

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 21st June 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document – Issues and Options Report

WARDS: All wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Executive Board, at its meeting on 25th January, agreed to prepare a consultation response to the questions posed in the Waste DPD Issues and Options (I and O) Report. The public consultation on the I and O Report happened between 19th March and 30th April 2007. The Local Development Framework Working Party held on 6 March 2007 received a report detailing the suggested response to the consultation questions posed in the I and O Report and resolved to note the report and comments.
- 1.2 The Council is now required to make this consultation response submission to the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) to make its views known on the options available to deal with waste planning. This report covers the Council's recommended consultation response to the I and O Report consultation.
- 1.3 The consultation exercise has been approached via the preparation of two-consultation documents. There is a Full I and O Report and accompanying questionnaire together with a Summary I and O Report and accompanying questionnaire. This report covers the consultation responses to be given in the Summary I and O Report questionnaire and this is attached in Appendix One. Appendix Two contains the completed questionnaire that accompanies the Full Report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the suggested responses to the key issue areas highlighted in this report and the proposed answers to the questionnaires accompanying the Full and Summary I and O Reports be submitted to MEAS as the formal response from Halton Borough Council.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

Halton is now participating with the other Merseyside Councils in the preparation of a joint plan for waste related development across Merseyside. This will be a statutory plan and has to follow the legal requirements for preparation according to the 2004 Planning Act. The first stages were the preparation of a sustainability appraisal scoping report and an issues and options report, each of which have been subject to public consultation.

The SA Scoping Report sets the context and provides baseline information in order to provide a starting point from which to appraise the social, economic and environmental effects of implementing the Waste DPD. This was published on 6th December 2006 and consulted upon for a five week period ending on 18th Jan 2007.

The Issues and Options Report has been prepared by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service on behalf of the local authorities, overseen by an officer steering group. These local authorities, including Halton's Executive Board agreed that the I and O Report should be published for public consultation between 19th March and 30th April 2007.

Response to Issues and Options Report Consultation

The full version of the Report is a detailed and complex document that is not suited to broad public consultation. Therefore a Summary Report was produced which is more suited to the general public although it does cover the same issues as the full version. The responses in this report are based on the questions in the **Summary** Issues and Options Report. Reference is made to the full version where relevant. Two questionnaires will be returned to MEAS, one accompanying the Summary Report and the second the Full Report. These questionnaires are provided in the appendices.

Key Issue Areas

In the I and O Report there are nine Key Issue areas under which the important waste management issues facing Merseyside are arranged. These are:

1. Waste minimisation.
2. Waste management self sufficiency in Merseyside.
3. Identifying sites for new waste management facilities.
4. The spatial pattern and distribution of facilities to serve local communities.
5. Options for waste management treatment and disposal.
6. Managing hazardous waste.
7. Transport of waste.
8. Layout and design of new development to support sustainable waste management.
9. Development control policies based on criteria.

The options identified and suggested responses given below relate to the Summary Report (Appendix One).

Key Issue 1: Waste Minimisation

The issue here is how the waste plan can encourage minimising the amount of waste produced to reduce the burden on subsequent waste management facilities.

The options are:

OPTION 1A - Direct intervention through planning policies requiring site waste management plans and waste minimisation at development sites or

OPTION 1B - Rely on other influences to reduce the volume of waste produced at developments.

Suggested response: Option 1A

Reason: Direct intervention through planning policies is considered more effective in minimising waste at development sites.

Key Issue 2: Waste Management Self Sufficiency in Merseyside

This issue is concerned with how much of the waste produced by Merseyside should be managed locally and how much should be exported to be managed elsewhere. This will have implications for the number and capacity of waste management facilities to be built in Merseyside.

The 4 options range from continuing to export the majority of waste produced within Merseyside into neighbouring areas to the sub-region becoming a net importer of waste.

Suggested Response: Option 2B

Make provision for waste management facilities to accommodate a total quantity of waste arisings equivalent to that forecast to arise in Merseyside with the exception of waste that requires management at specialist facilities.

The answer to the question posed by this issue should be in line with option 2B as Merseyside should be self sufficient in management of all waste except for hazardous waste, low level radioactive waste and sewage sludge.

