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The 6Rs in Waste Management WLGA Evidence to EPC Committee

25th January 2007



WLGA • CLILC

INTRODUCTION

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales. The three national park authorities, the three fire and rescue authorities, and four police authorities are associate members. It seeks to provide representation for local authorities (LAs) within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.
2. The WLGA welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Assembly's Environment Planning & Countryside Committee on waste management in Wales. There are two key drivers for waste activity in Wales: The first is the statutory requirements on local government and the second is the policy framework provided by 'Wise About Waste'.

Key Driver 1: Statutory Requirements

3. Local government's **statutory** roles in waste management are:
 - ✚ Collection and disposal authority – LAs have a duty to collect and arrange for disposal of household waste (Environmental Protection Act 1990).
 - ✚ LAs have a duty to make provision for commercial waste collections if requested by businesses in their area (Environmental Protection Act 1990). Provision can mean arranging for a private sector contractor to deal with the waste, or the LA can collect and then charge the business directly. If the commercial waste becomes the property of the local authority through their collection activities the waste is then classed as municipal and therefore counts towards their targets (see below).
 - ✚ LAs have a duty under the Landfill Allowance Regulations (2004) to ensure diversion of biodegradable municipal waste away from landfill. Each year LAs are given targets by WAG which specifies the maximum quantities that they can send to landfill. If they do not meet these targets they are liable to pay a £200 per tonne fine for every tonne over their allowance (subject to an intervention protocol agreed between the Association and Welsh Assembly Government). In addition, there is also the potential for infraction fines if Wales were to cause the UK (as the Member State) to fail to meet the requirements of the EC Landfill Directive.

Key Driver 2: The Policy Framework

4. The policy framework informs and provides guidance on how LAs undertake their waste activities:
 - ✚ Wise About Waste, the Assembly's waste strategy sets the national policy on how Wales should handle its waste with support for the waste hierarchy. Wise

about Waste is very strong on recycling and composting and this in turn has influenced how LAs deal with the waste they collect. The calculation in 2001/02 was that achievement of the 40% recycling and composting figure (with a minimum of 15% recycling and 15% composting) would achieve the landfill diversion required by 2009/10. The policy framework has been supported by the Sustainable Waste Management Grant which has been used by authorities to fund provision of recycling/composting facilities (kerbside collections, enhancement of civic amenity sites etc.). The framework is monitored (from a LA perspective) through the recycling and composting performance indicators which LAs report on annually. However, it must be emphasised that recycling and composting are not statutory activities.

- ✚ Local planning authorities are charged under Technical Advice Note 21 to put in place a “comprehensive, integrated and sustainable land use planning framework for waste in Wales” for all waste streams in Wales. This is achieved through the Regional Waste Planning process.



The 6Rs

5. Waste is traditionally spoken about in the context of the 3Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle. The WLGA would like to introduce 3 more Rs to the debate and these will be covered in this submission:
 - ✚ Residual waste management;
 - ✚ Resources; and
 - ✚ Regionalism.

REDUCE

6. If Wales is to solve its waste problem, then it needs to stop producing so much waste in the first place: we need to tackle the problem at source. Local government was pleased that municipal arisings fell by 59,000 tonnes from 1,930,000 tonnes in 2004-05 to 1,871,556t in 2005-06. But in 2003-04 waste arisings were 1,820,000 so we are still on average increasing the amount of waste that is produced.
7. As incomes increase and lifestyles become more affluent it would appear that more waste seems to be increased. According to the Prudential¹ people on average throw away:
 - ✚ 61% of a bag of lettuce/ salad
 - ✚ 61% of a Loaf of bread
 - ✚ 57% of Fruit

¹ http://www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/Attitudes/soggy_lettuce_pru.pdf

-  45% of Pint of Milk
-  17% of a bottle of wine

8. Households need to be made aware, through communication, of the cost they are incurring when they throw so much into the bin. Awareness raising/education on only buying what is needed will help reduce the amount of waste at source: industry has long practiced lean production we need to encourage lean consumption.
9. The Association, through Waste Awareness Wales, is communicating practical tips and advice to householders on how to reduce waste. They have just published 'Go Green for 2007' which provides plenty of advice on how individuals can help reduce the amount of waste produced.²
10. We think there is merit in the Assembly Government developing a clear policy position on the 'reduction agenda'. Whilst we appreciate that this is not a devolved issue the Assembly Government does have an important role to play in lobbying/influencing the UK Government and the European Commission and there needs to be consideration of how the additional powers granted to the National Assembly for Wales through the Government of Wales Act 2006 might be used to facilitate the 'reduction agenda'.

