

# WASTEDATAFLOW NORTHERN IRELAND USER GROUP MINUTES

MEETING HELD Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Magherafelt District Council offices, 50 Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt

## Attendees:

Michael Lavery **ML** (Antrim BC),  
Lynsey Daly **LD** (arc21),  
Clive Catterson **CC** (Ards BC),  
Gary McKnight **GMcK** (Ballymena BC)  
Nigel McKeown **NM** (Ballymoney BC),  
Brendan Murray **BM** (Belfast CC),  
Alison Curtis **AC** (Castlereagh BC),  
Jonathan Wilson **JW** (Coleraine BC),  
Mark McAdoo **MM** (Cookstown DC),  
Paul Topley **PT** (Craigavon BC),  
Caroline O'Donnell **CO'D** (Derry CC)  
Anthea Owens **AO** (Dungannon & South Tyrone BC)  
Elaine Smith **ES** (Larne BC),  
Tara Cunningham **TC** (Newry & Mourne DC),  
Lisa Mayne **LM** (Newtownabbey BC),  
John Murtagh **JM** (Magherafelt DC)  
Peter McCoy **PMcC** (North Down BC)  
Yvonne Lecky **YL** (Strabane DC)  
Liz Drew **LDW** (SWaMP)  
Adrian Fitzpatrick **AF** (EHS)  
Claire O'Neill **CO** (EHS)

## Apologies:

Maud Finney – Banbridge DC  
Tim Smith – Castlereagh BC  
Stephen Gracey – EHS  
Gavin Mannix – Fermanagh DC

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

CO welcomed everyone to the meeting and as there were new members everyone introduced themselves.

## 2. Minutes of last meeting

### *Actions from previous meeting:*

CO informed the group that 23 out of 26 district councils had reported best value indicators to DoE Local Government Branch for 2006/07 despite there being no mandatory requirement to do so. Most of the performance indicators regarding waste were to do with costs. EHS had prepared a paper on the cost kpi's and had passed it onto Environmental Policy Division. EHS are currently awaiting feedback on this so guidance can be issued to councils. There may be some uncertainty over this with RPA etc. The cost kpi's are due to be reported by the end of August via WasteDataFlow. Some of the information could be obtained from WDF, but some information, such as from surveys, could not be derived from the information input to WasteDataFlow.

The group felt that the use of telephone calls during the validation process to clarify minor issues was a welcome development.

The group discussed issues around the reporting of WEEE. It was felt that the timeliness of the reports was improving as the contract had developed, although concern was expressed by the group about the lack of data available on a site specific basis and the actual tonnage which was being reprocessed. CO felt that if the information was coming back from Geodis that would be adequate for councils in the reporting of final destinations as the reprocessing and export of materials should be regulated by other means such as through EHS' Producer Responsibility Unit. Some members of the group felt that the information flow was dependant on the sub contractor used.

**Action:** EHS to look at position regarding reporting of WEEE, and to report back to group.

CO informed the group that the waste management groups had become more involved in the validation of returns and the roll up process following a training session held by EHS during October 2007. The group was informed that Sarah Friel was leaving the NWRWGM to take up a post with the University of Ulster. It was felt that the introduction of the e-mail alerts had helped to identify when data had been rolled up to the next part of the chain, and therefore had speeded the validation process up.

It was stated that in terms of council officers mentoring others many of the officers had their own contacts and perhaps there wasn't a need to formalise any such arrangement as there was already a lot of ad hoc communication between the groups.

CO stated that the six month BMW progress reports had been issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008 to all district councils and waste management groups.

The minutes of the previous meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007 were agreed by the group.

### 3. Civic Amenity Site Returns

CO informed the group that EHS Licensing have started to receive site returns from licensed sites. Council operated CA sites are to make their returns via WasteDataFlow. The CA site returns are currently under development with the IT contractors. CO circulated a proposal for the CA site returns which had been discussed at the last Operational Group meeting along with a screen shot of the proposed question.

Q16 would look the same as it is currently. Each council would select the relevant CA site and input the tonnages for each site. There would be extra input from district councils but the information is required as part of licence conditions, however this is the easiest way to keep the returns within one system. The CA sites are covered by Q16 for recyclables and by Q23 for disposal. In Q23 there will be a link to enter data for each CA site. An option for "Other" will be available to deal with sites currently being processed through Licensing. The information collected could be used to generate reports of the segregation efficiencies of each CA site. Extra reports could be developed if required.

A query was raised about the recording of residual waste going to dirty MRF. AF explained that the tonnage is recorded as being collected against the appropriate category in Q23 and the tonnage is recorded as being input into Q64 where the tonnage to landfill and recycling is recorded.

A question was asked when the CA site returns would be required. CO stated that it was likely to be in place for the returns due to be made at the end of August (April to June data).