Reason:

This option will ensure that the majority of Merseyside's waste is managed within the boundaries of the sub-region thus providing employment opportunities and reducing export to other areas. This will require the construction of new waste management facilities. More specialized facilities will be provided on a regional basis which represent economies of scale and attract private investment. However hazardous wastes and other wastes requiring specialist disposal and treatment may need to travel significant distances to reach its destination.

Key Issue 3: Identifying Sites for new Waste Management Facilities

This issue is concerned with devising a suitable method to identifying appropriate sites for new waste management facilities. The results of consultation on this issue will be used to devise the method. This is a separate exercise to the work being carried out by the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority to identify sites for the management of municipal waste alone.

Questions 8 and 9 are concerned with: 8) whether the plan should identify specific sites or 'general areas of opportunity' for particular waste facilities 9) should sites be safeguarded only for waste management?

Suggested response:

Question 8 It is important that the plan is site-specific. This will reduce uncertainty and blight associated with 'areas of opportunity' such as certain industrial estates or other opportunity areas.

Question 9 It is important that sites are safeguarded from uses other than waste management facilities to ensure certainty of availability and reduce the need to find any subsequent replacement sites.

Site Search for New Waste Management Facilities

The first part concerns stage 1 preliminary site search

Question 10 asks what are the most appropriate locations for new waste management facilities.

The options are as follows:

- Business parks and light industrial areas
- Industrial areas containing heavy or specialist uses
- Contaminated land
- Brownfield land
- Working quarries or borrow pits
- Former minerals sites
- Existing landfill sites
- Former landfill sites
- Redundant agricultural buildings
- Sites previously occupied by other types of waste management facilities
- Sites adjacent to transport nodes and railway sidings
- Countryside and greenbelt
- Urban areas
- Other site types

Suggested response: It is considered that the most appropriate locations would be industrial areas containing heavy or specialist uses, brownfield sites, depending on location and sites adjacent to transport nodes and/or railway sidings taking their proximity to sensitive areas such as housing into account. Locations within business parks and light industrial areas could cause blight and effect investment confidence. Sites in rural areas may have an unacceptable impact and sites on existing waste sites or on contaminated land may be in an unsuitable location with regard to transport or impact on surrounding uses.

Stage 2 Absolute Constraints and Primary Constraints

The next stage of the site search methodology relates to the application of a

range of environmental and location criteria with the aim of eliminating the more sensitive sites. Questions in the full version of the Issues and Options Report relate to the most appropriate buffer distances between the various categories of waste facilities and adjoining sensitive uses such as residential areas, schools and hospitals.

The full version of the Issues and Options Report also contains questions on the relative importance of the identified environmental constraints according to the category of waste facility proposed. For example whether an open windrow composting facility is compatible with Greenbelt designation or flood plains.

Stage 3 Other Environmental Constraints

Question 12 asks whether there are any other environmental constraints that should be considered during the development of the site selection process.

Suggested Response: the list of absolute and primary constraints is considered acceptable. The question on appropriate screening distances from sensitive receptors for various categories of waste facility is difficult to answer at this stage without greater technical knowledge of the likely effects. For the same reasons it is also difficult to answer the question on the relative importance of the identical environmental constraints according to the type of waste facility proposed.

Key Issue 4: Spatial Distribution of Facilities to Serve Local Communities (including industrial communities)

A series of questions are set out. These are:

1. Should Merseyside plan to encourage facilities to be located within close proximity to the main centres of population and industry?
2. Should Merseyside seek to identify sites where a number of waste management facilities are clustered together or should facilities plan to be established throughout Merseyside to serve local communities and businesses?

A series of spatial models are then set out as follows:

OPTION 4A (Diffuse Model) – Merseyside should plan for small facilities which can serve local communities and businesses and effectively manage the full range of wastes produced, or;

OPTION 4B (Centralised Facilities Model) – Merseyside should plan for strategically located large sites with a view to establishing a limited number of resource recovery parks which will serve Merseyside as a whole, or;

OPTION 4C (Cluster Model) – Merseyside should plan for a number of strategically located bulking points for all waste types which will serve the

local communities and businesses. The waste should then be bulked up for onward transit to strategically located treatment and disposal facilities where waste will then be managed, or;

OPTION 4D (Combination Model) – Merseyside should be served by a combination of the diffuse distribution of facilities, centralised facilities and clustered facilities options.