REUSE

11. If waste is produced, then it is best, where possible for it to be reused. Local authorities often work closely with the community sector on re-use schemes. For example, furniture and white good re-use schemes that collect unwanted furniture and then supply it to householders in need of furniture/equipment (eg Track 2000 in Cardiff and Res-a-Rec in Swansea). There are also reuse schemes for other 'waste streams' (eg Community Re-Paint which collects and then distributes unwanted but reusable paint).
12. A key challenge for such schemes is ensuring long-term financial viability and linked to this is the need to promote greater awareness amongst society of can be done with their waste and how it can benefit other people or groups in their local community.

² www.wasteawarenesswales.org.uk


13. The current waste strategy is quite quiet on reuse and we would like more work done on whether there is scope for extending the reuse market.

RECYCLING & COMPOSTING

14. Members of the Committee will be aware that for 2005-06 Wales recycled and composted almost 23% (14.67% recycling and 8.45% composting). This is an increase of 4% from the 2004-05 performance of 19%. On average authorities serve 71% of households with kerbside provision. This equals 1,258,620 households across Wales (data from 2005-06 NAWPIs). This means Wales is on track to achieve the 25% target for 2006-07.
15. The Association is also aware that those councils who had relatively low coverage have significantly rolled out kerbside over the last year to householders and we therefore hope to see an increase in performance over the next year or so. WLGA is currently collecting information from LAs on what they collect, participation rates etc. and we hope to present it to members on the day of the Committee.
16. However we are aware that recycling can be controversial and cause confusion. The recent scare stories about recycling leading to increased numbers of rats does not help in encouraging people to recycle more. There is also confusion over what can be recycled: plastics being the prime example. We have already presented evidence to the Committee on the reasons why local authorities may not collect plastics as part of kerbside collection schemes (cost, weight based targets etc.). Even where plastics are collected there is often confusion as to what can be recycled due to the range of different plastics used in packaging. We believe that there would be merit in developing clearer labelling and cross industry protocols to make it easier for individuals to recycle.
17. Market research undertaken a few years ago by ENCAMS illustrates that only a minority of those surveyed were 'routine recyclers' and that the majority were either apathetic or even opposed to the concept.³ The research demonstrated the need for a co-ordinated media campaign to raise awareness of the need to recycle and compost. This has been achieved through the 'Its our future, please don't throw it away' campaign run by Waste Awareness Wales. However, we still need to do more to

³ ENCAMS (2002) "Market Segmentation Research 2002", ENCAMS, London.

encourage and perhaps require the so-called 'Misinformed Moaners', 'Busy Dismissors' and 'Domestic Cleansers' to recycle/compost more.

<p>Routine Recycler Frequent participation 40%</p> 	<p><i>"I feel it's important to recycle household waste whenever I can".</i></p> <p>ABs, Older (35+), own home, like visiting the coast and countryside</p>
<p>Its all their fault Average participation 23%</p> 	<p><i>"The Council do not provide enough recycling facilities and are not putting enough effort into encouraging people to recycle".</i></p> <p>Younger on average (20's, 30's) though some retired persons</p>
<p>Domestic Cleanser Infrequent participation 20%</p> 	<p><i>"If there was a clean and tidy way to do it I would recycle more"</i></p> <p>Des, younger (20's 30's), less likely to work full time and prefer the Sun or Daily Mail to the Telegraph</p>
<p>Busy dismissors May never 14%</p> 	<p><i>"I lead a very busy life and just don't have the time to think about recycling and suchlike"</i></p> <p>C1s, younger (20's 30's), more likely to be male and work full-time</p>
<p>Misinformed moaners Poor participation 3%</p> 	<p><i>"Recycling can often be more harmful to the environment than beneficial so I don't see why I should bother"</i></p> <p>DEs, younger (18-34), work part-time, few couples, live in rented accommodation or with parents</p>

