

## PART 2 - PRESENT POSITION



## 4 WASTE PREVENTION AND MINIMISATION

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall approach to the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Waste Management Plan follows the Irish and European Waste Hierarchy of:

- Prevention
- Materials recovery (recycling/recovery)
- Energy Recovery
- Safe disposal including landfill.

Progress in waste minimisation and prevention over the life of the 2001 Plan has been positive. However, waste prevention and minimisation will be a key target area for improvement, particularly with the development of national programmes and initiatives whose underlying goal is to decouple waste generation from economic growth.

### 4.2 2001 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Waste Management Plan, adopted in 2001, recommended a number of measures in order to promote prevention and minimisation under the following headings:

- Household/Community
- Industry and Commerce
- Local Authorities.

### 4.3 PROGRESS TO DATE AND INITIATIVES

Waste Prevention was in its infancy as a waste management option regionally and nationally during the period 1997/1998 when the individual waste strategies were being developed. Most Local Authorities at the time had very little experience of waste prevention. Similarly there were no clear national definitions of prevention, nor any coherent guidelines for Local Authorities. The Plan outlined a number of ambitious and potentially

effective measures for prevention/minimisation for the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region over the Plan period. There has been positive progress made in this area over the course of the Plan since its adoption.

The **Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992** gives the Agency powers to promote the carrying out of environmental audits, and specific industries are required to obtain an **Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC) licence**. The principal objective of the IPPC Licensing system regarding waste is to secure from licensees, annual improvements in waste minimisation. The information obtained through the annual report to the EPA must include amounts of raw materials usage; waste produced; off-site and onsite recovery.

#### 4.3.1 Household/Community Level

Environmental Awareness Officers (EAOs) have been appointed in each of the Local Authorities, with a positive impact on waste minimisation and prevention on their primary focus group – the public. The EAOs are responsible for raising awareness among the public on best practice in waste management. Awareness & Education programmes have been developed and are being implemented in each Local Authority.

To date, waste minimisation initiatives in the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region have primarily been aimed at diverting waste from disposal by encouraging the use of dry recyclables collection, bring banks, Recycling Centres and the provision of compost bins at a reduced price to encourage diversion of organic waste. Promotion of home composting has added value in terms of waste prevention.

The EAOs have played a crucial role in the progress achieved:

- 60 waste related projects have been awarded funding through the Local Agenda 21 Environment Partnership Fund
- 323 schools in the Region are registered with the An Taisce Green Schools Programme
- 117 schools have achieved Green Flag Status

- Visits by schools and groups to waste management facilities
- Almost 16,000 home composting units have been sold through the Local Authorities since 2001
- 9 Real Nappy promotional events have been held
- Encouraging/advising on the establishment of Waste Clubs among businesses
- Speakers at various seminars (e.g. Race Against Waste Business seminars)
- Talks and presentations to community groups and development associations
- 18 Environmental Awareness Weeks undertaken across the Region, bringing local press and media on board
- Re-use events held across the Region (including reusable nappy events)
- Regular radio slots advising householder how they can prevent waste
- Campaigns in local press and newsletters to tie-in with national campaigns (e.g. composting sessions)
- The waste collectors have yet to undertake adequate education programmes regarding segregated collection of household waste.



#### 4.3.2 Industry and Commerce

As stated in the recommendations of the previous Plan a Regional Industrial Waste Minimisation Officer (RIWMO) was appointed for the Region in 2003. This position, along with the Regional Waste Coordinator, one technical staff and one clerical staff member, make up the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Regional Waste Management Office.

The RIWMO has been very active and has engaged to a high level with the industry and commercial sectors. Consequently many of the policies laid out in the previous plan with regard to waste prevention have been and are being implemented.

- Site visits to approximately 150 companies and major waste producers in the Region
- Regular contact with the major stakeholders in the Region (REPAK, IBEC, Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Ireland etc)
- Organisation of Seminars on Innovative Business Waste Management, Waste Management for Smaller Businesses, and Waste Prevention by Design
- Promotion and setting up of waste clubs for business groups
- Compilation of information for Cleaner production and best practice examples
- Initiated the development of a waste prevention mentoring system whereby larger best practice companies advise and support SMEs - the project is receiving funding under the EPA's Cleaner Greener Production programme
- Active involvement in Business Networks regarding waste prevention
- Presentations at business association seminars and workshops
- Preparation of literature such as Managing Waste in Business Newsletter and the Waste Prevention Guide.

#### 4.3.3 Local Authority

Within the Local Authorities themselves, the Environment Departments and especially the EAOs, have been active in the promotion of better waste management approaches, in particular the promotion of higher recycling levels. However no Local Authority has reported moves towards the implementation of a fully documented environmental management system, even one that is informal or non-certified.

All four Local Authorities recycle much of their waste from their civic offices, yet there is a lesser emphasis on prevention. Some initiatives and awareness raising regarding double sided photocopying, reusable

envelopes, reuse of paper cups and scrap paper are evident. Prevention initiatives in other sections of the Local Authorities have been minimal. Some green procurement is carried out, in particular regarding the purchasing of recycled paper and toners, as well as double sided photocopiers and printers. However this is mainly in the Environment Departments and is not formally or systematically applied throughout the Local Authorities. EAOs are actively promoting such a policy but it requires support and drive from management.

