



**Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste
Development Framework**

**Report of the Draft Waste Planning Strategy
Consultation Meeting**

29th September 2011

By Proteus Public Relations

Final Report – 11th October 2011

1. Introduction

The latest meeting of the Waste Forum, which took place on 29th September 2011 at Oxford Town Hall, was held to discuss and review the proposals in the Draft Waste Planning Strategy consultation document. Present at the meeting were:

Proteus Public Relations

Paul Davison	Chairman
John Johnson	Recorder

Oxfordshire County Council

Peter Day	Minerals and Waste Policy Team Leader
Lois Partridge	Minerals and Waste Planning Policy Officer
Trevor Brown	Minerals and Waste Planning Policy Officer
Rob Dance	Planning Implementation Group Manager

Forum Members

Andrew Wood	Friends of the Earth
Cathy Harrison	Environment Agency
Charles Mathew	Stanton Harcourt Parish Council
Chris Sheehan	Sheehan Group
Colin Woodward	Sutton Courtenay Parish Council
David Peckford	Cherwell District Council
Grant Scott	Viridor
James Irvine	Agrivert
Mark Recchia	Banbury Town Council
Matt Bates	Oxford City Council
Miles Thompson	South Oxfordshire District Council
Nick Hards	Didcot Town Council
Stewart Mitchell	Grundon

Apologies

Graham Mundy	Grove Town Council
John Beech	CPRE
Vincent Doyle	Waste Recycling Group

The agenda for the meeting is set out in Appendix A.

Meeting Format

The meeting ran as follows:

- Presentation from Oxfordshire County Council on development and content of the draft Waste strategy
- Group discussions on aspects of the strategy, namely:
 - Vision and objectives
 - Strategy for waste facilities
 - Waste policies and core policies
 - Group's main issues
- Review of group discussion
- Summary and close.

2. OCC Waste Presentation

Peter Day of OCC opened the forum by delivering a brief summary of the development and current status of the draft strategy, outlining the vision and objectives of the strategy and policies for waste facilities, core policies and next steps. The key points on the consultation are as follows:

- The draft Waste Strategy is open to an eight week public consultation, running from 5 September to 31 October 2011. Documents are available on the Oxfordshire County Council website, in libraries and in County and District Council offices.
- Once the consultation period has ended, the need for amendments will be considered in response to the comments and the strategy will be progressed to the proposed submission document.
- If major changes to the strategy are needed, then further consultation may be required.
- Once finalised, the document will need to be agreed by a full meeting of the County Council. It will then be published for further representations and then submitted to the government for independent examination by a planning inspector.

Forum members were then given an opportunity to give their views on the points covered in Peter's presentation. The following is a summary of the points raised:

- One forum member queried when a document containing site specific plans would be released. Peter Day responded that the Minerals and Waste Policy team will not have the available capacity to produce the document until after the public examination of the Core Strategy, in approximately one year's time. Subsequently, the question was raised as to how OCC have produced the document thus far, without knowing exactly where facilities will be installed. Peter responded stating that general locations have been proposed based on an assessment of waste



management needs, with new facilities being located near to where they will be needed.

- One forum member questioned the draft strategy's approach to commercial and industrial waste. Taking into account the planned incinerator at Ardley, it was queried as to whether the county's waste arising was sufficient for a new facility. Peter Day responded stating that the Ardley incinerator has a capacity of 300,000 tpa – it is expected to handle approximately 120,000 tpa of municipal waste from Oxfordshire, leaving approximately 180,000 tpa available for commercial and industrial waste. It has been estimated that 90,000 tpa of this would come from Oxfordshire and 90,000 tpa from outside the county. This would leave about 180,000 tpa of commercial and industrial waste produced in Oxfordshire to be dealt with, therefore requiring an additional facility to handle this waste.
- One forum member questioned why OCC were effectively putting a cap on facility development in certain towns – the fact that a town already has one facility doesn't mean that another should not be built there. Peter Day responded that the draft strategy did not seek to impose a cap on waste management facilities that would move waste up the hierarchy, but aimed to ensure sufficient capacity of facilities where they will be needed. Applications for additional facilities could be considered under Policy W6. For economic reasons the industry is likely to be self-regulating such that there would not be an oversupply of waste facilities.
- One forum member raised a concern that the draft strategy's objectives are contradictory – the plan has outlined provision for facilities that would have a handling capacity greater than that required for Oxfordshire alone (and will therefore be able to process waste from neighbouring counties), yet the vision outlines the objective of the county remaining largely self-sufficient. It was questioned as to whether this would lead to the movement of waste, both within Oxfordshire and between counties, in order to get the most favourable price. Peter Day responded that the strategy aims to deal with Oxfordshire's waste but also makes provision for some waste from London and elsewhere, at a declining rate.
- One forum member highlighted that South Oxfordshire currently has a recycling rate of 70%. It could therefore be postulated that the amount of C&I waste produced is going to reduce and that the required capacity would therefore be reduced. Peter Day responded stating that this could be the case, but estimates of requirements can only be made on current evidence.