- All of the negative connotations associated with recycling need to be addressed. We need to make it easy for people to participate, there needs to be greater ownership of the waste issue and recognition of the benefits that recycling/composting can bring. We believe that good progress is being made on these issues but evidence from the Association's peer review process indicates that in some areas where very good kerbside provision is available participation from householders does not get above

50%. Thus, there needs to be a debate on how participation can be encouraged and further incentivised. There would appear to be a number of options:

- + Incentive schemes
- + Fortnightly collection of residual waste and more frequent collection of recycle and/or compostable material
- + Financial incentives to recycle/compost through charging for residual waste collection
- + Stricter enforcement

Incentive Schemes

19. Waste Awareness Wales published in 2006 a report on current incentive schemes offered by LAs – these include competitions, prize draws, recognition through formal awards as the best recycler etc.⁴ In addition some authorities have found that schemes such as adopt a site – which entails local community groups being responsible for the maintenance, cleaning etc. of recycling bring sites, receive a payment from the Council for every tonne collected – they therefore have an incentive to encourage local communities to use it as much as possible. One authority is currently rolling out the provision of compost bins to householders and has recruited 'compost doctors' to champion, inform and train householders how they can use and benefit from home composting.

Fortnightly Collections

20. To encourage more recycling and to meet the requirements of the Landfill Directive, five councils in Wales have started fortnightly collections of residual waste. This is often accompanied with the introduction of more regular recycling collections and the provision of food waste collections to remove the 'smelly' waste from the residual rubbish. Where this is introduced the Council will distribute the most suitable bins (often lidded wheelie bins) to householders. The WLGA would like to stress that despite recent press coverage stating that this practice was the contributory factor in an increase in the rat and pest population, advice from environmental health professionals is that if done properly there is no reason why fortnightly collections and home composting should lead to an increase in vermin. What we do have to ensure is that proper communication is given to householders, that they fully understand that wheelie bins have to be secured and not over filled and with composters that they are on a hard standing.

⁴ Waste Awareness Wales (2006) "Review of Local Authority Household Incentive Schemes Wales", Waste Awareness Wales, Cardiff.

21. The calculation for meeting the 2009-10 landfill target by recycling and composting alone was based on the premise that councils would introduce separate collections of food waste. Councils were unable to start collecting food waste early on because of the animal by-product regulations introduced as a result of foot and mouth which means that food waste has to be composted at a different (and more expensive) kind of facility than a normal composter as originally planned. This meant that many councils initiated kerbside green waste collections to ensure compliance with WAG composting targets and also because at that time (and still not yet) home composting activity cannot be taken into account in the calculation of performance indicators.
22. The introduction of fortnightly and food waste collections is fully supported by the WLGA and is entirely consistent with 'Wise About Waste'. With the provision of more recycling and composting facilities we will hopefully see a reduction in waste being put out for residual collections, but if there appears to be a stagnation in performance then alternatives to incentives and service delivery may have to be considered.

Financial Incentives – Charging for Residual Waste Collection

23. The potential for Council's to eventually charge for black bag collections has received a lot of press over the last few months, and is something the LGA in London came out and actively supported earlier this month. The Assembly Government are also committed to exploring the feasibility of introducing charges for black bag collections and are committed to scoping charging for residual waste collection by March 2007.⁵
24. The WLGA intends to work with its member authorities, assess the impact on other debates such as the Lyons review on funding of local government and determine whether local government would benefit from having the powers to charge householders for residual waste collection. Obviously any scheme which explored these options would need to have in place a comprehensive recycling service and issues of equity and fairness would need to be properly examined before any scheme is introduced. The relationship with Council Tax would also need to be explored.

Stricter Enforcement: Fines

25. Another issue that has been raised in the press recently is householders being fined by Councils for not recycling the correct material or putting material in the wrong bag. Fines have to be considered part of the 'toolkit to encourage recycling and

⁵ Welsh Assembly Government (2006) "Environment Strategy for Wales: First Action Plan", Welsh Assembly Government, Cardiff. Action 20 – Complete scoping work on charging for residual waste collection by March 2007 and issue consultation paper by end of December 2007.

composting'. If householders do not participate correctly in sustainable waste management schemes and Councils have taken all reasonable steps to inform them of the opportunities/requirements then they have to have the ability to utilise their powers to fine.

