelpful.
- (h) Land use issues should be a key consideration for the RES as well as the RSS. The RES should take the needs of waste management into account when considering how much employment land is required, of what type and in which locations. In Shropshire, for example, the need for waste facilities accounts for 13% of the total employment land need; and in some parts of the Region this proportion might be higher. Resource recovery facilities can have extensive site requirements. Competing needs for land could force prices higher and squeeze waste facilities out of contention; an adequate and flexible land supply is important to safeguard against this.
- (i) The waste sector can make a significant contribution to the Region's employment prospects, by providing employment opportunities that utilise practical skills (NVQ levels 2 and 3) as well as 'thinking' skills for example those associated with new environmental technologies. It provides the potential to capitalise on the skills and knowledge of older workers through redeployment and retraining.

Agreed

A draft response to be prepared, based on the points made in the discussion, and circulated for comment. Comments to be provided by 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Final response to be sent to AWM by 28<sup>th</sup> February. (BB/ PF)

#### **4. Review of Regional Spatial Strategy**

4.1 The chair suggested that RTAB might wish to comment on the importance of ensuring that waste matters are carefully integrated with other policy issues in the Revision – particularly the supply of employment land, strategic locations for waste-focused facilities, and the implications of the redevelopment of brownfield land for construction and demolition waste management.

[Agreed:](#)

<a href="#">Comments of RTAB regarding employment land and brownfield land reclamation to be submitted to WMRA. (BB/ PF)</a>
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#### **5. Research studies into waste recycling and recovery capacity and potential landfill capacity – update**

5.1 It was reported that SLR had been appointed to undertake a study into reuse and recycling capacity in the region and that Scott Wilson had been appointed to look at the prospects for current mineral sites being available as landfill sites within the next 20 years and what capacity that might produce. Both studies are to report by the end of March 2007 and inauguration meetings had been held with RMWOG representatives on 8 January to agree the scope of the work, involvement of local authority mineral and waste planners, and the form of the output reports so that they could be kept up to date by individual authorities. A further meeting will be held on 13 March when draft reports and the monitoring framework will be presented.

5.2 Authorities were asked to co-operate in the studies and to respond to the requests to update and correct the schedules which the consultants would be circulating.

5.3 The Chair suggested that several other topics might warrant studying:

- (a) Construction and demolition waste;
- (b) The role of transfer stations;
- (c) Directory of facilities that recycle and re-use materials.

5.4 RH suggested that a further topic could be to study what people perceive to be the problems of waste and what would help to mitigate these. BB agreed to raise this at national RTAB chairs level.

#### **6. Progress on plans/ developments in the Region**

- (a) Telford: Core strategy and waste DPD – Public Inquiry in May.
- (b) Worcestershire: Core Strategy submitted; consultation runs until 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Negative responses from police and health trust to consultations on a planning application for 100K tonne waste transfer station.
- (c) Black Country: Joint Core Strategy in preparation; stakeholder event on minerals and waste planned for late March.
- (d) Warwickshire: Minerals and Waste Development Scheme has been revised; Submission draft of Core Strategy in preparation. Planning application received for resource recovery including biomass as energy resource, composting and anaerobic digester.
- (e) Shropshire: Consultation on Core Strategy and Minerals Plan closed end December. Consultations with DCLG/ PINS may lead to changes in content of

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Core Strategy. SPD on Managing Waste in New Developments now adopted.  
Minerals and Waste Development Scheme being reviewed. Considering best  
approach to saving policies in existing plans.

**7. Next Meeting**

Agreed:

10am, 28 <sup>th</sup> March at Warwickshire County Council.
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### **Giffords Recycling**

The meeting was followed by a short presentation by Rod Gifford, of Giffords Recycling Limited, and a tour of the site.

Rod explained that his company was widely regarded as the 'best wood recycler in the world', though it is not the largest. The company recycles wooden pallets. Products include refurbished pallets, 'bark' mulch and equestrian bedding. The plant accepts and treats polythene and cardboard packaging on a small scale. It is the only such facility in the conurbation. The company has expanded from employing 42 people 3 years ago to 90 currently, with the prospect of employment increasing to 150 in the near future.

PF 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007