

18 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

18.1 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT HERITAGE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In its 'Statement of Strategy 2003 – 2005' the Department of Environment and Local Government (now Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government) states its Mission Statement as:

"To promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life through protection of the environment and heritage, infrastructure provision, balanced Regional development and good local government".

In line with this overall mission, the DEHLG includes a number of objectives and strategies which include:

- To promote and protect a high quality natural environment, protect human health and secure the integration of environmental considerations into economic and sectoral policies
 - To provide and maintain policies, programmes and a legislative framework for the protection and, where necessary, improvement of environmental media and the satisfactory management and reduction of waste
 - To provide policy leadership and legislative framework for the development and management of investment programmes in water, waste water and waste management infrastructure, and pursuing complementary policy initiatives, including producer responsibility initiatives and application of the polluter pays principle, to meet environmental and development needs
 - Promoting a partnership approach among the economic sectors, social partners, and non-governmental organisations to key environmental policy and sustainability issues through *Comhar* and other inclusive initiatives such as Local Agenda 21
- Developing and overseeing implementation of initiatives to prevent or minimise waste in the context of *Preventing and Recycling Waste: Delivering Change*, including a new grant scheme to support greater reuse and recycling, further producer responsibility initiatives (building on the success of REPAK) and additional environmental levies following those implemented successfully in respect of plastic bags and landfilling operations
 - To encourage and support the use of public private partnerships within the local government sector as a way of delivering infrastructure and quality public services in a timely and cost effective manner.

18.2 EPA

The EPA has a wide range of statutory duties and powers under the Environmental protection Act. In addition, the capacity of the EPA in relation to enforcement has been enhanced in the Protection of the Environment Act, 2003.

The responsibilities of the EPA in relation to waste management include:

- Formulation of National Hazardous Waste Management Plan
- Publication of National Waste Database
- Licensing of large-scale waste management facilities
- Enforcement of Waste Licences
- Promotion of environmental best practice through Cleaner Greener Production Programme
- Auditing and reporting on the performance of local authorities in the discharge of their environmental protection functions in relation to waste management
- Assisting local authorities to improve their environmental protection performance through the establishment of an enforcement network to promote information exchange and best practice, and by the provision of appropriate guidance.

18.3 REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The Regional Waste Management Office was founded to facilitate and coordinate the efforts of the partner Local Authorities in implementing the objectives and meeting the targets of the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Regional Waste Management Plan and to facilitate, where possible, the efforts of industry in prevention, minimisation and production of waste in the Region.

The office is staffed by a Regional Waste Co-ordinator and Regional Waste Minimisation Officer who are supported by one technical staff member and one clerical staff member.

The role of the Regional Waste Management Office include the following:

- To Coordinate in partnership with the four member Local Authorities, the implementation of the objectives set out in the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Regional Waste Management Plan and to ensure that the targets set out in the Plan are achieved within the specified dates
- To foster improved linkages between local authority departments within each local authority in the Region in order to meet the Plan targets.
- To foster community awareness of waste management issues in association with the Environmental Awareness Officers in each of the member Local Authorities
- To proactively promote prevention, minimisation, re-use and recycling of waste in association with industries, businesses, Repak and other Agencies, through the Regional Waste Minimisation Adviser
- To assess, issue and review waste collection permits within the Region
- To establish single-issue task groups on issues such as the management of construction and demolition waste, education and awareness and waste collection permits and enforcement
- To co-ordinate the application for grant assistance for national waste prevention and awareness projects or schemes.

18.4 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Historically, the emphasis within Local Authorities has been on collection of waste. With the introduction of the Waste Management Acts 1996 to 2003, the roles and responsibilities of Local Authorities have been expanded to include:



Waste Planning:

- Formulation of Waste Management Plans with regard to prevention, minimisation, collection, recovery and disposal of non-hazardous waste
- Provision of segregated collection and bring systems
- Planning for new facilities including: bring banks; waste recycling centres; materials recovery facilities; transfer stations; green waste composting and biological treatment facilities; thermal treatment capacity and; landfill facilities
- Ensure that new developments include provision for the management of waste during construction and operation.
- The Local Authorities will promote good waste management arrangements in the design of new apartment complexes, housing developments and shopping centres and other commercial/industrial developments

Waste Prevention:

- Outline measures and best practice for prevention and minimisation of waste

- Promotion of general awareness in relation to waste management
- Lead by example through working towards in-house Waste and Environmental Management Systems
- Introduction, where practicable, of Green Procurement Policies.

