

West Midlands State of the Environment

Waste and resource management

Society is resources at an unsustainable rate and creating too much waste. Waste is a serious environmental, social and economic burden for the West Midlands. Re-use and recycling reduces the amount of waste sent for disposal at landfill or incinerated, reducing the risk of harm to our environment.

All householders and businesses produce waste. In the past we have relied on disposal of waste at landfill sites, but the West Midlands is running out of landfill space. Minimisation, reduction of waste and proper segregation provides the most sustainable action for the future management of waste in the West Midlands region. We can all reduce the amount of waste we produce and dispose of our waste more responsibly by reusing and recycling it wherever possible.

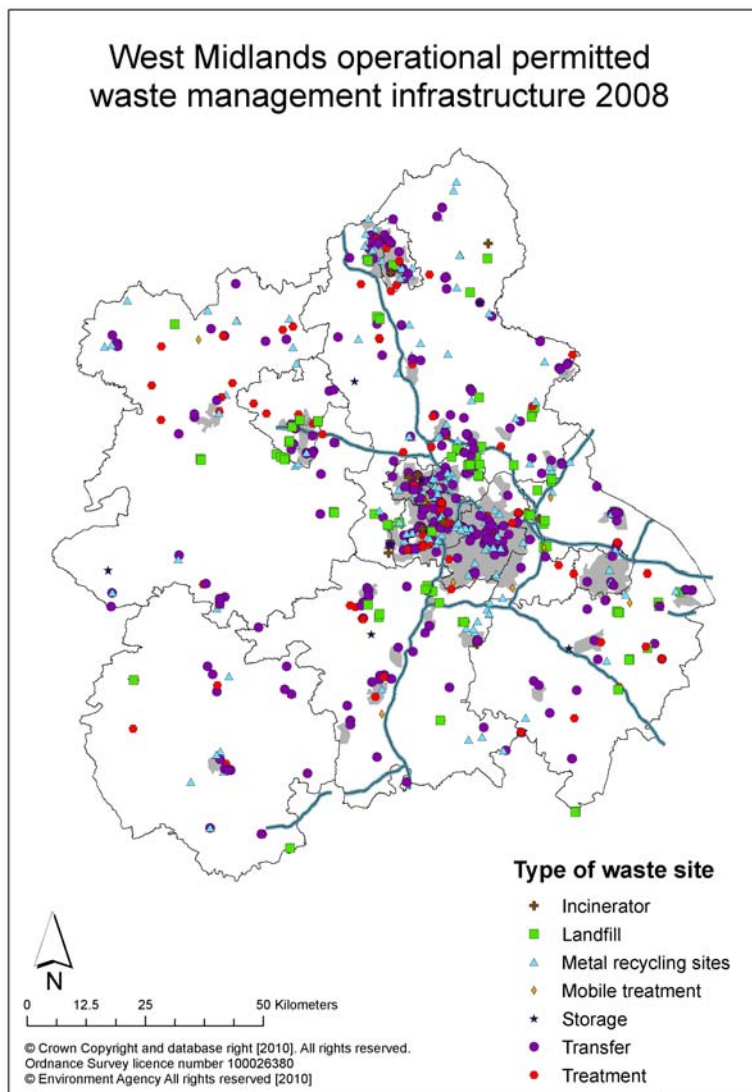
Further legislative changes including the Waste Framework Directive and Landfill Tax are important drivers in diverting many waste streams from landfill. In recent years more waste has been reused and recycled and many types of waste generated by businesses and homes have now become valuable resources. Management of waste as future resource will help with the sustainable management of waste within the West Midlands.

At a glance

- The West Midlands produced over 2.9 million tonnes of municipal waste in 2008, including 2.6 million tonnes of household waste. The latest commercial and industrial waste data showed the West Midlands produced 7.3 million tonnes of this waste type.
- In 2008, 4.8 million tonnes of waste was disposed of in landfill sites, with 5.5 million tonnes of waste going to waste transfer and treatment facilities. A further 2.1 million tonnes was sent to metal recycling sites.
- Since 2001, waste sent to West Midlands landfill sites has decreased by over 42 per cent, whilst inputs to waste transfer facilities has increased by 13 per cent. Waste going for treatment has increased by 25 per cent to over 1.5 million tonnes.
- At the end of 2008 the West Midlands had landfill capacity of over 79 million cubic metres. At current rates of disposal, this is only enough for another 10 years.
- Over 1.1 million tonnes of waste was incinerated at permitted facilities in the West Midlands in 2008, 85 per cent of which was municipal waste.
- In 2008, 35 per cent of municipal waste was recycled and/or composted. The West Midlands has the highest recovery and recycling rate of 66 per cent per cent for municipal waste, and the lowest percentage of municipal waste going to landfill, when compared with other regions in England and Wales.

Data and trends

The map below shows the location of the licensed waste facilities within the West Midlands.