3. Group exercise

Following Peter's presentation and the group feedback, Paul Davison explained the objective of the group exercise was to identify the views of individuals, sectors of the group and the group as a whole on the proposals in the Draft Waste Planning Strategy consultation document.

Forum members were split into small working groups and asked to discuss and comment on the following:

- Vision and objectives
- Strategy for mineral working
- Minerals policies and core policies
- Group's main issues

Having discussed the issues in small groups, a nominated representative then reported the group's comments back to the forum. The raised issues are detailed below.

Vision and objectives

Group 1

- The group felt that the vision and objectives reflected existing policy and had no major concerns.
- It was felt that the Plan needs to be achievable and within control. The ability of Oxfordshire to be self-sufficient in handling its waste was questioned, in particular that all of Oxfordshire's C&I waste cannot be managed by treatment.

Group 2

- The group felt that the vision should be to minimise waste produced. It was felt that the Plan is providing for more waste than will be produced by Oxfordshire, which is a concern. More emphasis needs to be placed on 'self-sufficiency'.
- Although it was appreciated that it was not possible to mention site-specifics at this stage, requirements were made for the Plan to be more specific about setting targets.
- The group wanted safeguards for the development on Green Belt land and confirmation of who would decide if development in such locations can take place.

Group 3

- It was felt that the vision and objectives needed to be more spatially specific and relevant to Oxfordshire.
- Waste reduction should be referred to in the vision.
- The group suggested that the vision and objectives should make greater reference to waste arisings.

Strategy

Group 1

- It was felt that the strategy was overly prescriptive, restrictive and excluded further capacity.
- It was felt that the strategy was too constrained by location, implying that a town that already has a facility would not require another. This may result in the movement of waste around the county.

Group 2

- The group felt that when restoring land after temporary permission, imagination was required. The group wanted a range of solutions, rather than restoring the land back to as it was before. Each site has its own particular needs for aftercare.
- The group would like it to be made clear in the strategy that dialogue is taking place with industry and the public.
- The group were concerned by the disturbance caused to local residents by the extended opening times of waste management centres. The group would like more notification of extended opening/operating hours and the opportunity to object.

Group 3

- The group questioned figure 4 which highlighted the growth areas of Bicester, Oxford, Wantage and Grove and Didcot. It was commented that significant growth was also forecast for Banbury, Carterton and Upper Heyford.

Policy

Group 1

- The group felt that the Policy should define what is needed where, but shouldn't restrict the development of a second facility and induce a monopoly. This would result in the movement of waste around the county. It was also suggested that a facility could be built between two towns and would serve them both, but would not meet the criteria of the Waste Plan.
- The group were supportive of the flexibility of policy regarding development in Green Belt land.

Group 2

- In relation to Policy W5, the group supported the development of a household waste recycling centre in Banbury. It was felt that the centre should be as close to the town as possible.
- The group wanted confirmation of discussions with neighbouring counties and consideration of facilities across the county border.
- The group questioned whether there were any land assets held by OCC that could be considered as potential development sites.

- The group questioned the policy of developing one centralised facility to cover a large area, and suggested the development of two or three smaller sites that would be more accessible. The group felt that the policy needed to make clear that the Plan was considering more than one facility.
- The group were concerned that the key diagram does not make clear the locations of the new municipal waste transfer stations.
- The group felt that the Green Belt limit was acceptable, but suggested that there are a number of possible sites in Oxford and the Oxford Green Belt that could be considered.
- The group wanted to see confirmation that temporary sites would close on deadline and that the deadline would not continue to be extended, as has been previously seen.
- The group wanted confirmation that development agreements in AONB sites would be honoured and felt that the figure provided in W5 4.56 was too high.
- The group were concerned that the figures for the estimated waste to be managed were increasing, despite objectives to work to reducing waste arising as in the waste hierarchy.

