

**MINUTES OF THE WASTEDATAFLOW OPERATIONAL GROUP
MEETING HELD 29th March 2007
13:00 Room 4 ASHDOWN HOUSE, LONDON**

Attendees:

Jane Hinton (JH)	Defra ESI
Elly Watson (EW)	Defra ESI
Gary Armstrong (GA)	Enviros
Kate Thompson (KT)	Enviros
Rosaleen Ball	East Sussex
Alan McCoy (AM)	Cardiff CC
Francis Clephan (FC)	Hampshire
Caroline Hawkins (CH)	EA (Wales)
Claire O'Neill (CO'N)	NI EHS
Colleen Kennedy (CK)	SEPA
Abigail Foster (AbF)	WAG

Apologies:

Nigel Naisbitt (NN)	Enviros
Heather Barker (HB)	EA
Tina Benfield (TB)	CIWM
Keith Rogers (KR)	WIP
Sophie Eastal (SE)	GLA

1. Minutes from last meeting

Outstanding action 13: AbF reported back to the group that there have been no further developments regarding home composting so she is unable to say, at this point, whether Q21 will still be required.

- **Action 1: AbF will have a better idea by August/September time of what questions Wales will require on home composting for the 2008/9 reporting period so she will feedback to the group then.**

Outstanding action 5: GA will liaise with CO'N regarding report 36 – this will be picked up as part of the review of the NI reports.

JH informed the group that Gary Armstrong is attending this meeting in his new role as Project Manager of WDF having taken over from Nigel Naisbitt.

2. Progress report**(i) England**

Response rates 2006/7: Q3 deadline is the 31st March and to date, Enviros have received 255 returns so they are expecting a heavy load on the system over the next few days. The flow of Q3 returns has not been as high as it usually is in the month before a deadline. Enviros are not entirely sure why this is but it may be that LAs have other priorities owing to the fact that the 31st March data submission deadline coincides with the end of the financial year.

Two LAs in England have not entered data for Q1 and 3 have not entered data for Q2.

Training: regional training sessions were held in London, East Midlands, and Nottingham during March and Enviros are currently liaising with Defra to develop a training program for 2007/8. On-line web conferencing is also being explored.

Communications: the Spring newsletter went to LAs and was posted on the website with contributions from all countries. The group agreed that this was a smooth process and the new format of the newsletter was a large improvement.

Guidance/fact sheets: Enviros are currently producing a fact sheet to aid LAs in England when completing information for the annual questions set. They are also looking into producing a fact sheet on WEEE - where to record waste from electrical, electronic equipment in WDF.

CH informed the group that Wales have produced fact sheets for Welsh LAs but these have been LA specific. CH will look to see whether any of the guidance issued is generic and can be developed into/included in a fact sheet.

- **Action 2: members of the group to provide any ideas for additional fact sheets topics to KT.**

(ii) Wales

Response rates 2006/7: currently validating Q3 data.

CH and AbF have attended a waste road show where Fran Lowe from the EA issued guidance on MBT. CH and AbF organised small break out sessions for LAs to discuss WDF: many of them offered thanks for WDF and they thought it was a useful tool for reporting waste data.

(iii) Northern Ireland

Response rates 2006/7: Q3 data was due at the end of February. There were 3 late submissions with 1 return still outstanding.

Validation of green waste remains an issue and NI will be carrying out audits which will resolve this. One issue that LAs have raised is how do they know the true final destination of the waste? It is often difficult for LAs to know where their waste, which as been processed e.g. at a transfer station/MRF, ends up. The group agreed that a fact sheet could be produced, with input from the EA, on why LAs have to report final destination and the best way of obtaining this information to enter into WDF.

- **Action 3: KT to include final destination of waste as a fact sheet topic with contributions from EA.**

AM informed the group that LAs find it difficult to find the destination from the ones offered on WDF, often the LA only has an invoice from the waste contractor from which they have to identify the destination.

JH informed the group that the destination list is intended to be updated on a quarterly basis. In reality there is a time delay between receiving the list from the EA and upload into WDF as this information has to be cleaned etc. Currently, Defra are exploring using the WasteData Hub to provide more timely and efficient upload of destinations to WDF.

