Eryri Local Development Plan Review

Waste

July 2016
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Making efficient use of resources and minimising waste is a cornerstone of living sustainability.

1.2 The European Landfill Directive sets mandatory targets which require the following reductions landfill for biodegradable municipal waste (by weight of that produced in 1995):

- By 2010 - to 75%
- By 2013 - to 50%
- By 2020 - to 35%

1.3 These targets have been the principal influence on the formulation of Welsh Assembly Government policy as set out in “Towards Zero Waste” (June 2010). The strategy document outlines the actions that need to be taken if Wales is to become a high recycling nation by 2025 and a zero waste nation by 2050.

1.4 In order to meet these stringent targets the amount of waste produced must be reduced by 1.5% every year until 2050.

1.5 It is intended that by 2025, significant waste reduction will have taken place (of around 27% of 2007 levels) and waste will be managed in a way that makes the most of recovering valuable resources. This means seeking to maximise closed loop recycling and minimising the amount of residual waste produced.

1.6 As recycling rates for all main waste streams (household, commercial and industrial) increase towards a figure of 70% (as a minimum) by 2025, residual waste, the material that cannot be recycled feasibly, will decrease to a figure of 30% (as a maximum). This residual waste will be phased out of landfill sites and sent instead to high efficiency ‘energy from waste’ plants in accordance with the waste hierarchy and in order to deliver the best sustainable outcomes for this waste fraction.

1.7 Landfill as a disposal option will be eliminated as far as possible so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make the most of our valuable resources.

2.0 Percentage of Waste Reused/Recycled/Composted

2.1 Reducing waste generation and re-using, recycling and recovering energy from waste conserves raw materials, reduces emissions and saves energy. It is an integral component of living sustainably development and contributes to combatting climate change.

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1 Residual waste is the fraction of waste that has not been separated for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion and which is usually put out for treatment and/or disposal in black bags, wheelie bins or skips.
2.2 Most of the household waste (HW) generated within the National Park is treated and disposed of outside Snowdonia. With Local Authorities setting challenging targets by Welsh Government on waste re-use, recycling and reducing landfill to zero, Gwynedd and Conwy Councils’ performance has shown year on year improvement. The Table below shows the latest figures available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% HW Reused/Recycled</th>
<th>% HW Composted</th>
<th>% Non-HW Reused/Recycled</th>
<th>% Non-HW Composted</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>56.2</td>
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<td>Gwynedd</td>
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<td>17.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conwy</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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3.0 The Regional Waste Plan 1st Review

3.1 The North Wales Regional Waste Plan (NWRWP) 1st Review was endorsed by the North Wales Local Authorities in April 2009 and agreed by the Welsh Assembly Government in September 2009. The NWRWP 1st Review, which replaced the original Plan published in 2004, became the strategic framework for underpinning the preparation of waste policies in Local Development Plans and a material consideration in the development control process.

3.2 The NWRWP 1st review provides a land-use planning framework for the sustainable management of wastes and recovery of resources in North Wales. It is therefore essential that the RWP be guided by sound principles. The following key principles are considered to be fundamental:

- **Sustainability**;
- **The Waste Hierarchy**;
- **The Proximity Principle**;
- **The Self-sufficiency Principle**; and
- **Collaboration**.

3.3 It was agreed by the North Wales Regional Waste Group that the National Park\(^2\) would not be required to identify land for large-scale waste facilities to

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\(^2\) It has been long standing national policy that major developments should not be permitted in national parks and that any proposal should be examined rigorously and permitted only if there was no way of meeting the need for the development from outside the national park. This has been recognised in the environmental capacity study undertaken during preparation of the Plan.
serve more than one local authority area. Guidance provided by the Welsh Government supported this by stating that:

“Each local authority should identify a list providing a choice of preferred potential locations or sites for additional waste facilities with capacity for greater than one local authority area for inclusion in the RWP. It is unlikely however that National Parks would be suitable locations for major in-buildings waste development and National Park Authorities will not therefore be required to identify potential locations or sites for this type of development.”

3.4 As a result the Snowdonia National Park Authority was only required to ensure that there was adequate land provision to deal with its own needs. All predictions of waste arisings had been carried out at the Local Authority level which meant there were no specific capacity requirements identified for the National Park. It was therefore suggested that Snowdonia National Park work with its respective Waste Disposal Authorities (Gwynedd County Council and Conwy County Borough Council) to agree a suitable area of land to be identified to deal with its waste. The Eryri Local Development Plan recognised the role that the Ffridd Rasus facility, which is owned and managed by Gwynedd Council, would have in this respect and this was set out in Development Policy 4 of the Eryri Local Development Plan.

4.0 Gwynedd Council Strategic Plan (2013 – 2017)

4.1 Gwynedd Council recognised that there was an over-reliance on waste disposal to landfill and there was a requirement therefore to increase levels of reuse, recycling and composting across the County. To that end the Council set out the following as one of its priorities for action in its Strategic Plan.

AMG4: Reducing the amount of waste going to Landfill:

Waste Reduction Project
- The people of Gwynedd will have reduced municipal waste sent to landfill and increased reusing / recycling / composting.

- The businesses of Gwynedd will have reduced commercial waste sent to landfill and increased reusing / recycling / composting.

4.2 This is in line with the main thrust of Welsh Government policy as set out in “Towards Zero Waste”

5.0 North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project

and Snowdonia has been excluded as an area of search for regional waste management facilities.