26. There are however a number of practical difficulties in terms of the burden of proof. Whilst the new fixed penalty notices provided for in the Clean Neighbourhoods Act will help, the burden of proof and defective evidence gathering remains an issue.

RESIDUAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

27. The WLGA believes that although 'Zero Waste' is a laudable aim and should be a long-term objective, the practical requirements of the Landfill Directive means that there is an urgent need for residual waste treatment processes in Wales.
28. There is widespread recognition within LAs, WAG and industry that recycling and composting will not be sufficient to ensure Wales meets the landfill diversion targets post 2009-10. Wales will therefore need a network of strategic, suitable and sustainable waste facilities. In the first round of Regional Waste Plans it was estimated that Wales needed approximately 650 waste facilities for all waste streams, with municipal waste management making up some 200 of these.⁶
29. The regional waste plans are currently being reviewed (see box below).

Review Process for the Regional Waste Plans

- 1) EA Wales to report on the LCA / SA of the Strategic Options by the end of January 2007;
- 2) SEA of the Options to be conducted in January / February 2007
- 3) RPS to report on the spatial work & SEA by end of December / early January 2007;
- 4) HIA Draft Report by February 2007;
- 5) RWP 1st Review Consultation Draft by March / April 2007;
- 6) Stakeholder / Public Consultation: June / July 2007;
- 7) Recommended Draft of the RWP 1st Review by October 2007;
- 8) LPA Endorsement: November / December 2007; and
- 9) Formal submission of agreed RWP 1st Review by January 2008.

⁶ SE and SW provided detailed figures with 91 and 62 facilities being required respectively for municipal waste. North were unable to break the figures down per waste stream, but there was an approximate 3:1 total required for municipal required in SE & SW so the total number was simply divided by 3 to arrive at the municipal figure.

30. The reviews are including a wider range of options for treatment in their life cycle assessment and sustainability appraisal than the first plans which primarily focused on mechanical biological treatment (MBT) for the treatment of municipal waste. The options are:

Option for Regional Waste Plan Review	Description
Option 0 'Do Nothing' strategy	(This Option is included for assessment purposes only – as a baseline to compare the other Options against.) Maintains the current levels of recycling, composting, energy from waste and landfill, projected on to waste tonnages arising in 2013.
Option 1 A landfill-led strategy for residual waste	<i>High</i> recycling and composting levels followed by <i>low</i> levels of thermal treatment of residual waste using either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyrolysis (Option 1A), or • Gasification (Option 1B), or • Mass burn with energy recovery (Option 1C) All remaining residual waste would then be sent to landfill. (Recycling/treatment levels are those required to achieve the 2020 BMW Landfill Directive target in 2013.)
Option 2 An Energy from Waste-led strategy for residual waste	<i>High</i> recycling and composting levels with all remaining residual wastes, where possible, being treated by <i>high</i> levels of Energy from Waste using either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyrolysis (Option 2A), or • Gasification (Option 2B), or • Mass burn with energy recovery (Option 2C), or • Anaerobic digestion (Option 2D) Any remaining residual waste would then be sent to landfill. (Recycling levels are those required to achieve the 2020 BMW Landfill Directive target in 2013. Energy from Waste levels aim to minimise waste to landfill.)
Option 3 An MBT/BMT-led strategy for residual waste	<i>Maximum</i> recycling and composting levels, all remaining residual wastes being sent to MBT/BMT with the output recovered / disposed of using either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyrolysis (Option 3A), or • Gasification (Option 3B), or • Mass burn with energy recovery (Option 3C), or • Fuel to off-site energy use (Option 3D), or • On-site anaerobic digestion (Option 3E), or • Landfill (Option 3F) For Options 3A–3E, any remaining residual waste would then be sent to landfill. (Recycling levels are the maximum possible – may exceed those required to achieve the 2020 BMW Landfill Directive target in 2013.)
Option 4 An autoclave-led strategy for	<i>Maximum</i> recycling and composting levels, all remaining residual wastes being sent to autoclave with the output recovered / disposed of using either:

