



Northern Ireland Audit Office

# Northern Ireland's Waste Management Strategy

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

HC 88, Session 2005-06 23 June 2005



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Northern Ireland Audit Office

Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General  
for Northern Ireland

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# Northern Ireland's Waste Management Strategy

This report has been prepared under Article 8 of the Audit (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 for presentation to the House of Commons in accordance with Article 11 of that Order.

*J M Dowdall CB*  
Comptroller and Auditor General

Northern Ireland Audit Office  
22 June 2005

# Abbreviations

BMW	Biodegradable Municipal Waste
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DOE	Department of Environment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EHS	Environment and Heritage Service
EMS	Environmental Management Systems
EPG	Environmental Policy Group
EU	European Union
GB	Great Britain
NI	Northern Ireland
NSMDG	The North-South Market Development Steering Group
PAC	The Public Accounts Committee
SDS	Sustainable Development Strategy
WCL	Waste and Contaminated Land
WM	Waste Management
WMIF	The Waste Management Industrial Fund
WML	Waste Management Licensing
WMP	Waste Management Plan
WMS	Waste Management Strategy
WRAP	The Waste and Resources Action Programme

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Photographs on pages 12 and 27 courtesy of Environment and Heritage Service

Photograph on page 33 courtesy of Friends of the Earth

Photographs on pages 14, 23, 28 and 31 courtesy of Scottish Environmental Protection Agency

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# Introduction and Executive Summary

## Northern Ireland's Waste Management Strategy

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### Introduction

1. An estimated 1.3 billion tonnes of waste is disposed of in the EU each year (3.5 tonnes per person). Northern Ireland's (NI's) total waste generation is estimated at 20 million tonnes per year, of which 15.6 million tonnes are agricultural waste (predominantly organic), just over 1 million tonnes are municipal waste, 635,000 are commercial and industrial waste and 45,000 tonnes are hazardous waste.

2. European Union (EU) waste policy is set out in the 1975 Framework Directive<sup>1</sup> (which was updated in 1991 and expanded by a series of subsequent Directives relating to specific waste streams). The Framework Directive instructed Member States to introduce a system to ensure the safe disposal of waste and to take appropriate steps to encourage waste prevention, as well as recycling and reprocessing, and to detail these measures in Waste Management Plans (WMPs). It also established a hierarchy of waste management practices.

3. The Department of the Environment (DOE) has overall responsibility for NI's waste management strategy. Environment and Heritage Service (EHS), an Agency within DOE, takes the lead in advising on, and implementing, the Government's waste policy and strategy. EHS is also responsible for the administrative and enforcement provisions of a number of regulations that place obligations on the producers, holders and carriers of controlled waste. District Councils are responsible for devising and implementing WMPs in order to establish a regional network of facilities to support a reduction in the amount of municipal waste sent for disposal and to increase the use of recycling.

4. DOE has not established a precise figure for the total expenditure on waste management by the Department and Councils, but estimates that it is between £90 million and £120 million annually. Domestic waste disposal costs alone come to £60 million, and this is expected to double by 2020, at current growth rates. Furthermore, initial estimates for capital expenditure on major new infrastructure are around £270 million over the next five years. In addition, significant expenditure will also be incurred by stakeholders, including producers and consumers.

5. NI's waste management performance ranks poorly in comparison with other countries, with one of the lowest recycling performances in Europe and most waste being disposed of in landfill sites. The series of sub-directives emanating from the Framework Directive set very challenging targets for NI. The most significant is the 1999 Landfill Directive, which will require major improvements in waste management processes to achieve the required reduction in use of this disposal method by 2010. Such major improvements are crucial, in light of the fact that, at current rates of growth in levels of waste generation, there is a significant risk that NI's existing landfill capacity could be exhausted this year, should current planning applications for new capacity be unsuccessful, or planning decisions delayed.

6. District Councils estimate that they will have to spend an additional £50 million over the next three years in order to implement the infrastructure necessary to comply with the EU requirements. A further investment of approximately £150 million will be incurred if thermal treatment technology (including incinerators) is acquired to comply with the EU requirement to divert waste from landfill. EHS

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive of 15 July 1975 on waste (75/442/EEC).

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estimates that it will need to spend a further £25 million over the next two years to implement the actions contained in the Waste Management Strategy.

## Scope of our examination

7. Against this background, we reviewed the action being taken by DOE and EHS to tackle NI's waste problem by examining:

- the degree to which NI's legislative framework has kept pace with EU requirements;
- the comprehensiveness of NI's Waste Management Strategy;
- the extent to which the Waste Management Strategy has been implemented; and
- the review of progress to date and future improvements required.

## Part 1: Establishing the Waste Legislation Framework

8. EU member states are required to transpose Directives into domestic legislation in a manner that is in keeping with the standards being set by the EU, and aimed at meeting its targets. Lengthy delays in transposing Directives have the potential to give rise to infraction fines, where the EU penalises member states for failing to comply with transposition requirements (paragraph 1.2).

9. NI has been slow to transpose environmental Directives, sometimes doing so years after the rest of the UK. A substantial backlog developed and, at March 2002, 45 pieces of NI environmental legislation were needed to clear it, including several large pieces of waste legislation. By March 2003, the backlog was reduced to 16 and the remaining backlog was cleared in March 2004 (paragraph 1.3).

10. Bringing NI's waste management legislation into line with EU requirements is an important achievement, because the backlog posed a number of problems, such as:

- the risk of infraction proceedings for non-transposition;
- delays in implementing the required legislative framework impair the level of control and, therefore, the potential for health risks and environmental damage is increased; and
- the late introduction of legislation has also contributed to disparities in control between NI and the Republic of Ireland (paragraph 1.4).

11. The "polluter pays" principle is a cornerstone of EU environmental policy. Its aim is to ensure that those who handle or dispose of waste pay the costs arising from minimising any associated environmental damage or, if actual damage occurs, that they pay the costs of clean-up and restoration. The problem of illegal dumping of waste emanating from both NI and the Republic of Ireland has generated considerable public concern and, in 2001, EHS established a team to tackle the problem. Assuming that illegal waste generated from within NI is at least equivalent in volume to that being imported from the Republic of Ireland and, with a minimum landfill tax payment of £14 per tonne, diverting this waste to legal dumps could have increased tax revenue up to 2004 by at least £5.6 million, as well as providing the obvious environmental benefits of proper disposal (paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6).

12. The eradication of the legislation backlog over the last two years is an important step in improving waste management, as DOE is now better placed to implement new EU requirements quickly, and in line with the rest of the UK and Ireland. In doing so, it will be important to ensure that the employment of external expertise and consultants, to assist in progressing specific pieces of legislation, is

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planned and managed within a proper contractual framework that is in accordance with Departmental and DFP requirements (paragraph 1.11).