#### 4.3.4 National Programmes and Initiatives

A number of national initiatives have been introduced since the publication of the previous Limerick/Clare/Kerry Waste Management Plan. Amongst these are:

- The Environment Partnership Fund
- Environmental Research Technological Development and Innovation Research Programme (ERTDI)
- Cleaner Greener Production Programme
- National Waste Prevention Programme (NWPP)
- Enforcement Legislation
- Race Against Waste.
- National Construction and Demolition Waste Council (NCDWC).

The Environmental Partnership Fund (Local Agenda 21) promotes sustainable development by assisting small-scale environmental projects at local level, which involve partnerships between Local Authorities and local community groups, schools and environmental NGOs.

The ERTDI Research Programme is conducted by the EPA and supports R&D projects through grants. The Cleaner Greener Production Programme would fall under this programme, with a specific focus on cleaner more sustainable production in small to medium enterprises.

In April 2004, the Minister for the Environment Heritage and Local Government launched the National Waste Prevention Programme. The Programme is being implemented by the Core Prevention Team in the EPA and aims to deliver substantive results on waste prevention and minimisation.

The introduction of enforcement legislation and Pay by Use waste collection services over the period 2004/2005 had a positive effect on waste prevention and minimisation at every level, as householders and industry attempt to reduce waste costs by reducing their waste volumes.



#### 4.3.5 Race Against Waste Campaign

The Race Against Waste campaign has gathered momentum and support since its launch in October 2003. Local Authorities have engaged well with the campaign together with using the Race Against Waste branding. This engagement and branding should continue and Local Authorities will see benefit from the high profile advertising and media campaign.

The communications campaign consists of a number of programmes and tools, which can be used both now and in the future to target several different sectors including the householder. The website [www.raceagainstwaste.ie](http://www.raceagainstwaste.ie) and the hotline was promoted and linked through the Local Authorities as they provide relevant information for householders, businesses and others alike. The various national programmes provide a ready-made platform from which Local Authorities should benefit.

#### 4.3.6 Small Change for Businesses

The Small Change programme launched in February 2004 was developed with input from stakeholders within the SME sector and is a

partnership with the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland (CCI). The programme consists of:

- A guide – to help organisations set up a waste team, carry out a waste audits and, put a programme of action in place
- Seminars – run in partnership with local Chambers of Commerce.

*How can Local Authorities use the Small Change programme?*

- Disseminate the guide to the SMEs in their area
- Promote the Small Change programme
- Attend and present at Small Change seminars
- Organise seminars for SMEs
- Make the information available through Local Authority offices and websites.

#### **4.3.7 Action At Work (Large Organisations)**

The national Action at Work programme for larger institutions was launched early in 2005. The programme targets organisations such as the health service, third level institutes, government departments, prisons, The Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána, transport services and Local Authorities themselves and has been developed with representatives from these sectors. The programme is similar to the Small Change programme and consists of:

- A guide – to help organisations set up a waste team, carry out an audit, put a programme of action in place
- Seminars – These seminars are sectoral in nature and have been organised together with various representative organisations to bring the information to their members / staff.

*What can this programme do for Local Authorities?*

This programme provides a source of information and direction for larger

organisations. This programme provides tools that Local Authorities can use to promote proper waste management among larger organisations in their area.

*How can Local Authorities use this programme?*

- Disseminate the guide to the various organisations in their area
- Promote the programme through the various Local Authority networks
- Work closely with organisations in the area such as those outlined above
- Participate in sectoral/cross-sectoral seminars organised through the Race Against Waste and other networks
- Work with the County Development Board in an effort to target these organisations

#### **4.3.8 Tidy Towns – Race Against Waste Module**

The Race Against Waste module of the Tidy Towns competition was first introduced for the 2004 competition. It was an optional pilot component of the competition for 2004 and will stay in this format for the 2005 competition with a view to integrating it into the competition proper following that. It aims to put across the message about working together as a community, with each sector targeting their own areas and working with other sectors.

The criteria for the competition are based around the various sectors of the community:

- Schools – number of Green Schools
- Businesses – number implementing Small Change
- Residents – household composting, recycling
- Institutions – implementing programme for action.

*What can this programme do for Local Authorities?*

The Race Against Waste Tidy Towns module has provided an outlet for collective community responsibility in relation to waste. Due to its

competitive nature, this module encourages sectors in the community, to come together. The local Tidy Towns committees now have an added responsibility to support the work of the Local Authority and provide a vehicle for spreading the message of proper waste management among the community.

*How can Local Authorities use this programme?*

Local Authorities should work closely with Tidy Towns committees to:

- Locate facilities such as bring banks and recycling facilities
- Set up community composting schemes
- Encourage local schools to participate in the Green Schools initiative.

Encourage local businesses to participate in the Small Change programme and Action at Work programme for larger organisations.



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