

Executive Summary

Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd was commissioned in May 2007 to conduct the Consultation on the Regional Waste Plan (RWP) 1st Review.

The formal Consultation Period ran from the 15th October to 24th December 2007.

The South West Wales RWP is intended to provide a land-use planning framework for the sustainable management of waste and recovery of resources and will have the status of a material consideration in the local planning process. The original Plan (published in 2004) is currently under review and this consultation was undertaken to communicate regional level issues arising from the 1st Review to a broad range of stakeholders, and explore their opinions on the alternative choices presented in the RWP. Feedback from the consultation (presented in this report) will inform the revision of the plan.

Why consult?

The review of the three Regional Waste Plans (South East, South West and North) is of concern to everyone in Wales as everyone will be affected by the choices made, both financially, socially and environmentally. Wales can no longer rely on landfill for the treatment and disposal of society's waste and needs to urgently develop the necessary waste management infrastructure to meet landfill diversion targets under the EU Landfill Directive and avoid Landfill Allowance Scheme (LAS) fines.

It is widely recognised that early and comprehensive public consultation and engagement are essential to the future of successful waste management service delivery and facility planning submissions. As such a detailed and extensive consultation on the RWP 1st revision was commissioned to ensure open debate on the key issues and to encourage feedback on the proposals set out.

Aims and Objectives

A project Steering Group was formed, consisting of Hyder Consulting representatives, and Regional Waste Group Representatives (including the three Regional Coordinators, one per region).

Through discussions with the Regional Waste Group Coordinators the following methods of consultation (and tasks) were agreed upon:

- ✓ Develop a Campaign Identity & Consultation Themes
- ✓ Develop a Consultation Document
- ✓ Develop a Consultation Survey
- ✓ Conduct Stakeholder Mapping

- ✓ Design a PR/Media Campaign
- ✓ Develop a Consultation Website with online survey capability
- ✓ Facilitate an Industry Day
- ✓ Facilitate Community Group Meetings
- ✓ Facilitate Public Focus Group Meetings
- ✓ Facilitate Strategic Stakeholder Meetings

In order to evaluate the success of the consultation process, criteria were identified at the outset against which the process could be monitored and measured. The **aims** of the RWP 1st Review consultation were as follows:

- ✓ To widely publicise the RWP 1st Review and the problems that it tackles
- ✓ To invite comments on the alternative choices / technology options / planning criteria
- ✓ To provide access to the consultation documents and independent sources of background information
- ✓ To provide decision makers with a sound basis for making decisions on the alternative choices presented for inclusion in the final RWP 1st Review document

The **objectives** of the RWP 1st Review consultation were as follows:

- ✓ Widely publicise the RWP 1st Review, the content and implications of the document and the need for stakeholder and wider public engagement at this strategic level through a range of media including print based and web based resources
- ✓ Giving everyone the opportunity to 'have their say', to allow comments to be considered and responded to in an inclusive and recordable way and to ensure that the consultation is a two-way process
- ✓ Provide access to the consultation documents through an appropriate mix of media including websites, hard copy literature, public meetings etc
- ✓ Effectively communicate the issues addressed by the RWP 1st Review, including developing recognition through a branded awareness raising campaign, 'ownership' and understanding of the problem; and providing clear and accurate information on the alternative choices – including information on the waste management / resource recovery technologies, the risks and the community benefits where appropriate
- ✓ Provide access to high quality independent sources of background information to support the debate and to help inform those who wish to dig deeper

- ✓ Design and deliver a survey on the main consultation issues of the wider public in order to provide decision-makers with a sound basis for making decisions on the alternative choices
- ✓ Conduct the consultation aspects of the Health Impact Assessment
- ✓ Meet the legal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) consultation (statutory) requirements
- ✓ Invite and report comments from regional-level stakeholders and the wider public on the alternative choices
- ✓ Facilitate consultation at the Local Authority level by providing a common approach and consistent consultation materials through the development of a strong and recognisable brand identity

The initial foundation documents underpinning the Consultation Programme was the Draft RWP 1st Review document and its associated technical / assessment reports (all of which can be found on the CD in Appendix A). A significant element of the initial consultation programme was the review and assimilation of the detail from the following five documents:

- ✓ The respective Consultation Draft RWP 1st Reviews (3)
- ✓ The respective Sustainability Appraisal and Life Cycle Assessment Reports of the Strategic Waste Management Options
- ✓ The SEA Environmental Report on the Strategic Waste Management Options
- ✓ The SEA Environmental Report on the Identification of Areas of Search for Regional Waste Management Facilities
- ✓ The Consultation Draft Health Impact Assessment

Following a review of these documents the key topics that required consultation were extracted. They became the five key themes against which the consultation was set. These were:

THEME 1: The Regional Waste Plan 1st Review

The first theme set the scene for the consultation, explaining what the Regional Waste Plans are, what they aim to achieve and what was involved in the 1st Review. This was set in the context of the legislation and targets for the recycling and disposal of waste in Wales. This section also introduced the consultation and provided information on how people could get involved and contribute to the debate.

THEME 2: The Need for Waste Facilities

Information was provided on the types of waste generated in Wales with a projection of how much waste will be produced in the region in 2013. The current landfill and facility capacities were also

illustrated to provide an overview of why new waste facilities are needed in Wales and in the region.

THEME 3: Technology Options

The main types of waste disposal and waste treatment facilities and the processes involved in each were described. The four main Options (combinations of technologies) and eight top performing sub-options being considered for the treatment of residual waste were given.