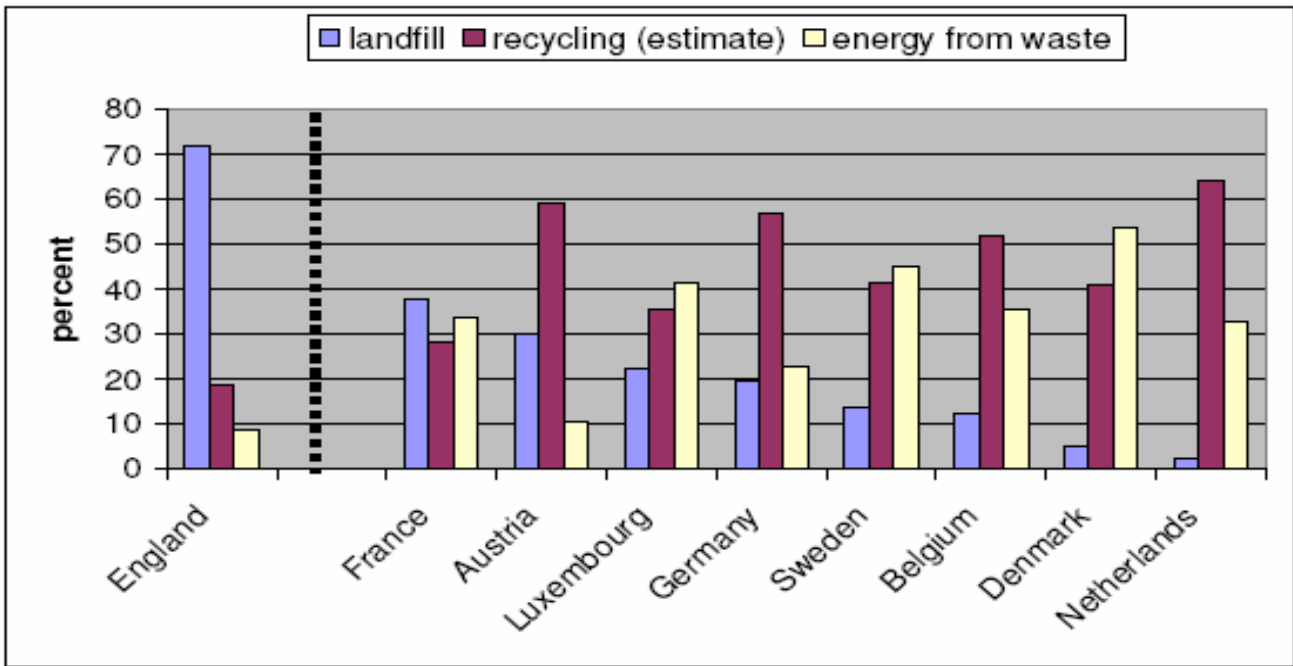
residual waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyrolysis (Option 4A), or • Gasification (Option 4B), or • Mass burn with energy recovery (Option 4C), or • Fuel to off-site energy use (Option 4D), or • Landfill (Option 4E) <p>For Options 4A to 4D, any remaining residual waste would then be sent to landfill. (Recycling levels are the maximum possible – may exceed those required to achieve the 2020 BMW Landfill Directive target in 2013)</p>
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[In light of the above factors, and following a review of the Options generated for the first RWP, the MSG agreed the following strategic waste management Options for the RWP review – all of which aim to achieve the 2020 BMW Landfill Directive target in 2013]

31. It is obvious that there is not a 'one size fits all' solution to the waste problem in Wales.

32. Early indications are that the most sustainable option is:
 - ✚ MBT with the product (floc) being sent to an industry which can burn the floc as a fuel. There is a very limited market for MBT floc and there are also major financial implications to consider as authorities would have to pay a gate fee for the MBT plant and then pay an additional cost to source a market for the floc as is it still classed as a waste;
 - ✚ The second "best" option appears to be maximum recycling and composting accompanied with energy recovery from waste. The WLGA has been urging WAG to be clear on its position on energy from waste as authorities want to ensure that what they put in place meets WAGs strategy. We were pleased in Autumn 2006 that the Minister publicly recognised the role that energy recovery from waste can play in delivering a sustainable waste management agenda when meeting local authority environment cabinet members.

