

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

MINUTES

THE STRATEGIC WASTE BOARD

Friday, 13 March 2009

10.00am The Braid, Ballymena

Present:	
Sammy Wilson, MP, MLA	Minister of the Environment (Chair)
Stephen Peover	Permanent Secretary, Department of the Environment
Paul Simpson	Deputy Secretary Planning and Local Government and Environmental Policy Department of the Environment
Wesley Shannon	Director, Climate Change and Waste Management Division Department of the Environment
Anthony McKay	Principal Officer, Planning Service, Department of the Environment
Liam McKibben	Acting Deputy Secretary, Central Policy Group Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
David Sterling	Deputy Secretary, Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry
Michael Willis	Head of Central Management Branch, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure
Councillor Shaun Gallagher	(Vice Chair) Chair of NILGA Waste Working Group Derry City Council
Councillor Sean McGuigan	Deputy Chair of NILGA Waste Working Group Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Graham Byrne	Operational Director Southern Waste Management Partnership (SWaMP2008)
Alderman Hubert Nicholl	Chairman, arc21 Joint Committee Ballymena Borough Council
Councillor Winston Fulton	Deputy Chairman, arc21 Joint Committee Larne Borough Council
John Quinn	Chief Executive, arc21
Councillor Robert McPherson	Coleraine Borough Council
Councillor Patrick Groogan	Magherafelt District Council - Karen - did he attend?
Eamon Molloy	Development Officer

	North West Region Waste Management Group (NWRWMG)
Tim Walker	Chair of the Local Government Technical Advisers' Group
Ursula Walsh	University of Ulster Jordanstown
Patrick Durkan	Managing Director, Urban Forest Ltd
Secretariat:	Ivan Gregg, Waste Programme Support Office, Department of the Environment John Waterworth, Waste Programme Support Office, Department of the Environment Karen Smyth, NILGA
In attendance:	Denis McMahon, Waste Planning and Infrastructure Division, Department of the Environment Alan McVicker, Director, Programme Delivery Support Unit Siobhan Tweedie, Private Office, Department of the Environment

1.	Welcome and Introductions	<u>Action</u>
1.1	The Minister welcomed all members of the Strategic Waste Board (SWB) to the meeting. He thanked them for their hard work and the progress that had been made to date on strategy implementation. A particular welcome was extended to Ursula Walsh, the new independent member of the Board.	
2.	Apologies	
2.1	Apologies were received from: John McMillen (OFMDFM) Philip Irwin (DFP) June Ingram (DEL) Martin Darcy (SIB) John Briggs (SWaMP2008), Roy Ramsay (NIEA), Anne Blacker (NIEA) Cynthia Smith (DOE Planning Service) John Cole (DHSSPS) Cllr John Campbell (SWaMP2008) Prof. Sue Christie, NI Environment Link	
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
3.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.	
4.	Matters Arising	
4.1	The Minister outlined progress on the matters arising from the previous meeting. Para 8.2 of 19/12/08 minutes <i>DOE Press Office to arrange meeting with local environmental journalists to brief them on current recycling position</i> The Minister reminded members of the recent concern regarding the downturn in the recyclates market and the suggestion at the	

	<p>previous meeting that a briefing for journalists should be held. He noted that further to discussion it had been agreed that the issue of a press release would be a more appropriate way forward and that this was issued on 12 January 2009.</p> <p>It was noted that a Ministerial event to raise the profile of recycling in Northern Ireland had been suggested and that the Minister may do this in the future. Members were also informed that WRAP had indicated that the situation was now improving.</p> <p>Mr Molloy informed the Minister that the NWRWMG had recently held a meeting with a contractor and are satisfied that some areas have stabilised, and although some areas remain volatile, are happy that longer term contracts face no immediate risk.</p> <p>Mr Byrne confirmed that SWaMP had a number of contractors in place and were experiencing no increase in gate fee. Mr Quinn noted that a very slight recovery in the market was evident.</p> <p>Para 9.1 of 19/12/08 minutes <i>DOE to present Information Paper at next SWB meeting on construction and demolition waste</i> SWB 1 (1/2009)</p> <p>Mr Shannon presented a paper which had been prepared at the request of the SWB. He noted that the recently adopted revised European Waste Framework Directive (WFD) imposed a number of statutory targets for recycling including one for the re-use and the recycling of construction and demolition waste, which will supersede the current non-statutory Waste Management Strategy targets. He stated that this paper would provide a baseline, setting out the current position and whilst some good work was currently underway in the sector more robust data was necessary. This was being addressed by NIEA using statutory returns to obtain more accurate information on waste arisings. and recycling in this sector. With the learning and communications work also moving forward, he noted that it was hoped to be able to put a regular report on this area of work to the Board.</p> <p>Cllr Gallagher welcomed the paper, which was noted by the Board.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Waste Programme Steering Group Report (includes Strategy Delivery Programme Update and Strand Reports)</p>	
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Mr Peover gave an update on the last meeting of the Waste Programme Steering Group, and an overview of progress. He drew the Board's attention to paper SWB 2(1/2009) and noted that although some risks remain, no significant new risks are appearing. He advised the Board that there had been some progress on planning and legislation, although some concerns remain. Three additional administrative staff have been provided for strands 1, 4 and 5 of the strategy and consultants, Morrow Communications, have been engaged to develop a learning and communications action plan. The appointment of an additional member of staff to work on the Data and Research strand (4) has been reflected in the change of strand status from red to amber.</p>	

