

**MINUTES**  
**THE STRATEGIC WASTE BOARD**

Friday, 19 December 2008

10.30 am, Civic Forum, Magherafelt District Council Offices

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
Steve Aston	Acting Director, Environmental Protection, Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Anthony McKay	Principal Officer, Planning Service
Joyce Rutherford	Central Policy Group Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Martin Darcy	Strategic Adviser Strategic Investment Board
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
Councillor John Campbell	Chairman, SWaMP2008 Armagh City and District 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

Eamon Molloy	Development Officer North West Region Waste Management Group (NWRWMG)
Professor Sue Christie	Director, Northern Ireland Environment Link
Secretariat:	Ivan Gregg, Waste Programme Support Office, Department of the Environment Bernie Conlon, Waste Programme Support Office, Department of the Environment Karen Smyth, NILGA Andy McClenaghan, 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.	
2.	<b>Apologies</b>	
2.1	Apologies were received from Philip Irwin (DFP), John McMillen (OFMDFM), Doreen Brown (DRD), Deborah Brown (DCAL), June Ingram (DEL), Wendy Reid (DE), John Briggs (SWaMP2008), Tim Walker (TAG) and Patrick Durkan (Urban Forest Ltd). Ronnie Jordan (DARD) and Cynthia Smith (DOE Planning Service) also sent apologies with Joyce Rutherford and Anthony McKay attending respectively on their behalf.	
3.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	
3.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.	
4.	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
4.1	The Minister outlined progress on the matters arising from the previous meeting.  <b>Para 4.2 of 29/8/08 minutes</b> <i>Secretariat to amend table of SWB members to include Stephen Peover. This had been actioned.</i>  <b>Para 5 of 29/8/08 minutes</b> <i>Secretariat to circulate project strand reports and strategy progress report ahead of each SWB meeting. This would be dealt with under today's agenda item 5.</i>  <b>Para 6 vi and vii of 29/8/08 minutes</b> <i>Paul Simpson to examine potential funding options to resource implementation of the Learning and Communications strand of the</i>	

	<p><i>Waste Management Strategy</i>. This would be dealt with under today's agenda item 6.</p> <p><b>Para 6 viii of 29/8/08 minutes</b>  <i>Secretariat to liaise with Chair and Vice-Chair to plan information event at Stormont.</i> The Minister noted that he had opened and attended NILGA Waste Management Information Session for MLAs in Stormont on 3/11/08. The event covered the consequences for Northern Ireland of failure to meet statutory Landfill Directive targets; waste management technologies available; and the delivery challenges facing the Waste Management Strategy. The Minister stated that the event was well attended and showed a good level of interest by MLAs in the subject.</p> <p>Councillor Shaun Gallagher (Vice-Chair) added that 38 MLAs (including most members of the Environment Committee) had attended the event and that feedback had been very positive.</p> <p>The Environment Committee had been briefed on 11<sup>th</sup> December by representatives from arc21, SWaMP and the North West Region Waste Management Group. Paul Simpson advised that the Committee has requested that Departmental officials attend a future meeting (at a date to be arranged) to brief members on their strategic approach to waste management and the flexibility and capacity of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund.</p> <p><b>Para 8 v of 29/8/08 minutes</b>  <i>Minister to discuss with the First Minister the possibility of issuing the consultation [on the Local Government (Contracts and Compulsory Purchase) Bill] under 'special procedure' with the agreement of the First and Deputy First Minister rather than the entire NI Executive.</i> The Minister noted that a Consultation document on the Department's proposal for a Local Government (Contracts and Compulsory Purchase) Bill had issued on 12 December 2008 with comments requested by 12 March 2009.</p> <p><b>Para 12 of 29/8/08 minutes</b>  <i>Secretariat to liaise with NWRWMMG to confirm venue for next meeting.</i> This had been actioned.</p>	
5	<p><b>Waste Programme Steering Group Report (includes Strategy Delivery Programme Update and Strand Reports)</b></p>	
5.1	<p>Stephen Peover confirmed that he was attending the meeting today in his capacity as Chair of the Waste Programme Steering Group (WPSG). Since the last SWB meeting there had been two meetings of the WPSG. In future it was proposed that the WPSG would meet a few weeks in advance of each SWB meeting and provide a report to the Board along the lines suggested in Paper SWB 1(3/2008). He indicated that he did not propose to go through today's report in detail but rather would take matters by exception. A major concern for the WPSG across all the strands was resources. The main points he highlighted from the report were as follows:</p> <p>(a) Waste Prevention strand - due to policy decision made in June 2008 on waste charging the WPSG had agreed to look at alternative approaches to charging that might prevent waste arising. New milestones /targets have been set due to this different approach.</p>	