## Part 2: Developing the Waste Management Strategy

13. It is UK Government policy that sustainable development should underpin all other goals, policies and processes and, in 1999, it published a Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) for the UK. Following devolution, each regional legislature was expected to produce its own local SDS (paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2).

14. Although the NI Executive's Programme for Government explicitly placed sustainable development at the heart of its work programme and, in 2000, the Executive gave a commitment to develop an SDS, none has been finalised yet. In the absence of a NI SDS, there are currently no formal, local indicators against which to measure progress. DOE now estimates that publication may be delayed until autumn 2005 (paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4).

15. The Waste Management Hierarchy, which forms the basis of EU waste management policy, indicates the relative priority to be applied to the different methods of dealing with waste. A 2000-2003 comparison of EU member states showed that the UK's waste management performance compares unfavourably with other peer countries in Europe that have implemented enhanced waste management practices. Within the UK, waste management performance varies, with the recent statistics showing NI's performance as being poorer than England but similar to Scotland (paragraphs 2.5 to 2.7).

16. The 1975 EU Framework Directive requires all member states to prepare Waste Management Plans (WMPs) to ensure the development of an integral network of regional waste facilities, and progress towards sustainability. DOE launched the NI Waste Management Strategy (WMS) in 2000, in response to the Directive and its 1991 amendment (paragraphs 2.8 to 2.10).

17. A detailed knowledge of the nature, source and volume of output of each waste stream is an essential prerequisite for the development of a successful waste management strategy. The only waste stream for which EHS holds regularly updated data is municipal waste, which is collected by the District Councils. EHS's current estimates of NI's largest waste stream, agricultural waste (around 75 per cent of the total), are based on data collated in 2001. Agricultural waste has yet to be regulated, but EHS expects that only a small proportion of this stream will be subject to waste management licensing controls, with the rest being subject to other regulatory controls, such as those relating to nitrates (paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13).

18. The WMS sets out four primary and ten secondary targets. The NI targets mirror overall EU requirements and are geared towards compliance with the mandatory Directive targets, but they differ from those set for England insofar as they do not include specific recycling targets for municipal waste (see Figure 5). Nevertheless, in view of NI's lower starting point, and delay in implementing the WMS, the targets are likely to prove challenging (paragraph 2.16).

19. The Strategy instructed Councils to finalise WMPs by June 2001 (10 years after the EU Directive was issued). Meeting this target date was considered crucial to drive the implementation of an integrated network of regional facilities and processes to ensure that the Strategy and EU targets were met. However, no plans were produced by this deadline. The EU commenced infraction proceedings against the UK in 1998 for failure to implement a requirement for local authorities to draw up WMPs. EHS considered it essential, therefore, to complete production of the WMPs and, in December 2001, issued a direction for the final WMPs to be submitted by June 2002. The three consortia, established by Councils, produced plans by the second target date, but they did not include enough of the specific details required by legislation in relation to how waste was to be collected and disposed of, nor detailed costs and benefits of the methods proposed (paragraph 2.22 and 2.23).

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20. To supplement the WMPs, EHS instructed the consortia to submit detailed Implementation Action Plans. These were finally submitted by the third target date (April 2003), some 22 months later than prescribed by legislation. Consultants employed by EHS in September 2003 to review the Action Plans concluded that, although they provide an update of what the Councils believe is required to achieve the WMP targets, they do not provide an indication of the level of improvement that will be achieved via this investment (paragraphs 2.24 to 2.26).

21. The cost of implementing the Action Plans is borne by Councils but, to ease the burden on ratepayers, EHS grant aids a proportion of the costs. EHS's Waste Management budget has been increased to take account of grants to Councils, and its own increased staffing. However, the delay in finalising the Action Plans and subsequent implementation of what is termed the micro waste management infrastructure (such as home recycling facilities) meant that allocated funds were not expended when planned (paragraph 2.29).

### **Part 3: Implementing the Waste Management Strategy**

22. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy advocates applying sustainable development within Government through the Greening Government initiative. Since Government procurement in NI amounts to over £1,500 million per year, the potential environmental benefits to be achieved by adopting green purchasing principles are significant, and could make a substantial contribution to developing the recycling market. In the late 1990s, some progress was achieved in implementing Greening Government, and the initiative was being driven at ministerial level with the appointment of "Green" Ministers. However, the pace of implementation has slowed in recent years (paragraphs 3.2 to 3.3).

23. In Great Britain, in June 2004, the Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committed Whitehall Departments to five per cent annual increases in the amount of waste they recycle or prepare for use as compost, with an ultimate target of 75 per cent. Each Department will be required to justify publicly its actions and the timescales it sets itself to deliver the target. There are no similar targets or requirements for NI Departments (paragraph 3.7).

24. Councils' delay in producing comprehensive WMPs has hindered the introduction of networked recycling facilities and processes essential to meeting the 2005 target to recover 25 per cent of waste. Even if this target is achieved on an overall basis, it is likely that the overall performance will mask large variations between the Councils (paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9).

25. A significant obstacle to achieving sustainable waste management in NI is the lack of sufficient infrastructure to reprocess recovered goods, or a market to demand reprocessed goods. DOE and EHS are involved in a number of initiatives aimed at developing this market (paragraphs 3.11 to 3.14).

26. In 2002, DOE negotiated an all-island contract for the disposal of domestic waste fridges and freezers, on behalf of the 60 Councils and local authorities throughout Ireland, in order to assist Councils, and achieve economies of scale. However, a number of factors combined to shorten the contract period, and the successful bidder withdrew, in July 2003, just before the contract was due to be signed, and a re-tendered contract came into effect in March 2004. Many Councils stockpiled fridges while awaiting the new contract, while others disposed of them, at various prices. We estimate that the delay in putting the contract in place cost the public purse at least £0.75 million (paragraphs 3.15 to 3.17).

27. The speed with which DOE has implemented a significant volume of waste legislation in recent years has meant focussing on this aspect of its work and an inability to devote sufficient resources to issuing guidance to those affected by the new legislation. For example, EHS said that when, following the threat of infraction fines, the Special Waste Regulations were introduced in 1998 over a three-week period, the tight timescale put it under considerable pressure, as it did not have the necessary staff in place, nor sufficient time to produce the associated forms and documentation (paragraph 3.20).

