



# MIDLANDS

Waste Management Strategy



## WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE MIDLANDS REGION



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Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí



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Westmeath County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Na h-Iarmhí



# 2005-2010

## February 2006

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The local media, print and local radio, have assisted to date in reporting on Elected Member Briefings and local consultation meetings.

We particularly thank the Local Authorities, the County Managers, and the staff for assistance to date with the Study.

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This Plan Review was carried out by RPS Consulting Engineers in association with COWI Consulting Engineers and Planners, Copenhagen, Mazars Financial Consultants and Clean Technology Centre.

## FOREWORD

The Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region follows the statutory review of the current Waste Management Plan for the five Local Authority areas of Offaly, Laois, Longford, Westmeath and North Tipperary. The Plan covers the period from 2005 to 2010.

The aim of the Plan is to set out a framework for the sustainable management of waste within the five Local Authority areas and covers all non-hazardous waste arising in the Region. The Plan also has regard to the management of hazardous waste in accordance with the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan, prepared by the EPA.

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 22 of the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended, and the Waste Management (Planning) Regulations, 1997.

This Plan is the second Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region. In 1999 the five Local Authorities agreed to jointly prepare the first Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan, which was adopted in 2001. The current Plan includes a Review of the progress against the objectives set out in the 2001 Plan.

The review of the Midlands Waste Management Plan has been managed by a Waste Management Steering Group comprising executives of each of the five participating counties. The Executive Authority for the project is Offaly County Council.

The Waste Management Plan has regard to, inter alia, EU Policy, National Policy, the Local Authority County Development Plans and National and Regional Planning Guidelines including the National Spatial Strategy.

As part of the Plan Review, extensive consultation with members of the public, private industry, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local interest groups has taken place, and this feedback has been considered in the preparation of this Plan. A further two-month period of consultation was undertaken on publication of the Draft Plan. Following the public consultation period, and the incorporation of amendments, it has become the statutory Waste Management Plan for the Region for the period 2005-2010 or until further reviewed.

The format of the Plan is in line with the format set out in the Waste Management (Planning) Regulations, 1997 as follows: -

**Part 1** – Preface to the Plan.

**Part 2** – Present Position regarding Waste Management.

**Part 3** – Anticipated Developments over the Period of the Plan.

**Part 4** – Policy.

**Part 5** – Implementation

The Plan is illustrated as appropriate by maps and is based on the best available information at this time.

A Glossary of Terms is included at the back of the Plan.

# WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE MIDLANDS REGION 2005 – 2010

## Executive Summary

The Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region was made jointly in 2001 by Offaly County Council, Laois County Council, Longford County Council, Westmeath County Council and North Tipperary County Council. The Plan was developed from the Midlands Waste Management Strategy Study (1999), which set out to replace a system over-reliant on landfill disposal with a new integrated approach to waste management over a 15-20 year period. The first formal Review of the Plan has recently taken place in 2004-2005, culminating in this Replacement Plan.

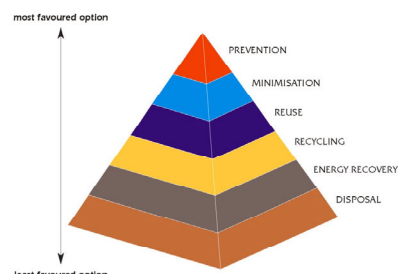
## Midlands Region Profile

The Midlands Region location at the heart of Ireland, makes it highly accessible and an attractive base for commercial and industrial activities. The profile of the Midlands Region is a mix of principal towns, smaller urban centres and attractive rural villages. Recent National economic growth has had a corresponding impact on the Midlands particularly the continued development of the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries. Economic prosperity has also increased pressure on infrastructure in the Region and continued investment is a priority. Maintaining a high quality environment against this backdrop of growth is a significant challenge.

Regional Statistics (2003)	
<b>Population</b>	286,373
<b>Area</b>	8,500 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>No. of Households</b>	92,648
<b>Administrative Centres</b>	Tullamore, Portlaoise, Longford, Mullingar, Nenagh
<b>Labour Force</b>	102,000 employees
<b>Tourism</b>	280,000 visitors/€115m spend

## Waste Management Strategy and Targets

The Midlands Waste Management Strategy is based on the EU Waste Management Hierarchy, which prioritises waste prevention, reuse, recycling and energy recovery ahead of landfill. The future strategy for the Region re-affirms this approach through integrated solutions and sustainable management of waste arisings. The long-term targets for the Region by 2013 remain for the combined household, commercial and industrial, and construction and demolition waste streams:



**Recycling 46%**

**Energy Recovery 37%**

**Landfill Disposal 17%**

## How much waste is there to manage?

In 2003 the Midlands Region generated around 467,500 tonnes of household, commercial/ industrial, construction and demolition waste. Reporting and recording mechanisms for waste data have improved significantly since 1998. However there remains a lack of consistent data for specific waste streams such as industrial and priority wastes. Data for household waste is generally consistent across the Region and it is estimated that each household now generates 1.2 tonnes of waste on average each year.