<p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>He advised the Board that the status of Strand 1 (Waste Prevention) had been changed from green to amber, to reflect the slippage in this work due to the ongoing sick leave of a member of staff.</p> <p>Mr Peover gave an overview of the progress on the strategy strands and highlighted that progress had been made on engagement with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland on the repatriation of illegally dumped waste.</p> <p>The board agreed the WPSG progress report.</p> <p>Mr Shannon commented on the ongoing work under the learning and communications strand, informing the Board that a workshop had been held earlier in the week, facilitated by Morrow Communications, to assist in the development of key messages for a communications action plan. He advised that a Senior Information Officer was to be recruited to take this work forward, and that the competition had closed at the end of February. The consultants have been speaking to members of the Learning and Communications Forum and are looking at the key messages that need to be put forward with regard to behavioural change. He added that it had been recognised that there was a need to segment the audience into sectors and to address ‘NIMBYism’</p> <p>Mr Walker noted that the issue of staff and resources had been ongoing for quite some time and asked if, given the current economic climate there is no future increase in the level of resourcing, how the existing resources can be used to the best effect.</p> <p>Mr Peover explained that the waste management work within DOE was subject to as much uncertainty as everything else, and noted that there was considerable financial pressure on the Assembly Executive. He noted that the department was working to existing budgets, and was awaiting the outcome of the budget announcement on 25 April. He informed the Board that although the situation was fluid, it was planned to maintain existing resources on waste management. He added that the shortfall of £7.5m within the Planning Service was a critical issue, and that cover for this would need to be found, in addition to the general financial pressures.</p> <p>He reassured members that this work was very high priority for DOE and that money had been set aside for capital expenditure. He noted his intention to try to protect this work.</p> <p>Mr Walker then asked, given the importance of this area of work, if the department would be putting contingency plans in place, in case the necessary finance and resourcing doesn’t materialise.</p> <p>Mr Peover again reassured the Board that the department did not foresee any changes in funding, and was still staffing up. He noted that he would be seeking advice from the Minister on the impact on Planning Service of a reduction in income resulting from falling numbers of applications, but stated that this was a separate track of activity and would not affect the Learning and Communication strand.</p>	
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6.	Report from Waste Infrastructure Programme Board (WIPB)	
6.1	<p>Mr McVicker presented the report of the Waste Infrastructure Programme Board, noting that there had been significant progress on projects. He informed the Board that arc21 were now in a dialogue phase with 6 large consortia displaying interest, which was a positive sign. He added that the 2nd phase of Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions (ISOS) would be entered into before the end of March.</p> <p>He reported that the NWRWMG project had been approved in January; went out to the market in February and that they were now waiting for pre-qualification questionnaires, with a dialogue phase planned for May.</p> <p>It was noted that SWaMP2008 had got off to a slower start but were catching up fast, planning to go out to the market in April.</p> <p>Mr McVicker stated that a non-paper still had to be produced on State Aid and gave an update on gateway reviews, the risk register and noted that site selection and planning issues were being monitored on a monthly basis and were moving forward well.</p> <p>He noted that further to discussions regarding the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund (SWIF) it may not be possible to capitalise certain aspects of the project costs, and that these may now not qualify for assistance from the SWIF. PDSU have highlighted the issues and a quantum of costs have been identified and the department were investigating the potential of putting a bid forward for additional revenue and resource funding.</p> <p>Cllr Nicholl and Mr Quinn voiced the deep concern, felt by the three waste management groups regarding the money that has already been committed in anticipation of being eligible for SWIF and noted that there may be accounting difficulties presented in the current year. It was also noted that, for example, arc 21 would be potentially required to commit £10m to revenue spending and the other groups would be experiencing similar difficulties. Mr Quinn strongly emphasised the need for a robust bid to go from the department to DFP, and highlighted the possibility that the whole programme could grind to a halt. He endorsed the department's action so far and expressed his hope that the slippage bid will also be successful.</p> <p>Mr Peover stated that this is not a bid for 'new money' but rather an accountancy issue, in that a change of heading is needed, to allow for 'non-recurrent revenue' spend. It was noted that DFP has been very supportive so far.</p> <p>The Minister voiced his concern regarding existing and necessary future spending, with uncertainty over the accountancy rules.</p> <p>Mr McMahon informed the Board that he was working on this issue with the waste management groups, and that the issue was around budgeting and what would be required in-year.</p> <p>Mr Peover asked what the assessment of the groups was. Mr Quinn noted that arc21 were reaching a new phase of activity on site selection and were already working in the environmental aspects of this, including pre-application data capture. He noted that the groups were in a phase of partnership with the department and are in no doubt that the officers will try to make this work. He added that local</p>	

