

**MINUTES OF THE WASTEDATAFLOW OPERATIONAL GROUP
MEETING HELD 6th December 2006
13:00 Room 7B ASHDOWN HOUSE, LONDON**

Attendees:

Jane Hinton (JH)	Defra ESI	Silvia Cagnoni (CK)	SEPA
Elly Watson (EW)	Defra ESI	Sophie Easteal (SE)	GLA
Nigel Naisbitt (NN)	Enviros	Abigail Foster (AbF)	Welsh Assembly
Gary Armstrong (GA)	Enviros	David Greenfield (DG)	East Sussex
Kate Thompson (KT)	Enviros	Roy Probert	Council of Swansea
Heather Barker (HB)	EA	Tina Benfield (TB)	CIWM
Keith Rogers (KR)	WIP		
Francis Clephan (FC)	Hampshire	Apologies:	
Caroline Hawkins (CH)	EA (Wales)	Colleen Kennedy (CK)	SEPA
Adrian Fitzpatrick (AF)	NI EHS	Heather Barker (HB)	EA

1. Minutes from last meeting

No one had any comments to make regarding the minutes from the last meeting.

2. Progress report

(i) England

Response rates 2006-07: Q1 2006-07 deadline was 30th September. To date 389 returns have been received (98.9% response rate) and Enviros have validated 359 of these to Level 35.

Quarter 2 2006-07 deadline is 31st December. Currently 82 returns have been received, 42 of which have been validated through to L35. A reminder email was issued by Enviros at the end of November.

Calls to the helpline: The helpline has received an average of 150-200 calls per month. The BVPI report that is now available online has meant that LAs are interrogating their data more thoroughly so this could explain the increase in the number of queries.

Communications: a quarterly newsletter has been sent to LAs in the UK and is available on the website. It is also due to be sent to external users next week (see annex of the monthly report for a list of external users).

- **Action 1: Scotland, Wales NI to provide additional external contacts for distribution list as per email sent by Amanda Norris (Enviros) 27th Novmeber.**
- **Action 2: Enviros to move the newsletter so that is not under the England subheading as the newsletter is relevant to all UK users.**

EA & LATS 2005-06: The EA have released the final 2005-06 LATS retirements figures on 16th November an annual report. This coincided with the release of the Municipal waste statistics for England.

EA & response rates 2006-07: A total of 77 out of 121 (disposal) authorities were issued with predicted outturn figures at the end of November. These authorities have been rolled up to level 40 in WDF. Twenty-nine LAs did not meet Q1 deadline so were not provided with a prediction. Twelve LAs submitted data at L30 but had not reached L35 by end of November so were not provided with a prediction. There were also 3 LAs with outstanding LATS issues which are being dealt with by Defra policy colleagues so the EA did not provide predictions to them.

FC asked the EA when the LATS trading register will be closed so LAs can trade their surplus 2005-06 allowances. JH informed the group that there is an IT bug that needs fixing as currently the register cannot be closed until all 121 LAs have finalised their reconciliations.

- **Action 3: JH to liaise with Defra colleagues responsible for the LATS trading register to ensure they are appraised of the issue.**
[Actioned 6th December]

Two new members of staff have joined the EA LATS team and are currently being trained.

DG informed the group that some LAs he has spoken to were not happy with the tone of the EA report and they felt that the presentation of the figures did not reflect the purpose of the LATS trading scheme. For example many LAs could be landfilling over 100% of their landfill allowance which is fine provided they have purchased allowances to cover this.

- **Action 4: PM to feedback comments to the EA LATS team.**
[Actioned 11th December]

(ii) Wales

Response rates 2006-07: One LA still has not submitted data for Q1. Generally the data is being completed ok however there are still some guidance issues with the MRF questions.

CH and AbF went to visit Enviros to discuss the reports that are required for Wales. The online summary sheet will be similar to the England online summary sheet and it will include the mass balance calculation but a few adjustments will be made to the headline figures. Wales will also be producing reports for the NAWPIs using similar reports as the England BVPI reports.

(iii) Northern Ireland

NI carried out advanced report training for senior district council officers in each of the three regional waste management groups during November. The feedback was positive and managers now know how to get more out of the WDF system.