5.1 As it is now widely acknowledged, landfill is no-longer a sustainable option for dealing with residual waste. This, and the shortage of landfill facilities in north Wales, led to the recognition that there was a need to deal with the disposal of these residual wastes on a regional basis. The North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project (the Project) brought together five local authorities across North Wales (Isle of Anglesey Council; Gwynedd Council; Conwy County Borough Council; Denbighshire and Flintshire Councils), in a pioneering project to effectively manage residual waste in North Wales.

5.2 In April 2014 Wheelabrator Technologies Inc. was appointed as the Project’s preferred bidder and construction of a new energy recovery facility on the Deeside Industrial Park in Flintshire is currently underway.

5.3 The proposed facility is designed to process up to 200,000 tonnes of residual waste per year, generating sufficient electricity equivalent to meet the needs of around 30,000 homes. The facility will also create heat or steam, which could be piped to nearby industrial and domestic users as part of a district heating system.

5.4 The facility will be a boost for the local economy, - it is anticipated that some 300 jobs will be created during the construction phase and around 35 full time jobs once the facility is fully operational.

6.0 Waste in the Snowdonia National Park

6.1 Prior to 2013 most of the waste generated in the National Park was disposed of at the Ffridd Rasus landfill site, near Harlech. The site also dealt with wastes produced in areas of southern Gwynedd (Meirionnydd) outside the National Park boundary, in Barmouth, Tywyn and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Waste from that part of Conwy inside Snowdonia is disposed of outside the Park at Llanddulas.

6.2 Gwynedd Council is responsible for the collection, treatment and ultimate disposal of municipal and commercial wastes they collect. The Council has, over recent years, responded to ever increasing recycling targets imposed by the Welsh Government. They have done this by making significant changes in the way they manage wastes and recycling.

6.3 The Council has introduced a number of changes in order to keep abreast of their environmental responsibilities such as:

- rationalising collection routes,
- changing (reducing) the frequency of collections,
- introducing the ‘Blue Box’ recycling scheme,
- collecting garden and kitchen waste and
- opening recycling stations across the county.
6.4 For example, in addition to a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) previously consented at Bala a new HWRC at Gwynedd Council’s Bala Road Depot, Dolgellau was granted planning permission in November 2011 by the Snowdonia National Park Authority.

6.5 In May 2012 planning permission was granted for a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Transfer Station at Gwynedd Council Ffridd Arw depot in Dolgellau. Recyclable waste from across the Meirionnydd area is brought to the site and temporarily stored until there are sufficient quantities to be transported elsewhere for recycling.

6.6 During 2013 Gwynedd Council decided, in line with its Strategic Plan priority AMG4, to change the nature of operations at Ffridd Rasus and considered outsourcing the disposal of residual waste and not moving ahead with the development of further landfill cells (which were consented) at the site. The wastes would be transported from the site to other facilities, such as the Gwyriad anaerobic digester at Llwyn Isaf or to other sites outside the County. It is anticipated that from 2018 residual wastes from north Wales would be dealt with at the new energy recovery plant at Deeside.

6.7 In October 2013 the Snowdonia National Park Authority granted consent to Gwynedd Council to develop the Fridd Rasus site, which includes an In-Vessel Composting facility, a Household Waste Recycling Centre and Pulveriser buildings as a Waste Transfer Facility for the receipt, bulking and off-site transfer of waste to other treatment or disposal sites outside Snowdonia.

7.0 North Wales Joint Minerals and Waste Planning Service

7.1 In the mid 2000’s the north Wales local authorities began investigating the possibility of setting up a shared service for their minerals and waste planning work as it was considered that minerals and waste planning was a specialist service and that suitably qualified and experienced officers were spread rather thinly across the seven authorities.

7.2 The collaboration originally involved the six local planning authorities and the Snowdonia National Park Authority. Subsequently minerals and waste work in the northern part of Powys has been bought under its aegis.

7.3 The service began operations in April 2011. The team of seven specialist waste and minerals planners, employed on behalf of the participating authorities by Flintshire Council, is based in Mold and Bangor. It assesses and writes reports on planning applications for mineral and waste developments; carries out

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4 The anaerobic digestion plant at Llwyn Isaf (outside the National Park) is now fully operational. The plant treats all of the food waste collected by Gwynedd Council and can potentially generate 3,500 megawatt hours per year of renewable electricity for the national grid. This is enough to meet the annual demand of more than 700 homes,
site monitoring; helps develop policy and undertakes compliance and enforcement work. Decisions on planning applications are still taken by the relevant planning committees in each planning authority.

8.0 Implications for Policy Review

8.1 Although the development of a Waste Transfer Station at Ffridd Rasus essentially brings an end to landfilling and composting at the site, Snowdonia continues to contribute towards an integrated and sustainable network of waste management facilities in the north Wales region. To that end those references to the Ffridd Rasus site in Development Policy 4 are now largely superfluous and may be removed. The second paragraph of the policy remains relevant and should be retained as it is recognised that waste management can take many forms and can employ a variety of technologies.

8.2 Many of these technologies can easily be accommodated in industrial type buildings and do not give rise to serious pollution concerns e.g. the dismantling of discarded electrical equipment. Some of these activities fall under Class B2 of the (Planning) Use Classes Order and as such they can be accommodated on existing industrial estates or on land allocated for industrial use.

8.3 There is no need to amend Strategic Policy F: Waste as there is no requirement for the National Park Authority to make land available for new regional, or sub-regional scale waste management facilities.