28. Following the implementation of waste legislation, EHS is responsible for developing policies and procedures to ensure compliance and, where necessary, for taking enforcement action. However, EHS has been slow to finalise relevant waste management enforcement procedures, and some are still outstanding. The NI Assembly Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) report "Control of River Pollution in Northern Ireland"<sup>2</sup>, highlighted the need for clearly stated enforcement procedures, in respect of water pollution prevention requirements, that are applied fully and consistently. A related point was made by the Westminster PAC, in its report "Protecting the public from waste"<sup>3</sup>, which recommended that the Environment Agency for England and Wales should be transparent about the enforcement action it will take in response to different types of licence breaches and offences. The similarity between the scenario described in the PAC reports and the current position with regard to waste management underlines the importance of EHS having documented and effective enforcement procedures in place (paragraphs 3.21 to 3.23).

29. District Councils had responsibility for landfill sites until the Landfill Regulations (NI) 2003 passed this function to EHS in December 2003. EHS has no detailed historic data relating to all landfilled sites but, since taking over this responsibility, has been identifying between one and three illegal sites per week (paragraph 3.26).

30. A fundamental cultural shift in attitude and behaviour is essential to achieving the Waste Management Strategy's (WMS) objectives. In order to encourage this shift, EHS employed media consultants, in December 2001, to drive a £1.5 million public awareness campaign: "Wake up to Waste". In order that all campaigns can achieve their full potential, it is important to ensure that the availability of recycling facilities, and other opportunities for avoiding waste disposal, are maximised. As these improvements have progressed only to a limited degree, the success of "Wake up to Waste" may have been limited, in the short term, and will be more difficult to maintain, or expand, in the longer term (paragraphs 3.28 to 3.32).

## Part 4: Reviewing progress and designing improvements for the future

31. The Waste Management Advisory Board for NI (WMAB), whose membership consists of waste management representatives from both the public and private sectors, was formed by DOE in May 2001 as a forum for key stakeholders to advise on, and assist with, the implementation of the WMS. The WMAB was also charged with preparing a strategy progress report in 2003. Overall, the WMAB found that success so far has been limited (paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3).

32. In order that the next stage of the WMS can achieve real improvements, it will be important to put in place enhancements to the framework used in stage 1. It is essential that any future Strategy is based on a reliable assessment of the baseline position, i.e. the current waste problem in terms of nature, source, volume and rate of growth of each waste stream, and the resources available for treatment and disposal. Armed with more accurate information, EHS could more easily derive a valid estimate of the resources and facilities needed to meet EU requirements in respect of all waste streams. This would make it easier to identify the actions required to do so, to prioritise them over

<sup>2</sup> "Control of River Pollution in Northern Ireland", 3rd report of Session 2000-01 3/00/R.

<sup>3</sup> "Protecting the public from waste", 25th report of Session 2002-03 (HC 352).

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the required time frame and match them with available resources (paragraphs 4.4 to 4.5).

33. We consider that the difficulties that beset the implementation of the first stage of the Strategy should prompt a review of the responsibilities allocated to EHS and Councils, and demonstrate the need for improvements to be driven centrally. We recommend that consideration be given to alternative structures, such as:

- creating an overarching District Council Waste Steering Group with the authority to make decisions on behalf of all Councils; or
- EHS taking on the role of waste management authority for the whole of NI, relieving Councils of the responsibility for making strategic decisions and freeing them to concentrate on driving forward improvements in local delivery of waste services (paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8).

## Establishing the waste legislation framework

### NI Waste legislation is based on EU Directives

1.1 The key EU document in the waste management field is the 1975 Framework Directive, which focussed on safe disposal, and required the production of waste management plans that would encourage prevention and recycling. The Directive was amended in 1991, with the aim of ensuring the achievement of a high level of environmental protection in all matters associated with waste. Since 1991, the EU has issued a series of subordinate Directives, aimed at minimising the environmental threat caused by those waste streams posing the greatest risk, such as refrigeration equipment, batteries and hazardous waste. A list of principal EU waste management Directives is at Appendix 1.

1.2 Member states are required to transpose Directives into domestic legislation in a manner that is in keeping with the standards being set by the EU, and aimed at meeting its targets. It is UK government policy to implement EU legislation in a timely manner, and it is responsible for ensuring that all regional legislatures enact the required legislation separately, where this is appropriate. Lengthy delays in transposing Directives have the potential to give rise to infraction fines, where the EU penalises member states for failing to comply with transposition requirements.

### NI has not transposed EU Directives in a timely manner

1.3 NI has been slow to transpose Directives, sometimes doing so years after the rest of the

UK. The longest delay related to Waste Management Licensing (WML) which was transposed into NI legislation in 2003, some 10 years after the EU deadline and almost 10 years after it was introduced in GB (see Appendix 1). A substantial backlog developed and, at March 2002, 45 pieces of NI environmental legislation were needed to clear it. These included several large pieces of waste legislation relating to Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, Landfill and Waste Management Licensing. By March 2003, the backlog was reduced to 16 pieces, with a further 8 pieces already in place but requiring amendment, because of the need for “further consideration of transposition and implementation issues”<sup>2</sup>. This remaining backlog of overdue EU waste legislation was cleared in March 2004.

1.4 Bringing NI’s waste management legislation into line with EU requirements is an important achievement, because the backlog posed a number of problems, such as:

- the risk of infraction proceedings for non-transposition. This created a potential for the UK to be fined, because infraction proceedings would apply to the UK government, rather than the local Assembly. It is difficult to estimate potential levels of fines, but an economic appraisal of EHS’s proposed public awareness information campaign, conducted in 2001, estimated that fines could be around £400,000 for each day that NI was non-compliant with EU requirements. In the event, this has been avoided and the UK has not incurred infraction fines as a result of NI’s waste management legislation delays;
- most EU Waste Directives require Member States to introduce self-financing control processes to prevent health hazards and

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environmental damage. Delays in implementing the required legislative framework impair the level of control and, therefore, the potential for health risks and environmental damage is increased; and

- the late introduction of legislation has also contributed to disparities in control between NI and the Republic of Ireland, which DOE said was also influenced by the different levels of resources provided on either side of the border. The tighter restrictions on the use of landfill and a gate charge which is double that in NI may have contributed to the major inflow of waste from the Republic of Ireland being landfilled (in both legal and illegal dumps) in NI. Exporting of waste for disposal within the EU is only permitted in certain, limited, circumstances (e.g. for recycling, when the country of origin has no suitable facilities) and, consequently, there is no detailed information on the level of waste being brought into NI. However, EHS estimates that it could be in the region of 400,000 tonnes in recent years, which is equivalent in volume to over 40 per cent of NI's annual municipal waste total.

1.5 The “polluter pays” principle is a cornerstone of EU environmental policy. Its aim is to ensure that those who handle or dispose of waste pay the costs arising from minimising any associated environmental damage or, if actual damage occurs, that they pay the costs of clean-up and restoration. For example, the WML regulations are designed to implement “polluter pays” by ensuring that EHS's £1.2 million annual costs (for issuing licences to carriers or disposers of waste, and monitoring compliance with the terms of the licences) will be recovered from license fees. Although “polluter pays” requirements are satisfied by these fees, there is still a risk that EU could instigate infraction action as a result of NI's long delay in introducing the Regulations, in respect of the period during which NI was non-compliant with the EU requirements.

