

Environmental Resource Policies



8. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE POLICIES

8.1 Natural and Cultural Environmental Assets

Policy ER.1 NATURAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

Development will only be permitted where it is consistent with protection of the environmental assets of the County and respect for the character and quality of its towns and countryside. Local plans should therefore include policies and land allocations which ensure that:

- (a) development does not involve loss of, or risk of damage to, or adverse impact on: a Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar Site, or the setting of any of these, or any other landscape, site, building, structure, artefact, feature, habitat, species or area with international statutory protection, or of international importance unless there are imperative reasons for the development which are of overriding public interest;
- (b) development does not involve loss of, or risk of damage to, or adverse impact on the Area of Outstanding National Beauty; a Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserve, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Building, Registered Park, Garden or Battlefield, Conservation Area or the setting of any of these or any other landscape, site, building, structure, artefact, feature habitat species or area with national statutory protection, or of national importance unless the development can be demonstrated to be in the public interest;
- (c) development does not involve significant loss of, risk of damage to, or adverse impact on the setting or character of any landscape, site, building, structure, artefact, feature, habitat, species or area of ecological, geological, archaeological, historical, recreational or other conservation interest of acknowledged regional or local importance unless there are overriding reasons for development;
- (d) development meets all appropriate pollution control, ground water protection, water conservation and flood control requirements.
- (e) the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) will be protected from development; where there is an overriding need for such land to be developed, land of the lowest grade will, wherever possible, be used first.
- (f) design guidance moves away from standardisation towards design that is more sensitive to the locality, and takes account of ways in which the environmental impact of development on energy and water resources can be reduced.

INTENT

8.1.1 Policy ER.1 seeks to apply the international, national and regional policy framework on environmental resources to Warwickshire, reflecting the hierarchy of importance attached to the assets that make up these resources.

CONTEXT

8.1.2 This Policy seeks to ensure that the County's key landscape, natural and cultural assets, and the quality of life of its residents, are carefully protected. It also seeks to ensure the sustainable use of our environmental resources. In accordance with Government guidance, principally expressed in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), the highest level of protection is afforded to those assets which are of national or international importance. Development which affects these sites will be subject to special scrutiny and consideration. PPG7 (The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development), PPG9 (Nature Conservation), PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), and PPG16 (Archaeology and Planning) each provide specific guidance on these issues. Detailed information on the County's environmental assets is held in the County Sites and Monuments

Record, the Warwickshire Biological Record Centre, and the County Geological Localities Record Centre. These assets are a valuable resource which can contribute to economic prosperity, tourism and leisure, and education.

8.1.3 PPG9 recognises that our natural heritage is not confined to statutorily designated sites but is found throughout the countryside and in urban areas. Sites of regional and local importance for nature conservation, together with countryside features which provide wildlife corridors, links or stepping stones, all form a network necessary to maintain the range and diversity of habitats, species, geology and landforms. Similarly, PPG15 and 16 recognise that cultural heritage and the historic environment are not restricted to sites designated statutorily (as World Heritage Sites or Scheduled Ancient Monuments), or otherwise (Historic Parks and Gardens, and Historic Battlefields), but are also manifest in a wide and diverse range of sites and areas of regional and local significance. These sites should also be protected from development unless there are other material considerations which are sufficient to override the conservation importance.

8.1.4 Protecting the environment from potential harm is a duty shared between the planning and pollution control systems, which are separate but complementary. Many industrial developments which pollute air, land or water require operational licences from the Environment Agency. The aim of the planning system is not to duplicate this regulatory framework. However, many developments do not require licensing by the Environment Agency, who may in these cases advise the planning authority on issues that concern them. PPG23 (Planning and Pollution Control) provides further advice on this. The Environment Agency also advises on the suitability of development proposals within the flood plain as well as on flood control requirements, and planning policy guidance is provided on new development and flood risk in the Consultation Draft PPG25 (Development and Flood Risk). Specifically, PPG25 includes reference to measures intended to facilitate sustainable drainage.

