

Recycling - The State of the Nation

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What we have done in Wales over the past five years

- Produced a waste strategy suited for Wales (*Wise about Waste*, 2002)
- Sought to manage material resources and waste materials in a sustainable manner for environmental, economic and social benefit - the so-called triple bottom line
- Built a partnership of stakeholders across economic sectors and professions



So how good is performance in Wales?

- In 2000, when I became Head of Waste Policy, local authority recycling performance was measured in terms of household recycling rates.
- The highest rate in Wales was 21.2% and the lowest was 2.6%. Only five authorities were in double figures and five were below 5%.



Performance over the past five years

- In 2003/04, the first waste strategy target of 15% combined recycling and composting was met across Wales as a whole, with 13 authorities on more than 15% and 9 authorities on less than 15%
- The overall national recycling/composting rate was 16%, up 3% on the previous year



Performance over the past five years - 2004/05

- The municipal recycling/composting rates for 2004/05 will be released on December 16th 2005
- Indications from the authorities suggest that 2 will be above 30%, 2 between 25% & 30%, 5 between 20 & 25%, 10 between 15 & 20% and 3 below 15%. (Unconfirmed figures.)
- The annual increase over 2003/04 will probably be around 3%



The Landfill Allowances Scheme in Wales

- The Landfill Allowances Scheme in Wales started in October 2004. Following the excellent monitoring by the Environment Agency it has been confirmed that all 22 local authorities in Wales met their LAS targets.
- Future targets are challenging but achievable. We do not expect any authorities to fail to meet their LAS targets this year



Summary up to 2005

- To summarise progress to date:
 - Massive increase in resources
 - Good progress towards recycling/composting targets
 - Good start to Landfill Allowances Scheme
 - Better data management (WasteDataFlow)



Issues for the future (1)

- We will not have access to the levels of funding that we would all like to see - so we have to optimise expenditure
- We need to see increased co-operation between local authorities on matters such as procurement
- We need to see greater co-operation between waste management and economic regeneration functions



Issues for the future (2)

- We now have good municipal waste data management systems for tonnages and will need to develop similar for costs
- Reuse, recycling and composting will remain our favoured options for managing waste - however, we recognise that for the foreseeable future we will have a significant residual waste mass: what should we do with this?



The use of energy from waste facilities is consistent with 'Wise about Waste' (1)

- 'Wise about Waste': "Achievement of these targets will not avoid the need for a significant amount of residual waste to be dealt with using techniques such as ... EfW"
- EfW should be considered only if it:
 - "does not inhibit increased recycling and composting"
 - "includes combined heat and power wherever practicable"



The use of energy from waste facilities is consistent with 'Wise about Waste' (2)

- Obtaining energy from rubbish can assist in replacing fossil fuel useage
- Energy from waste reduces both emissions of methane to atmosphere and leachate that may threaten groundwater
- We must ensure that energy from waste is carried out at a level that does not cap recycling and composting



Forward with optimism

- After five years in this post I am pleased at the progress that has been made and I'm confident that in future we shall move much closer to sustainable waste management
- Provided that we remain true to the Assembly's sustainable development duty and to the principles of 'Team Wales' we shall succeed in becoming a world leader in waste management



Thank you!

- Thank you for listening - any questions?



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