

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 11 July 2001
Time: 2.00 to 5.00 pm
Venue: Theatr Brycheiniog, Canal Wharf, Brecon LD3 7EW

"MANAGING WASTE SUSTAINABLY": DRAFT WALES WASTE STRATEGY

Purpose

1. To invite the Committee's initial comments on the draft Waste Strategy "Managing Waste Sustainability".

Background

2. The draft strategy takes forward the recommendations agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2000. It has been developed in partnership with the Wales Waste Forum consisting of key stakeholders. The three month consultation period will end on 5 October and the strategy is to be considered in plenary later this year. It will need to be reviewed regularly, at least every five years, to comply with European Directive requirements.

3. A summary of the consultation paper is attached as an Annex. The full text sent to members separately, is available on the Assembly's web site.

Selected Issues

Some of the issues members may wish to consider are:

- The draft proposes a range of potential targets consistent with more sustainable ways of managing wastes. These include: reductions in waste produced by the public sector; reductions in waste produced by each industrial and commercial sector; increase in the reuse of construction and demolition waste; household waste minimisation; home composting; and municipal waste recycling and composting.
- The ability of the Assembly to influence the achievement of the proposed targets varies considerably, and will need to be considered in the light of responses when finalising the strategy. Setting targets where the Assembly has few levers may be counter productive and undermine the credibility of the strategy. On the other hand giving a quantitative message to individuals and organisations as to the progress that needs to be made may be useful.
- Arguably the key target proposed, is that for the recycling and composting of

biodegradable municipal waste (BMW). This reflects the low level of recycling/composting now carried out and the need to increase this, both to improve the sustainability of our waste management practices and also to meet statutory drivers from Europe. The Landfill Directive requires us to reduce the quantity of BMW sent to landfill, when compared to a 1995 baseline figure, to 75% by 2010, 50% by 2013, and 35% by 2020. Wales currently landfills around 98% of its BMW. A target of 40% composting/recycling by 2010 is proposed, a significant increase on the 30% shown in the current joint England and Wales strategy.

- The achievement of this target will require material progress in the development of new recycling and composting facilities, markets for recycled products and acceptable standards for composting, with some associated risks. It would also still leave a substantial quantity of biodegradable waste going to landfill or to energy from waste, even if there is little or no growth in wastes arising.
- Policy instruments are discussed in chapter 4. The draft confirms the previous view that the appropriate instrument for determining limits on the amount of waste individual local authorities can send to landfill should be permits, and discusses options for the allocation of permits to local authorities.
- Health issues relating to the disposal of waste are discussed in Chapter 6 of the draft strategy. There is no wholly risk-free way of managing waste; decisions on preferred options will need to be taken by local authorities involving their own communities.
- The draft strategy discusses a wide range of issues that need to be incorporated within the strategy some of which are necessary to meet EU drivers. Issues such as special (hazardous) waste, fly tipping and illegal waste management, the need for education and the marketing of the strategy are considered.

The draft strategy contains detailed proposals for an action plan to move Wales towards more sustainable waste management and to achieve the targets. The most significant actions are:

- funding, in collaboration with UK Government, of a programme of waste minimisation initiatives for businesses in Wales;
- £40m additional resources over three years including £34.5m for local government to meet challenging waste prevention, recycling, composting and reduction of landfill targets;
- £3.25m from the New Opportunities Fund over the next three years to projects that expand community sector waste re-use, recycling and composting;
- £650,000 in 2001-02 to the UK Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP) and related recycling market development projects in Wales with further funding in future years.

(Contact point Robert Williams, Environmental Protection Division)