

# Material Resources Strategy News

February 2004

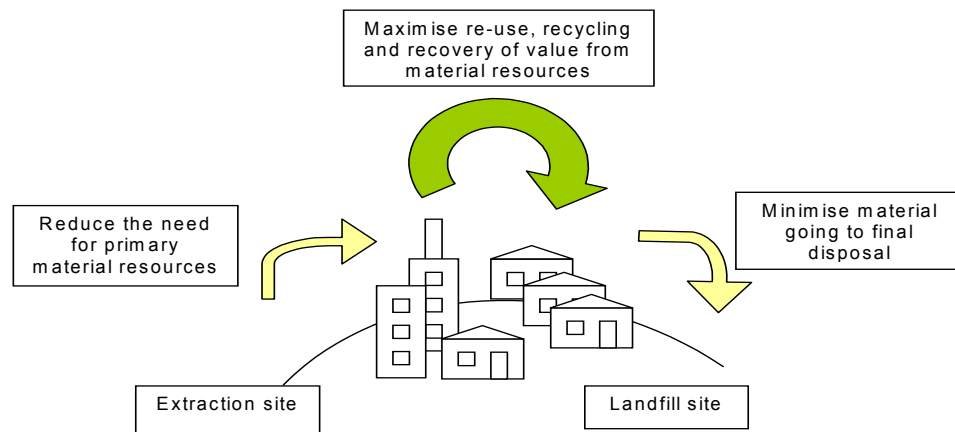


## **MRS 'A brief history'**

Welcome to the first MRS newsletter, designed to give you a quick update on the progress of the Material Resources Strategy.

The MRS has now been discussed at 2 major workshops, in Southampton and Portsmouth, and there is a **3<sup>rd</sup> workshop coming up on the 31<sup>st</sup> March in Aldershot**. You will be receiving your invitations to that workshop soon.

The MRS will look at how we use materials and how we could make better use of them in the future. Its aim is to produce strategies which will maximise re-use, recycling and recovery of value from material resource, as illustrated in the diagram below.



This 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop is going into much more detail than the previous two and we will be sending out further information in the next couple of weeks, explaining how we will have much more detailed discussions across a whole range of issues related to Material Resource Use.

This is your chance to input to the specifics of what goes into the Material Resources. Strategy so put the date in your diary now.

## Waste not...



**Waste is a dirty word. Most of us are conscious that we produce too much, but we don't want to think about what happens to it. Yet we are now faced with the consequences of our throw-away attitude of the past 25 years, and the time has come to change.**



From nappies to cameras, almost everything is disposable these days, and even investment items like cars and household appliances seem to come with built-in obsolescence. So why can't we keep chucking out everything 'used' and voraciously consuming only box-fresh goods? Surely someone somewhere is planning for the disposal of all our waste – and aren't we getting terribly good at recycling these days?

Well, yes and no. On the one hand we are running out of large holes in which to bury our waste (landfill is almost at capacity in the South East), and on the other we could do a lot more in terms of re-using 'rubbish'. With waste volumes set to double in the next 25 years, what is desperately needed now is a new approach to the problem.



Although to most of us, rubbish is what we put out for the weekly refuse collection, domestic 'wheelie bins' contribute a relatively small proportion of the waste produced in Hampshire (less than 25%). It doesn't make sense to treat household waste differently from that produced by industry, construction and agriculture – it's all refuse, and there are economies of scale to be achieved by processing it and recycling it as a single stream.

But how do we define waste? The answer is that waste must cease to be waste altogether, and be redefined as a resource – just as water, wood and minerals are resources – and fed back into the system as a material or source of energy. That is the principle behind the Material Resources Strategy, a partnership between Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils, Project Integra (which manages Hampshire's household waste), and the wider community – including commerce and industry, community groups, Central Government and other public sector organisations.



While it may be a comfort to know that there *are* people whose responsibility it is to determine how waste is handled in Hampshire, it also comes as a bit of a shock to realise that all of us need to change our mindset when it comes to waste, so that producing it at the current rate becomes unthinkable – a somewhat shameful anachronism, like public hanging or bear-baiting. And waste is, after all, a relative term. If I am writing a letter on recycled paper, it is to me a very useful product, not a waste product – just as my discarded jeans may be considered a valuable commodity to the firm that exports second-hand Levis to Japan. So if we can find more ways of re-evaluating, recycling and re-using waste, we can change our waste 'problem' into an opportunity, which could be good news for Hampshire business. And that's what the Material Resources Strategy (MRS) is all about.

### **Charting new territory**

It's a tall order. The process of producing the MRS will be long and probably tortuous. To begin with, there are no precedents for the integrated approach to



waste that MRS aims to adopt, so the partnership is starting with a blank slate. And the process by which it aims to arrive at the strategy, with input from representatives of as many interested sectors as possible, is ambitious in its sheer scale. Between 200 and 400 people will be involved in shaping the policy, via stakeholder meetings to be held throughout the coming year.