8.1.5 High quality agricultural land is a national resource, which deserves protection for the future. Once developed in any way, its return to agricultural use is rarely practicable. PPG7 states that structure plans should include policies for the protection of the best and most

versatile agricultural land (defined as grades 1, 2 and 3a), and make clear the approach adopted to the protection of the different grades. Such land should only be developed exceptionally, and in such cases development should where possible be directed towards land of the lowest grade. PPG7 now brings in additional factors to the assessment of agricultural land quality e.g. biodiversity, soil quality and sustainability.

8.1.6 The quality of the County's environment, and of the life of its residents, can be enhanced by design which is sensitive to its surroundings. In some cases this may involve the use of traditional styles or local materials; in others, issues of scale, massing and layout may be more important. In addition, skilful design can assist in achieving other objectives of the plan, for example by encouraging low water use, waste recycling and energy efficiency.

OPERATION

8.1.7 It is envisaged that this Policy will be operated through the preparation and review of local plans in the formulation of policies for the protection and conservation of environmental resources and in the allocation of land for development. Guidance on the

detailed application of policy in the relevant PPGs should be read in the context set out above. District/ borough councils may also find the detailed guidance contained in the 'Quality of Life Capital' approach helpful. This approach, jointly developed by the Countryside Agency,

English Heritage and the Environmental Agency, involves a number of basic steps towards promoting sustainable development and can be applied at all levels ranging from development plans to individual development control decisions.

8.2 Assessing the Environmental Impact of Developments

Policy ER.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

The environmental impact of all proposed development on human beings, soil, fauna, flora, water, air, climate, the landscape, geology, cultural heritage and material assets must be thoroughly assessed, and measures secured to mitigate adverse environmental effects to acceptable levels. Local plans should include policies to ensure this takes place. The impact of existing sources of environmental pollution on the occupants of any proposed new development should also be taken into account. All assessment of environmental impact should take account of, and where possible seek to reduce, uncertainty over the implications of the proposed development. If adverse impacts cannot be mitigated to acceptable levels, development will not be permitted.

INTENT

8.2.1 Policy ER.2 is intended to direct local plans to put in place policies that embed the spirit of environmental assessment in as well as ensuring the proper application of environmental assessment of proposals in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 and Government guidance on the application of those Regulations,

including DETR Circular 02/99 on Environmental Impact Assessment.

CONTENT

8.2.2 The impact of all aspects of a proposed development should be considered prior to determination. This should include the effects of factors such as noise, dust and light pollution on existing occupants; damage to recreational facilities, natural, geological, archaeological and historic

landscape assets; and any constraints imposed by existing conditions. As well as direct impacts, indirect and cumulative effects should also be considered. In most cases informal assessment will suffice; proposals falling within the scope of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999, which are likely to have a significant effect, will need a formal Environmental Assessment.

8.2.3 This Policy also enables local plans to address the land use implications of

issues such as climate change, energy efficiency, atmospheric emissions, noise and the sustainable use of water. PPGs 22-25 give detailed advice on how they should be reflected in local plans.

OPERATION

8.2.4 The Policy should be applied through more detailed local plan policies that reflect both the wording of the Regulations and the guidance of Circular 02/99.

8.3 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy ER.3 AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, shown on the Key Diagram, is of national landscape importance, and will be subject to the most rigorous protection. Development will only be permitted where it is consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. In addition, local plan policies should:

- (a) require the highest standards of design and mitigation in the AONB to ensure that development is in keeping with landscape character; and
- (b) prevent large scale development, including mineral extraction, in the AONB, other than where it is of proven national interest and where there are no suitable alternative sites.

INTENT

8.3.1 Policy ER.3, in supporting the national importance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as illustrated on the Key Diagram, seeks to ensure that local plans put the full weight of the development plan behind the conservation of the Cotswolds as a regional and local environmental and recreational asset, especially to the tourist industry that is vital to south Warwickshire.

CONTEXT

8.3.2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty receive statutory protection under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), which places them on an equal footing in terms of landscape importance as National Parks. PPG7 makes clear that AONBs should receive the most rigorous protection from adverse development. The northern edge of the Cotswolds AONB provides the most significant landscape back-drop to south Warwickshire, the detailed character of which is described in the 'Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines' (1993). The Cotswolds are a nationally important asset to the tourist industry and the north Cotswolds are particularly important to the tourist industry of south Warwickshire, providing a crucial link on the tourism route from Bath through to

'Shakespeare country' around Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick. Development must be as sustainable and as sensitive to the character of the Cotswolds as possible as ill-conceived, intrusive development could have a long-term detrimental impact on the character of this part of the County.

