

**Minutes of Meeting of Regional Technical Advisory Body
7th March 2006**

1. Attendance

Bruce Braithwaite	Staffordshire County Council
Chris Blakeley	WMRA
Neil Cross	Government Office West Midlands
Rachel Pipkin	GOWM
Richard Hammersley	Academic representative
Jenny Doyle	ESA
Jeff Rhodes	ESA
Chris Crean	
James Dennison	Groundwork West Midlands
Susan Juned	NISP
Dawn Harris	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Adrian Cooper	Shropshire County Council
Katherine Kynaston	Telford & Wrekin Council
David Coxill	Telford & Wrekin Council
Ian Culley	Wolverhampton City Council
Katie Dickson	Wolverhampton City Council
Derek Greedy	Warwickshire County Council
Nick Dean	Worcestershire County Council
Kevin Singleton	Herefordshire Council
Debbie Kline	Herefordshire Council
Mohammed Salim	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Peter Field	Technical Secretary

1.1 Apologies were received from Carl Douglass, Mark Bishop, Deborah Jones, Ralph Hepworth, Shaun Denny, Peter Hopkins, Graham Bailey, Gerald Owen, Emily Manttan, Simon Chapman, David Bridgwood, and Lorna Langdon.

1.2 The Chairman thanked Shropshire County Council and Greenfinch for agreeing to host the meeting and provide the tour of the Biodigester Demonstration Plant.

2. Minutes of meeting on 29th January 2006

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

- a) RSS Annual Monitoring Report, 2005: this has been published and can be accessed on the WMRA web site.
- b) Web site: the Chairman referred to ongoing developments at both national and regional levels; RTAB business can now be accessed via the WMRA web site.
- c) Clean Neighbourhoods Act: a submission has been made on behalf of RTAB; there will be a formal consultation on the proposals.
- d) Agenda items for Chair of Regional Environment Partnership: the consultation on the National Waste Strategy will be the key issue.

3. Regional Waste Strategy/ Review of Regional Spatial Strategy

3.1 PF outlined the proposals of the Sub Group convened to consider the data to be provided to assist local authorities to answer the Section 4(4) questions on waste. In addition to the published technical papers, EA site specific input data is to be made available. A workshop for strategic planning authority representatives is proposed, to explore the questions and data sources and provide a forum for discussion of the issues and options. This has been arranged for 20th March 2006. An explanatory paper is to be issued as the context for this workshop.

3.2 Discussion focussed on the approach to be adopted in the RSS review.

- a) There was general support for a 'resource efficiency' approach that firmly tied in waste management with the economic strategy for the RSS.
- b) It was acknowledged that the RSS should reflect apportionments to WPAs in terms of capacity requirements, but not site-specific allocations or specific management technologies.
- c) Broad locations may be identified in the RSS for nationally or regionally significant developments. The responsibility for identifying requirements for nationally significant facilities rests with national government.
- d) LDDs are required to allocate sites and areas suitable for waste management, in accordance with the strategy, broad locations and apportionments established in RSS. The approach to be adopted is set out in the 'living draft' of the Companion Guide to PPS10. The limitations of the planning system need to be acknowledged: it will not be possible or appropriate to attempt to control things too tightly. The role is to facilitate by making possible an agreed level of infrastructure provision.
- e) Waste management requirements should be explicitly taken into account in assessing employment land needs, and plans should allocate sufficient employment land to provide for waste as well as other employment-related uses. The policies and proposals of a Waste LDF should be reflected in the LDFs of each District.
- f) It will be necessary to consider how to safeguard existing sites and site allocations from alternative uses. In practice this may be difficult, because of competing interest from higher value uses. It was noted that it was proving difficult to defend land allocated for employment uses against other proposals such as housing. The Companion Guide includes reference to the robustness of assumptions about site allocations and availability.
- g) Industry would like to see a consistent approach at national level to assumptions about inter-regional waste movements.
- h) Should the region move immediately towards a 'consume your own smoke' apportionment, or should a period of adjustment be allowed for?
- i) Monitoring will be an important component of what is put in place, in order to improve the currently poor quality of data.
- j) RTAB should have a standing agenda item for members to report on permissions granted, sites lost etc.

Agreed:

- (a) The proposals for the Workshop on 20th March 2006.
- (b) A standing item to be included on future RTAB agendas, seeking information on relevant planning decisions.