1.6 The problem of illegal dumping of waste emanating from both NI and the Republic of Ireland has generated considerable public concern and, in 2001, EHS established a team to tackle the problem. Although the team currently consists of only half the estimated number of staff required to cover the inspection and



enforcement of waste legislation (see paragraph 3.21), it has currently 150 cases relating to the illegal carrying and dumping of waste pending prosecution, and has undertaken 31 successful prosecutions (see paragraph 3.24). EHS does not have any data relating to the amount of illegally-dumped waste emanating from within Northern Ireland. Assuming that it is at least equivalent in volume to that being imported from the Republic of Ireland (see paragraph 1.4) and, with a minimum landfill tax payment of £14 per tonne, diverting this waste to legal dumps could have increased tax revenue up to 2004 by at least £5.6 million, as well as providing the obvious environmental benefits of proper disposal. In addition, each delivery to legal sites would provide site operators (Councils or private owners) with an extra £30 of income, from the gate charge.

### DOE has increased resources to improve the introduction of legislation in future

1.7 The Department of the Environment (DOE) recognised the need for a special effort to tackle the backlog of essential environmental legislation and, in the financial years 2001-02 to 2003-04, provided extra resources to allow faster making of legislation and to improve policy-making capacity (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: Additional funding for Environmental Protection Group 2001-02 to 2003-04**

Year	Additional Funding (£'000)	EPG staff in post
2000-01	0	32
2001-02	400	55
2002-03	500	70
2003-04	800	87

1.8 DOE said that the influx of so many new staff, many without previous experience in policy or legislation work, required an extensive training and development programme. In addition, DOE has employed external experts, on short-term contracts, to assist in progressing specific pieces of legislation. The amount spent on short-term contracts has increased over the last three years, from £26,600 in 2001-02 to £142,500 in 2003-04, and DOE anticipates that there will be an ongoing need for such appointments, in specialist disciplines, to implement further legislation in the future.

1.9 DOE is working with its GB counterpart, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to ensure that Waste Directives will, in future, be transposed in NI at a similar time to the rest of the UK. The remaining outstanding waste transposition issues apply to the UK as a whole and are being managed by DEFRA and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). These relate principally to the European Commission's view that the UK's definition of controlled waste in existing legislation is incomplete, because it excludes certain hazardous, agricultural, and mines and quarries wastes, and on-going negotiations between DEFRA and the EU regarding the definition of agricultural waste. Any changes resulting from DEFRA's discussions with the EU will require amendments to current NI legislation. One Directive (End-of-Life Vehicles) is still outstanding for the whole of the UK, and DOE said that it is to be transposed by DTI.

1.10 Having cleared the waste transposition backlog, DOE intends that its policy and legislation staff will, in future, work in specialist teams dedicated to different areas of environmental protection. These teams will work closely with their counterparts in DEFRA, and with the European Commission, to ensure that new legislation in NI transposes EU Directives fully and on time. It is intended that the teams will also monitor implementation of legislation after it is introduced, and deal with any amendments that may subsequently prove necessary, building on the knowledge and experience gained during transposition.

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1.11 The eradication of the transposition backlog over the last two years is an important step in improving waste management, as DOE is now better placed to implement new EU requirements quickly, and in line with the rest of the UK and Ireland. In doing so, it will be important to ensure that the employment of external expertise and consultants is planned and managed within a proper contractual framework that is in accordance with Departmental and DFP requirements.





# Part 2

## Developing the Waste Management Strategy

### **Sustainable Development should be the high level policy from which the Waste Management Strategy emanates**

2.1 It is UK Government policy that sustainable development should underpin all other goals, policies and processes and, in 1999, it published a Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) for the UK. The SDS provides for re-defining progress with due consideration to a high level of environmental protection and the prudent use of natural resources. The Waste Strategy for England and Wales was prepared in light of the policies set out in the SDS, and DOE said that the NI Waste Management Strategy was also developed in this context.

2.2 Following devolution, each regional legislature was expected to produce its own local SDS. Wales produced its SDS in November 2000 (the requirement to pursue sustainable development is built into its Constitution), followed by Scotland in 2002, and both report annually on progress. English regions and local authorities have their own strategies, each containing specific indicators against which progress can be measured. These indicators can be local or national, depending on the geographical area to which they relate.

2.3 Although the NI Executive's Programme for Government explicitly placed sustainable development at the heart of its work programme and, in 2000, the Executive gave a commitment to develop an SDS, none has been finalised yet. In 2002, DOE began preparing an SDS by issuing a consultation paper "Promoting Sustainable Living", but there was no further progress, up to March 2004, as all available resources were focussed on clearing the legislation backlog, to

avoid EU infraction fines. In the absence of a NI SDS, there are currently no formal, local indicators against which to measure progress.

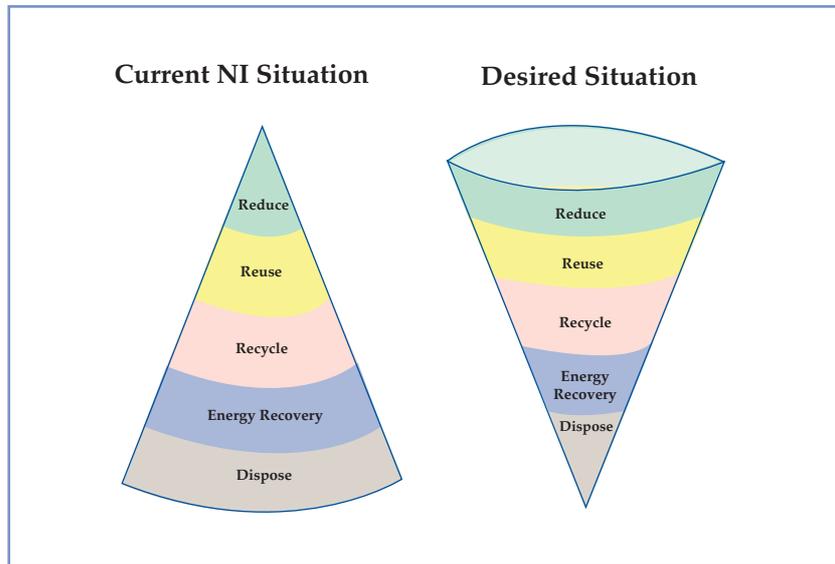
2.4 The Government's Sustainable Development Commission highlighted the absence of a NI SDS in its April 2004 report, and recommended that one should be finalised quickly. The UK SDS is currently being reviewed and a joint consultation paper, "Taking it on", by the UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and NI Administration was issued in April 2004. DOE allocated resources to the Sustainable Development agenda in April 2004 with the aim of publishing NI's SDS in February 2005, in tandem with the revised UK SDS, but now estimates that publication may be delayed until autumn 2005.

