

Report to Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 10 January 2012

**Portfolio: Environment
Planning & Economic Development**



**Subject: Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Joint
Waste Development Document – Preferred Approach**

Officer contact for further information: J Gilbert

Committee Secretary: A Hendry

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the receipt of the consultation document on the Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Waste Development Document – The Preferred Approach and the deadline for return of the 19th of January 2012;**
- (2) To consider the responses to the consultation set out in Appendix 1**

Report:

Introduction

1. The Preferred Approach document sets out for the first time the preferred strategy, policies and site proposals for waste planning across the plan area of Essex and Southend-on-Sea for the period 2013 to 2031. The consultation period on the document commenced at the end of November 2011 and ends on the 19th of January 2012.
2. The documents set out in detail the preferred options for waste management for the period described and set out site specific proposals for the location of the various waste management facilities.
3. All the many substantial documents can be viewed on line at www.essex.gov.uk/WDD. This report does not include any of the formal documentation but sets out the key issues as far as this Council is concerned on the issues under consultation.

The Essex Waste Partnership

4. The Partnership has been in place since 2005 and this Council is a full and active member. Since 2005 recycling performance across the County has increased significantly with a countywide performance of around 50% in 2010/11. Although the Partnership has an excellent track record of increasing recycling and reducing waste overall, it remains the case that the County is reliant upon landfill for the disposal of non-recyclable or non-reusable waste. In 2010/11 the County paid over £16.7 million in tax, with this set to rise to £19.4 million in 2011/12 if landfill volumes remain the same. With landfill tax set to rise to £72.00 per tonne by 2013/14, it is an imperative that alternative disposal methodologies are implemented. Leaving pure costs to one side, it is also the case that landfill void space is diminishing.

Waste Strategies

5. The Joint Municipal Waste Strategies for Essex and Southend set out the key objectives for the management of waste in the Partnership area. These have been agreed by Government. The key aims can be summarised as follows:

- to reuse and reduce waste in the first instance
- to achieve 60% recycling by 2020
- to favour composting technologies such as anaerobic digestion (AD) for source segregated organic waste, with the resultant gases used for electricity
- to favour mechanical and biological treatment (MBT) for residual waste
- to promote the most environmentally and financially advantageous approach to managing the outputs from AD and MBT
- to continue to use windrow composting (piling biodegradable waste in long rows) for garden waste
- to continue to use in-vessel composting for combined garden and food waste

6. There have been three consultation exercises, in 2002, 2005 and 2008. The outcome of these was a strong message from the Essex community that they wanted to see:

- more recycling through kerbside schemes
- residual waste being treated rather than going to landfill
- the outputs from MBT being used to produce energy rather than going to landfill.

There was also a clear preference to avoid incineration of raw waste (i.e. energy from waste plants).

Treatment Technologies

7. **MBT** – uses a combination of mechanical and biological methods to treat waste. In essence, all recyclable material is removed from the waste stream, either at the kerbside or at an MBT plant, and the residual waste is treated through shredding. There are then a range of biological treatments available including anaerobic digestion and biodrying which produces a more inert product at the end which can be landfilled or used to produce energy. Gas is also produced (carbon dioxide and methane) which can be used to produce energy.

8. **AD** – is a process where biological material (plant and animal) is converted by microorganisms in the absence of air into more useful products. Gas is produced (carbon dioxide and methane) which can be used to produce energy. The end product is rich in nutrients and can be used as fertiliser.

9. **IVC** – converts kitchen and garden waste into compost under very controlled conditions of heat in an enclosed vessel. It works as a home compost heap does, but because of the heat, water and oxygen applied, the process of composting is shortened to around six weeks.

10. **Windrow composting** – is a process undertaken in the open air, by heaping garden waste and allowing it to compost naturally. The process is assisted by pre shredding the waste and regular turning to ensure adequate oxygen content and to distribute moisture. The entire process takes around 16 weeks.

Waste transfer stations

11. In order to effectively manage waste throughout the County, it is envisaged that six transfer stations will be required. All collected waste will be delivered to a transfer station where it will be bulked up and then taken away for final treatment. The six locations have been identified as Harlow (Oct 2013), Uttlesford (March 2014), Braintree (May 2014), Chelmsford (May 2014), Colchester (May 2014) and Southend (May 2015).

Residual waste treatment

12. Once all recyclables have been removed, what is left is residual waste. However, despite the provision of kerbside schemes etc, there will always be material within the residual waste stream which can be usefully removed as part of any residual treatment such as MBT.

13. The County has been successful in securing £100.9 million of PFI credits for the provision of residual waste treatment facilities. Procurement of these facilities has commenced and a preferred bidder will be announced in early 2012. Building is likely to start in late 2012 with first operations scheduled for summer 2015.

Sites

14. The County has obtained planning consent for a residual waste treatment plant at a location in Basildon. There is a further requirement for facilities to treat organic waste and, as set out above, waste transfer stations. The preferred approach sets out to identify and then safeguard a number of locations/sites within Essex for the provision of waste management facilities in the future. It also sets out an assessment of a number of sites which have been considered but rejected for a variety of reasons.

