

**Minutes of Meeting of Regional Technical Advisory Body  
5<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

**1. Attendance**

Bruce Braithwaite	Staffordshire County Council
Paul Franc	DEFRA – WIP Data Strategy Manager
Chris Blakeley	WMRA
Neil Cross	Government Office West Midlands
Rachel Pipkin	GOWM
Debbie Jones	Environment Agency
Emily Manttan	Environment Agency
Richard Hammersley	Academic representative
Jeff Rhodes	ESA
Shaun Denny	ESA
Peter Hopkins	Robert Hopkins Ltd
Graham Bailey	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Dawn Harris	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Adrian Cooper	Shropshire County Council
Katherine Kynaston	Telford & Wrekin Council
David Coxill	Telford & Wrekin Council
Katie Dickson	Wolverhampton City Council
Derek Greedy	Warwickshire County Council
Nick Dean	Worcestershire County Council
Peter Field	Technical Secretary

1.1 Apologies were received from Carl Douglass, David Bridgwood, Kevin Singleton, Ralph Hepworth, Susan Juned, Chris Crean, Kevin Singleton and Lorna Langdon. It was noted that Chris Crean had been injured in an accident, and the group expressed their best wishes to him for a speedy and full recovery.

**2. Minutes of meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. With regard to item 5.1, it was noted that Mohammed Salim had attended a meeting of the wood/energy recycling group.

**3. Regional Waste Strategy/ Review of Regional Spatial Strategy**

3.1 The Chair expressed his thanks to those who helped with the workshop held to explore issues relating to the Section 4(4) questions, and invited comments on progress in answering these.

3.2 AC commented that in Shropshire there was a large number of existing facilities not included in the spreadsheet of licensed sites, and that local knowledge was required on a site by site basis to respond to these questions; this was inevitably very time-consuming. There is also a miss-match between the categories of site in the spreadsheet, and that required in the S4(4) tables.

3.3 DJ referred to a separate spreadsheet of sites licensed under PPC; PF agreed to forward this to WPA representatives. DJ also offered to look at individual instances where the license data appears to be inconsistent with local knowledge.

3.4 DG explained that in Warwickshire's case, the response will be co-ordinated with Coventry and Solihull; timescales for Cabinet approval had required use of the first set of issued data.

3.5 The Chair stated that it was now important to develop the questions and options to be presented in the forthcoming public consultation. Several members commented that the audience would be diverse and include particular interest groups as well as the general public; careful targeting and suitable contextual information must be provided to encourage an informed response to the questions and options. It will be necessary to integrate the questions/ options for waste with other policy issues, notably the housing growth options.

3.6 The Chair proposed that an inclusive sub-group be convened to develop the questions and options, and invited volunteers. DG, RH, SD/JR, AC, DJ, KK, PH, CB, NC and KD indicated they would be prepared to participate.

**Agreed:**

- (a) PF to distribute information on incinerators to WPA contacts;
- (b) A representative sub-group to meet as soon as possible to develop questions/ options for public consultation – PF to make arrangements.

**4. Presentation by Paul Franc, WIP Waste Data Manager**

4.1 Paul tabled a 2-page summary and outlined the background to the development of the National Waste Data Strategy and progress to date. The aim of the Strategy is to bring data together from disparate sources to achieve a national database for waste statistics. To date, the focus has been on cleaning data from across EA's 26 areas. Reports by Government Office area and sub-regions will be available on the DEFRA website on 19<sup>th</sup> May. Reports on facility capacities (based on licensed capacity) are planned for June/ July 2006. Confidentiality issues will mean these will be relatively high-level reports. Reports on tonnages and waste flows will follow, in September/ October. Phase 2 (exempt sites, agricultural waste etc) will start in 2007. A CD is to be issued at the forthcoming CIWM Conference; copies will be made available to WPAs.

4.2 A number of issues were raised in discussion:

- a) Use of licensed capacity could exaggerate existing capacity; this might lead to under-provision for future capacity through the planning system; a 'health warning' should be included in the reports to this effect.
- b) At least at this point in time, the outputs from the project appear to be more aimed to provide national level monitoring information than local information for planning purposes. However, data from the 2004 returns will possibly provide scope for more detailed reports, and in future (2007/08) it is possible that WPA level information will be made available through a system of password control.
- c) Regular data on waste production is not being made available through this process, which focuses on data gathered at waste management facilities. However, at some point in the future it may prove possible to capture waste production information using output from weighing technologies.

4.3 Paul invited members of the Group to contact him to discuss specific issues in detail, and offered to make a further presentation to RTAB in the future. The Chair thanked Paul for his presentation.

## **5. Regional Support Fund**

5.1 NC confirmed that WIP funding for the region has been agreed at £30K for each of 2006/07 and 2007/08. Proposals need to be submitted and approved by September 2006. He tabled guidance notes and application forms. Applications for funding need to show region-wide benefit. The assessment process is relatively simple.

### **Agreed:**

- (a) Suggestions for funding to be forwarded to PF and NC.
- (b) Further consideration of proposals to be given at the next meeting.

