

Waste Disposal and Waste Planning in North Devon

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of the report.

1. Introduction

At the County Committee meeting in March, a request was made for a presentation regarding the future waste disposal needs in North Devon. This report considers these needs in terms of the County Council's responsibilities for waste planning and waste disposal.

Devon County Council is the Waste Disposal Authority for municipal waste which means it has responsibility for managing household waste in Devon. It works closely with the District Council Waste Collection Authorities to implement an efficient, viable and environmentally sustainable waste management regime for municipal waste. In its role as Waste Disposal Authority, the County Council has a variety of contracts with a number of waste operators to manage the waste produced and also to run facilities on its behalf. It also has to ensure that sufficient capacity is in place to manage the waste which arises across the County.

The overarching strategy direction for the management of municipal waste in Devon is set out in the Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This document, adopted in 2005, identifies the agreed approach for collecting and managing waste in Devon and was jointly produced by the County and District Councils in their roles as Waste Disposal and Waste Collection Authorities. Initial progress is now being made on a refresh of this strategy document.

Devon County Council is also Waste Planning Authority. In this role, the County Council has responsibility for setting out the planning policy framework for waste development in the County Council area and for determining planning applications for waste development proposals. Waste planning policy is currently set out in the Waste Local Plan which includes site allocations for waste facilities and policies for considering waste-related planning applications.

The County Council is now preparing the Waste Core Strategy as a replacement for the Waste Local Plan. The first formal consultation stage for the Waste Core Strategy, the Issues and Options consultation, is currently ongoing and is due to finish on 21 July 2011. Following the consultation a preferred strategy document will be developed prior to submission, examination and adoption of the final strategy.

2 Waste Arisings in North Devon and Capacity Need

The amount of municipal waste generated in North Devon, including that collected at the recycling centres, is approximately 45,000 tonnes per annum. Of this, 42% is recycled or composted and the remainder is sent for disposal at Deep Moor landfill site in Torrridge. A range of materials are collected for recycling and organic waste is collected for composting at Deep Moor In-Vessel Composter.

Deep Moor landfill has planned capacity until 2016, with planning permission due to expire at the end of 2017. Actual capacity depends on the rate of fill which is determined by the amount of waste generated and the associated recycling rate. Residual household waste has decreased in North Devon since 2009/10. This downwards trend is partially due to the economic downturn and partially due to district and county initiatives encouraging the public to reduce, reuse and recycle waste. These trends may result in the life of Deep Moor being prolonged. It should however be noted that waste disposal requirements are viewed holistically across the county which can affect local capacity conditions at waste facilities.

The Devon Authorities are looking closely at future needs for Devon's waste disposal in the context of reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. This work will be informed by the outcome of the Government's Waste Strategy Review which is due to be published this month. This review may indicate that the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme, which has for a long time been the driver to reduce municipal waste sent to landfill, is to be phased out, leaving the landfill tax as the key driver. As a result of the drive to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, energy from waste (EfW) incinerators are proposed for Exeter and Plymouth to deal with a considerable percentage of waste arising in Devon.

In the recent past, an EfW plant has been proposed in Barnstaple. This was not taken forward when funding for the new North Devon College, the main heat user of energy from the plant, was not realised. However conditions could arise in future which mean that energy from waste proposals in the area need to be reconsidered.

Depending on the outcome of the Government's review, the progress in delivering the other two EfW plants and the trend in waste arisings, decisions will be made on the most appropriate options for the disposal of municipal waste in the north of Devon. Initiatives from private companies for alternative waste disposal proposals in the area may also come forward to take a range of wastes including commercial, industrial and municipal wastes.

3. Current Waste Planning Policy

Currently, proposals for future waste management facilities in North Devon will need to be considered in the context of the strategy direction of the Waste Local Plan which reflects that within the Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This strategy direction states the potential need for six strategic waste facilities in the suggested localities of Exeter, Barnstaple, Newton Abbot, Ivybridge, Honiton and Tavistock.

The Waste Local Plan translates this strategy direction into a series of site allocations. Currently there are nine sites allocated for strategic waste management facilities in Devon. Two of these, a site at Severn Brethren in Barnstaple and Deep Moor near Great Torrington, are allocated in northern Devon. There are eleven sites allocated as sites for other significant waste facilities in the Waste Local Plan. Two of these, Little Silver near Marwood and Holmacott near Instow are in North Devon. Finally, there are eleven sites allocated for minor waste facilities, only one of which, Anvil Corner near Holsworthy, is in northern Devon. Although not exhaustive, this list helps to identify a number of sites which may be suitable for future waste facilities in North Devon. It should be noted that there may be additional

appropriate sites in North Devon which may have come forward since the adoption of the Waste Local Plan in 2006.

4. Future Waste Planning Policy

Work on the Waste Core Strategy started in 2010 and has since focused on progressing to the Issues and Options consultation stage.

The Issues and Options Consultation Report contains three spatial approaches for addressing future waste management requirements. These are based on centralised, localised and mixed approaches. The centralised approach would include a small number of larger-scale facilities, the localised approach would include a larger number of smaller, community oriented facilities, and the mixed approach could include facilities of a variety of scales across Devon.

The centralised, localised and mixed approaches include areas of search for future facilities in North Devon. Depending on the outcomes of the consultation and further assessments, one of these approaches will be developed in more detail to form the spatial element of the strategy. Once this work is undertaken, the potential implications for North Devon will become clearer in terms of potential facility size and location.

After the Waste Core Strategy is adopted, planning applications for waste management facilities will be determined using the new Strategy rather than the Waste Local Plan. As a result, the Waste Disposal Authority and the Waste Planning Authority will work together closely to ensure that the Waste Core Strategy develops appropriately to provide a suitable planning framework for future waste proposals.

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Electoral Divisions: All in North Devon

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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| Background Paper | Date | File Ref. |
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