4. Review of National Waste Strategy

4.1 The Chair commented that the Government is clearly moving in the direction of a holistic approach towards waste and resource management. Defra has highlighted a pivotal role for RDAs in promoting this approach. Local authorities are being asked to consider taking on a wider role beyond municipal waste, and to act in partnership with others. Concurrent consultations are also taking place on the PPC/licensing system (Defra/ EA) and Low Level Radioactive Waste.

4.2 It was agreed that the consultation marks a fundamental change in approach and that it is important for RTAB and the Region to respond, and to encourage individual local authorities to do so. The deadline for responses on the National Waste Strategy is 9th May.

Agreed

RTAB's next meeting should be brought forward to enable a discussion of draft responses to all 3 consultations.

NOTE: date of meeting now fixed for 10am on Friday 5th May, at Staffordshire County Council Riverway offices.

4. Progress on plans/ developments in the Region and other Regions

(a) Warwickshire:

4.1 DG reported that the draft Core Strategy is currently out to public consultation, closing on 10th April. Roadshows and Waste Forums are being held. 12 key issues have been identified, and it is hoped that the Forums will help in identifying the preferred option to be taken forward.

4.2 RH noted that West Midlands Planning Aid was involved in the Warwickshire public consultation, and provided training to help community groups in the Region to engage effectively in such processes.

(b) Telford and Wrekin:

4.3 DC reported that the Waste LDD is scheduled to be submitted in the Autumn. It is likely to propose 4 strategic sites, and its overall allocations were considered to meet the indicative requirements identified in the Phase 2 study. It will include an 'other sites' policy.

(c) Shropshire:

4.4 AC gave a presentation on the Draft Core Strategy. It promotes an integrated sustainable resource management approach and sets out policy and principles as the context for 2 separate LDPs for waste and minerals. Consultation on the

'preferred option' ends on 31st March. The County Council is seeking to adopt a 'waste generation' Supplementary Planning Document jointly with the District Councils.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 NC sought nominations from RTAB to sit on a wood/ energy recycling expert group being set up as part of the Forestry Framework.

5.2 NC outlined provisions for the Regional Support Fund for 2006/07 and 2007/08, and invited views on projects that might be considered for funding. The Regional allocation is £30K in each year.

6. Date and time of next meetings

- (a) 10am, Friday 5th May 2006 at Riverway, Stafford – **nb note change of date.**
- (b) 10am Tuesday 4th July 2006 – venue to be agreed.

Presentation by Michael Cheshire, Managing Director of Greenfinch

Michael outlined the background to the development of the South Shropshire Biodigester Plant.

- ❑ Anaerobic digestion takes place in enclosed vessels and produces energy in the form of biogas, and biofertiliser. It is a 3product process – delivering waste management, nutrient recycling and renewable energy solutions.
- ❑ Provided the waste is separated, the process counts towards Government recycling and composting targets.
- ❑ Biogas can be used in boilers, CHP schemes (eg in Denmark), vehicles (eg Sweden's buses) and solid fuel cells.
- ❑ The South Shropshire plant is the product of a partnership between South Shropshire District Council and Greenfinch, and has been supported by funding from Defra and AWM.
- ❑ Planning permission was granted following extensive pre-application public consultation which generated much public support. There were no objections to the application.
- ❑ The plant has a design capacity of 5,000 tonnes pa of source segregated kitchen and garde waste, and produces fertiliser and biogas (used for heat and electricity). It occupies a 0.25ha site.
- ❑ The plant:
 - Reduces uncontrolled emissions of methane to the atmosphere.
 - Displaces fossil fertilisers, especially nitrogen.
 - Reduces transport costs – a local facility.
 - Provides renewable heat and electricity.
- ❑ And contributes to sustainable development objectives:
 - Provides local employment.
 - Involves the local community.
 - Provides netter use of resources.
 - Provides renewable energy.
- ❑ The scale of the demonstrator plant is not commercially viable; a minimum 10-15K throughput would be required.
- ❑ Broad financial balanced sheet based on a 20K tonne pa capacity:
 - Capital cost: £3.2m.
 - Income: gate fee @ £45 p tonne = £900K.
 - Electricity @ £22.50 p tonne = £450K.
 - Heat @ £10 p tonne - = £0K.
 - Biofertiliser @ £5 p tonne = £0K.
 - Costs: staff, transport etc = c £600K
 - ie Annual surplus of £750K to finance the debt.