It was felt that there was a potential difficulty in obtaining the data, and that a huge amount of work would be involved and felt maybe a half-way house between what was recycled and what was landfilled would be appropriate.

CO stated that the reporting would be as per the requirements of licence conditions.

Some members stated that their councils were currently able to report every waste stream from CA sites to EHS.

It was felt there could be some flexibility by using a multiplier to determine certain waste streams, and that the reporting could be as complex as one wanted to make it.

CO recognised that there could be potential difficulties where waste streams were not weighed, but felt that this could improve in the future.

Some members of the group had difficulties in getting information from contractors on a site specific basis. Some felt that it was down to the specifics of the tender and the management of the contract to get the information in an accurate and timely manner.

A question was raised regarding if the information on the return would be provided to Licensing. CO explained that it would be a “one stop shop”. The site returns would be provided to Licensing but would still be looked at on a site specific basis. The NILAS team would be auditing for tonnages to check diversion of BMW. NILAS audits are not currently done on a site specific basis.

The annual subsistence fees were determined on the basis of the amount of recyclables going through a site. Some concern was raised about the possibility of being audited twice by EHS for the same information.

**Action:** EHS to look at the categories required and the reporting of site returns.

It was felt that more work would be involved to give a break down per site, but that it was feasible to do so. Some felt that returns must reflect the minimum statutory requirements. Some members felt that if it was proportioned out it wasn't going to give any meaningful information on the efficiencies of individual sites.

The group asked if Q16 would still be required. CO explained that it would still be required to provide a collective total for all CA sites under a council's control. CO explained that there would be various options open to each council for the required licensing categories, but that it would still need to be broken down into individual waste streams to determine BMW diversion. It was explained that on some sites the waste is bulked with other sites because there is no weighbridge on site. CO stated that approximations would have to be made in the interim.

**Action:** EHS to update group on options for site returns for Q16, and Q23, which should be relatively straightforward.

#### **4. Auto upload demo**

CO gave a presentation via the WasteDataFlow test site on the functionality being developed into the system for the auto upload of data. CO explained that some councils have Excel sheets of returns from contractors and are having to collate these figures together from these for input into WasteDataFlow. This development will provide the functionality to upload these straight into WasteDataFlow via an xml generator. The functionality is still in the development stages and is currently out for testing. There would be a need to set up appropriate IT systems within councils for the uploading, and IT companies might develop software to offer to councils. This would be additional functionality within WasteDataFlow, the management of the spreadsheets would be the responsibility of the councils and subcontractors, there would be no HelpDesk support available.

The group enquired if this was still in pilot. CO explained that it was being developed. It could save time in entering data. It is only an option, and it is not recommended for keying information into Excel for upload into WasteDataFlow. Some members thought that it was something that waste software companies would link into, and offer to councils in the future.

#### **5. Reports**

AF gave a presentation on the reports that are currently available through WasteDataFlow broken down by the various devolved administrations. Although the reports for each country are similar the information obtained in the reports differs due to different definitions between devolved countries.

CO asked the group for feedback as to what reports they would like and explained that EHS had received little feedback on ideas for report development. CO sought clarification on the report suggestions that had been received from the group and suggested perhaps kitchen waste against the amount of organics collected in a kerbside scheme.

Some felt that the reports were meaningless without capture rates. CO stated that this would be soon available through the waste compositional analysis study. Waste landfilled by category (by %) was suggested as being a potentially useful report.

CO stated that a mass balance report should be available soon.

**Action:** LD has been working on a few management reports, and will send these through.

## 6. Validation

AF gave a brief presentation to the group on the validation for the most recent quarter (July to September). The validation process started around 20<sup>th</sup> November with the first data submitted to level 35. All queries had been issued by 10<sup>th</sup> December, and all validation had been completed by 17<sup>th</sup> December. The group was complimented on the efforts they had made along with the waste management groups to improve the efficiency of the validation process.

CO informed the group that a summary was being developed to highlight potential problems to users before submission to the next level.

## 6. AOB

JW asked, although outside of the scope of the current meeting, if a meeting could be facilitated through arc21 to allow district councils to discuss the workings of the WEEE contract.

CO informed the group that the updates for historical data needed to be looked at to see how the new reports affected data entered prior to 2006. It was possible that a “hardwired” solution may have to be looked at. The kpi’s relating to recycling were now available on the EHS website.

The waste compositional study will have to go to Environmental Policy Division; the study will have to be accepted as being robust before any changes to legislation can be considered.

The group enquired as to when the compositional study would be available. CO said that it should be available to all district councils within the next two weeks.

CO stated that the selection lists had been updated. A full list of all licensed sites and the most frequently used exemptions had been sent to Enviros with all licence and permit numbers. There may be potential issues when entering data for the next quarter with licences which have been surrendered or not yet processed through Licensing.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting was arranged for 11 am on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at EHS offices. Many thanks to John Murtagh for hosting the meeting.