33. Wales needs to recognise that in most of the 'high performing' EU countries high recycling and composting is accompanied by a focus on energy recovery. The table below illustrates this quite clearly:



Source: Eurostat Structural Indicators for Waste

34. Waste is a resource and one which potentially can assist with the energy shortage over the coming years. Whilst we would prefer to see waste amounts decreasing, in the short term (next 10-15 years) estimates are that waste production will either increase or stagnate, but not dramatically decrease, so utilising it as a resource to produce another much needed resource seems eminently sensible.

Community Engagement Project – WAW, WLGA, WAG & EA

35. However, we recognise that within Wales and the UK waste plants are much more controversial than they are on the continent. A sophisticated and honest debate needs to be held with the public and other sectors to inform them of the need for various waste facilities including bring sites, material recovery facilities in-vessel composting facilities (to take food waste), anaerobic digestion and energy from waste plants.
36. For this reason Waste Awareness Wales with its partners WLGA, WAG and EA commissioned a project to provide a toolkit and advice on how communities can best be engaged in the waste management debate. For authorities who are procuring waste facilities the toolkit will provide practical steps on when and how best to engage with the public, how information can be presented in an impartial manner (in the form of fact sheets) and giving examples from other exercises on how communication was managed to learn lessons of good and not so good practice to make sure we don't repeat the same mistakes. Key messages from the project so far are:

- ✚ Consultation and engagement is not an option – it must be done
- ✚ Consultation needs to be meaningful and inclusive
- ✚ Consultation should begin as early as possible in the process
- ✚ There is no set process – each exercise is unique but lessons can be learnt from others

37. Hyder the appointed consultants are on track to complete the work and present to the steering group in February 2007. If the Committee would like a copy of the report and toolkit can be sent to them in due course.

RESOURCES

38. In 2006 the WLGA commissioned PriceWaterhouse Coopers to undertake a research project to explore the capital and revenue gap in municipal waste management in Wales. The brief asked PriceWaterhouse Coopers to explore whether local authorities had the necessary financial resources to meet the requirements of the Landfill Allowance Scheme following the approach detailed in Wise About Waste i.e. maximising recycling and composting, followed by a form of treatment and then landfill as a last resort.

39. PWC established that Welsh local government needs:

- ✚ £65m per annum **additional** revenue for collection and disposal
- ✚ £463 **additional** for capital up to 2012/13 (this takes into account an element of regional working)

40. In Council tax terms these figures would equate to an extra £65 per annum on a Band D equivalent to 2012. In 2005-06 Welsh LAs spent £177m per annum (£97m on collections and £80m on disposal, RO Returns from LAs to WAG) on municipal waste management so an additional £65m revenue commitment would represent almost a 50% increase on current spend. However, the WLGA is concerned that without extra resources authorities will have their hands tied, and through no fault of their own will be unable to meet the landfill diversion targets or the Assembly's own recycling and composting targets.

41. In terms of cost per tonne this equates to:

- ✚ £51 per tonne for collections (as LAs collected 1,873,556 tonnes of municipal waste in 2005-06 (NAWPI returns))
- ✚ £59 per tonne for disposal (as LAs disposed of 1,350,102 tonnes of municipal waste in 2005-06 (NAWPIS returns))⁷

42. The nature of the capital and operating costs for residual waste management facilities are indicated in figure 1.

Figure 1: Average Cost of Building and Operating Residual Waste Management Facilities

Technology	Plant capacity 'Ktpa	Capex range £m	Average Capex £m	Opex range £m	Average Opex £/t
Windrow Composting	20-25	0.5-1.23	0.99	13-25	16.5
	50	1.5-2	1.85	12-15	14
In-Vessel Composting	20	0.6-4.5	2.39	18-45	27
	50	2.62-10	5.64	18-20	19
Anaerobic Digestion (separate digestion, dry)	10	1.4-5	3.25	9-20	15
	20	2.5-7	4.25	6-20	12
Anaerobic Digestion (co-digestion, wet)	31		3.9		
	45		7.3	8-36	24
Bio-Mechanical Treatment	50		7.6-8.5	15-50	
	60		8		
	85-100		11-16		32.5
	120		16		
	200		17		
	220		25		
Mass Burn Incineration	50	12.5-19	16		
	100	25-36	28		
	150	38-45	41		
	200	40-58	47	35-55	45
	400	73-100	87		
	500	80-105	93		
Pyrolysis/Gasification	32-360		8-93	20-55	38-53
				46-61	