The consultation exercise

15. For ease of reference the Executive Summary of the Preferred Approach is appended to this report. Throughout the report a number of questions are posed in respect of:

- key findings
- the vision
- strategic objectives
- preferred approaches
- preferred sites

16. Whilst the vast majority of these do not relate directly to this Council in land use terms, they can and will have an impact on the way in which we deliver our waste management services in the future. Furthermore, as part of the Essex Waste Partnership, we should be offering comments where it is appropriate to do so.

17. The table set out as appendix 1 to this report sets out the questions being posed and seeks to provide feedback to the County. Members are asked to consider the questions and draft answers provided so they may be returned to the County Council by the deadline date of the 19th of January 2012.

Reason for decision:

To enable a response to be made to the County Council before the deadline of 19th January 2012.

Options considered and rejected:

The only option was not to respond given that no land within this district has been identified as a safeguarded location. However, as full members of the Essex Waste Partnership, and in view of work currently being undertaken on the preparation of the Local Plan, a response is considered appropriate.

Members may delete, substitute or amend entries in the table in Appendix 1

Consultation undertaken:

None

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Existing resources
Personnel: Existing resources
Land: Nil

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Relevant statutory powers:

Background papers: Essex County Council consultation documents available on-line at www.essex.gov.uk/wdd

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

There are no HR or CDA implications

The consultation papers contain considerable detail in respect of:

- a sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment 2011
- a sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment 2011 – non technical summary
- habitat regulation assessment – sites 2011
- habitat regulation assessment – preferred approaches 2011
- level 1 minerals and flood risk assessment 2011

Key Decision reference: (if required)

Appendix 1 – Questions and proposed responses / comments

Question No.	Issue	Question	Answer(s)/Comment(s)
1.	Waste capacity issues (part 3 of summary)	Do you agree with the key issues identified?	Of the 12 issues set out, 9 can be agreed. Points 5, 9 and 10 are more difficult for this Council because they relate to capacity data which are difficult to independently verify. That said there is however no reason to suggest that the County's data are in any way incorrect.
2.	Capacity gap report (part 3 of summary)	Do you agree with the methodology and approach?	<p>Yes. It is particularly likely that additional treatment facilities for organic waste will be required and that transfer stations will be required to support Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) and improve efficiencies. It is also agreed that provided the three proposed major treatment facilities (MBT/AD) proceed in accordance with existing consents, and according to the data in the report, no additional capacity will be required.</p> <p>This Council notes that there is a capacity gap relating to Clinical Waste Treatment Facilities. However, the document makes no comment on where this waste is created.</p>
3.	The proposed vision (part 4 of summary)	Do you agree with the proposed vision?	Yes. We fully agree with the proposals to ensure net self sufficiency by 2031, with a reduction in the exportation and importation of waste into Essex. As ever the key will be the reduction of the waste stream overall, especially in the commercial and industrial sectors.
4.	Strategic objectives (part 5 of summary)	Do you agree with the strategic objectives?	Yes. We agree with all 8 strategic objectives
5.	Preferred approach (1) – waste hierarchy (part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA(1)?	Yes. This Council has always supported the principles of the waste hierarchy, seeking to place greater emphasis on

Question No.	Issue	Question	Answer(s)/Comment(s)
			reduction of and reuse of waste instead of treatment later.
6.	Preferred approach (2) – waste prevention and reuse (part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA(2)?	Yes. See comments above to question 5.
7.	Preferred approach (3) – spatial strategy (part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA(3)?	<p>Yes. Existing allocated sites should be safeguarded, and given capacity requirements others should have to clearly demonstrate why they are more suitable. It is also agreed that such facilities should only be permitted where they are within existing designated employment of industrial zoned land.</p> <p>However, there are queries regarding Map 2 ‘Overall Spatial Strategy’. This shows the eastern end of the London Underground Central Line. It is misleading to show this as a ‘railway’, as it is a commuter line, not a traditional overground railway capable of transporting waste materials etc. Furthermore, the line is shown as extending to Chipping Ongar. This line ends at Epping, the Epping to Ongar branch having been discontinued by Transport for London some years ago. A tourist/leisure service operates on this branch at select times.</p> <p>Map 2 appears to show the sites at Langston Road, Loughton; Mill Lane, High Ongar; Town Mead, Waltham Abbey, and Hallsford Bridge, but others appear to be missing. The allocation for North Weald Airfield in the Waste Local Plan is not shown, neither are the existing sites at Barnfield, Epping Road, Roydon; the GBN site at Hastingwood; or Randalls Scrapyard at Thornwood. It is queried whether this map is complete.</p>

