

12 WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The Waste Management Plan for the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region (2001) outlined waste stream targets to be met by 2013. In order to achieve these targets the Plan envisaged the implementation of a fully integrated waste management system to include recycling, thermal treatment and landfill options. This chapter will analyse the progress made towards meeting the targets set out in the 2001 Plan, the positive additions to waste infrastructure in the Region as well as the shortcomings thereof.

Waste Management Practice in the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region has evolved over the duration of the last plan, with the collection area, and the number of households provided with segregated household waste collection, now significantly expanded.

The collection of waste is for the most part carried out by permitted waste collectors with a small percentage, approximately 18% (excluding bring bank and Recycling Centres), being collected by the Local Authorities.

Since January 1st 2005 waste collection services have been obliged to operate under a use-related (pay per weight/volume/lift) system.

12.2 WASTE MANAGEMENT DATA

Data on waste arisings and disposal is now collected from all operators of licensed facilities and all permit holders in the form of an Annual Environmental Report (AER), and collated by each Local Authority. Compilation of this data is undertaken in order to give an estimate of the amount of waste generated, treated, recycled or disposed of within the county. Further analysis yields Regional figures.

Each Local Authority, on receipt of the AERs from permitted collectors and facilities, is responsible for collating the data and submitting an annual report to the EPA in the form of a 'National Waste Database Return'.

This report follows a prescribed format and details all waste arisings and movements within each Local Authority's functional area.

The importance of this data is paramount to successful waste management planning both annually and for the duration of each Waste Management Plan. Underestimated or overestimated figures, or erroneous data, can have a subsequent effect in terms of the infrastructure provided.

Limerick County Council is the lead authority in the Region and as such is responsible for issuing waste collection permits and recording and maintaining all records on AERs submitted by permitted waste collectors. The successful outcome of this role is highly dependent on an unambiguous, efficient, reporting system operated by all participating Local Authorities and complimented by a robust recording system. It is considered that the current system could be improved and this area should be reviewed by the participating local authorities with a view to standardising the way that figures are collected and reported.

In particular, commercial and industrial wastes need specific mention. These waste streams are not sufficiently and effectively reported, and this is an area that will require significant attention over the next plan period.

12.3 2001 PLAN INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reported, and in some instances estimated, data on waste arisings the previous Waste Management Plan made recommendations for the expansion of the existing waste infrastructure in the Region, particularly targeting provision of recycling facilities.

Specifically, the plan recommended the provision of:

- 260 Bring Banks: 215 had been provided by the end of 2004
- 12 Recycling Centre Facilities: 13 Recycling Centres in operation in 2006; one under construction and one other to commence construction

- Thermal Treatment Capacity for 255,000 tonnes per annum: little progress made
- 1 Biological Treatment Facility: Currently, no facility has been provided although there is private sector interest in developing such a facility; 1 public facility is under construction
- 1 Central MRF and 2 Transfer Stations: Currently, there are 3 privately operated MRFs; 9 Waste Transfer Stations servicing the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region.

12.4 DEFICIENCIES IN WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The 2004 rate of household and commercial recycling, at 36.5% has meet the 2013 target of 37% ten years ahead of schedule. The current household recycling rate of 13.9% is just below the 2004 national average of 19.5%. In each Local Authority area good progress has been made in the provision of dry recyclables infrastructure, particularly with regard to bring banks, transfer stations and MRFs.

In addition, there has been a significant increase in population in the Region in recent years that increases the demand for more infrastructure.

Considering the hierarchy in terms of waste management, it is possible to review the current infrastructure and highlight the deficiencies that currently exist.

Prevention: No physical infrastructure required (see Section 4)

Minimisation: No physical infrastructure required (see Section 4)

Reuse: Waste Repair/Reuse centres were recommended in the last plan, and have not been provided. The Region has advanced the provision of a reuse website which is expected will be operational in 2006. This will provide the means for both householders and businesses to participate in a reuse programme. The website is being developed as part of a special

Regional waste awareness campaign, for which part funding is provided by DEHLG.

Recycling: The number of bring-banks provided in the Region since the adoption of the last plan has been exemplary and the Region is well on its way to achieving the recommendations of the 2001 Plan with regard to household and commercial waste recycling. However, the increase in population in the Region would merit an ongoing review of the infrastructure provided, and consideration should also be given to extending this service to less well-served rural areas in order to increase the opportunity to recycle. An equally important aspect to providing waste infrastructure is servicing the infrastructure. It is common to see bring banks full and recyclables and other materials dumped adjacent to these facilities because of an infrequent collection service and no alternative facilities nearby.

The number of Recycling Centres currently operating in the Region is as envisaged in the 2001 Plan. Thirteen facilities are operational and two are under construction. It is important that progress continues to be made on expanding these sites in order to provide outlets for the public to recycle, particularly with the introduction of pay by weight charges provoking a rethink on individual waste producer habits.

Thermal Treatment: At present, there is no existing infrastructure within the Region for the recovery of energy from waste. The 2001 Waste Management Plan identified the need for thermal treatment capacity for 255,000 tonnes of waste per annum, but little progress has been made in developing this infrastructure, other than a technical review of the available technologies.

Disposal: Disposal, the least favoured option for waste management, is currently well served in terms of infrastructure, with three landfills currently operational within the Region. It is estimated that there is a remaining capacity of 2.5 million tonnes in the Region.

The system operated at most landfills is one whereby waste accepted for landfilling is weighed and a charge per tonne is levied. Members of the public as well as commercial hauliers have access to the landfill and both are subject to the weighing system. This option is used by a number of householders

throughout the Region, but there are deficiencies in the system, particularly in terms of recording the origin of the waste. Also, the distinction between commercial and household wastes would not always be apparent under this type of system, leaving the system open to misuse.

12.5 PRIVATE/PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The current waste management infrastructure throughout the Region is shared between public and private bodies.

All landfill sites in the Region are owned and operated by the Local Authorities, which are responsible for running costs and cost relating to remediation and aftercare. The majority of Recycling Centres are also owned by the County Councils, although the situation may change as more private companies become involved. Privately operated facilities will recoup costs from entry fees where applicable and the sale of the recyclable materials.

There are a number of privately owned and operated waste transfer stations and Recycling Centres in the Region. In addition, there are several planning applications with local authorities and waste licence applications have been lodged with the EPA.

It is an essential element of the Plan to ensure adequate infrastructure as part of the Waste Management Plan for the Region. The Limerick/Clare/Kerry Local Authorities recognise the value of private investment in realising this aim.

It is also recognised that the private sector will be critical players in the development of larger

facilities such as biological and thermal treatment for the Region.

12.6 COMMUNITY ISSUES

The National Waste Policy recognises that “mobilisation of public support and participation” is necessary for a successful strategy.

The level of intercommunication between Councils and the public has increased significantly since the implementation of recommendations made in the last plan. The recruitment of Environmental Awareness Officers as recommended in the previous Plan has greatly improved communications between the councils and community groups, improved awareness of the ordinary householder and assisted in improving environmental education in schools.

National Initiatives such as the environmental plastic bag levy, awareness campaigns, in particular the Race Against Waste campaign, have also been very successful in showing the public what significance their role is in modern waste management.



Community run resource centre