Suggested Response: it is proposed that the Option 4D Combination Model is most suitable.

Reason: This will ensure that the needs of local communities are satisfied but also provides opportunities for larger scale, strategic facilities, with economies of scale, to be established if the industry comes forward.

Key Issue 5: Waste Management Treatment and Disposal Options

If waste is to be managed across Merseyside in a more sustainable manner then it is important that there is an adequate number and mix of different facilities which can handle the waste produced.

The Issues and Options report describes the treatment and disposal challenges of different waste streams including municipal solid waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction demolition and excavation waste and agricultural waste. It also describes the different treatment technologies available and their site requirements. A series of questions and options are then set out.

Question 15: Should the allocation of sites be specific to different types of facility and waste types? Should criteria based policies be used to identify potential uses at allocated sites?

Suggested Response: The preferred approach would be a combination of sites, Option 5C, allocations specific to certain types of waste disposal facility and sites that could be suitable for a wide range of facilities. This would enable certain sites to be reserved for key facility types or technology types. Generally, new waste management facilities should be co-located as far as possible with existing waste management facilities, however consideration must be given to whether the existing facility is in a suitable location and whether it is causing problems for adjoining uses. By following option 5C, a combination of facility specific allocations along with allocations of sites that are potentially suitable for a wide range of different facilities, the waste DPD can accommodate the level of flexibility required to adapt to the rapidly evolving waste management scene.

Question 16: Do you think the waste 'resource' could be attractive to existing industries within Merseyside e.g. through co-located energy from waste developments? If so how should the waste DPD policy help facilitate this?

Suggested Response: This question is topical due to the current proposal for an energy from waste power station proposed by Ineos Chlor in Runcorn.

The Waste DPD should set out policies that would help to judge such proposals and perhaps identify sites where existing industries may benefit from such facilities. Policies must ensure that any negative impacts on the people and communities of Merseyside are minimised.

Question 17: If the retention of ancillary operations at landfill sites is not contrary to other policies objectives, e.g. green belt and countryside protection policies, should their permanent retention be encouraged through adoption of a suitable policy?

Suggested Response: Yes. This may be particularly important for schemes such as electricity generation from landfill gas.

Question 18, Landfill Disposal

Landfill disposal as a means of managing waste is the least preferred option and is therefore at the bottom of the waste hierarchy. However it will continue to be an essential part of Merseyside's waste management strategy for the foreseeable future.

Options are as follows:

OPTION 5E - Specific sites are allocated for future landfill development.

OPTION 5F - Criteria based policies for landfill are used.

Suggested Response: Option 5E is preferred because the allocation of specific sites for landfill development will ensure that Merseyside has sufficient landfill identified to deal with the residual waste generated following treatment. There will be more certainty for local communities and the waste disposal industry.

Key issue 6: Hazardous Waste Management on Merseyside

The Options are as follows:

OPTION 6.1 - The Waste DPD allocates a sufficient number of sites to manage all Merseyside's hazardous waste arisings, including hazardous waste transfer, treatment and disposal.

OPTION 6.2 - The Waste DPD allocates sites to accommodate specific hazardous wastes resulting in the delivery of regionally/ nationally significant facilities and helping to achieve a net self-sufficiency with respect of hazardous waste.

OPTION 6.3 - Do not make specific provision for hazardous waste management facilities and instead rely upon the waste industry to propose suitable sites and the use of criteria based policies.

Suggested Response: Option 6.2 is the preferred option

Reason: The net self-sufficiency option is preferred because it would provide valuable regionally significant hazardous waste treatment capacity that would represent economies of scale and attract private investment and present new jobs for local people.

Key Issue 7: Transport of Waste

The Options are as follows:

OPTION 7.1 - Do not attempt to encourage waste to be transported by alternative methods instead continue to rely upon existing policies at planning application stage to assess the issue.