GA informed the group that they have included the WM license number in square brackets at the end of each destination in the drop down menu to assist LAs with finding the destination in WDF.

(iv) Scotland

There has been a delay in receiving Q1 data due to the new system in place. SEPA are working closely with the LAs to answer issues they have raised.

SEPA have not finalised their online summary report. There was an outstanding issue with MBT and the summary report is now with Julian Fox (Enviros). Once the online summary sheet has been implemented, this should improve data quality and reduce the validation process.

SEPA have created a check list for LAs which sets out the major data cross-checks that are needed to ensure data accuracy. This, along with guidance and a letter to each Chief Officer in Scottish LAs, will be issued shortly. Scotland are utilising the existing guidance fact sheets that England have produced but there are some difference between the way England/Wales report data in WDF compared with Scotland. JH acknowledged this but suggested that differences in guidance between countries should be minimised wherever possible.

SEPA will be exploring the use of SPlus a statistical software package to validate the Scottish data. The package will produce key statistics from the CSV downloads so the returns can be validated.

3. Feedback from user Groups

England: the England UG met again for the fourth time on 7th March. Enviros gave presentations on recent improvements to WDF functionality and future items of development. JH outlined what the EA will be doing as part of their LATS audit. A LA representative from Bedfordshire CC gave a presentation on 'working with 2-tier authorities' which was well received and highlighted the problems LAs encounter obtaining data from their contractors and management of data within 2-tier authorities. Afternoon breakout sessions provided LAs the opportunity to discuss WDF annual questions, where they go for help and reports. Full details of the WDF England UG can be found on the WDF website under the 'Project Management' menu.

Wales: the UG met two weeks ago and covered various data entry issues.

AM queried the guidance regarding apportionment of co-mingled material sent through a MRF and how can an LA be sure that the material tonnage figures from a MRF entered in WDF are accurate? JH informed AM that wherever possible, actual tonnages figures by material type should be estimated based on compositional analysis by the authority or MRF provider. Where this information is not available, the table in the WDF guidance manual (section 3 - entering data) can be used as guidance for apportioning tonnage outputs from the MRF into individual material types when the authority has no documented study of their own to draw on.

The issue was raised by Rosaleen Ball regarding stock-piling of recyclate material from the point in time from where it was 'collected' (i.e. WDF Q10 etc) to the point where it was 'sent for' recycling (i.e. WDF Q19). How should LAs report be recording

this information in WDF? There has always been an issue regarding how to report material which has been stock-piled (both recyclate and residual waste) and the group agreed that a separate discussion was needed to look into this issue in more detail, from the perspective of each country, and a guidance fact sheet could be issued to ensure consistency of advice to LAs.

- **Action 4: England, Wales, Scotland, NI to consider the issues they have regarding LA stock-piling of waste and how they currently advise LAs to enter this information in WDF. Then share with the group with the view to aid further discussion.**

NI: currently NI do not have a user group. NI have a Data Taskforce which covers to waste data issues. The members of the taskforce are senior officers, therefore C'ON will be considering setting up a UG for NI.

4(a) Discussion of Development Programme

Should be read in conjunction with the development programme paper; only substantive discussion & action points are outlined here.

Development Item	Status
5.2 Mass balance report	<p><i>Wales:</i> the mass balance report is currently on the test site and the Welsh UG have come back with some comments/suggestions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 5: AbF to liaise with Enviros to ensure completion. <p><i>NI:</i> Enviros (Julian Fox) has sent through details of the mass balance equation. C'ON said that this looks slightly different to how NI calculated BMW to landfill last year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 6: C'ON to test the mass balance calculation (accessed via the test site) and liaise with Enviros in order to proceed with development.
5.3 Queued processing of data	It is now working ok after a minor problem but Broadskill do not anticipate this problem occurring again. As a precaution, they have ensured that RH is available during every reporting deadline in case the problem persists.
5.5 Reports	<p>5.5.2 EA reports: these have now been completed but only National Level users have access to these reports and currently they can only be run for authorities in England.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 7: RH to make these reports available for Welsh authorities [Actioned 30th March].
5.6 Quarterly question management	<p>The question management facility has been tested on the test site and Defra have provided feedback to Broadskill who have refined the functionality accordingly. This will allow LAs to exclude questions which are not applicable to them. This functionality will go live on the 10th April and LAs will be sent an informative email and guidance note on how to use this new functionality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 8: Devolved countries to let RH know which questions in WDF would be mandatory to authorities in their countries? Likely to be Q3 (annual), Q4, Q19, Q23.
5.7 User feedback on	The specification for this item of work is currently with the development team. There will be differences between countries regarding the text in