<b>Household</b>	<b>113,550 tonnes</b>
<b>Commercial/Industrial</b>	<b>89,000 tonnes</b>
<b>Construction &amp; Demolition</b>	<b>265,000 tonnes</b>

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 1998 – 2003

Through concerted efforts by the Local Authorities, the waste management industry and the voluntary/community sector, the Midlands Region has made steady progress in implementing its waste strategy. However, significant strides will be required during the next Plan period if long-term targets are to be achieved.

**Waste Prevention and Minimisation** - In 1998 waste prevention/minimisation initiatives were almost non-existent in the Region. Now the Region has 5 full-time Environmental Awareness Officers working with schools, householders, and business to prevent waste generation and promote waste recycling. The Region has actively engaged with established community groups and established waste programmes e.g. 'Adopt-a-bank-Scheme'. Awareness programmes for householders and businesses continue to expand each year as the Region aims to decouple waste generation from economic growth.

**6,000 home composters provided since 2000**

**184 schools registered with the An Taisce Green Schools Programme**

**37 Green Schools Flags Awarded**

**19 Waste Related Projects sponsored under the Local Agenda 21 Fund**

**Annual Seminars/Workshop on Packaging Waste are held for businesses**

**Waste Recycling** – The overall municipal waste recycling rate has increased from approximately 14% in 1998 to 23% in 2003 and continues to increase. In 2003, 10% of household waste was recycled through Kerbside collection of dry recyclables, Bring Banks and Civic Amenity Facilities in the Region. Recycling of commercial/industrial waste reached 36% in 2004, thanks to the introduction of separate collections and increased recycling of packaging and other waste streams.

**187 Bring Banks in place**

**1 Bring Bank for every 1,531 people**

**9 Civic Amenity Facilities in operation**

**29,000 householders with separate collection service of dry recyclables**

**Waste to Energy** – A Waste to Energy (Thermal Treatment) facility is required for the Region for the treatment and recovery of energy from 'residual waste' which cannot be recycled. It is estimated that a facility to treat a minimum of 150,000 tonnes of residual municipal, industrial and agri wastes is required. To date little progress has been made on this issue and the situation needs to be immediately addressed.



Construction of lined cell, Ballaghveny Landfill

**Waste Disposal** – The reliance on landfill is still high: 60% of municipal waste and 76% of household waste is landfilled annually. At present there are four EPA licensed Local Authority landfills in operation in the Region in Derryclure (Offaly), Kyletalesha (Laois), Ballydonagh (Westmeath) and Ballaghveny (North Tipperary). All facilities are operated to the highest international standards in compliance with the EU Landfill Directive (1999). In response to the slow development of alternative waste treatment facilities, all 4 landfills have applied to the EPA for short to medium term extensions to the current facilities. Currently all of the facilities have EPA waste licences which should accommodate landfill requirements in the region up to and beyond 2010.

**Regulation and Enforcement** – the Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring the activities of waste management companies and waste producers are within the law and in keeping with the goals of this Plan. Dedicated regulation and enforcement units have been established by each Local Authority resulting in improved compliance in this area.

## REVIEW OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN 1998-2004

A formal review of the Waste Management Plan was commissioned in 2004 and completed in 2005. This examined progress to date and involved a significant amount of consultation with the public and sectoral interests. It also took into account the changes and challenges facing the region, and the advent of new policies and laws on waste from the EU and the Irish government. Some of the key findings of the review were as follows:

- Target dates of the original Plan were over-ambitious, bearing in mind the scale of the waste management challenge and the practicalities of implementing new collection and recycling services and facilities in the Region.
- Further progress on prevention/minimisation is emphasised, including greater responsibility from the industrial and commercial sector to minimise waste transferred to consumer level. Further development of community and voluntary sector initiatives need to be fostered and encouraged.