OPERATION

8.3.3 It is expected that, where relevant, local plans will support the Cotswolds AONB designation directly through policies for its protection and indirectly for the development of land in and adjacent to the AONB.

8.3.4 A management plan for the Cotswold AONB is required under the recent legislation and will need to be prepared shortly. Once a review of the Cotswold AONB Partnership's existing management plan has been carried out this management plan can be adopted. The management plan is expected to set out views on new development within the AONB area and issues related to tourism, agriculture, heritage, forestry and access. Both Warwickshire County Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council are partners involved in the Cotswold AONB Partnership, which may evolve into a conservation board in the near future.

8.4 Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Policy ER.4 PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE

Local plans should seek to protect and enhance landscape character and quality in all areas of Warwickshire's countryside. In particular, criteria should be established for the assessment of the sensitivity of each local landscape type to different categories of development.

- (a) Special Landscape Areas should be designated by virtue of their particular landscape quality, which is of local rather than national importance. The broad extent of these areas is indicated on the Key Diagram, and should be determined precisely within local plans. Within these areas, local policies should ensure that development does not damage landscape character and that only developments which can demonstrate a high quality of design are permitted.
- (b) Areas where environmental quality is poor should be identified in local plans as Environmental Enhancement Zones where new developments would be expected to contribute to the restoration of the environment. Where derelict land and unrestored mineral workings are located close to towns or cities, and are not proposed to be restored to agricultural use, local plans may provide for the restoration of this land, for recreation, public access or archaeological, geological or nature conservation use.

INTENT

8.4.1 Policy ER.4 seeks to direct local plans towards a more sensitive and 'character-based' approach towards landscape assessment that brings out the value of each area. At the same time, the Policy intends that the wider areas of particular special landscape quality in the County should continue to be recognised and that the Structure Plan should enable local plans to specifically target zones in need of environmental enhancement.

CONTEXT

8.4.2 It is important to ensure that any new development in the countryside, regardless of whether it is in a specially protected area, does not damage the character and quality of the landscape. This is partly to do with good design (see Policy ER.1e), but also involves making sure that new settlements fit into existing settlement patterns, and takes account of the sensitivity of the landscape to new development. Some landscapes are particularly sensitive to development, perhaps because their character is flat

and open, or because they are sparsely settled.

8.4.3 This approach is called the 'character-based approach', and is given strong support in PPG7. Landscape character in Warwickshire has been comprehensively analysed and described in the Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines. In addition, PPG15 encourages assessments based on the historic landscape character of the whole countryside. More detailed assessments of the sensitivity of different landscapes should be undertaken and used in the definition of local plan policies. Other documents such as village design statements and community appraisals could also embrace the character-based approach.

8.4.4 Some areas, because of their particular landscape qualities, still merit additional protection. These Special Landscape Areas, based on a detailed analysis undertaken in the early 1970s, have been defined on the Key Diagram, but require more detailed definition in local plans to take account of the most up-to-date information, such as character-based and historic landscape assessments.

Boundary reviews to Special Landscape Areas should also be undertaken as part of the local plan review on the basis of this information.

8.4.5 Areas of particularly poor landscape quality may also be defined as Environmental Enhancement Zones. This designation does not imply lower standards in deciding whether development is appropriate or not, but places greater emphasis on using new development as a mechanism for environmental enhancement (see also Policy ER.5).

OPERATION

8.4.6 It is expected that this Policy will be reflected in local plan reviews. This should include: development allocations based on a 'character-based' assessment of landscape quality; detailing the boundaries and policies to be applied in the Special Landscape Areas shown on the Key Diagram; and identifying environmental enhancement zones where justified by the clear prospects of development bringing about an enhancement to poor quality landscapes.

8.5 Positive Environmental Enhancement

Policy ER.5 POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

Local Plans should take advantage of the opportunities afforded by development, in addition to the mitigation or compensation for adverse impacts, for the provision, positive management and enhancement of environmental and recreational assets. This should include public access to and interpretation of features for education and informal recreation, as well as contributing to targets in UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

INTENT

8.5.1 Policy ER.5 encourages district/borough councils to include policies in their local plans that take a proactive approach to the management and enhancement of environmental and recreational assets.

