

Book review

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO WASTE MANAGEMENT LAW

R. G. P. Hawkins and H. S. Shaw. Thomas Telford Publishing, 2004.
ISBN 0-7277-3275-7, £35, 275 pp.

This is the most up-to date legal reference on waste by several years. It is extremely well indexed and cross-referenced, and also manages to be interesting, even amusing in places ('Act of Richard II: removal of refuse on pain of forfeits, in 1388. Since Geoffrey Chaucer was Clerk of Works to this king's cultured court, the forfeits could be both innovative and hurtful')—and thought-provoking (e.g., p. 105, Southampton's scheme for furniture recovery, which does not contribute to recycling figures as the goods are not considered to be waste—unless they are unusable, in which case the scheme must pay for their disposal costs *as* waste).

The book contains 12 chapters, covering historical background; waste definitions; classification; administration; minimisation, recycling, processing and recovery; energy recovery and landfill; planning; pollution prevention and control; nuisance and flytipping in law; health and safety and duty of care; consignment of waste; and impacts on water quality. Five appendices give further details.

But—should this invaluable reference *be* (only) a book?
All such topical books are of course inherently out-of-date,

especially in the almost bewilderingly fast-changing world of waste at the present time. This book was published in 2004, yet there have already been many additional regulations and guidance, such as the Hazardous Waste Regulations, Planning Policy Statement 10, and the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme regulations. Although the authors have, where possible, signposted the arrival of such impending changes, it already seems odd that strategic environment assessments and sustainability appraisals are referred to only obliquely, and to have no mention of the major study on health and environmental effects of municipal waste. (The currency of the advice can of course to some extent be maintained by users through such resources as the Environment Agency's NetRegs.¹)

It is very useful to have this book on one's shelf (and it *is* on mine, bought on the reputation of the authors and referred to frequently). However, it would also be very useful to have it as a searchable web-based resource, which could be periodically updated—one for Thomas Telford's agenda?

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REFERENCE

1. See http://www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs/?lang=_e for details.