### **The EU has established a hierarchy of measures for reducing waste at source and tackling waste that arises**

2.5 The Waste Management Hierarchy (see Figure 2), which forms the basis of EU waste management policy, indicates the relative priority to be applied to the different methods of dealing with waste.

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Figure 2: Diagram of EU Waste Hierarchy



Source: EHS

Note: The first cone in the figure has the advantage of showing the more desirable options nearer its apex. Unfortunately, it also reflects the current unsustainable situation because of the proportion of its segments. The challenge is to 'invert the cone'; so that the volume of waste being dealt with at each level actually decreases towards the least desirable option.

2.6 The underlying principles of the hierarchy are to achieve sustainable waste management by:

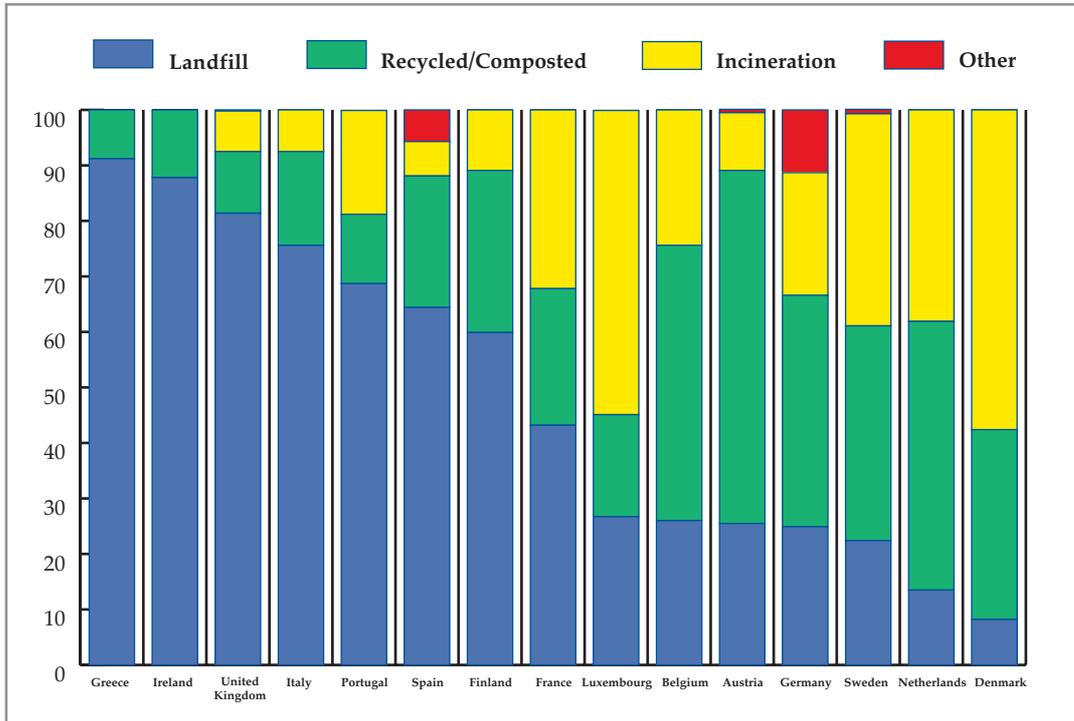
- minimising the production of waste;
- maximising the recycling or re-using of waste produced; and
- safe treatment and disposal of any remaining waste.

The EU recommends that landfilling of waste should only be used as the last option, as it can cause air, water and soil pollution by discharging carbon monoxide and methane into the atmosphere, and chemicals into the soil and water.

## NI's waste management is heavily reliant on landfill

2.7 Figure 3 compares the waste management of the 15 EU member states in the period 2000-2003. It shows that the UK's waste management performance compared unfavourably with other peer countries in Europe that have implemented enhanced waste management practices, although improvements have been made since 2003.

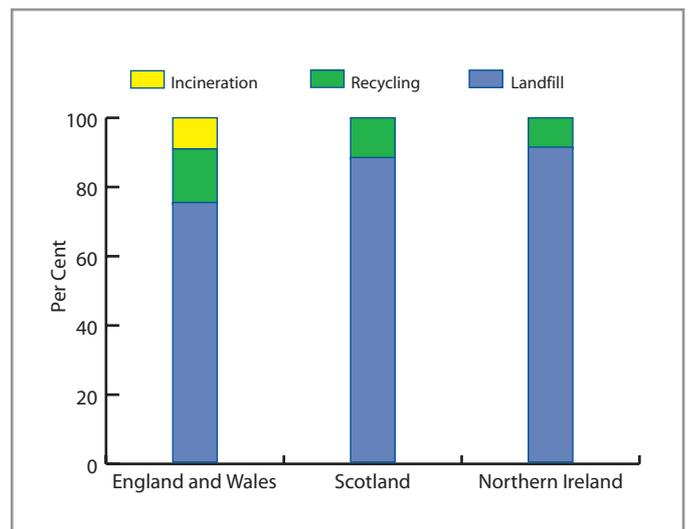
**Figure 3: Comparison of the 15 EU Member States' Waste Management during 2000-2003**



Source: Eurostat

**Figure 4: Comparison of Municipal Waste Management within the UK during 2002-2003**

Arrangements in the better-performing countries more adequately reflect EU requirements and have resulted in lower dependency on landfill and increased recycling levels. Within the UK, waste management performance varies with England and Wales performing better in both use of landfill and recycling of municipal waste (see figure 4).



Note: Northern Ireland's data relates to the 2002 calendar year

Source: EHS

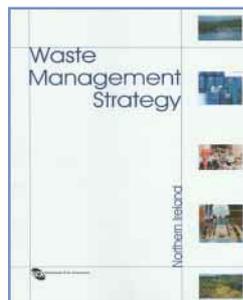
## EHS has a waste management strategy to comply with EU requirements

2.8 The 1975 Framework Directive (amended in 1991) requires all member states to prepare waste management plans to ensure the development of an integral network of regional waste facilities, and progress towards sustainability. The Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (WCL Order), which transposes most of the Framework Directive, requires the Department to produce a strategy containing its policies in relation to the reduction, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal of waste. It also requires District Councils to prepare waste management plans and to establish a regional network of facilities.

2.9 DOE's Environmental Policy Group (EPG) has the lead responsibility for setting environmental policy. However, due to its practical and policy expertise in waste management issues, the Department allocated this task to EHS, in addition to its operational responsibilities.