	<p>(b) Recycling and Recovery strand – a key issue is the absence of technical support. It is hoped that DOE Climate Change and Waste Management Division will secure two additional scientific staff early in the New Year to help with this work.</p>	
<p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>(c) Waste Planning strand – good progress is being made on the infrastructure projects. The Minister noted some slight slippage of progress on the NWRWVG and SWaMP2008 infrastructure procurement projects and asked if there were any concerns over the time delays. Eamon Molloy advised that NWRWVG had no concerns on the slippage and aimed to advertise in the EU Official Journal in January 2009. Graham Byrne confirmed that SWaMP2008 had experienced some delay as a result of the decision to form a body corporate but matters were moving forward now and they aimed to advertise in the EU Official Journal in April 2009.</p> <p>(d) Legislation and Enforcement strand – good progress on all projects. An update on the legislation projects is provided at Section 3 of the report. This will be refreshed on an annual basis unless there are significant developments in the interim that need drawn to the attention of the SWB.</p> <p>(e) Learning and Communications strand – this would be dealt with under today’s agenda item 6 paper.</p> <p>Councillor Shaun Gallagher agreed that the format and detail of the report were fine. Local Government would have a serious concern over the red status for staffing and budget, especially on the Learning and Communication strand, and would help with any bid for resources to offset this situation.</p> <p>Stephen Peover stated that WPSG are focusing attention on resources and the impact this has on progress with strand projects.</p> <p>The Minister asked if all members were content with the format, actions and recommendations in the report. Members agreed.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Update report on Learning and Communications</b>	
6.1	<p>Paul Simpson spoke to Paper SWB 2(3/2008) highlighting the six actions at Para 2 for immediate attention.</p> <p>An underlying problem was insufficient staff and programme money. In relation to staffing it was intended to transfer £500k from DOE Local Government Division to provide 11 additional staff into those strands that were failing.</p> <p>On programme money he recalled the questions raised by members at the previous Board meeting on the potential use of money from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme or from reallocating part of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund (SWIF) to progress learning and communications.</p> <p>He advised that SWIF was specifically granted by the Executive for infrastructure. DFP have said that only costs directly related to capital infrastructure can be charged to SWIF. Some elements of communications relating to procurement of infrastructure fall into this category and can be paid for from the Fund.</p> <p>The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme monies are part of the Northern Ireland Block and as such cannot be ring-fenced for learning and communications.</p>	