CONTEXT

8.5.2 Both legislation and Government guidance (in particular, PPG9, The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 and DoE Circulars 11/95 and 1/97) identify planning conditions and obligations as a means of conserving and managing environmental resources. PPG9 refers to national and European regulations and recommends that structure plans should include policies to encourage the management of environmental assets. Locally distinctive features are broadly identified by English Nature's Natural Area Profiles; these together with habitats and species identified by

the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans should be used to determine priorities.

8.5.3 Regulation 37 of the Habitats Regulations and PPG9 require structure plans to include policies to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. PPG9 also states that suitable planning conditions and obligations may serve to promote such management. These features are those which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as stepping stones, are essential for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange. Examples given in the Directive are rivers with their banks, traditional field boundary systems, ponds and small woods. Other such features include geological sites, linear tree belts, road verges, railway lines, plantations, green lanes, canals, lakes, grasslands and reservoirs.

8.5.4 The UK Biodiversity Group has produced targeted action plans for the conservation and the enhancement of priority habitats and species. Guidance has also been produced for the production of local action plans for local habitats and species. The government looks to local authorities to be a lead partner in this process, and, in this respect, the Warwickshire/Coventry/Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan is seeking to fulfil this role.

8.5.5 The advice provided by English Heritage, English Nature and the Countryside Commission in 'Conservation Issues in Strategic Plans' encourages the enhancement of characteristic landscape types, wildlife habitats, features of earth science interest, and archaeological, historical and cultural features. There

is a requirement to address opportunities for enhancing historic buildings or features and their settings by careful repair, promotion of good management practices and carefully targeted new development. Conservation management is recognised as having the potential to nurture the economic well being of conservation areas and increase the likelihood of further enhancement.

OPERATION

8.5.6 It is expected that, in preparing local plans, district/borough councils will consider the extent to which their particular local plan can contribute through land use policies to the management and enhancement of environmental and recreational assets.

8.6 Protection of Open Space

Policy ER.6 PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE

Local plans should include policies to protect the open space which contributes to the character and attractiveness of urban areas. Areas of Restraint within or adjoining the built-up areas of towns will be identified in Local Plans.

INTENT

8.6.1 Policy ER.6 seeks to enable local plans to protect those open spaces that have a fundamental role in making urban areas attractive places to live, visit and invest.

CONTEXT

8.6.2 In focusing most development on the existing towns (Policy GD.3) there is a risk of 'town-cramming' which would undermine the attractiveness of towns as places to live, work and visit. Local

plans should include policies to reduce this risk. One mechanism for so doing is to designate 'Areas of Restraint' to provide long-term protection for key areas of open land within or adjacent to towns.

OPERATION

8.6.3 It is expected that district/borough councils will bring forward, through the local plan process, policies identifying

areas of restraint, where and when they are justified by particular local circumstances. Clearly this Policy is not only relevant to the main towns in the County but also to the smaller market towns that may come under pressure to meet local development needs. It is expected that local plans will identify those towns where the application of this Policy would be appropriate in the circumstances of their local plan.

8.7 Protection of Informal Recreational Resources

Policy ER.7 INFORMAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Informal recreational facilities, including publicly accessible land and public rights of way, should be protected for their recreational value in local plans.

INTENT

8.7.1 Policy ER.7 seeks to ensure that the importance of informal recreational facilities is recognised and that protection is given against any harmful effects from new development.

maintaining quality of life in town and country. While public rights of way have statutory protection, local plans should include policies that protect all of these facilities from damaging development. PPG17 (Sport and Recreation) gives specific protection to playing fields.

CONTEXT

8.7.2 Informal recreational facilities such as parks, local nature reserves, sites of archaeological and geological interest, land with public access, and the public rights of way network, are important for improving and

OPERATION

8.7.3 Through the local plan review process, districts/boroughs should consider the inclusion of policies to protect informal recreational facilities.