Group 3

- The group were concerned that the policy could be more readable and concise. It was felt that the technical terminology used could be improved upon.
- The group were concerned about the generic nature of the Policy and felt that terms such as 'in the area of' and 'large/small' developments could be better defined. It was felt that paragraph 4 in Policy W6 was very specific to administrative Oxford, and felt that it should reference wider urban area. In addition the group would like to see comment regarding timing of development implementation.
- The group felt that the strategy had not identified a number of other development location opportunities, such as the former defence land at Graven Hill, Bicester and defence land at Cherwell.
- The group supported the ambitious targets for waste reduction and diversion from landfill that go further than that in the South East Plan.
- The group felt that Policy W7 should make stronger reference to restoration, referencing previous issues of over-filling.

4. Summary

On completion of the group exercise, Paul Davison summarised the group's main issues. One major concern that arose from the meeting was regarding the outline contained in the draft strategy for facilities to handle a greater capacity than required by Oxfordshire. The group stated that this was in contradiction to the Plan's vision of being self-sufficient. Concern was also expressed that the strategy does not fit in line with the waste hierarchy, which suggests that a move should be made towards waste reduction. Examples were provided of South Oxfordshire's high rate of recycling and how, if replicated, a reduced capacity would be required.

Although it was appreciated that site specifics cannot be detailed at this time, forum members found it difficult to comment on developments when only given approximate locations. Concerns were raised over the fact that the strategy presumed the development of only one facility in each town. It was therefore suggested that OCC were inducing a monopoly scenario for development.

5. Next steps

Following on from the consultation meeting, the forum's responses will be logged and analysed, together with all other responses to the consultation, and reported to the County Council's Cabinet. The need for any amendments in response to the comments will be considered and the strategy will be progressed to the proposed submission document. If major changes to the strategy are needed then further consultation may be required. After agreement by a full meeting of the County Council, the finalised document will then be published for further representations and then submitted to the government for independent public examination by a planning inspector.

APPENDIX A – Agenda

DRAFT Waste Planning Strategy Consultation with Stakeholders Group

Agenda

Date 29 September 2011

Time 1.45pm

Location Town Hall, Oxford

Presentation BY OCC

1. Current status of draft strategy and objectives and timetable of consultation
2. OCC responsibilities and obligations
3. Vision and objective
4. Previous consultation input
5. Draft strategy
6. Core policies
7. Implementation
8. Questions

Group discussions

Vision and strategy
Policies and implementation
Group's main issues

9. Review group discussions
10. Summary and close

Appendix B - Feedback form results summary

Feedback forms were issued to all forum members who attended the consultation workshops, in order to gather feedback on the format of the session. Three forms were returned from the minerals session and twelve from the waste session.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the feedback forms:

- When asked if the workshop was helpful in providing information on OCC's revised Minerals/Waste Strategy options;
 - o 17 respondents said yes
 - o 0 said no
 - o Comments included *'useful to hear other points of view'*, *'rather dry presentation but it was informative'* and *'very well structured with diverse and useful views expressed'*.

- When asked if the forum member felt that they had an opportunity to express their views in the workshop;
 - o 17 respondents said yes
 - o 0 said no
 - o Comments included *'time was limited'*, *'would have preferred to see debate with officers or open discussion with other attendees'* and *'still not sure if views are being heard and taken into account by wider audience'*.

- When asked if it was helpful to have independent facilitators to run the workshop on OCC's behalf;
 - o 14 respondents said yes
 - o 3 said no. Of those that so no, opinion was that it might not have been necessary for the numbers involved
 - o Comments included *'Not a huge amount of facilitation needed'*, *'Proteus has consistently performed well in these meetings and control them and encourage them in a positive manner'*, *'maybe not necessary'* and *'it avoided the risk of 'us and them' issues'*.

- Respondents were then asked to rate certain aspects of the workshop. The following responses were given:
 - o **Presentation**
 - 4 members thought that it was very good
 - 7 thought that it was good
 - 4 thought that it was neither good nor poor

- **Venue**
 - 1 member thought that the venue was very good
 - 10 thought that it was good
 - 5 thought that it was neither good nor poor.
- **Format of workshop**
 - 2 members thought that it was very good
 - 11 thought that it was good
 - 2 thought that it was neither good nor poor.
- **Information provided**
 - 4 members thought that it was very good
 - 12 thought that it was good
 - 1 thought that it was neither good nor poor.
- **Relevance to you**
 - 5 members thought that it was very good
 - 8 thought that it was good
 - 2 thought that it was neither good nor poor
 - 1 member thought that it was poor.
- **Group discussions**
 - 3 members thought that it was very good
 - 11 thought that it was good
 - 2 thought that it was neither good nor poor.