More than 100 of these stakeholders assembled at the Pyramids conference centre in Portsmouth on 2 December 2003, to discuss proposals for the vision, aims and strategic objectives that will guide the officers who will put MRS into practice over the coming years. Talks took place around a series of tables, each with a facilitator to help the process along and feed back comments to the chair.



One of the challenges faced by the partnership in its early stages is to engage with all members of the wider community in Hampshire and beyond. At glance at the delegate list confirmed the presence of plenty of council employees, and a good number of representatives of local conservation groups. Several major building firms were also represented, as were some of Hampshire's biggest employers, like Mitsubishi. Small business groups, residents' associations, Southern Water, the Strategic Rail Authority, and even the British Horse Society had sent delegates. Such a mixed bag is vital is indicative of the extent of the negotiations that will be necessary to arrive at a definitive strategy that answers everyone's needs and gains their active support.



When questions were taken prior to undertaking the business of the afternoon, such diverse concerns were raised as the possibility of consulting with the MoD over the availability of land for new recycling facilities, the need to take into account the Government's housing proposals when considering the South's waste disposal facilities, and the importance of liaising with bordering counties. A conviction that overarched the entire discussion was that it was essential to influence the EC and Government over changes to legislation, regulations and fiscal measures to achieve MRS objectives, so that Hampshire was not trying to operate in a vacuum.



The outcomes of the discussion on the MRS vision statement and aims were generally supportive, although it was felt that the vision statement could be more assertive. Delegates agreed that the first principle was to ascertain people's current attitudes to waste, and then to raise their awareness and understanding of the MRS objectives. If the strategy is to be successful it must be presented in plain language: the term 'material resources' was considered rather obscure, and it was suggested that a new title could be identified that better explained what the strategy was about.

To the nine MRS principles listed in the discussion document, a further twenty or so were added by the delegates during the general discussion. However, it was agreed that as the principles were designed to form a framework within which officers would implement the strategy, between five and ten key principles should be defined by the next meeting, the other points to become part of the strategic objectives for the various elements of the strategy.

Next, delegates got down to examining the strategic objectives for each element of the strategy: engaging the process chain, establishing material recovery systems, and delivery on the ground.





In general, it was felt that objectives should be more specific and, where relevant, backed up by data. One table emphasised the need to 'get out of the planning box' and look at specifics, like delivery through marketing and sales. It was also stressed that existing processing facilities should be fully exploited before new ones are planned. Landfill was, as ever, a sensitive issue and delegates felt that an alternative must be identified: 'We don't have time to develop a long term plan for landfill'.



With plenty of material to work on before the next meeting in March, the MRS planning team called the meeting to a close. Forming the MRS in this manner will take until the end of 2004, when the proposed strategy will be presented to stakeholders for final consultation. It is then that the real work – the task of changing hearts, minds and behaviour – will begin.

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### **Feedback from Events**

There have now been 2 MRS events which have been attended by over 300 people in total, and there will be many other events of this type over the coming months.

What we have learned from these events so far, from your feedback, about organisation we will try to include in any future events that we hold.

Each workshop is followed up by analysis of the feedback, which is then sent out to all stakeholders. Between each workshop our aim to progress and achieve goals laid out by the feedback.



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### **What does sustainable development mean?**

The MRS deals with some complex terms and language across a number of specialist fields.

Sustainable development, for example, was defined by the Bruntland Commission in the 80s as

*'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,'* however in practice everyone has their own definition of what sustainable development means to them.

A major aim of the MRS is to keep the words to Plain English however there will inevitably be some technical terms and acronyms although these will be kept to a minimum. To ensure everyone understands what these words mean the MRS website now has a glossary which will develop as the MRS develops.

If there are any words on the glossary which you think need further information, or any other words which need added please let us know so that we can add them on. ([www.mrs-hampshire.org.uk/FAQ](http://www.mrs-hampshire.org.uk/FAQ))





## Contact Us

If you would like any more information on the MRS process or would like to become a member of the stakeholder process please contact us:

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## Stakeholder contact details - Data Protection Act compliance

Entec UK are managing the MRS stakeholder process on behalf of Hampshire County Council. Since they are acting for Hampshire County Council, they have been given access to the database of contact details held by Hampshire County Council (including names and addresses) which is used to maintain contact with stakeholders. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998, the data you provide will only be used by the Material Resources Strategy (MRS) and the MRS partners. The data will be stored electronically on the MRS database and will not be passed to third parties. When the stakeholder dialogue is finished, the database will be returned to Hampshire County Council so they can keep you up to date on all future developments in relation to the MRS.

If you do *not* wish Entec UK to hold and use your contact details, please contact Damian Reynolds of Hampshire County Council (email: [t7.surveyors@hants.gov.uk](mailto:t7.surveyors@hants.gov.uk) or telephone 01962 845290) and he will arrange to have your details removed from the database.

*Please note this will mean that you will no longer receive information about the MRS.* If you do **not** contact us, this will be taken to mean that you have no objection to Entec UK holding and using your contact details.

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