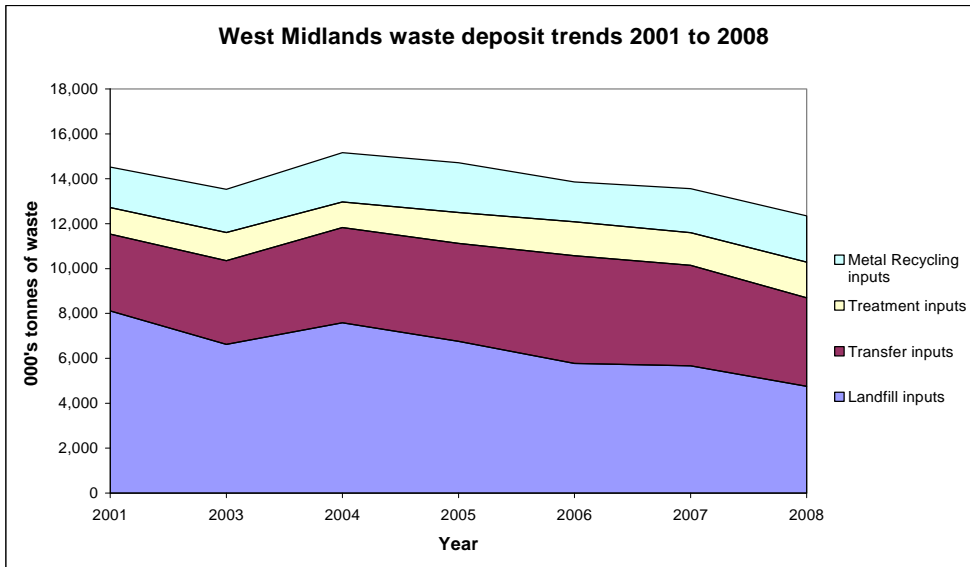
In 2008 there were 1269 permitted waste management facilities in the West Midlands with a total permitted capacity to handle over 155 million tonnes of Waste per annum. Of these, 532 sites were active (handling waste) during 2008. Each active Waste Facility is required to submit returns to us reporting the amount of waste handled by the facility for the calendar year.

Amongst the active permitted Waste Facilities in the West Midlands in 2008 there were

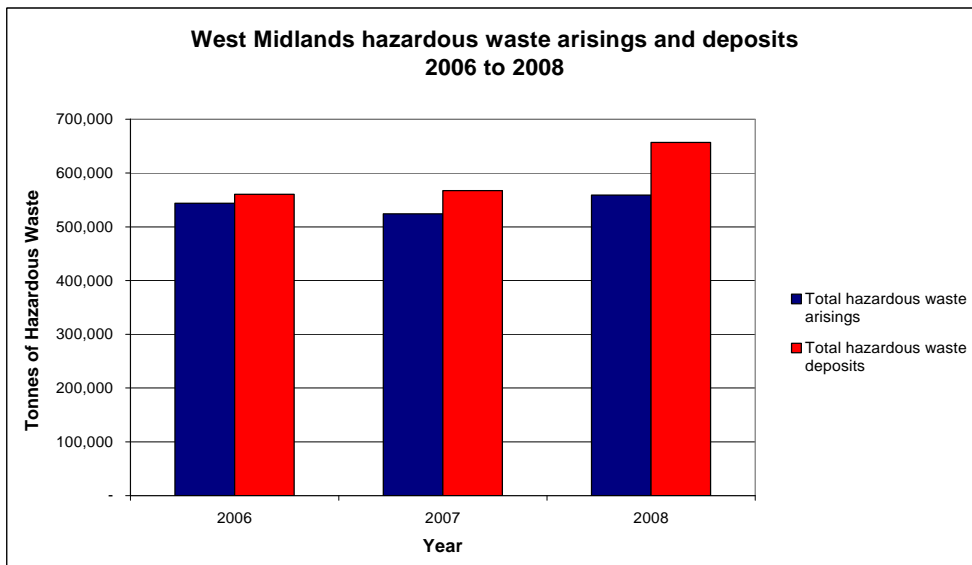
- 36 landfill sites
- 73 waste treatment facilities, with waste inputs of nearly 1.6 million tonnes
- 380 waste transfer stations

- 13 waste incinerators, with an annual capacity to handle 1.4 million tonnes of waste.
- 80 per cent of region’s incineration capacity is designated for municipal energy from waste incinerator facilities.

Since 2001 waste inputs to landfill have fallen by 42 per cent in the West Midlands. During the same period inputs into waste transfer sites and waste treatment sites in the West Midlands have increased by 13 per cent and 25 per cent respectively with nearly 1.6 million tonnes treated.



In 2008 nearly 560,000 tonnes of hazardous waste was produced in the West Midlands, 9 per cent of all hazardous waste arisings for England and Wales. Since 2006 overall hazardous waste arisings in the West Midlands have remained consistent just over 0.5 million tonnes a year.



In 2008 total hazardous waste deposits were over 650,000 tonnes, with the region responsible for 10 per cent of all hazardous waste deposits for England and Wales. The West Midlands is a net importer of hazardous waste with over 380,000 tonnes imported from other regions, and 290,000 tonnes of West Midlands hazardous waste arising exported out of the region.

More waste data and information for East Midlands can be found on our website (http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/data/111318.aspx#West_Midlands).

Our role

We want organisations to use less natural resources in the future and to treat the waste we produce as a resource. We will provide advice, guidance and leadership to businesses and the public sector to help more efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.

There is an increased need to ensure the delivery of new waste management facilities that are fit for purpose and in the right place and to sustainably manage waste close to its place of production. As a regulator of waste management sites we also have an important role advising and influencing waste planning authorities to manage waste in the most sustainable way.

In the coming years we will:

- Work with waste planning authorities in the West Midlands to ensure that waste management infrastructure is in right place at the right time.
- Work with regulated businesses and regional policy makers to improve the resource efficiency of our businesses in the West Midlands.
- Work with and influence developers and partners to ensure more development achieves better resource efficiency through sustainable construction and retrofitting measures.
- Through our regulatory role we want to ensure the amount of hazardous waste, clinical waste and electronic waste is reduced and improve the management of its production, storage, treatment and disposal.

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