



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# National Planning Policy for Waste

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# National Planning Policy for Waste

## Introduction

1. The Waste Management Plan for England<sup>1</sup> sets out the Government's ambition to work towards a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use and management. Positive planning plays a pivotal role in delivering this country's waste ambitions through:

- delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency, including provision of modern infrastructure, local employment opportunities and wider climate change benefits, by driving waste management up the waste hierarchy (see Appendix A);
- ensuring that waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns, such as housing and transport, recognising the positive contribution that waste management can make to the development of sustainable communities;
- providing a framework in which communities and businesses are engaged with and take more responsibility for their own waste, including by enabling waste to be disposed of or, in the case of mixed municipal waste from households, recovered, in line with the proximity principle<sup>2</sup>;
- helping to secure the re-use, recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment; and
- ensuring the design and layout of new residential and commercial development and other infrastructure (such as safe and reliable transport links) complements sustainable waste management, including the provision of appropriate storage and segregation facilities to facilitate high quality collections of waste.

This document sets out detailed waste planning policies. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>3</sup>, the Waste Management Plan for England and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste, or any successor documents. All local planning authorities should have regard to its policies when discharging their responsibilities to the extent that they are appropriate to waste management.

## Using a proportionate evidence base

2. In preparing their Local Plans, waste planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities:

- ensure that the planned provision of new capacity and its spatial distribution is based on robust analysis of best available data and information, and an appraisal of options. Spurious precision should be avoided;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-management-plan-for-england>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/988/pdfs/ukxi\\_20110988\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/988/pdfs/ukxi_20110988_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- work jointly and collaboratively with other planning authorities to collect and share data and information on waste arisings, and take account of:
  - (i) waste arisings across neighbouring waste planning authority areas;
  - (ii) any waste management requirement identified nationally, including the Government's latest advice on forecasts of waste arisings and the proportion of waste that can be recycled; and
- ensure that the need for waste management facilities is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns, recognising the positive contribution that waste management can bring to the development of sustainable communities.

## Identify need for waste management facilities

3. Waste planning authorities should prepare Local Plans which identify sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs of their area for the management of waste streams. In preparing Local Plans, waste planning authorities should:

- undertake early and meaningful engagement with local communities so that plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and set of agreed priorities when planning for sustainable waste management, recognising that proposals for waste management facilities such as incinerators can be controversial;
- drive waste management up the waste hierarchy (Appendix A), recognising the need for a mix of types and scale of facilities, and that adequate provision must be made for waste disposal;
- in particular, identify the tonnages and percentages of municipal, and commercial and industrial, waste requiring different types of management in their area over the period of the plan (In London, waste planning authorities should have regard to their apportionments set out in the London Plan when preparing their plans);
- consider the need for additional waste management capacity of more than local significance and reflect any requirement for waste management facilities identified nationally;
- take into account any need for waste management, including for disposal of the residues from treated wastes, arising in more than one waste planning authority area but where only a limited number of facilities would be required;
- work collaboratively in groups with other waste planning authorities, and in two-tier areas with district authorities, through the statutory duty to cooperate, to provide a suitable network of facilities to deliver sustainable waste management;
- consider the extent to which the capacity of existing operational facilities would satisfy any identified need.

## Identifying suitable sites and areas

4. Waste planning authorities should identify, in their Local Plans, sites and/or areas for new or enhanced waste management facilities in appropriate locations. In preparing their plans, waste planning authorities should:

- identify the broad type or types of waste management facility that would be appropriately located on the allocated site or in the allocated area in line with the waste hierarchy, taking care to avoid stifling innovation (Appendix A);
- plan for the disposal of waste and the recovery of mixed municipal waste in line with the proximity principle, recognising that new facilities will need to serve catchment areas large enough to secure the economic viability of the plant;
- consider opportunities for on-site management of waste where it arises;
- consider a broad range of locations including industrial sites, looking for opportunities to co-locate waste management facilities together and with complementary activities. Where a low carbon energy recovery facility is considered as an appropriate type of development, waste planning authorities should consider the suitable siting of such facilities to enable the utilisation of the heat produced as an energy source in close proximity to suitable potential heat customers;
- give priority to the re-use of previously-developed land, sites identified for employment uses, and redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages.

5. Waste planning authorities should assess the suitability of sites and/or areas for new or enhanced waste management facilities against each of the following criteria:

- the extent to which the site or area will support the other policies set out in this document;
- physical and environmental constraints on development, including existing and proposed neighbouring land uses, and having regard to the factors in Appendix B to the appropriate level of detail needed to prepare the Local Plan;
- the capacity of existing and potential transport infrastructure to support the sustainable movement of waste, and products arising from resource recovery, seeking when practicable and beneficial to use modes other than road transport; and
- the cumulative impact of existing and proposed waste disposal facilities on the well-being of the local community, including any significant adverse impacts on environmental quality, social cohesion and inclusion or economic potential.