Question No.	Issue	Question	Answer(s)/Comment(s)
8.	Preferred approach (4) - Safeguarding of strategic sites (part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA(4)?	Yes. See comments to question 7.
9.	Preferred approach (5) – Strategic sites for recycling and recovery (part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA(5)?	Yes, although the Council is aware of the sensitivities regarding the location in Harlow. Please see answer to Appendix E, Question 7 below.
10.	Preferred approaches (6) to (11) – Non strategic sites for recycling & recovery (see part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with Pas (6) to (11)?	Broadly, yes However, Preferred Approach 6 ‘General Locational Criteria for Recycling and Recovery Facilities’ refers to ‘areas of degraded, contaminated or derelict land’. It does not make a distinction between such land being within, or outside, the Green Belt.
11 to 19	Preferred approaches (12) to (20) – locational criteria for waste facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • waste water treatment • clinical waste • MBT, AD and autoclaving • energy from waste, pyrolysis and gasification • inert landfill • intermediate, low and very low level radioactive waste (see part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with Pas (12) to (20)?	Broadly, yes However, Preferred Approach 19 ‘Locational criteria for landraising’ suggests that inert waste should not be used for landfilling or landraising, where it could practicably be re-used, recycled or re-processed. This Council receives many planning applications to use inert waste as landfill to create golf courses. Does this mean that all future applications of this type should be refused?

Question No.	Issue	Question	Answer(s)/Comment(s)
20.	Preferred approach 21 – mitigating & adapting to climate change (see part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA (21)?	Yes. The waste industry must play its full role in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
21.	Preferred approach 22 – transportation of waste (see part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA (22)?	Yes. It is accepted that the preferred use of rail and water will be problematical. The difficulties with road access are likely to arise for the smaller scale facilities (e.g. transfer stations, composting sites) which are likely to be in more built up areas (TS) or in rural areas (composting) where access to the main highway network will require the use of secondary and local roads.
22.	Preferred approach (23) – General considerations for all waste related developments (see part 6 of summary)	Do you agree with PA (23)?	<p>Broadly, yes</p> <p>However, it is felt that approaches PA10, PA11, PA12, which suggest the use of ‘previously developed land in rural areas’ and ‘redundant farm land and buildings’, should include a distinction as to whether or not such land and buildings are within the Green Belt.</p> <p>Also, it is felt that approach PA14, which suggest the use of ‘agricultural locations and farms (Anaerobic Digestion only), should include a distinction as to whether or not such locations and farms are within the Green Belt.</p> <p>The same should apply to all references to ‘degraded, contaminated or derelict land’ within the preferred approaches.</p>

Question No.	Issue	Question	Answer(s)/Comment(s)
			<p>The above amendments are suggested not only to preserve the open character and appearance of the Green Belt, but also to avoid the potential generation of significant traffic movements of recycling material, which could harm Green Belt areas.</p>
23.	Preferred sites and selection criteria (see part 7 of summary)	Do you agree with the selection criteria and are there other criteria which should be included?	Broadly, yes. Please see comments on specific sites further on.
24.	Implementation, monitoring and review (see part 8 of summary)	Do you agree with the proposed monitoring & implementation framework and are there any indicators which should be added?	Yes we agree with the framework. No, there are no further indicators which should be added.
25.	What else?	Has ECC missed anything?	<p>Paragraph 1.3 of the main document states that the final WDD will replace the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2001). Does this mean that the outstanding allocations in the Local Plan will no longer exist?</p> <p>This Council notes that Essex County Council gave permission for the storage and subsequent re-distribution of waste at Chase Lane, North Weald in 2009. This does not seem to be included in the list of current sites.</p> <p>There are a few errors in the table of 'Proposed Safeguarded Waste Water Treatment Works' in Appendix C. Stamford</p>

Question No.	Issue	Question	Answer(s)/Comment(s)
			<p>Rivers should be corrected to Stanford Rivers. Also, the WwTWs at North Weald and Thornwood currently listed as being within Uttlesford District, are actually within Epping Forest. This Council queries whether any other sites are missing from this list, e.g. the site at Chigwell Row.</p> <p>On page 'ch' of Appendix E (Preferred Sites and Non-selected sites), re: site W10 Templefields, Harlow, it is stated both that application ESS/38/11/HLW has been granted, and that it is pending a decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ . ▪ The sites shown at Thornwood do not appear in any of the strategic safeguarding lists in appendices A-C. Is this because they are judged too small to be strategic?
Appendix E Q13	<p>L(i)4, Shellow Cross, Roxwell/Willingale (Non-selected landfill sites) Site specific comments</p>	<p>This site was not selected as a Preferred Site. Do you agree with our assessment?</p>	<p>Yes. This Council objected to the potential selection of this site at a former stage of consultation.</p>

Question No.	Issue	Question	Answer(s)/Comment(s)
Appendix E Q24	W2 Hallsford Bridge, Ongar (Non-selected waste management sites) Site specific comments	This site was not selected as a Preferred Site. Do you agree with our assessment?	Yes.
Appendix E Q29	L(i)12R Patch Park Farm, Abridge (Failed Stage 1 Non-selected landfill and waste management sites) Site specific comments	This site was not selected as a Preferred Site. Do you agree with our assessment?	Yes. This Council objected to the potential selection of this site at a former stage of consultation.
Appendix E Q7	W10 Templefields, Harlow (Preferred site for MSW Transfer Station) Site specific comments	Do you agree with the selection of this site as a Preferred Site?	Yes, although the Council is aware of the sensitivities regarding the location in Harlow. Alternative opportunities may arise elsewhere in the Epping Forest/Harlow area.