THEME 4: The Appraisal Process

The techniques and methods used to assess and evaluate the four strategic waste management options and their associated 19 sub-options were presented. The section also described how the assessments resulted in the top eight performing sub-options being selected for consultation.

THEME 5: The Implications for Planning

This section covered the key principles involved in recommending suitable locations (in planning terms) for regional waste management facilities. Possible areas where waste management facilities may be located across the Regions were presented in the Areas of Search maps, along with criteria which underpinned these maps.

The Consultation Process

The consultation process involved a diverse range of fully bilingual engagement methods including the following tasks agreed with the Steering Group:

A. Develop a Campaign Identity & Consultation Themes:

A consultation brand was developed and the five main themes upon which to consult were formed.

B. Develop a Consultation Document:

The RWP was condensed into one document to engage with a greater variety of stakeholders. This document revolved around the five themes, and provided contact details, and how to obtain further information.

C. Develop a Consultation Survey:

To obtain quantitative feedback, a survey was developed and sent direct to stakeholders via post, email, via the Our Waste Our Challenge website and at meetings.

D. Conduct Stakeholder Mapping:



A stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted in order to engage a representative sample of the population.

E. Design a PR/Media Campaign:

Extensive media liaison was conducted throughout the consultation and significant media coverage was gained.

F. Develop a Website:

A website was produced as part of the awareness raising programme, to provide background information, provide a source of document download and to give the opportunity to complete the survey electronically.

G. Facilitate an Industry Day:

Members of the waste industry, land owners, technology providers and waste producers were invited to what was possibly the largest event of its kind to be held in Wales to date. This successful day obtained industry feedback, whilst providing industry with the requirements of the RWP.

H. Facilitate Community Group Meetings:

Community group meetings were held in each local authority area, in order to engage with local people and organisations, so that they could comment on the RWP and also act as advocates of the process.

I. Facilitate Public Focus Group Meetings:

A series of 3 consecutive meetings with the same attendees invited to each meeting were held in each region., The groups had the aim of covering the technical information contained within the review in depth in order to build consensus and understanding of the RWP so that a more informed response could be made and quality feedback obtained.

J. Facilitate Strategic Stakeholder Meetings:

Strategic stakeholders from public, private and not for profit sectors were invited to discuss the RWP and put across their views.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The report contains a fully comprehensive recommendations section formed from the quantitative and qualitative responses to the consultation survey and from the qualitative feedback and comments recorded by consultees throughout the process.

Each of the regional groups will need to consider these recommendations (some of which are formed from the statutory consultation for the SEA) in terms of their updates to the RWP 1st Review

as well as recommendations for future engagement and consultation of the wider issues that the RWP addresses.

Key Findings from Consultation Responses

Most consultees were happy with the aims and objectives of the consultation and recognised the urgent need for residual waste treatment facilities to be planned for.

It was recognised that this is a 'complicated topic' and some consultee's felt that it was too technical for them to understand or that they felt comfortable to 'leave the decisions to the decision makers'.

The hazardous waste supplement from the previous RWP should be included with any relevant updates and capacity requirements for any previous 'un-modelled' waste should also be included.

Forecast Waste Growth data from 2005-2013 should be revised in the light of real data for municipal waste for 2006 and 2007 as actual historical data should show that the 4% per annum predicted growth is an overestimate.

Small scale, flexible facilities are the preferred approach amongst the consultees indicating that sub regional facilities are favoured above larger regional facilities.

Some types of facilities / treatment routes have been preferred above others but all the top options presented in the RWP should be made available for choice at a local level so that local needs can be taken into consideration.

Further work should be undertaken to integrate the findings of all the options appraisals conducted for the review, not just the SEA.

The Areas of Search maps should be more detailed and include information such as the sites of existing facilities, proximity to the national grid and transport links.

Key Findings from the Consultation Process:

Although the survey response rate was disappointing in terms of numbers, the depth of information and excellent qualitative information from respondents has been welcome. We would therefore encourage the reader to judge the value of the consultation not by the total number of survey responses but by the depth and quality of debate and the engagement that has been fostered between the different tiers of stakeholders.

The technical nature of the information given was off putting to many. Although the consultation document was aimed at the general public revisions of the document made it more technical. We would recommend that future engagement or consultation is presented in 'tiers' so that technical information can be dipped into or read in depth depending on interest and technical background.

Interest in recycling issues has taken years to develop amongst the general public. Towards the end of the consultation as high level media and increased local activity surrounding the consultation was growing so did the public engagement with the process. We would strongly recommend that awareness raising continues beyond the completion of the RWP 1st Review.



Summary

One of the key aims of the consultation was to widely publicise the RWP 1st Review and the complicated issues that it aims to tackle. The steering group and local authority partners worked together to stimulate what was the largest debate in Wales to date on the way forward in terms of selecting and siting the country's future network of waste management facilities.

Although recycling issues may be a hot topic amongst the Welsh public following the development of a number of successful schemes and the media attention given to more recent WAG statements regarding future targets etc, little thought is often given to residual waste treatment or the need for waste management facilities. In general, such issues have only received consideration when a local plant has been proposed.

This consultation has initiated the process of awareness raising about these issues and although the number of survey responses received may be a little disappointing in terms of numbers, the results should be taken in context, with the many thousands of people having been exposed to information about the RWP 1st Review.

The consultation process, being the largest of its kind ever to be conducted in Wales, generated valuable and meaningful feedback from those who became involved in the process and responded accordingly. The Regional Waste Group now has a clear set of consultation responses and recommendations from which they will be able to inform the Regional Waste Plan 1st Review. It is recommended that to complete the consultation process the results of the review are widely publicised and made available to everyone that took part in the process.