8.8 Minerals Local Plan

Policy ER.8 MINERALS LOCAL PLAN

The Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire should provide a landbank of permitted reserves of aggregates in accordance with national and regional guidelines, which takes into account the need to use secondary aggregates or alternative materials. Local plan provisions for aggregate and opencast and deep mine coal workings should be made in the context of the impact on the living standards of local people, local environment and agriculture, and where appropriate proven regional and national demand. Until the Minerals Local Plan is reviewed, those policies which it repeats from the Structure Plan Alterations 1989-2001 are consistent with this Structure Plan and will continue to apply.

INTENT

8.8.1 Policy ER.8 confirms the need for the Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire to make adequate provision for a landbank of aggregate reserves in accordance with guidance issued nationally and regionally. It acts as a guide to the key development constraints that the local plan should take into account in formulating policies for the allocation and release of land for mineral extraction, whilst making it clear that proven regional and national demand for both aggregates and coal are also material considerations. It clarifies the status of those policies in the adopted Minerals Local Plan which are repeated from the Structure Plan Alterations 1989-2001.

CONTEXT

8.8.2 National policy guidance on mineral extraction is contained in a series of

Mineral Planning Guidance notes (MPGs). The following MPGs are of greatest relevance to the forward planning of mineral extraction development in Warwickshire: MPG1 - General Considerations and the Development Plan System; MPG3 - Coal Mining and Colliery Spoil Disposal; MPG6 - Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England and MPG11 - The Control of Noise at Surface Mineral Workings. Regional Guidance is contained in RPG11 (Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands).

8.8.3 Minerals are an important national resource and their use makes an essential contribution to the economic prosperity of the nation. Without minerals our current lifestyle could not be maintained. Most of the raw materials of the built environment are extracted from the ground, as are the fossil fuels on which we depend for most of our energy. Warwickshire has

significant deposits of coal, sand and gravel and hard rock as well as deposits of limestone, ironstone and clay. It is expected to contribute a fair share of mineral to the national demand.

8.8.4 MPG6 requires that mineral planning authorities aim to maintain a landbank (a stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of minerals) amounting to 7 years of sand and gravel reserves and a longer (unspecified) period of crushed rock reserves, unless exceptional circumstances prevail. MPG6 (which was last updated in 1994) sets out an estimate for the West Midlands Region of the amount of mineral for which there was expected to be a demand during the 15-year period 1992 - 2006. This figure has been divided between the mineral producing authorities in the West Midlands and then divided by 15 to give the amount of mineral that each authority should make provision for each year. In Warwickshire, provision should be made for 0.816 million tonnes of sand and gravel and 2.09 million tonnes of crushed rock each year. A 7-year landbank of sand and gravel reserves would amount to 5.712 million tonnes. These figures take into account the fact that some aggregate is expected to be provided from secondary and recycled material.

8.8.5 It is likely that in the future estimates for aggregate demand will be lower than existing figures. This is for two reasons. Firstly, current estimates were based on assumptions that construction activity would be much greater than it has been and, secondly, because in recent years the quantity of secondary and recycled aggregate becoming available and which can be used as a substitute for primary (new) aggregate has increased.

8.8.6 Minerals can only be worked where they occur. However, they are often found in attractive areas of landscape, areas with significant geological or biological interest, under high quality agricultural land or close to places where people live or work. The impact on these areas of acknowledged importance must therefore be given due consideration in the formulation of policies to control mineral development. Those areas with statutory protection, such as AONBs and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) should be afforded greatest protection. Other areas, whilst not enjoying the same degree of protection, nevertheless play an important role in defining and enriching the character of Warwickshire and should be afforded an adequate degree of protection in local plans.

8.8.7 Although the protection of the environment and places where people live is very important, the local plan must balance this protection against the national and regional demand for minerals to ensure that Warwickshire contributes its fair share to satisfy the economic needs of the nation.

from the Structure Plan Alterations and embedded in the Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire are consistent with this Structure Plan and continue to apply within the context of the Minerals Local Plan.

8.8.8 The currently adopted Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire repeats various policies from the Structure Plan Alterations 1989-2001. The Structure Plan Alterations 1989-2001 have now been superseded by this plan and it is therefore necessary to clarify the status of those policies. Policy ER.8 confirms that the policies repeated

OPERATION

8.8.9 The review of the Minerals Local Plan should take into account national guidance and strategic constraints and demonstrate how they have been addressed in the formulation of policy regarding the allocation of land for and the operational development of mineral extraction.