NI also gave a presentation to SEPA on 24th November regarding the auditing of data for NILAS.

NI issued reconciliations to DC's for the 1st scheme year (05/06) on the 23rd November. Municipal derived compost tonnages used as daily cover material were excluded from diversion figures for the last quarter of 05/06. A valid transfer of 699 tonnes was received by EHS from Armagh and City District Council to Fermanagh District Council. All authorities were within their allocation for the year.

Response rates 2006-07: 25 DC's had submitted quarterly data for July to September to meet the 30th November deadline. EHS sent reminders and have notified Environmental Policy Division who will decide whether DC's who have not met the submission deadline will be fined.

EHS will also be looking at the possibility of opening up a selection of the Scottish questions to NI authorities.

NI reports – the BMW report for NI has been revised and sent back to Enviros. The report is needed in time for January so they can issue six month progress reconciliations.

➤ **Action 5: GA to update AF on the status of report 36.**

(iv) Scotland

No update from Scotland.

3. Feedback from user Groups

There was no further feedback regarding the User Groups since the last Operational Group meeting.

4. Discussion of Development Programme (refer to the Gantt chart circulated)

The development paper which was discussed in the last Operation Group meeting was circulated to the WDF PMB who have approved the development items listed in the paper.

AbF informed the group that the Mass Balance report for Wales (similar to the mass balance report for England UAs) is a priority item.

➤ **Action 6: AbF to send GA the amended report so it can go live as soon as practically possible.**

Item 5.10 Update selection lists – AbF asked what the hold up is? GA informed the group that this has been a resource intensive job as the EA data currently has to be manually matched to the destinations in the WDF database. It was hoped that this process will become more automated as now the destinations in the EA destination list will have unique permit numbers which can be matched more easily using a lookup function.

AbF pointed out that some sites may have more than one permit number so the assumption that Enviros were working under might not hold true. GA & KR agreed that this could pose a few problems but there should only be a small number of sites

with more than one permit number so it is hoped that the impact on the quarterly updates will be small.

- **Action 7: GA to re-evaluate the solution for updating selection lists in the future.**

KR informed the group that the EA list currently uses three databases that hold the information that is required. One possible option for England and Wales would be to date the destination lists directly from the datahub (which receives quarterly updates) and update this information directly to WDF.

- **Action 8: KR to provide GA & JH with example of destination data from the hub.**
[Actioned 7th December]

AF informed Enviros that the NI licensing sites and exempt sites are available in their website and are updated on a quarterly basis but they are in pdf format. Enviros require the data in excel (or similar) format.

- **Action 9: AF to investigate whether the information is available in a suitable format and to liaise with Enviros to agree a template of what is needed.**

FC pointed out that it is important that LAs are informed when the updates to the destination lists are made to avoid possible confusion for data entry staff.

Item 5.5.1 Report Assessment – there are two elements to the report assessment development item:

- i. Evaluation the report functionality we want to be using within WDF.
- ii. Reviewing the content of the existing reports.

Regarding the functionality of the reports, AF highlighted the value of the PDF reports in that they display dates and times of when the reports have been run and also they are read-only so it protects the integrity of the reports when they are sent to external bodies.

GA confirmed that this functionality could also be matched in the Excel reports if the evaluation of the report functionality favours this reporting method.

Each Country is at a different stage of element (ii) above:

- NI do not need to review their reports but there is still an issue with the BMW report 36 (see section 2iii of the minutes).
 - Scotland are at the early stages of report development and need to assess existing reports for other countries and develop their own report definitions ready for Enviros in the New Year.
- **Action 10: EW to send SC definitions of the advanced Crystal reports for England and the BVPI reports/c-variables.**

[Actioned 8th December]

- Wales need their BVPI reports to go live early next year.
- **Action 11: Each country to provide Enviros with what is required for their reports by the end of December.**

SE asked whether the C-variables are currently held in the database so can be downloaded in the CSV output option. GA informed SE that they are currently not available as they are stored in a different section of the database but Enviros and Broadskill will be looking at ways of displaying the C-variables.