OPTION 7.2 - Encourage the establishment of new waste management facilities at locations that enable more sustainable modes of waste transport, including docks and rail depots. Encourage alternative modes of transport for specific waste management facilities, such as bulking operations with onward movement.

Suggested Response: Option 7.2

Reason: New waste management developments would be required to consider the issue of alternative transport when designing facilities. Greater use of alternative transport methods will divert quantities of waste away from traditional road network particularly those facilities moving the greatest volumes of waste. This approach would considerably constrain the choice of suitable locations for new sustainable waste management facilities.

Key Issue 8: Layout and Design of New Developments to Support Sustainable Waste Management

Most of Merseyside's population lives in urban areas in housing that was not designed with multi bin refuse collection in mind. This presents problems for modern sustainable waste management practices such as waste storage and collection. Therefore waste management must be carefully considered, at design stage of new development.

The options for Question 22 are as follows:

OPTION 8A - The Waste DPD assists with good design from a waste management perspective by including specific policies to address the issue.

Implications: Districts would be able to refer to a specific policy which would sit within the Waste DPD to ensure new developments consider sustainable waste management. The issue of design cuts across many different subject areas and by developing policies within the Waste DPD there is the potential for duplication and inconsistency with other policies in planning documents.

OPTION 8B - Whilst recognising this issue as an important one, the Waste DPD does not include specific policy relating to general design principles in new developments. Instead the Waste DPD informs the development of policy elsewhere which may be detailed in other DPDs or SPDs.

Implications: Districts would rely upon policy being developed in other planning documents rather than the Waste DPD. There is the potential that the specific waste-related message may become lost in more general design policy. This approach could result in inconsistency across Merseyside.

Suggested Response: Preferred option 8B

Reason: Although the objective of achieving appropriate waste management facilities in the design of new development must be included in the DPD, the design guides prepared by individual local planning authorities are the best vehicle for implementation.

Question 23, Design of Modern Waste Management Facilities

It is essential that waste management facilities in new developments are designed and operated to a high standard to avoid any blight or negative effects on public or investor perception.

The Options are as follows:

OPTION 8C - New waste management facilities must carefully consider the proposed design to ensure it does not adversely impact on the locality of the area, promotes sustainable waste management and affords a high level of protection of the surrounding environment.

OPTION 8D - Continue to assess proposal designs across Merseyside without the benefit of an adopted policy in the Waste DPD.

Suggested Response: Option 8D

Reason This option would ensure that the development of waste management facilities would be designed to a high standard to ensure that it does not impact adversely on the surrounding environment but detailed design policies would be left to local authorities development plans. The possibility of a best practice design guide for particular waste management facilities that may have an effect on public or investor perception should be considered.

Key Issue 9: Criteria Based Development Control Policies

Not all locations with potential for waste management facilities will be identified through the site search methodology. There will therefore be a requirement to include criteria based policies based within the Waste DPD to assess forthcoming planning applications on non-allocated sites.

OPTION 9A - Criteria-based development control policies are included in the Waste DPD which allows applications at non-allocated sites to be assessed.

OPTION 9B - Do not include criteria-based development control policies in the Waste DPD but instead rely upon applications at non-allocated sites being assessed against other policies in the other local authority Development Plan Documents.

Question 25, Suggested Response: Option 9A

Reason: It is important that criteria based development control policies are included but care should be taken that this does not overlap or contradict generic development control policies in individual local planning authorities development plans.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

These are explored in depth by the suggested responses to the issues and options in the previous section.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Council's response as a planning authority to the issues and options overlaps with its role as a waste management authority. The suggested responses in this report have been made in consultation with Waste Management Services.

It is imperative that the Council responds to this consultation to ensure its views are known. The Council is a key partner in the production of the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document. The main risk associated with this report would be in not participating in the consultation and therefore missing an opportunity in sub-regional plan making.

List of Background Papers

<u>Document</u>	<u>Place of Inspection</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Halton Borough Council, Knowsley Council, Liverpool City Council, St Helens Council, Sefton Council and Wirral Council, Joint Waste Development Plan Document, Issues and Options Report and Appendices November 2006	Planning and Policy Division, Rutland House or www.wasteplanningmerseyside.gov.uk	Andrew Pannell