submission	<p>the email and when the email is sent out i.e. which data submission level in WDF should trigger the feedback submission for different countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 9: Broadskill to inform EW when this development item is ready for testing. ➤ Action 10: C'ON to provide what text will be required in the emails sent to DCs.
5.9 Expansion of Q51-65	<p>The group agreed that the option to develop Q51-65 so that LAs can report information on more than 2 transfer stations should go ahead. This work will impact on reports but this should be addressed when the reports are reviewed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 11: Broadskill/Enviros to proceed with this item of development provided it does not impact on the PI reports for Wales. ➤ Action 12: JH to inform Broadskill of the max number of transfer stations LAs will need to report information for by Wednesday 4th April.
5.15 Review of questions set for 2007/8	<p>The question set was reviewed in the last OG meeting. The group agreed that any changes to the text of WDF questions can be implemented for 2007/8 reporting period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 13: Enviros/Broadskill to amend question text following the outcome of the question review (see document circulated to Enviros by EW on 8th March). <p>England have decided to drop questions 20 (annual recycling tonnages) and 36 (waste campaigns) from the annual question set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 14: Wales, NI and Scotland to review the annual question set and Enviros/Broadskill know by Wednesday 4th April.
5.19 National Access database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action 15: Broadskill to import the Welsh data, status, group tables in the 'master database' which was sent by EW to GA on 30th January. It contained basic queries for Wales to modify and build on – delivery date May/June.

There was further discussion regarding who should test and sign-off general system development items. Wales, NI and Scotland agreed that they were happy for Defra to test and sign off general (*i.e.* not country specific) items of work.

4 (b) Review of WDF Reports

The Group agreed the recommendation of the reporting review carried out by Enviros/Broadskill, *i.e.* to produce future reports in Excel (as per the England BVPI reports). Benchmarking and trend facilities would still be available and the benchmarking reports would not be restricted to only 4 LAs, the reports could run as many LAs required. These reports would also be available to public access users where data have reached the appropriate National level.

- **Action 16: GA to send a screen dump of what the report template screen will look like.**

The WDF reporting launch page: LAs can run reports from the launch page where they can select the type of report, number of authorities, reporting periods. The LA

can also select a report template which will allow for different versions of the report e.g. data tables only, data and chart etc.

CH suggested that we need to flag up to others that we are developing the reports in WDF to ensure there is not a duplication of effort and LAs do not work in parallel to produce the same type of reports.

There are 3 scenarios for the existing advanced/analytical reports (*i.e.* those available via the benchmarking/trend menu option screen):

- (i) Existing Crystal report definitions are correct, therefore do not need changing
- (ii) Amendments needed to existing Crystal reports, therefore the report will be replaced by the new Excel reporting method, creating or using existing C-variables as appropriate.
- (iii) Development of a new report – any new reports will be developed in the new Excel reporting function, creating or using existing C-variables as appropriate.

What about the Basic reports?

Initially the group agreed that these could remain in the Crystal format as they do not need changing however with the update of Q51-65, some of the basic reports will need to be amended.

Broadskill/Enviros need to consider how to manage launching of reports of different formats (Crystal, Excel) in WDF and whether it is feasible to do this from the same screen, for different user groups (LA, GOs, Public).

The Flow diagram in Annex A highlights the process and stages involved in development of the reports. This model also holds for any other type of system development.

6. AOB

JH asked Wales whether they will be publishing quarterly WDF statistics as National Statistics? AbF said that they will be publishing figures on a rolling year basis which will include adequate footnotes regarding 'p' provisional data, 'r' data revised etc.

7. Next meeting: 20st June 2007.

Annex A: The Process and Stages involved in development of the reports. This model also holds for any other type of system development.