- **Action 12: GA to explore the different methods of displaying C-variables as outputs from WDF.**

5. Review of Questions for 2007/8 reporting

JH suggested that the group look over the question set common to all countries during the meeting and any review of country-specific questions be done separately and fed back at a later date.

Below is a list of questions which the group decided need to be either changed or reviewed for 2007/8. Changes to text are highlighted in red and underlined.

Annual questions

Q3 Text changed to: No. of premises receiving a regular 'residual' waste collection service.

- Define help text guidance to clarify what's reported.

Q8 Participation rates for the kerbside dry recyclable and green waste collections.

- Consider including options for more collection schemes – possibly make the question a free text field.

Q20 Total quantity sent for recycling and composting

- JH suggested that this question was not needed as the information can be derived from quarterly question Q19 – so suggested deleting the question completely. AF informed the group that this question was used for validation purposes in NI so they need it to be kept in. Possibility to remove for England/Wales/Scotland but keep in for NI?

Q21 No. of home composting bins distributed by LA (broken down by composter type)

- It may be necessary to open this question up for Wales.
- **Action 13: AbF to feed back to the group early next year whether this question will be required for Wales.**

Q29 Type of organisation contracted for non-household waste & Q30 Type of organisation contracted for recycling & composting services

- These questions are useful but pursue with WIDP as the question text might need amending/extending.

Q31 What was the net cost of household waste collection? & Q32 What was the net cost of waste disposal?

- This data should match exactly what LAs enter in their Revenue Outturn (RO5) forms.
- Some data fields of the financial questions should be automatically calculated to avoid data errors and reduce the burden on LAs entering data.

Q36 Total number of other waste awareness & educational initiatives implemented during the current year.

- It was suggested that it is better to enhance the guidance for each awareness/initiative rather than adding additional categories.

Waste Collection questions

Q4 No. of households by residual waste containment method.

- JH asked why this question (and others like it) were on a quarterly basis rather than an annual basis. DG informed the group that these questions were originally designed like this so that new collections schemes which had been introduced part way through the year could be tracked.

Q5 No. of households by dry recyclables collection method.

- TB asked how LAs should complete this question if they have alternate weekly collection schemes – the drop down box only provides options for weekly/fortnightly etc. GA informed the group that it is possible to add an additional row to allow more than one frequency to be recorded but the impacts of making this system change would have to be assessed.
- The group agreed that clearer guidance for alternate collections should be issued to assist LAs to complete this question correctly.

Q21 No. of home composting bins distributed by LA (broken down by composter type).

- The data quality for this question is often poor as LAs can mis-interpret the guidance. One option would be to delete the column of data that causes confusion so that the 'number of additional bins offered' can be calculated manually rather than LAs having to enter the information.

Q10 etc. Tonnes of material collected for recycling via difference collection schemes.

- 31 material types were originally based on EWC classification. To change one or any of the material types may be disproportionately costly in the long term.
- It was suggested that the 'other material' category and associated comments could be assessed to see whether there are frequently occurring additional categories.

Q20 Change question text: What is the total quantity of materials LA sent to ~~brokers~~ re-processors? Remove term 'brokers' where it appears in Q20.

Q23 Details of other wastes collected for disposal (residual waste not collected for recycling)

- Remove the last category 'Other collected waste' as other waste should either be reported in 'Collected household waste: other' or 'Collected non-household waste: other'.

Waste Disposal questions

Q57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63 etc. Change question text from disposed to 'managed/treated'.

Q26 Change question text: No. of fridges/freezers ~~disposed~~ of 'collected' by your authority.

SC asked Enviros how these question changes will impact on the validation spreadsheet Scotland have created from the CSV download. GA confirmed that any changes made to the question set will have an impact on the CSV download and it is necessary to engineer the validation spreadsheets so they are more robust and resistant to changes to the CSV download output.

Any further changes to the question set should be emailed to EW (Cc'ed JH) by COP **Wednesday 13th December.**

- **Action 14: Defra will then circulate proposed summary of changes/investigations for action by Enviros.**

6. AOB

7. Next meeting: 21st March 2007.