

Annex B

## Criteria for Selecting Strategic Waste Sites

## B1.1

*HOW THE CRITERIA HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AND APPLIED*

1. The City of Oxford and the towns of Banbury, Bicester, Abingdon and Didcot contain a sizeable proportion of the County's population and are linked by the strategic roads of M40/A34. With the exception of Witney and Wantage & Grove, which are more distant from this central area, they will jointly accommodate most of Oxfordshire's growth and it would be sensible to focus strategic waste facilities in the corridor formed by these towns. To avoid excessive journey times, sites that are further than about 10km from the centre of these towns should be excluded, except in the case of Oxford where a distance of about 15km should be applied. This is because of the city's greater size and because most of the area within 10km of Oxford is Green Belt. These distances are intended to be indicative; significant sites which lie just outside of the core area should not automatically be excluded from the short list.
2. A site of less than 1.0ha is unlikely to provide sufficient size for a strategic facility. In arriving at this figure regard has been had to guidance published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the (former) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

In some cases the exact size of a site is not known – for example where it has not been possible to define a precise development boundary because details of ownership are unclear. For the purpose of short listing it is not necessary to identify a specific site size; where site size is not already known a judgement will be made using available information e.g. O.S. plan base and visual inspection where necessary.

3. Convenient access to the main road network is a key requirement (see Core Strategy preferred options report). Safe access to an 'A' road is most desirable; however, a site will still be suitable if it has access to a 'B' or 'C' road which is capable of handling HGV traffic between the site and an 'A' road. What constitutes a convenient distance between a site and an 'A' road cannot be prescribed, but this is unlikely to extend beyond 1-2 km. A professional judgement will be made using initial observations made by County Council Highway and Transportation Officers where available. The effect of HGV traffic on residential property fronting a minor 'C' road should be taken into account under this criterion since generally HGV movements on such roads are less common than on 'A' or 'B' roads.
4. It is desirable to avoid sites the subject of a statutory environmental designation, but where it is known that the purpose of designation is unlikely to be adversely affected by a development, this should not necessarily lead to the exclusion of a site on this ground alone.

5. For the purpose of the short listing exercise only, the categories of use having the potential to be adversely affected by a waste development are listed. A judgement will be made on whether a waste development might give rise to a harmful impact in the case of any of the uses identified.

Residential uses are particularly vulnerable. There is little guidance available on the sort of distance which it may be desirable to maintain between a waste use and a residential use; the effects of a waste use will vary depending on the nature of the activity being undertaken. The Environment Agency generally recommends that a distance of 250m be maintained between an open windrow compost and residential property. However, in Hampshire it is understood that an EfW plant has been built at a distance of some 140m from the nearest housing. For the purposes of the short listing exercise an uninterrupted distance of at least 100m between a waste development and housing will be used. Where other development already intervenes between the two uses e.g. a major road, different considerations are likely to apply.

6. Regional policy (RPG9) advises that waste development in an AONB should only take place "in exceptional circumstances (for) small-scale waste management facilities for local needs...." Strategic waste facilities are not considered acceptable in an AONB and it is therefore considered reasonable to exclude from consideration any site of more than 1.0ha (see also criteria 1). Some sites in the AONBs are already in use for waste activities and may already occupy an area larger than 1ha. Without a better understanding of the site history it is considered that they should not be automatically be excluded from further consideration.
7. For sites in the Green Belt the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Paper indicates that a sequential approach to site selection should be applied (previously developed land, temporary waste sites, green field sites). At this stage there is no evidence pointing to a need for any consideration to be given to the release of green field land in the Green Belt to meet the anticipated need for waste facilities.
8. When considering the availability of a site, the principal consideration is the present use being made of the land. There seems no point including a site which has been the subject of recent development e.g. for housing or new office development and where the prospect of it being developed for waste is no longer realistic. Where it is known that there is planning permission for development that has not yet been implemented, this may be taken into account, but detailed planning histories are not being researched at this stage (see Appendix B of the Issues and Options Consultation Paper). For short listing, judgements

about site availability are therefore more likely to be informed by the use presently being made of the site.

Sites suitable for handling Construction and Demolition waste will be allocated in the Minerals Sites DPD. A number of the sites under consideration in the Waste Sites DPD have been nominated specifically for the handling of Construction and Demolition waste. There appears no need at this stage to reduce the choice of sites available to the Minerals Sites DPD by considering their suitability for Municipal or Commercial/Industrial waste. Sites nominated as a Construction and Demolition waste facility should therefore not be short listed. Any further development on an inert landfill site is most likely to extend to a Construction and Demolition Waste facility; inert landfill sites will therefore not be considered appropriate for a strategic waste facility.

There are also a number of sites presently used for scrap metal handling or processing, often in rural locations. The sites have often become established over many years and are usually fully developed. There seems little purpose in considering their potential for development as a strategic waste facility, particularly as this is likely to lead to the loss of an existing facility.

9. Although it may ultimately be possible for a waste development to take place in one of the higher risk flood zones (where it may be possible to mitigate the undesirable consequences of flooding), there seems no need at this stage to short list a site falling within Zone 2 or 3 unless there are particularly good reasons to do so.
10. PPS10 indicates that waste uses are likely to be compatible with industrial areas. However, it is unlikely that an individual building will occupy a site sufficient for a strategic waste facility and existing industrial/business sites providing beneficial employment will not be considered unless the site is derelict or there are undeveloped areas available within the site. Later consideration will be given to where non-strategic waste activities may be found acceptable, including for waste uses that could be accommodated in existing industrial buildings.
11. A new waste facility on undeveloped land is likely to be visually intrusive in a rural area, notwithstanding any potential for screening with landscape bunds and planting. Where a site is already in waste use, or where it comprises an un-restored quarry, it is less likely to give rise to visual intrusion in a rural area.

## **B1.2**

### **LOCAL FACILITIES**

The exclusion of a site from consideration as a strategic facility does not indicate that it will be unsuitable for a smaller scale waste facility.