AES Materials Recycling facility Tullamore



Recycling Services - Laois

- Progress in recycling has been good, and is broadly welcomed by all sectors. Nevertheless, if the Plan targets are to be met a more concerted effort is required with regard to collection and treatment of organic waste for composting/ biological treatment.
- There are still significant deficits in infrastructure to manage waste generated in the Midlands and this is increasing waste management costs and making it more difficult to achieve long-term recycling and energy recovery targets. Immediate progress in relation to the development of biological waste treatment and thermal treatment capacities for the Region is critical for achieving sustainable management of waste arisings and to help lower the costs of waste management.
- Construction and Demolition waste is a significant waste stream in the Region and this trend will continue. A redoubling of efforts by the construction industry in tandem with Local Authorities is required, to achieve minimisation through good practice, higher recycling and more sustainable reuse of recycled materials in the construction industry.
- With increased complexity in waste management, increased costs, and growing private sector involvement, Regulation and Enforcement is of vital importance
- More consistency in implementation is desirable – between one Local Authority and the next, between one area and the next, including the use related charging systems for waste
- The desirability of more waste being recycled and reprocessed in Ireland is an underlying theme under consideration in the consultation process. A National Market Development Group is examining this issue.

The EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan requires further action by the Local Authorities, to collect hazardous wastes such as batteries and waste oils from household and small business, to develop a register of all potentially hazardous waste disposal sites in the Region, and to examine the need for hazardous waste disposal capacity nationally.



# Waste Management Policy from 2005 – 2010

Responding to the consultation feedback, the findings of the Review, and the need to meet National and EU Objectives, the waste management policy for the Region has been revised and updated. Some of the key issues and objectives are as follows:

## Prevention and Minimisation Policy

The prevention and minimisation activities of the Local Authorities will be directed to specific target audiences – households, community, schools and business.

- The Environmental Awareness Officers (EAOs) will be dedicated primarily to waste awareness and education at the community and household level including the promotion of on-going campaigns such as the Home Composting Scheme and the Green Schools Programme.
- Each Local Authority will seek funding to enable the appointment of a new Green Business Officer who will be specifically assigned to waste prevention at the commercial and industrial level. The latter role will include implementing environmental management systems and green purchasing within the Local Authorities as well as supporting business in waste reduction. Greater co-ordination of the waste prevention message will be applied across the Region.
- The Local Authorities will encourage and support further community and voluntary sector prevention initiatives throughout the Region.

## Reuse and Repair

A pilot/trial facility will be developed in the Region enabling reuse/repair of household items. The scheme may be expanded depending on the uptake of the first facility.

## Waste Collection

For the most part, household and commercial waste collection in the Midlands Region is undertaken by the private sector. Westmeath County Council remains the only Local Authority in the Region still involved in waste collection. During the Plan period, the Local Authorities will oversee and regulate a 3-bin collection service through the collection permit mechanism including the expansion of the dry recyclable collection service and the introduction of a third bin for the separate collection of organic waste from households and business.

### The Third 'Brown' Bin

The next big recycling challenge for the Region is to introduce separate collection and biological treatment of organic waste (kitchen and garden waste) from households and business. This is a firm objective of the Plan, and will include the following actions by the Local Authorities:

- Rolling out a third 'brown-bin' collection to households starting in 2007
- Separate collection of food and other organic waste by business and industry, using Collection Permits and Waste Bye-Laws to ensure fair regulation of the collection market

## Uncollected Waste

Uncollected household waste is unacceptably high in the Region. At present it is estimated that 37% of households do not avail of a collection service although it is recognised that many of these households dispose of their waste at local transfer stations/Civic Amenity Facilities, directly to regional landfills or share services with their neighbours. The Local Authorities plan to undertake a household waste survey to determine the full extent of the problem. The findings of the survey will be used to set targets aimed at reducing uncollected waste levels. The Local Authorities will also run campaigns highlighting the environmental pollution associated with illegal waste disposal methods such as backyard burning and indiscriminate dumping.

## Household Recycling

Further success in this area depends on two aspects: the motivation and enthusiasm of the householder, and the provision of practical and convenient recycling services. The motivational challenge will be addressed by ongoing information campaigns managed by the EAOs. To improve access to recycling, further expansion of separate waste collection services will be carried out. In addition collection infrastructure will be further improved including:

- Providing 6 additional Civic Amenity Facilities which can accept bulky wastes, green wastes and priority waste streams
- Expansion of the existing Bring Bank density in the Region to 1:1,250 people
- Supporting the development of community recycling schemes



New Three Bin System of Source Separation for Household Waste

# WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY FROM 2005 – 2010

## Commercial/ Industrial Recycling

Most businesses have responded well to new waste practices, but good practice needs to become the norm and not an optional extra for companies. In order to support this, a two-pronged approach will be implemented:

1. Information campaigns and seminars (building on the 'Race Against Waste' campaign) promoting prevention, reuse and recycling will be organised annually
2. Regulation and enforcement of private waste producers and collection companies to ensure compliance with the Packaging Regulations and source segregation of all dry recyclables (paper, packaging, glass etc.) and subsequently organic waste. Co-operation of the waste collection industry will be required, and a phased implementation will be established.