2.10 DOE launched the NI Waste Management Strategy (WMS) in 2000, in response to the 1975 Directive and its 1991 update, following consultation with all stakeholders involved in its implementation (including Departments, Councils, businesses and households).

The WMS conforms to the EU requirements, setting out the Department's policies and providing District Councils with a framework on which to base Waste Management Plans. Its key aim is "to achieve fully sustainable waste management", with the Department leading the way, and it was issued with the commitment to review and assess its effectiveness in 2003.



2.11 The WMS is a high-level document that does not specify in detail the actions required of individual stakeholders in order to achieve its aims and objectives. In addition, District Councils were not required to comply with the WMS aims when preparing their plans, but were required to "take [it] into account". In the event, the Plans produced by the Councils did not include details of the actions specified in the Order, and DOE requested supplementary information (in the form of Implementation Action Plans) to fill the gaps (see paragraphs 2.23 to 2.25 below).

## The shortage of reliable data on waste streams makes it difficult to produce meaningful targets or to monitor performance

2.12 A detailed knowledge of the nature, source and volume of output of each waste stream is an essential pre-requisite to the development of a successful waste management strategy. This point was underlined by consultants, employed by EHS in 2003-2004 to carry out a review of the WMS, who concluded that the limitations of current reporting systems, represented by the lack of reliable data on a wide range of waste streams, were a key barrier to the strategy's success.

2.13 The only controlled waste stream for which EHS holds frequently updated data is municipal waste, which is reported quarterly by the District Councils and represents approximately five per cent of NI's total waste. EHS's current estimates of Northern Ireland's largest stream, agricultural waste (estimated as around 75 per cent of the total), are based on survey data collated in 2001. Agricultural waste regulations have yet to be introduced (see paragraph 1.9), but EHS expects that only around one per cent of this stream will be subject to waste management controls, with the rest being subject to other regulatory controls, such as those applying to animal by-products or nitrates. EHS recognises the need to have

detailed, up-to-date, data for this stream, and is liaising with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to address the difficulties inherent in conducting agricultural waste surveys. Other waste streams, such as industrial and commercial, have also been measured using surveys (currently the only method available, because statutory returns are not obligatory). EHS acknowledges that there are errors inherent with this method and is investigating options for strengthening its statutory powers to obtain more accurate and timely data.

2.14 Under Article 44 of the WCL Order, both EHS and Councils can request waste information from any source but neither relies on this, because its effectiveness is diminished by the fact that waste producers are not obliged to maintain records. In addition, the records that waste contractors and landfill operators will be required to keep under the WML regulations and the 2004 Landfill Allowances Scheme (NI) Regulations will not be sufficiently detailed to provide the level of data needed to plan effectively to minimise waste created, or to target improvement activities.

2.15 In EHS's view, an appropriate way of ensuring complete data for each waste stream is to introduce a statutory obligation for each waste producer to keep records and make periodical returns to EHS. These returns should provide detail of the level and types of waste being produced, and disposal methods used. Such a framework would provide a more informed basis for identifying needs, designing improvement measures and setting challenging targets to make the Strategy more meaningful in the future.

### **Most Strategy targets are not mandatory and may not be met**

2.16 The Strategy sets out four primary and ten secondary targets (see Appendix 2). The primary targets are aimed at meeting the Landfill Directive targets, which set reducing levels for the amount of Biodegradable

Municipal Waste (BMW) that can be landfilled. The secondary targets are aimed primarily at waste reduction and stemming the increases in other waste streams. The NI targets mirror overall EU requirements and are geared towards compliance with the mandatory Directive targets, but they differ from those set for England insofar as they do not include specific recycling targets for Municipal Waste (see Figure 5). Nevertheless, in view of NI's lower starting point, and delay in implementing the necessary infrastructure (see paragraphs 2.19 to 2.27), the targets are likely to prove challenging.

2.17 Consultants employed by EHS to carry out the review of Phase 1 of the WMS attempted to establish success achieved so far against each target but, in many cases, found there was insufficient data available to indicate progress to date, as Figure 6 shows. (Since two of the three Council Plans only cover the period up to 2006, projections as to what infrastructure might be provided by 2010 could not be made).

# Northern Ireland's Waste Management Strategy

Figure 5: Comparison of waste targets in England and Wales and Northern Ireland

Area	England and Wales Target	Northern Ireland Target
<b>Level of Household Waste to be recovered by:</b>		
2005	25 per cent	25 per cent
2010	30 per cent (recycled)	40 per cent
<b>Level of Municipal Waste to be recovered by:</b>		
2005	40 per cent	No targets
2010	45 per cent	
2015	67 per cent	
<b>Level of Municipal Waste to be recycled and composted by:</b>		
2005	25 per cent	No targets
2010	30 per cent	
2015	33 per cent	
<b>Reduction of Biodegradable Municipal Waste landfilling from 1995 levels by:</b>		
2005	-	85 per cent
2010	75 per cent	75 per cent
2013	50 per cent	50 per cent
2020	35 per cent	35 per cent
<b>Restrictions on the amount of Industrial and Commercial Waste that may be landfilled by:</b>		
2005	85 per cent of 1998 level	85 per cent of 1998 level

Source: 2000 Waste Strategy for England and Wales and Northern Ireland's Waste Management Strategy

**Figure 6: Progress so far in achieving Primary Targets**

Target	Status	Consultants' Assessment
Recover 25 per cent of household waste by 2005	In Progress	This should be achieved (provided Action Plans are fully implemented, progress monitored and corrective action taken, where necessary)
Recover 40 per cent of household waste by 2010, of which 25 per cent shall be by recycling or composting	Pending	Too early to define progress
Reduce the landfilling of industrial and commercial wastes to 85 per cent of 1998 levels by 2005	In Progress	Unlikely to be met
Reduce landfilling of BMW to: 75 per cent of 1995 levels by 2010 50 per cent of 1995 levels by 2013 35 per cent of 1995 levels by 2020	Pending	Too early to assess progress

Source: NI Waste Management Strategy Phase 1 Review

2.18 When the Strategy was launched in 2000, none of the targets was required by statute, although landfill diversion targets became obligatory as a result of legislation introduced in 2003 and 2004<sup>3</sup>. We consider that, when targets are not obligatory, it is more difficult to sustain the momentum necessary to achieve them, because of the additional work required to persuade those affected to co-operate. We welcome DOE's undertaking to consider establishing more statutory targets as part of the review of the WMS.

## District Councils' Waste Management Plans were produced late and did not align fully with statutory requirements

2.19 The WCL Order made EHS responsible for driving waste management improvements. As Councils are responsible for collection and disposal of domestic and commercial waste, the Order gave them statutory responsibility for delivering the Strategy requirements to reduce the reliance on landfill. The Order instructed Councils to set out their arrangements for meeting the landfill targets in WMPs.