Source: Figures provided by ENVIROS Consulting as part of their waste management technologies training

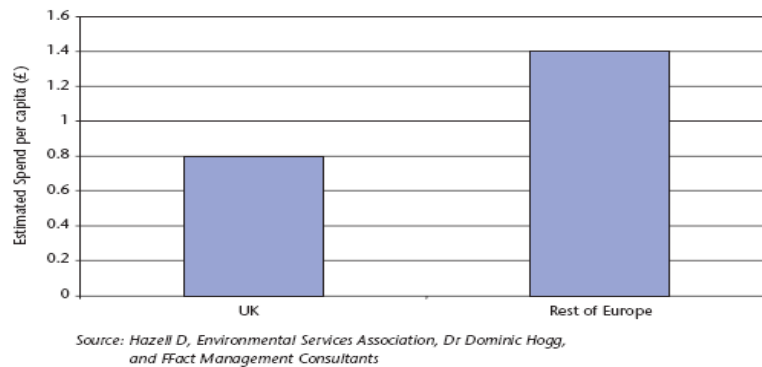
43. In terms of the £463m additional capital required LAs have broadly three options. They can solely rely on the private sector to fully fund the capital build of facilities and they simply pay a 'gate fee' which would have an impact on the revenue budget (and

⁷ These figures include all staff costs, administration, transportation, licensing requirements and income from sale of recyclate etc.

this is not included in the additional £64m required). Indeed current procurement exercises have cast doubt as to whether LAs can currently afford the new style waste technology contracts because of constraints on budgets. It is very common for an authority to incur costs well in excess of £1m for procurement as support is needed on the legal, financial and technical aspects. Alternatively LAs could part fund some of the capital build but there would have to be stringent checks to ensure that public money was not being used to subsidise private sector activity and cause a state aid. Thirdly LAs could utilise prudential borrowing to fund the building of the facilities. If £500m was borrowed with a payback period of 25 years (which is standard) Welsh Councils would have to raise an additional £50m per annum each year – this would be in addition to the additional £65m revenue gap identified above.

44. The Committee can therefore see that the financial challenges facing Welsh LAs are enormous, and this is without taking into consideration any potential fines (£200 per tonne) for missing landfill diversion targets. Councils through their own internal processes, requirement for best value and the drive for efficiency through the Making the Connections Agenda, are maximising the opportunities that can be made from efficiency gains but it is obvious that efficiency gains alone will not free up enough resources to close the funding gap. Figure 2 demonstrates the funding gap between between the UK's spend on waste per capita per week compared to the EU average.⁸

Figure 2: UK's spend on waste per capita per week compared to the EU average



45. If we want to have a modern, sustainable and efficient resource waste management strategy then Government needs to recognise that added investment will be required. The figures provided above hopefully illustrate that councils are providing value for money, that each year with the resources they are given they achieve an average 4%

⁸ Strategy Unit (2002) Waste Not, Want Not: A strategy for tackling the waste problem in England", Strategy Unit, London.

increase in recycling, but that so much more could be done and achieved with increased, sustained investment.

46. The Assembly Government have announced a new Capital Access Fund worth approximately £18m over two years (2007-08 to 2008-09) but no details have yet been issued about the process for accessing this money. The new Structural Fund Fund Programmes may also provide a source of capital funding for investment in waste management. The Committee will be aware that WAG is currently developing strategic frameworks for the new Convergence Programme, and that waste management is to have its own framework. We would hope to work in partnership with WAG to develop the Strategic Framework for waste.
47. Whilst the Convergence Programme may provide some funding for waste management facilities in West Wales and the Valleys it is unlikely that the Competitiveness Programme for East Wales will provide similar funding. It is important that the proposed Capital Access Fund for waste management is not used purely to match fund the Convergence Programme.