8.9 Waste Local Plan

Policy ER.9 WASTE LOCAL PLAN

The Waste Local Plan for Warwickshire should provide for a reduction in waste going to landfill, in line with the Government's national policy. Policies should:

- a. propose materials recycling facilities as close as possible to the source of waste;
- b. limit the extent of additional waste management facilities permitted to that necessary for the restoration of mineral workings or for the short term replacement of capacity in the Conurbation Fringe Corridor of North Warwickshire to discourage waste being hauled by road across the County.

INTENT

8.9.1 Policy ER.9 aims to encourage, in accord with the County Council's Waste Local Plan, the conservation of

existing capacity for waste that needs to be landfilled, the siting of waste recycling facilities close to the source of waste and a reduction in the movement of waste across the county.

CONTEXT

8.9.2 The Government's 'Waste Strategy 2000' and the Environment Agency's 'Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000: West Midlands' provides the context for the development of regional waste management strategies. The County Council is working with the West Midlands Local Government Association to secure a regional approach to waste planning in the current review of RPG11.

8.9.3 The County Council's Waste Local Plan (adopted in 1999) is based on a strategy that aims to encourage conservation of existing capacity for waste which needs to be landfilled, in line with the best practicable environmental options and the proximity principle, and to reduce the environmental burden on the County. It is the County Council's intention to continue to pursue this aim, seeking through negotiation, particularly in the West Midlands Local Government Association and through liaison with waste authorities in the East Midlands Region, to achieve a range and geographical spread of facilities, both within the Metropolitan Area, the wider region and beyond. In particular, it has the objective of reducing reliance on landfill and landraising sites in Warwickshire and to reduce

the waste imports into Warwickshire to significantly below 1995 levels by 2011. This objective is intended to start to reverse the trend of the early 1990s whereby the availability of large landfill/landraising sites in the Conurbation Fringe (i.e. close to the Birmingham Conurbation, in North Warwickshire) appears to have diverted waste flows from being deposited elsewhere in the Region.

8.9.4 Between 1988 and 1995, waste imports into Warwickshire increased nearly four-fold and by 1.3 million tonnes over the three years to 1995. Imports then represented 78% of the waste deposited in the County, much more in absolute and relative terms than taken by any other county in the Region. This trend looks to continue, with the County having an outstanding permitted landfill capacity of 31 million cubic metres at 1995 - indicating a capacity to take 31-40 million tonnes of waste.

8.9.5 The availability of large landfill sites close to the Birmingham Conurbation appears to have diverted waste flows from being deposited elsewhere in the Region to landfill disposal in Warwickshire. The Council would be justified in starting to reverse this trend by limiting new landfill capacity in line with the Government's national strategy targets for reducing landfill, RPG11 and the proximity principle.

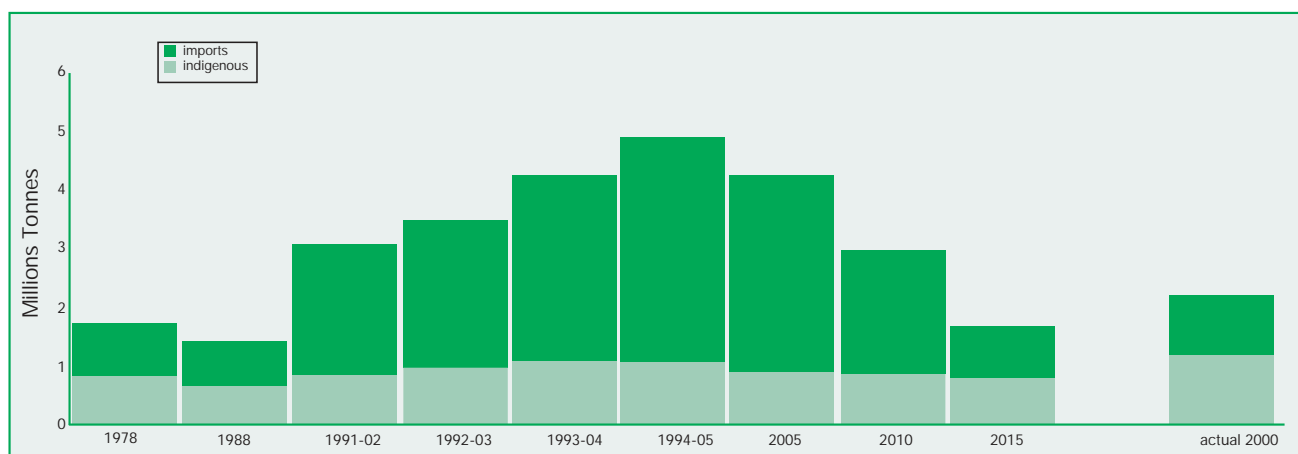
8.9.6 The County Council, as waste disposal authority, only has direct control over the disposal of a small percentage of the waste in Warwickshire (4% in 1995). Therefore, in relation to the vast bulk of waste deposited in Warwickshire, the County Council's strategy underpinning the Waste Local Plan aimed to conserve waste disposal resources by reducing the amount of industrial and commercial waste landfilled to its 1995 levels by 2005 through:

- working in partnership with district/borough councils and metropolitan authorities, 'Going for Green' and industry in an education programme to reduce the amount of waste produced;
- promoting re-use and recovery facilities close to the source of production;
- promoting re-use and recycling of construction and demolition waste, by local authorities and industry;

- seeking innovation for positive uses of inert materials; and
- restricting the numbers and extent of the planning permissions granted for new landfill and land-raising sites, in the County.

8.9.7 Waste reduction and recovery measures taken by the Conurbation planning and waste disposal authorities to implement Government targets have made substantial reductions in the flow of waste imports into Warwickshire. The target profile included in the Waste Local Plan aimed for a progressive reduction of imports over the period up to 2015. The Council's ambition was to see annual rates of waste going to landfill in the County, especially imports, down to the levels of the late 1970s by 2015 (i.e. 1.7 million tonnes per annum, of which only half were imports).

Warwickshire Landfill Deposits – Target profile For Imports (Millions of tonnes per annum)



8.9.8 Regional self-sufficiency in waste management has already been largely achieved across the West Midlands Region as a whole. However, within the Region, the trend has been for very substantial outflows of mainly industrial, commercial, construction and demolition waste from the Conurbation to be deposited in landfill sites located in the surrounding shire counties, especially in Warwickshire which takes over half of it. Over the five years from 1990-95, three quarters of the waste deposited in Warwickshire was imported, mostly from the Conurbation. Warwickshire generated only 10% of the Region's waste, but had about 39% of the Region's waste deposited in it. This made Warwickshire the largest single contributor by far to the Region's self-sufficiency.

8.9.9 However, figures from the Environment Agency's Waste Management Assessment 2000 indicate that the industrial and commercial waste deposited in Warwickshire had reduced by more than half to about 2.2 million tonnes (EA WM strategy fig. 4.2) as a result of a reduction in percentage of imports from the Birmingham Conurbation from 66% to 16% and an increase in exports of its generate waste to other regions to over one third. Consequently, the County only disposes of 39% of the waste produced in Warwickshire whilst

the Birmingham Conurbation now deals with 64% of the waste it produces (EA WM strategy fig. 2.8).

Landfill Capacity

8.9.10 In 1995, 31 million cubic metres of unused landfill capacity had planning permission. By 1999 this figure had reduced to 20 million cubic metres (EA WM strategy fig. 4.2). In terms of location, the available permitted capacity is closely related to current sources of waste generation. It is concentrated in three main areas:

- the conurbation fringe corridor in North Warwickshire in the vicinity of the Tame Valley and its tributary, the River Blythe;
- in the Nuneaton area, in the north and to the south of the town;
- to the east and south of Coventry in rural Warwickshire.

8.9.11 There is more than sufficient landfill capacity to meet future demand generated from within Warwickshire over the Plan period and well beyond within easy reach of the main urban areas of Warwickshire if the trend of reduced imports becomes established and Government strategy continues to take effect in terms of waste minimisation and recycling.