6. Green Belts have special protection in respect to development. In preparing Local Plans, waste planning authorities, including by working collaboratively with other planning authorities, should first look for suitable sites and areas outside the Green

Belt for waste management facilities that, if located in the Green Belt, would be inappropriate development. Local planning authorities should recognise the particular locational needs of some types of waste management facilities when preparing their Local Plan.

## Determining planning applications

7. When determining waste planning applications, waste planning authorities should:

- only expect applicants to demonstrate the quantitative or market need for new or enhanced waste management facilities where proposals are not consistent with an up-to-date Local Plan. In such cases, waste planning authorities should consider the extent to which the capacity of existing operational facilities would satisfy any identified need;
- recognise that proposals for waste management facilities such as incinerators that cut across up-to-date Local Plans reflecting the vision and aspiration of local communities can give rise to justifiable frustration, and expect applicants to demonstrate that waste disposal facilities not in line with the Local Plan, will not undermine the objectives of the Local Plan through prejudicing movement up the waste hierarchy;
- consider the likely impact on the local environment and on amenity against the criteria set out in Appendix B and the locational implications of any advice on health from the relevant health bodies. Waste planning authorities should avoid carrying out their own detailed assessment of epidemiological and other health studies;
- ensure that waste management facilities in themselves are well-designed, so that they contribute positively to the character and quality of the area in which they are located;
- concern themselves with implementing the planning strategy in the Local Plan and not with the control of processes which are a matter for the pollution control authorities. Waste planning authorities should work on the assumption that the relevant pollution control regime will be properly applied and enforced;
- ensure that land raising or landfill sites are restored to beneficial after uses at the earliest opportunity and to high environmental standards through the application of appropriate conditions where necessary.

8. When determining planning applications for non-waste development, local planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, ensure that:

- the likely impact of proposed, non-waste related development on existing waste management facilities, and on sites and areas allocated for waste management, is acceptable and does not prejudice the implementation of the waste hierarchy and/or the efficient operation of such facilities;
- new, non-waste development makes sufficient provision for waste management and promotes good design to secure the integration of waste management

facilities with the rest of the development and, in less developed areas, with the local landscape. This includes providing adequate storage facilities at residential premises, for example by ensuring that there is sufficient and discrete provision for bins, to facilitate a high quality, comprehensive and frequent household collection service;

- the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.

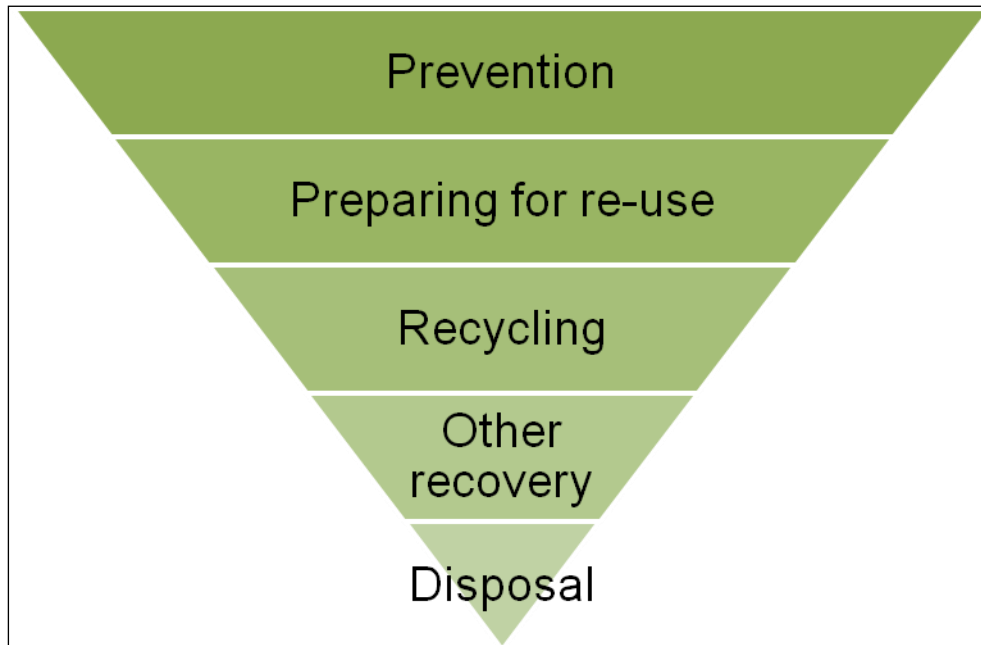
## Monitoring and Report

9. To inform the preparation of Local Plans and to inform the determination of planning applications as part of delivering sustainable waste management, local planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, monitor and report:

- take-up in allocated sites and areas;
- existing stock and changes in the stock of waste management facilities, and their capacity (including changes to capacity); waste arisings; and,
- the amounts of waste recycled, recovered or going for disposal.