REGIONALISM – Waste Delivery Partnerships

48. The Committee will be aware that at our evidence session in 2005 and oral evidence in November 2006 the WLGA reported that we are actively encouraging authorities to work together on the procurement of municipal waste infrastructure wherever possible and feasible and facilitating this through the new Regional Partnership Boards.
49. This is in the true spirit of Making the Connections and we are pleased to report that waste management is high on the political agenda with all of the four Regional Partnership Boards of the WLGA having discussed waste in their formal meetings. The table below provides information on the current collaborations and where they are at with procurement decisions. The approach taken is also endorsed by the Welsh Assembly Government in their recent publication 'Delivering Beyond Boundaries' which proposes a national and regional approach to 'enable LAs to work together over delivering solutions to complex waste management issues and develop a shared service approach to the problems they raise' (2006, p.4).

South East Wales

Caerphilly – in final negotiations with the preferred bidder and aim to complete the process in Spring 2007. Caerphilly are also engaged with the region as a whole in discussing future use of Structural Funds and dealing with floc from MBT on a regional scale.

Project Gwyrdd – Cardiff, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan & Monmouthshire's project to explore a feasible and sustainable solution to waste management. A lot of work has been undertaken on corporate governance issues, engaging with members on their views on appropriate partnership structures and appropriate technologies. Next stage is to soft market test to analyse what is available in the market, how the procurement exercise has to package itself to attract attention and then commence formal procurement

Heads of the Valleys – Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen & Blaenau Gwent's project to collaboratively procure waste treatment technologies. All expertise is on board, memorandum of understanding has been signed between Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen (the others are looking at it) on the partnership and formal procurement is about to begin this year.

Mid Wales

Ceredigion, Powys & Gwynedd – working together to identify a local and sustainable network of waste facilities recognising that there are a number of small waste industries in their areas that could benefit from investment and that the larger solutions will probably not be suitable for rural areas. Technical work is about to begin on appropriate technologies, suitable partnership structures and ensuring local benefits.

North Wales

Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire - commitment to work together on procurement of a treatment facility. SLR have been appointed to provide advice on the most suitable procurement route. Gwynedd and Anglesey also participate in regional discussions and are currently evaluating the suitability of the NE Wales proposal. Wrexham, because of contract requirements have separate arrangements in hand, but are fully engaged in regional discussions to ensure that what is put in place across the region is complimentary.

South West Wales

A high level cabinet member and chief officer board has been put in place to ensure that the region's approach to waste management is coordinated and sustainable. Proposals are underway for members to establish a joint committee similar to that set up for SWWITCH – the South West Transport Consortia.

Swansea because of issues around landfill and contract end dates were forced to begin soft market testing in 2005-06. At the same time an invite was extended to neighbouring authorities to participate in the process.

Carmarthenshire have Cabinet approval to work with Swansea and work is underway to sign off a formal MoU on how the partnership would operate etc.

Pembrokeshire have proposals to undertake a scoping study to assess the feasibility of technologies for their region and have had dialogue with Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion (as the west and south of their regions respectively are closer to Pembrokeshire so reduce costs) about feasibility of utilising some of their waste.

50. It has to be stressed that whilst regional collaboration is the aim it is not without difficulties and tensions. It takes a very brave authority through a procurement exercise to stand up and tell communities that the new waste plant in their area will not only take their waste, but also waste from other council areas. We know this is going to be difficult and the issue comes back to appropriate communication and engagement with members, officers, other stakeholders and importantly the public to ensure that the full issue is understood, that there is a need for whatever technology the partnership agrees upon and that health and environmental effects are minimal.
51. The Assembly Government have supported several of the collaborative projects through the Making the Connections Improvement Fund. It is important that WAG, Making the Connections and the individual authorities remain committed to a collaborative agenda to ensure that efficiencies in procurement costs and infrastructure requirements are kept to a realistic but sustainable number can be delivered.
52. Over the next year or so authorities will be making difficult and complex decisions such as what type of partnership structure to put in place, how to attract a very volatile and small market, what procurement route to pursue and what technology would be most appropriate to meet their needs. All of these decisions will require support from 'Wales plc' as the issues facing municipal waste are not just a local government problem – it is a Welsh problem.
53. Another issue to be addressed is the role of Value Wales in procurement issues. There needs to be clarity about who does what. Currently Value Wales is liaising with the above partnerships on their allocations of funding through Making the Connections, but their role in offering procurement support, putting in place easier mechanisms for LAs to buy consultancy support etc. is not clear.

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