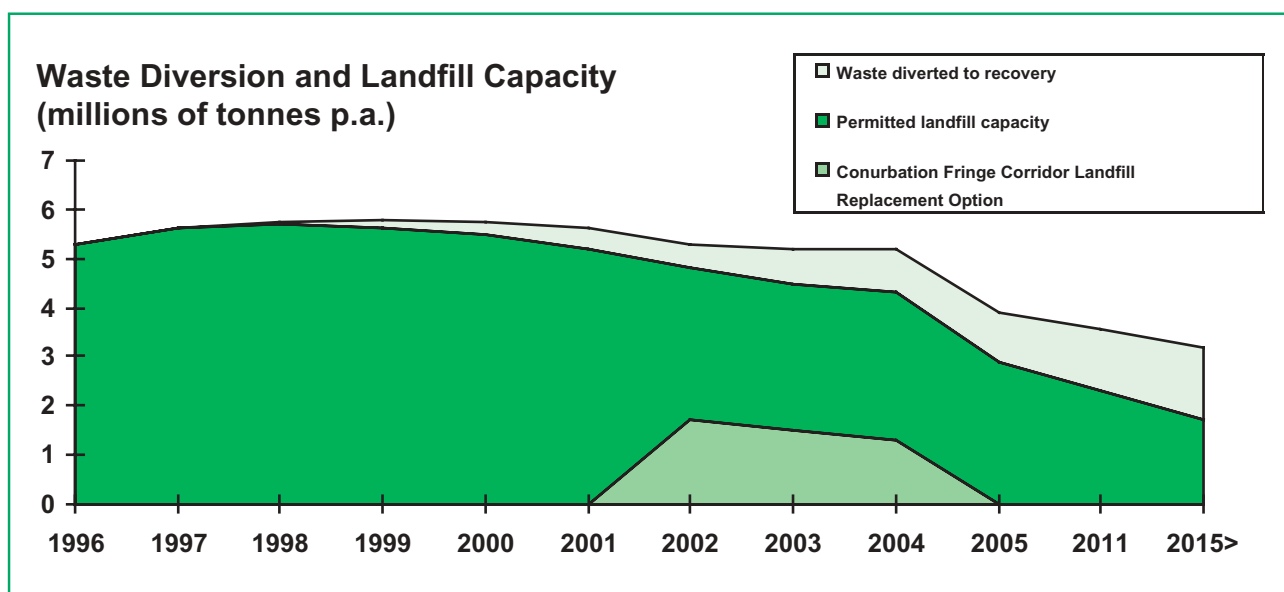
8.9.12 However, if past rates were re-established, particularly of imports

from the conurbation, it is likely that the landfill space available within easy reach of the conurbation in the Conurbation Fringe Corridor would run out before 2011. In order to avoid waste being hauled across Warwickshire over unsuitable County roads through villages and towns, it is necessary to address the situation where there has been less than the necessary progress achieved by the operators, authorities and producers involved in waste imports to Warwickshire. The Waste Local Plan strategy was to renew the capacity in the conurbation fringe corridor for the latter half of the Plan period, aiming for a "lower limit " of landfill reduction by 2005, and this strategy still remains appropriate given that the recent reductions in imports cannot be guaranteed.

OPERATION

8.9.13 The policies and proposals of the Waste Local Plan should aim to secure, through the land-use planning system, the strategy for the provision of waste disposal facilities. In doing so, they take account of established national and regional planning guidance from Government and the Structure Plan. Of particular strategic significance are policies on:

- the priority to be given to the transport of waste by rail or water where it cannot be treated or disposed of close to its source, subject to environmental impact and economic feasibility; and
- the treatment of waste disposal facilities, particularly materials recycling facilities which involve buildings in the Green Belt.



8.9.14 These facilities are likely to be most appropriate in urban areas, where they are close to the source of waste production. While not precluded by policy, it is likely that suitable sites in the Green Belt will be difficult to find. In this case, existing waste management facilities, such as landfill sites and industrial estates, may prove the most suitable locations.

8.9.15 Unless viable rail or water transport options are available to carry imported waste from the conurbation to the Nuneaton area or further afield in

Warwickshire, the Waste Local Plan does not provide for the long distance transport of such waste across the County. The County Council will resist, when and where it can, proposals for long distance road haulage of waste through Warwickshire as it would be contrary to the proximity principle. Where it can be demonstrated that rail or water transport options are economically viable any such proposals will need to demonstrate compliance with the policies set out in the Waste Local Plan.