## Construction and Demolition Waste (C&D)

Notwithstanding the good progress made by the construction sector in the past five years, improving waste management is a major challenge to this sector. Local Authorities will ensure that the Voluntary Construction Industry Initiative is applied to developments exceeding the proposed thresholds. In addition, new infrastructure to recycle C&D waste is required to be developed by the private sector, and the practice of sending C&D waste to permitted agricultural sites will be restricted in favour of better alternatives.

**New Construction Initiative**  
The National Construction and Demolition Waste Council (NCDWC) have established a Voluntary Construction Initiative requiring C&D Waste Management Plans to be drawn up at the Planning stage for significant projects and subsequently implemented during construction.

## Hazardous and Priority Wastes

The Plan contains objectives for improving the management of household hazardous waste, including awareness measures and collection systems. This also applies to hazardous waste from small business. New policies are also included to improve systems for collection and recycling of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and End of Life Vehicles (ELVs).

## Energy Recovery Policy

The Region supports the thermal treatment of non-hazardous residual waste materials after waste prevention, minimisation and maximum recycling measures have taken place. The Local Authorities will aim to engage with the private sector to determine the commercial viability of such a facility for the Region taking into account developments in neighbouring Regions. By using this facility, the Region can ensure that the long-term obligations of the *EU Landfill Directive* and the *Draft National Biodegradable Waste Strategy* to reduce landfilling of biodegradable waste are met.



**New Civic Amenity Site for Waste Recycling at Golden Island, Athlone**

## Landfill Policy

The Local Authorities will continue to pursue a policy of Regional landfill rationalisation in the long term whilst continuing to operate and maintain landfill facilities to satisfy regional demand, to the highest international standards in accordance with Waste Licences issued by the EPA.

## Directing Waste

The Local Authorities will explore the mechanisms for directing municipal waste to treatment methods in line with the EU waste hierarchy. This shall include recycling, biological treatment and the thermal treatment of waste as environmentally more advantageous to landfill disposal.

## Inter-Regional Movement of Waste

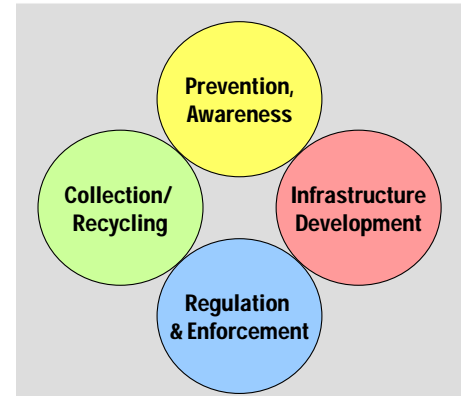
For the most part, the Midlands Region will strive to manage waste arisings generated within its Region whilst taking into account the proximity principle. However the current approach to Inter-Regional movements of waste needs to be made more flexible and workable for the waste industry. The capacity of waste facilities in the Region should, as far as possible, satisfy the needs of the Region whilst allowing some element of flexibility of movement of waste into and out of the Region.

# IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

## Local Authority Action Plan

Reflecting on the challenge of Plan implementation, four subsets of waste management services in the Region have been set out, as shown in the figure. A specific set of actions is required in each area. The local authorities currently have a role in all four activities.

The existing Waste Steering Group facilitates and coordinates the efforts of the partner Local Authorities in implementing the objectives and meeting the targets of the Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan and to facilitate where possible the efforts of industry in prevention, minimisation and sustainable management of waste in the Midlands Region.



Regulation and Enforcement will be a key area over the coming Plan period and further resources and training will be used to support staff in this field. Regulation by means of Waste Collection Permits and Waste Bye Laws will be a key tool used in implementing the Plan. Enforcement Units will continue to support the Local Authority in their day-to-day activities (e.g. inspection of permitted C&D sites). Better data provision is required from the private sector, and further auditing will be carried out by the Local Authorities.

## Roles and Responsibilities

While the Local Authorities are responsible for leading implementation, the success of the Plan will depend on the actions of society as a whole.