## **6. Black Country Waste Strategy**

6.1 GB gave a presentation on the background to the Strategy, which was closely linked to the Black Country Study. Atkins had been appointed to carry out a broad-ranging study and reported in March 2006. The Strategy includes a 30 year waste vision and an implementation programme, a 3 year action plan, a model for joint working and a communications strategy. Though it focuses on municipal waste, the Strategy does address other waste streams particularly in the context of the proposed Hill Top Resource Recovery Park.

6.2 The Strategy will be presented in detail to the Black Country Chief Executives on 18<sup>th</sup> May. Once the reports are agreed for publication, they will be made available on the authorities' web sites. GB agreed to make a further presentation to RTAB on the specifics at the next meeting.

## **7. Review of National Waste Strategy**

7.1 The Chair introduced the proposed response and invited comments. In particular, he asked whether there was general support for the proposed municipal waste recycling target for 2010, or the suggested relaxation of this target to 2012. The consensus was that the 2010 target should remain as a clear incentive to further progress on recycling. It was however noted that the implications may be greater for those parts of the Region which have to accommodate the higher rates of new housing development envisaged in the new household projections.

7.2 AC supported the proposed role for the RDAs, but commented that he was aware of instances where English Partnerships had sought to block proposed waste developments on or adjacent to their sites. It was agreed to include reference to the particular role of EP in helping to facilitate waste development in future.

7.3 DG commented that, though there is a greater emphasis on other waste streams, there remains a significant concentration on municipal waste, and that there was insufficient attention paid to the measures that will be needed to achieve the proposed new targets. BB suggested that this was a particular issue in relation to commercial and industrial waste, where (unlike the situation with municipal waste) there is no clear ownership of the targets. JR agreed, and pointed out that for these

targets to be achieved the commercial climate would need to change but this will only come about by 2012 through the Landfill Tax escalation – which will be too late.

7.4 RH and others commented that the Strategy should give more emphasis to measures that will stimulate the market for recycled materials.

7.5 There was a general view that there was insufficient recognition in the Strategy of the particular issues posed by hazardous waste. Whilst noting that there was a separate consultation on low level radioactive waste, it was felt that there should be reference in the Strategy to this issue.

7.6 DH felt that the Strategy should address the need for improvements to the regulatory and enforcement processes. The Chair suggested that there were relevant powers in the Clean Neighbourhoods Act that were not available to all Waste Planning Authorities and that this could be rectified; and that the proposed Strategic Waste Management Plans should be introduced as soon as possible.

**Agreed:**

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| <p>(a) To make changes to the response to reflect these views, and send the revised response to Defra (BB).</p> <p>(b) To inform the Chair of the REP of these amendments to RTAB's technical response (CB).</p> |
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**8. Consultation on low-level radioactive waste**

8.1 The Chair had drafted a response, the main thrust of which was that the consultation document assumed a very high level of technical knowledge thus placing it beyond even a relatively informed audience. There was general concern that WPAs are not routinely consulted on proposals to dispose of low-level radioactive waste.

**Agreed:**

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| <p>(a) The response to be sent to Defra (BB).</p> <p>(b) DJ to check and report back on the procedures for consulting on proposals to dispose of low level radioactive waste.</p> |
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**9. Environmental Permitting Programme**

9.1 The Chair advised that DEFRA, the EA and others had issued a consultation on proposals to amend the procedures for environmental permitting, the closing date for which is 15<sup>th</sup> May. One proposal is to create a one-stop shop for permits under which the current role of local authority environmental health officers would be transferred to the EA. He suggested that this might erode the role of local authorities and create difficulties if the proposal to introduce a requirement to prepare Site Waste Management Plans is introduced. He invited comments. He also noted that a separate consultation on the relationship between IPPC and planning was to take place shortly.

**Agreed:**

<p>Any comments to be sent to BB in time for a response to be made by 15<sup>th</sup> May.</p>
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## **10 Agricultural Waste**

10.1 EM explained that the controls over agricultural waste would come into effect on 15<sup>th</sup> May. DG noted that Warwickshire had already received a planning application for a transfer station to deal with plastic wrap, and ND commented that Herefordshire had granted planning permission for an waste collection facility which had a very wide catchment. It was noted that the main planning issue was the implication for new development in the open countryside, but that the scale of the impact was very unclear at this stage given the relatively low level of waste arisings.

## **11. Progress on plans/ developments in the Region and other Regions**

11.1 AC informed the group that Shropshire is to publish a consultation draft Supplementary Planning Document on integrating provision for waste into new development.

## **12. Any Other Business**

CB notified the group of the forthcoming seminar to be held by the RSS Environment Reference Group on 8<sup>th</sup> June at 10am, which will consider RSS options. Further details are available from [Gillian.toogood@telford.gov.uk](mailto:Gillian.toogood@telford.gov.uk).

## **6. Date and time of next meetings**

- (a) Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July at 10am, at Coleman's Birmingham.
- (b) Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September at 10am – venue to be confirmed.