	<p>government would be seeking Ministerial support in negotiation with his Executive colleagues if and when this is required.</p> <p>The Board noted that Belfast City Council were currently in consultation with its ratepayers regarding the location of a Mechanical Biological Treatment or an Energy from Waste plant, which ends 23rd March, prior to analysis and final recommendations to be put forward by advisers to a full council meeting in early May. The Board noted that the entire procurement process for arc21 has been scheduled around the decision, and that there are implications for other sites.</p> <p>The Board also noted that a communications document giving elected members advice on 'lines to take' and other issues would soon be made available.</p>	
7.	Consultation on the Waste Bill	
7.1	The Minister gave information on the timing of the bill and consultation, and noted that it should be in place by May 2010 which would be in line with the procurement timetable. Cllr Gallagher agreed that this was good news.	
8.	Proposal paper – Updates on Departmental Waste Management Action Plans	
	<p>The Board was updated on proposals for departmental waste action plans to be presented and agreed that the Central Government representatives to the Strategic Waste Board provide an annual update to the Board on progress by each of their Departments towards delivery of the aims and goals of the NI Waste Management Strategy and progress in implementing Departmental Waste Management Action Plans.</p> <p>It was agreed that the first of these updates should be brought to the Board meeting on 5 June.</p>	Departmental Updates to be brought to next SWB meeting
9.	Waste Management Plans – Annual reports	
9.1	<p>The Minister noted the need for the department to publish an annual report under the 1997 Waste and Contaminated Land order and that guidance for councils was currently being finalised for the monitoring of the performance of Waste Management Plans and setting out recommendations to standardise the content and structure of an Annual Performance Review Report and a short Implementation Action Plan for the next year. It was noted that the Department had already met with the Waste Management Groups (WMGs) to develop this work, with further meetings planned to agree and finalise content.</p> <p>The Board agreed the need for regular reporting and noted the current practice in this regard. Cllr Gallagher welcomed the proposed framework for regular monitoring and reporting of progress on the waste management plans and the aim of producing a NI wide report, focussing on the work of the WMGs. The content of the reporting format was agreed, as was the proposed structure of the Implementation Action Plan.</p>	New reporting format to be progressed by DOE
10.	Any Other Business	
10.1	Update to Elected Members and Independent Members	

	Expenses Guidelines.	
	The Board noted revised expenses guidelines for elected and independent members' attendance at meetings. Cllr Gallagher welcomed the confirmation of arrangements on behalf of the elected representatives on the Board.	Secretariat to ensure members are provided with appropriate forms
10.2	DOE Support to NILGA	
	Cllr Gallagher raised the issue of DOE support to NILGA, noting that he had written a letter to Mr Simpson on the issue before Christmas, that funding had been agreed at a previous Board meeting and that arrangements needed to be confirmed to enable NILGA to recruit a replacement for Andy McClenaghan who had been invaluable to local government during his time working on waste management. He highlighted to the Board that this funding was necessary to enable NILGA to support and maintain partnership working on waste management. Mr Simpson outlined his view that the relationship between NILGA and the DOE needed to be rethought and Mr Shannon noted that a reply to Cllr Gallagher's letter should be received by NILGA shortly.	Karen Smyth and Paul Simpson to work to resolve the issue of NILGA funding
10.3	Thanks to Paul Simpson	
	Cllr Gallagher expressed his deep appreciation for the support he had received from Paul Simpson during his time on the Strategic Waste Board, and thanked him for his help and advice, wishing him well on his upcoming retirement. Mr Simpson thanked Cllr Gallagher, noting that he had enjoyed working with him, and with NILGA, on what had been a steep personal learning curve as regards waste management. He thanked the staff on the waste management groups, department and PDSU for their help and support in what was now a strong partnership. The Minister also thanked Mr Simpson and wished him well.	
11.	Date and Venue of Next Meeting	
11.1	The next Strategic Waste Board meeting will be held in Armagh City and District Council Offices on 5 th June 2009.	