2.20 Northern Ireland is roughly equivalent in population size (1.7 million) to some English Metropolitan County Councils, and EHS acknowledges that it would have been

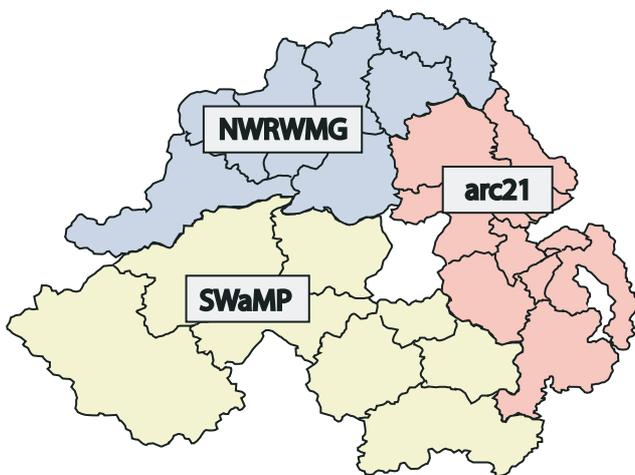
<sup>3</sup> Waste Emissions Trading Act (2003) and Landfill Allowance Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004.

# Northern Ireland's Waste Management Strategy

economically advantageous for Councils to produce a single plan. However, political sensitivities were deemed to be a major obstacle to achieving this outcome. Consequently, the WMS encouraged Councils to organise themselves into a maximum of five groups, with three eventually emerging:

- The Eastern Region Waste Management Group - 11 councils (arc21);
- North West Regional Waste Management Strategy Group - 7 councils in the North West (NWRWMSG); and
- Southern Waste Management Plan - 8 councils in the South West (SWaMP).

**Figure 7: Sub Regional Waste Planning Groups**



2.21 The urgent need to put an improved infrastructure in place, and the time lag associated with each individual council having to ratify its Group's plan, made it essential that production of WMPs should be expedited quickly, in the absence of a single plan for NI. In addition to the instructions in the WCL Order (see paragraph 2.19 above), DOE said that it also provided Councils with comprehensive guidance and helped them to develop common

chapters on Hazardous and Packaging waste. Notwithstanding this guidance, problems arose with the timely completion, and content, of the WMPs.

2.22 The EU commenced infraction proceedings against the UK in 1998 for failure to implement a requirement for local authorities to draw up WMPs. The WMS instructed Councils to finalise WMPs by June 2001 (10 years after the EU Directive was issued). Meeting this target date was considered crucial to drive the implementation of an integrated network of regional facilities and processes to ensure that the WMS and EU targets were met. However, none of the consortia produced plans by the deadline. In December 2001, EHS issued a direction for final plans to be submitted by June 2002.

2.23 The three groups produced plans by this second target date and, although they were sufficient to meet the EU Directive, and avoid infraction fines, they did not include enough of the specific details that the WCL Order required in relation to how waste was to be collected and disposed of, nor detailed costs and benefits of the methods proposed. Consultants employed by EHS in December 2002 to carry out an economic assessment of the plans, identified shortcomings. In relation to one group, they raised, "concerns over the accuracy of the costings submitted...figures would appear to be misstated in a number of areas and supporting information has not been made available to allow other costs to be properly assessed".

## Implementation Action Plans



2.24 To supplement the plans, EHS instructed the groups to submit detailed Implementation Action Plans that included budgetary and planning information which EHS could use as a basis to grant aid the infrastructure. The Action Plans were finally submitted by the third target date (April 2003), some 22 months later than prescribed by the WMS. Previous legislation requiring Councils to prepare Waste Disposal Plans had resulted in only 19 of the 26 Councils complying with this requirement over a 20-year period. In light of this earlier experience, we consider that it may have been helpful for EHS to produce a generic WMP, which the Groups could adapt for use in drawing up their individual plans. In our view, adopting such an approach may have reduced delays, enabling Councils to respond more quickly to the waste management challenges facing them, and reducing any risk of EU infringement fines.

2.25 The original Plans were radically reassessed when compiling the Action Plans, as some of the previous estimates were found to be either overstated or understated. The estimated costs for one group rose from £38 million to £59 million for 2003-06. Much of this additional cost is due to a switch from capital expenditure on providing centralised facilities, such as multi-recycling facilities and composting, to recurrent expenditure for buying in these services, and the inclusion of recurrent costs for refrigeration and End-of-Life Vehicle collection schemes, which were not considered in the WMP. The estimated expenditure in the Action Plans for the other two groups is lower than that in the WMPs, a combined £31 million compared to £40 million for the period 2002-06, due to changes in baseline assumptions, nature and scheduling of activities to be undertaken and cost assumptions.



### Consultants' Conclusions

2.26 Consultants employed by EHS in September 2003 to review the Action Plans concluded that, although they provide an update of what the Councils believe is required to achieve the WMP targets, they do not provide an indication of the level of improvement that will be achieved via this investment. The consultants concluded that, in the absence of targets, "it is not therefore possible to assess the effectiveness of the Action Plans in delivering the Waste Management Strategy targets".

2.27 The Consultants recommended that further guidance be developed, to ensure that future submissions by the Groups present sufficient detail of annual performance targets to enable progress to be measured. They also recommended that Councils should predict, on an ongoing basis, whether they are on target to meet the 2005 waste recovery targets, or whether remedial action is required. In their view, EHS should measure this progress continually, as part of the grant aid process. During our audit fieldwork (August 2004), EHS issued further guidance, to ensure that Councils' Action Plans and annual performance reports provided the necessary annual targets, and progress towards them, to enable it to determine performance achieved.

## EHS resources have been increased, but more are considered necessary to work with waste producers and to enforce legislative requirements

2.28 Since 2001-2002, staff levels in the Waste and Contaminated Land section within EHS have risen progressively, from 15 to around 100 staff at the time of our examination, with a plan to recruit an additional 70 staff. The additional staff are needed to administer and enforce the recent, and pending, legislation transposing EU Directives.

2.29 The cost of implementing the Waste Management Plans is borne by Councils but, to ease the burden on ratepayers, EHS grant aids a proportion of the costs. EHS's Waste Management budget has been increased to take account of grants to Councils, and its own increased staffing. However, the delay in finalising the Action Plans and subsequent implementation of what is termed the micro waste management infrastructure (such as home recycling facilities) meant that allocated funds were not fully expended when planned (see Figure 7).