6.2	<p>Any further funding must be bid for through the normal bidding process and the initial scoping work for such a bid will be a task for the communications/PR agency that DOE would aim to appoint in the New Year. They would also develop a communications action plan. This work will then be taken forward by an in-house Information Officer. The Division has also secured £75k to cover short-term learning and communications deliverables up to March 2009.</p> <p>Councillor Gallagher stressed that a message of encouragement must go out to the public to recycle. The Wake up to Waste Campaign had increased recycling rates in the past and it was crucial that we build on that success. Paul Simpson said the Department would be keen to work with Local Government on the key messages needed as soon as additional resources come on board in the New year.</p>	
7.	<b>Report from the Waste Infrastructure Programme Board (WIPB)</b>	
7.1	<p>Alan McVicker spoke to Paper SWB 3(3/2008). The main points he highlighted from the report were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Progress with projects - arc21 to enter ISOS phase of tendering process in January 2009. NWRWMG aim to go to the market in January 2009 with SWaMP2008 aiming for April 2009.</li> <li>(b) State Aid issues - DOE has developed a rebate mechanism framework for using the SWIF which will not distort the market and all bids will be assessed on a 'like for like' basis. A lot of work is underway to deal with the practical administrative issues associated with this framework.</li> <li>(c) Vires issues – Consultation on the Local Government (Contracts and Compulsory Purchase) Bill was now underway. .WMGs will be able to express their views on the proposals and the Department will then decide how best to proceed.</li> <li>(d) Gateway Reviews – recent Gateway review of NWRWMG project had gone well.</li> <li>(e) Planning issues – a WIPB planning sub-committee has been set up to ensure that key planning issues and timescales are kept in focus. The first meeting of the committee will take place later today.</li> <li>(f) Lessons learnt trip – a recent trip for the WMGs to Local Authorities in Cheshire and Derbyshire had received very positive feedback and would help projects in Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>	
7.2	<p>On the subject of Vires John Quinn explained it would be the preference of local government for issues such as guarantees, warranty and indemnities to be taken forward in the Local Government (Contracts and Compulsory Purchase) Bill. The Minister advised that amendments could be introduced at the Committee Stage in the light of comments received during consultation, and he encouraged arc21 and the other WMGs to make their views known.</p>	
7.3	<p>Eamon Molloy felt that direct engagement was required with the markets to gauge their reaction to the rebate mechanism and the complexity of the process. Denis McMahon noted that the issues which needed to be addressed in developing the funding mechanism were not unique to Northern Ireland and that, in the current banking environment, more authorities across Europe will be seeking to use</p>	

	<p>capital payments as part of funding packages. He said that he had been encouraged at a recent meeting organised by Martin Darcy with the European Investment Bank by their view that this is a workable mechanism and he said that he planned to continue to work closely with the WMGs to flesh out the details for the market as their procurement processes are progressed. John Quinn confirmed that arc21 is currently working closely with the Department on this issue in taking forward its procurement.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Recycling Position and Update from Waste Management Groups</b>	
8.1	<p>Local government members expressed concern that the current economic climate has meant a decline in the market for recycled material. A fall in the value of recyclables can also impact on district council finances. The Waste Management Groups agreed the market was vulnerable at the moment with certain waste streams affected more than others. The higher quality of paper collected in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK has helped maintain a market for waste paper. The support of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in considering permitting an application for increased short-term storage for recyclables was welcomed.</p>	
8.2	<p>Councillor Gallagher said that an important message we need to convey to the public is that the waste separated out for recycling is not going to landfill. The Minister agreed and suggested that the DOE Press Office arrange an early meeting with local environmental journalists to brief them on this issue and try and combat any possible negative media coverage. It was agreed that it would be useful for Councillor Gallagher, Karen Smyth and officials from the Waste Management Groups to attend such a meeting if available.</p>	<p>DOE Press Office to arrange meeting with local environmental journalists to brief them on current recycling position</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Revised Waste Framework Directive</b>	
9.1	<p>Wesley Shannon spoke to Paper SWB 5(3/2008). He advised that the revised Waste Framework Directive, which had come into force on 12 December 2008, was an issue that the SWB and the Waste Management Groups needed to consider carefully. The Paper set out the main changes introduced by the revised Directive namely, a clearer definition of waste; criteria for determining when certain wastes have been recovered and are no longer waste; the formal recognition of the priority order of the 'Waste Hierarchy'; and the setting of statutory targets for household, construction and demolition waste.</p> <p>Local government members expressed concerns over the ability for NI to meet the target for construction and demolition waste. It was agreed that the Department would prepare an Information Paper for the next SWB meeting on how the reuse, recycling or recovery of construction and demolition waste would be moved forward to meet the new statutory target. The NIEA will contribute to the paper.</p>	<p>DOE to present Information Paper at next SWB meeting on construction and demolition waste</p>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Any Other Business – Bryan Gregory's resignation / new Independent Member</b>	
10.1	<p>On 15 May 2008 Dr Bryan Gregory, an Independent Member of the SWB, tendered his resignation and this has been accepted. Ursula Walsh, a lecturer in Environmental Health and Built Environment at</p>	

	the University of Ulster has been invited to join the Board as his replacement.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Date and Venue of Next Meeting</b>	
11.1	The next meeting will be held on Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2009 at Armagh District Council offices.	