# Appendix A

## The Waste Hierarchy



- the most effective environmental solution is often to reduce the generation of waste, including the re-use of products – *prevention*<sup>4</sup>
- products that have become waste can be checked, cleaned or repaired so that they can be re-used – *preparing for re-use*
- waste materials can be reprocessed into products, materials, or substances – *recycling*
- waste can serve a useful purpose by replacing other materials that would otherwise have been used – *other recovery*
- the least desirable solution where none of the above options is appropriate – *disposal*

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<sup>4</sup> The full definition of each level of the waste hierarchy is set out in <https://environment.ec.europa.eu/waste/framework/> see also <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-management-plan-for-england>



# Appendix B

## Locational Criteria

In testing the suitability of sites and areas in the preparation of Local Plans and in determining planning applications, waste planning authorities should consider the factors below. They should also bear in mind the envisaged waste management facility in terms of type and scale.

### *a. protection of water quality and resources and flood risk management*

Considerations will include the proximity of vulnerable surface and groundwater or aquifers. For landfill or land-raising, geological conditions and the behaviour of surface water and groundwater should be assessed both for the site under consideration and the surrounding area. The suitability of locations subject to flooding, with consequent issues relating to the management of potential risk posed to water quality from waste contamination, will also need particular care.

### *b. land instability*

Locations, and/or the environs of locations, that are liable to be affected by land instability, will not normally be suitable for waste management facilities.

### *c. landscape and visual impacts*

Considerations will include (i) the potential for design-led solutions to produce acceptable development which respects landscape character; (ii) the need to protect landscapes or designated areas of national importance (National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts) (iii) localised height restrictions.

### *d. nature conservation*

Considerations will include any adverse effect on a site of international importance for nature conservation (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and RAMSAR Sites), a site with a nationally recognised designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves), Nature Improvement Areas and ecological networks and protected species.

### *e. conserving the historic environment*

Considerations will include the potential effects on the significance of heritage assets, whether designated or not, including any contribution made by their setting.

### *f. traffic and access*

Considerations will include the suitability of the road network and the extent to which access would require reliance on local roads, the rail network and transport links to ports.

### *g. air emissions, including dust*

Considerations will include the proximity of sensitive receptors, including ecological as well as human receptors, and the extent to which adverse emissions can be controlled through the use of appropriate and well-maintained and managed equipment and vehicles.

#### *h. odours*

Considerations will include the proximity of sensitive receptors and the extent to which adverse odours can be controlled through the use of appropriate and well-maintained and managed equipment.

#### *i. vermin and birds*

Considerations will include the proximity of sensitive receptors. Some waste management facilities, especially landfills which accept putrescible waste, can attract vermin and birds. The numbers, and movements of some species of birds, may be influenced by the distribution of landfill sites. Where birds congregate in large numbers, they may be a major nuisance to people living nearby. They can also provide a hazard to aircraft at locations close to aerodromes or low flying areas. As part of the aerodrome safeguarding procedure (ODPM Circular 1/2003<sup>5</sup>) local planning authorities are required to consult aerodrome operators on proposed developments likely to attract birds. Consultation arrangements apply within safeguarded areas (which should be shown on the policies map in the Local Plan).

The primary aim is to guard against new or increased hazards caused by development. The most important types of development in this respect include facilities intended for the handling, compaction, treatment or disposal of household or commercial wastes.

#### *j. noise, light and vibration*

Considerations will include the proximity of sensitive receptors. The operation of large waste management facilities in particular can produce noise affecting both the inside and outside of buildings, including noise and vibration from goods vehicle traffic movements to and from a site. Intermittent and sustained operating noise may be a problem if not properly managed particularly if night-time working is involved. Potential light pollution aspects will also need to be considered.

#### *k. litter*

Litter can be a concern at some waste management facilities.

#### *l. potential land use conflict*

Likely proposed development in the vicinity of the location under consideration should be taken into account in considering site suitability and the envisaged waste management facility.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-aerodromes-technical-sites-and-military-explosives-storage-areas>