The **General Public** as a producer of waste has a duty to continue to prevent waste where possible, and secondly to handle waste generated responsibly by ensuring that waste produced does not cause environmental damage. They need to participate in source separation and recycling services provided, and separate household hazardous waste for safe disposal.

The **Business and Industrial** sectors need to implement best practice in relation to waste prevention, minimisation, recycling and waste disposal, and to implement greener policies in-house. They will ensure that all waste leaving their premises has appropriate documentation and is handled by legal operators.

**Repak**, as a representative of the Packaging Industry, is responsible for improving packaging waste reduction, reusability and recyclability, as well as funding recycling and recovery of packaging waste.

The **Private Waste Sector** will continue to expand collection and recycling services, provide innovative technologies and assist in the promotion of awareness on waste management. Improvements in data reporting and compliance are required.

**Voluntary, NGO & Community Groups** are encouraged to undertake waste projects at local level. Increased responsibility will be taken for waste management through community schemes with support from local authorities.

## Producer Responsibility

An objective of the Plan is that producers and suppliers will play a greater role in preventing, minimising and recycling waste, and should share the burden more fairly with the end-user of the product:



- Full cost of collection, sorting and recycling of packaging waste will be recovered from industry through Repak
- National initiatives for WEEE, scrap cars and tyres will be implemented eventually enabling free delivery of the end-product for recovery
- Producers of materials such as newspapers, junk mail and telephone directories will be required to contribute to the cost of collecting, sorting and recycling the material
- Greater producer responsibility will be sought for materials such as batteries, paints, medicines and other household hazardous waste



## FINANCIAL ISSUES AND FUTURE MONITORING OF THE PLAN

### Financial Implications

Local Authority costs of providing waste services have increased significantly since 1998 from €14 million to €20 million in 2004. Landfill extension, remediation and operational costs accounted for 76% of the total expenditure, with a 10% spend on recycling, prevention and enforcement services. Landfill gate fees in the Region have provided a substantial income from Local Authority landfills with the exception of Longford County Council who do not own/operate a disposal facility. For 2004 a service deficit of €1.8 million was incurred in the Region. Each Local Authority still manages their finances relating to waste management and it is proposed to look at regionally managing some services during the Plan period. Collection of door-to-door dry recyclables is undertaken by the private sector whose costs are not included in the regional figures. The local authority funding gap will increase in 2006 to fund new civic amenities and landfill cells but then moderate until 2008/2009 when biological treatment by the private sector will divert further wastes from local authority landfills.

### How will we monitor progress?

An Annual Report will be prepared by the Region to update on progress in Plan implementation. The Annual Report will synthesise information from each of the Local Authorities and report on key service indicators and progress towards policy targets.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

### Public Consultation and Involvement

Public consultation and involvement played a major role in the formulation of this Plan. In addition to the statutory consultation period (July – September 2005) during which time the Draft Plan was on display to the public, consultation was sought using a number of methods:

- Newspaper advertisement calling for written public submissions
- Local Consultation Forums or Open Days in each Local Authority
- Consultation days for the waste industry
- Regional Stakeholder Meeting
- Consultation with Elected Members of the Region

The key issues that were raised:

- Planning/Permit Process
- Awareness/Prevention
- Inter-regional movement of waste
- Infrastructure/facilities
- Regulation and Enforcement
- Zero Waste
- Packaging
- Landfill/Waste To Energy

The submissions, meetings and briefings in the pre-Draft phase resulted in numerous ideas and initiatives which were included in the Draft Plan and have been considered in the development of policy for the Region. A second phase of consultation took place on the Draft Plan from July–September 2005, the feedback from which led to a series of revisions and amendments to the final Waste Plan before it was finalised.

### Useful Websites

Offaly County Council	<a href="http://www.offaly.ie">www.offaly.ie</a>
Laois County Council	<a href="http://www.laois.ie">www.laois.ie</a>
Longford County Council	<a href="http://www.longfordcoco.ie">www.longfordcoco.ie</a>
North Tipperary County Council	<a href="http://www.tipperarynorth.ie">www.tipperarynorth.ie</a>
Westmeath County Council	<a href="http://www.westmeathcoco.ie">www.westmeathcoco.ie</a>
Race against Waste	<a href="http://www.raceagainstwaste.ie">www.raceagainstwaste.ie</a>
Environmental Protection Agency	<a href="http://www.epa.ie">www.epa.ie</a>
Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government	<a href="http://www.environ.ie">www.environ.ie</a>
Information on the Environment	<a href="http://www.enfo.ie">www.enfo.ie</a>