Waste Regulation and Enforcement

- Introduction of bye-laws in relation to the presentation of waste
- Ensure that waste is managed as outlined in the Waste Management Plan
- Issue and enforcement of Waste Permits
- Issue of and Enforcement of Waste Collection Permits
- Enforcement of Regulations regarding the movement of waste
- Collection and reporting of waste statistics
- Enforcement of requirements laid out in Waste Management Plan
- Enforcement of Producer Responsibility Regulations
- Operation of Local Authority waste facilities in line with certificate of registration and licence requirements
- Consistent enforcement of waste legislation across the Region

Waste Infrastructure

- Provision of Local Authority waste infrastructure
- Facilitation of private infrastructural projects
- Use of DEHLG or EU grant aid system to promote new recycling facilities
- To investigate/facilitate new waste management technologies
- Provision and facilitation of waste infrastructure using partnership and social economy models.

18.5 PRIVATE WASTE SECTOR

The private sector has become increasingly involved in waste management in the Region.

In line with this increased participation, the private sector must also acknowledge its roles and responsibilities in relation to waste management, which include:

- Implementation of the requirements of the Waste Management Plan in line with the principles of the Waste Hierarchy
- Ensure that waste does not cause environmental pollution
- Ensure that all waste activities are adequately licensed or permitted
- Compliance with the requirements of all waste permits/licences
- Use of Best Available Technology
- Explore and introduce innovative waste management technologies
- Co-operate with Local Authorities in relation to the provision of waste collection services in peripheral areas
- Assist local authorities to reduce the amount of uncollected waste in the Region
- To promote education and awareness regarding waste management.

18.6 BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The business and industrial sectors contribute significantly to the overall amount of waste produced in Ireland. As waste producers, these sectors must take responsibility for the production, handling and ultimate treatment of waste produced on their premises and for waste generated as a result of products they place on the market. Roles and responsibilities include:

- To implement best waste management practice in the workplace with the emphasis on waste prevention
- Segregate waste that is produced into appropriate streams
- To adhere to the Producer Responsibility initiative, for example, Repak
- Promotion of awareness and best practice amongst employees
- To implement green purchasing policies
- Implementation, where appropriate, of Environmental Management Systems

- To ensure that all waste collectors have the appropriate waste permits/licences
- To explore ways of reducing waste, in the form of packaging, that is passed on to the consumer
- Liaise with Local Authorities and private waste sector in relation to provision of recycling parks for SMEs
- To ensure that all movements of waste, within Ireland and abroad, have the appropriate documentation
- To encourage and support initiatives and research into waste management by third level institutions.

18.7 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Educational Institutions at primary, secondary and third level play an important role in the promotion of good practice in relation to waste management. Students and teachers can lead by example and disseminate good practice throughout the wider community. Roles and responsibilities include:

- Participation in Green Schools Programme
- At third level: conducting research and development, in participation with industry, into innovative waste reduction, recycling and recovery technologies
- Implementation of in-house waste reduction and recycling programmes
- Dissemination of information to the wider community.

18.8 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Local Authorities wish to engage with local communities regarding the provision of waste management infrastructure and education on waste prevention, minimisation, recovery and recycling. This is a two-way process and in which voluntary and community groups have the following responsibilities:

- To co-operate with social economy measures

- To seek Local Authority, EU and National funding for waste minimisation and recycling projects, which will, in turn, create employment in the local area
- To participate in Tidy Towns competitions
- To discourage littering and undertake 'clean-up' days
- To liaise and co-operate with the Environmental Awareness Officers in the Region
- To take responsibility for the upkeep of bring banks in local communities through initiatives such as the 'Adopt a Bank Scheme'.

18.9 THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Each member of the public, as a producer of waste, has a duty to handle waste responsibly and to ensure that any waste produced does not cause environmental damage. Additional responsibilities include:

- To reduce the amount of waste being generated in the home by buying products with less packaging and buying in bulk
- Participate in waste collection schemes where they are available
- Segregate recyclable waste for collection or take to recycling centres or bring banks
- Segregate organic waste for composting
- Avoid burying or burning of waste
- To ensure that waste is presented for collection in the manner required by the Local Authority or waste operator
- To ensure that all waste collectors have a valid waste collection permit.