

Conwy Deposit Local Development Plan 2007 – 2022 (Revised edition 2011)



BACKGROUND PAPER 26 Landfill Feasibility Study

March 2011

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1. Background

- 1.1 Conwy Council is currently preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP) under the provision of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and related Development Plan Regulations for Wales. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the emerging LDP provides the sustainability objectives against which all realistic policies and strategies should be tested. The SA baseline indicates the shortfall in waste management facilities in Conwy as well as the limited life of existing landfill operations, in particular, operations permitted to manage non-hazardous waste. Although it is noted that provision needs to be made for waste management facilities which divert waste from disposal to landfill, some capacity will be necessary to manage residual waste from the recycling and recovery process.
- 1.2 Notwithstanding the North Wales Waste Treatment Partnership arrangements, the Authority need to consider the feasibility of allocating a site or sites within the LDP to cater for the landfilling of waste beyond 2015. Consistent with the Regional Waste Plan First Review and the front loading approach to plan preparation, the Authority commissioned RPS Consultants to carryout a landfill study to identify potential areas of search which may have the feasibility for landfill/land raising, providing for the identified shortfall in capacity beyond 2015.
- 1.3 This background paper is a summary from a more detailed Landfill Feasibility Study produced by RPS on the Council's behalf. Copies of the detailed study can be obtained by contacting the Planning Policy Department.

2. Study Objectives

- 2.1 The study objects were:
 - To provide robust evidence to help support site identification for future landfill/land raising operation;
 - Provide a shortlist of sites based on area of search data compiled for the review of the North Wales Regional Waste Plan, supplemented with County specific information and expertise. Sites to be ranked in order of suitability; and

- Provide a specific recommendation on preferred site(s) with sufficient capacity to fulfil the obligation to allocate sites in the Conwy LDP and meet the requirements of the EU Landfill Directive.

2.2 The study was carried out principally on a desktop basis. A staged approach was adopted comprising the following stages:

- Develop a criteria for site identification, reviewing the approach adopted for the area of search project for the Regional Waste Plan First Review and providing a clear auditable process for site assessment;
- Collate and collection of data and gap analysis;
- Identification of Proposed Areas of Search using GIS and the agreed criteria;
- Carry out interim consultation with statutory consultees to seek initial views on the proposed areas of search and methodology to this study; and
- Carry out site visits to the proposed areas of search.

3. Findings

3.1 Following site visits it was concluded that although the proposed areas of search (areas I and II as identified on the map in appendix A) were reasonably unconstrained and in close proximity to waste arisings based on strategic site assessment, immediate site access requires further appraisal and may prove financially and environmentally unfeasible. Highways access is particularly problematic to both areas of search due to the need for heavy goods vehicles to traverse through the town walls of Conwy, plus the impact of increased traffic using the A470 Tal y Cafn bridge junction which could be detrimental to highways safety in area of search 1, and steep topography affecting mainly, but not exclusively, area of search 2. Such problems may make the development of a landfill site in these locations neither feasible nor economically viable, therefore, it would not be prudent to include these areas within the LDP.

3.2 Since this study was concluded in April 2009, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) have finalised the LANDMAP data for the whole of the County Borough. When looking at the two areas of search, area of search 1 falls within an area designated as outstanding cultural landscape. Area of search 2 also falls within an area designated as outstanding cultural landscape, and partially within a geological

landscape designated as of outstanding quality. It can therefore be concluded from strategic level assessment that both areas of search are significantly constrained and none appear to be suitable for an allocation of this kind.

- 3.3 Given this level of uncertainty, it is not recommended that the proposed areas of search are allocated for landfill at this stage.
- 3.4 Taking account of the anticipated life of the Llanddulas non-hazardous landfill operation, which will expire circa 2015, it is recommended that further evidence, including consultation as outlined above, is carried out in readiness for the first review period of the LDP. It is recommended that this assessment includes a further area of search which emerged following the site visit.
- 3.5 Penmaenmawr Quarry (area of search III on the map attached in appendix A) is an operational mineral working located in north east of the County. The site assesses favourably against the GIS based criteria, although it is noted that the site is located in an area of special landscape value. The resulting voidspace arising from the mineral operation, combined with suitable underlying geology, indicates potential for landfill to facilitate restoration.
- 3.6 However, in addition to consultation with the landowner/site operator, recommended for the proposed areas of search, it is noted that further assessment for this additional area is required with regards potential impact on the future mineral extraction operation, road access and feasibility of a non-hazardous landfill operation. The site location is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, which may restrict site operations.
- 3.7 Subsequently further consultation regarding the feasibility of Penmaenmawr Quarry was carried out by Conwy Council officers with the landowner and other delivery agencies whilst this report was being finalised. Although the Welsh Assembly Government was reasonably supportive of further investigations being carried out for this area of search, initial views from the Company which owns and operates the Quarry confirm that the site operator would not be supportive of this proposed use at this site as it would potentially conflict with the working of this long term strategic

mineral reserve and future quarrying plans which would be incompatible with a landfill operation in the same void.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It can be reasonably concluded that, although the study identified potential areas of search excluding Penmaenmawr Quarry, following further investigation it is unlikely that these areas will be suitable for a landfill site due to significant landscape and highways constraints.

5. Appendix A

Map showing the areas of search identified by the study