2.30 In 2001-2002, the amount required to aid the Councils was estimated at £3.5 million, but the delay in finalising the plans impacted on their funding needs. During the last month of the financial year, EHS granted £2 million funding to Councils before the plans were finalised. We have already reported that £1.3 million issued was not spent on goods or services that were in use during the financial year, and constituted payment in advance of need<sup>4</sup>. Following this report, EHS gave a commitment that no further funding would be issued until Councils were adequately prepared to implement their plans. The grant paid to Councils during 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 was £3,844,847 and £6,147,827 respectively.

**Figure 7: EHS waste budget and expenditure 2001-02 to 2003-04**

Year	Budget	Actual Expenditure
2001-02	3,910,000	3,028,000
2002-03	9,292,000	5,324,000
2003-04	14,800,000	11,327,271

<sup>4</sup> Financial Auditing and Reporting 2001-2002 General Report (HC 551 NIA 107/02 page 123, paragraph 68).

## Implementing the Waste Management Strategy

### The Waste Management Strategy focuses on key policy areas

3.1 The Waste Management Strategy contains a high-level Implementation Action Plan, which outlines the actions required during Phase 1 (2000 to 2003) for initiating, developing and sustaining the strategy for each of the policy areas. The key themes of the first phase are:

- Greening Government - the Government to demonstrate leadership by improving its own environmental performance;
- Creating Partnerships - Councils to cooperate in the development of an integrated network of recycling, recovery and disposal facilities; and
- Mobilising Other Stakeholders - industry, public and other stakeholders to be mobilised to take an active role in achieving strategy objectives.

This part of the report examines progress on implementing the actions required under these key themes.

### Progress on Greening Government has been limited

3.2 The UK Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) (see paragraph 2.1 of this report) advocates applying sustainable development within Government through the Greening Government initiative. This initiative aims to ensure the more efficient use of resources and to make improvements by implementing Environmental Management Systems (EMS),

(see paragraph 3.6) and giving consideration to environmental issues when setting policy.

3.3 One of the most significant constraints on achieving sustainable waste management in NI is an inadequate market for reprocessed goods (see paragraph 3.11). Since Government procurement in Northern Ireland amounts to over £1,500 million per year, the potential environmental benefits to be achieved by adopting green purchasing principles are significant, and could make a substantial contribution to developing the recycling market. In the late 1990s, some progress was achieved in implementing Greening Government, and the initiative was being driven at ministerial level with the appointment of “Green” Ministers. However, the pace of implementation has slowed in recent years. DOE said that it had not made faster progress because it had to give priority to clearing the transposition backlog, and that the Greening Government challenge was for all Departments. DOE also said it was working closely with the Central Procurement Directorate<sup>5</sup> to integrate sustainable development principles into procurement practices.

3.4 In Great Britain, each Administration has Greening Government policies and guidance to ensure that consideration is given to the subsequent environmental impact when purchasing services and products. However, DOE has made little progress in this area and has yet to implement EMS and failed to meet the in-house measures contained in the WMS (see Figure 8).

<sup>5</sup> The Central Procurement Directorate is part of the Department of Finance and Personnel and is responsible for providing relevant guidance to Departments.

**Figure 8: DOE Waste Management Strategy targets**

Target Reference	Action Required
Secondary Target 3	The Department to introduce in 2002 a target for the purchasing of recycled goods
Secondary Target 6	The Department to reduce its overall paper use by 10 per cent in 2002

3.5 The DOE Board approved the Department's Waste Management Action Plan in October 2004, and DOE said it aimed to achieve ISO 14001<sup>6</sup> for its pilot EMS in April-May 2005 (see paragraphs 3.6 to 3.7). The following new targets have now been accepted:

- 50 per cent reduction in total paper consumption over next five years;
- All paper used by DOE, directly or by printers for DOE publications, to be derived from at least 70 per cent post-consumer waste by 2006; and
- All DOE-occupied buildings to have Recycling Action Plans in place by 31 December 2005.

3.6 As a starting point to developing an EMS, a DOE in-house team, assisted by consultants, undertook a solid waste audit, a recognised good practice measure, designed to provide information relating to waste management practices throughout DOE and its Agencies. Twenty sites were examined, ranging across several categories, such as office-only or office and canteen. The draft audit report concluded that the recycling average for office-only sites was 40 per cent, substantially below the benchmark of between 60 and 70 per cent. DOE's headquarters building (office and canteen), was one of the lowest performers, with only 15 per cent of waste being recycled, compared with an overall 32 per cent average

for this type of site. None of the sites had provided staff with waste management awareness training and none had implemented any waste minimisation initiatives. In February 2005, DOE told us that it had provided additional recycling facilities in its headquarters, and planned a poster campaign to raise awareness, and it intends that its action plan (see paragraph 3.5 above), will act as an exemplar to other Departments.

3.7 Other public bodies, such as: Water Service; Invest NI; Down Lisburn Health and Social Services Trust; and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive have an accredited EMS in place. In the private sector, there are approximately 120 companies with EMS, certified to ISO 14001 level. In Great Britain, in June 2004, the Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committed Whitehall Departments to five per cent annual increases in the amount of waste they recycle or prepare for use as compost, with an ultimate target of 75 per cent. Each Department will be required to justify publicly its actions and the timescales it sets itself to deliver the targets. There are no similar targets or requirements for Northern Ireland Departments.

<sup>6</sup> ISO 14001 is the international standard for environmental management systems which requires the establishment of an environmental policy, the determining of environmental aspects and impacts of activities and the setting of environmental objectives and targets.

### Creating partnerships: planning was delayed and the roll-out of local infrastructures is behind schedule

3.8 Councils' delay in producing comprehensive WMPs (see paragraph 2.22) has hindered the introduction of networked recycling facilities and processes essential to meeting the 2005 target to recover 25 per cent of waste. For example:

- most Councils did not begin distributing home recycling bins until 2004, and many households will still not have kerbside recycling facilities prior to the target year;
- one Council group had based its projections on the plan to award a contract in October 2003 to have four major waste facilities constructed and operational by April 2005. The contract has not yet been awarded; and

- despite one group's planned achievement of targets being heavily reliant on recycling and composting, composting activities in two of its Councils (including the largest) are still limited.

3.9 The delay in producing plans and the subsequent late roll-out of the infrastructure significantly impact on the possibility of meeting the 2005 targets (see paragraph 2.17 and Figure 6). Even if the target of 25 per cent waste recovery is achieved by 2005, on an overall basis, it is likely that the overall performance will mask large variations between the Councils (one Plan actually states that it relies on its largest Council exceeding 25 per cent to ensure the Group meets the target overall). However, DOE pointed out that one of the purposes in forming groups of Councils was to achieve higher average performance that enabled targets to be met on a collective basis.



## Delays have been caused by the need for Councils to produce separate plans and ratify decisions individually

3.10 In addition to the missed opportunities to achieve economies of scale by producing a single plan for Northern Ireland, other drawbacks have arisen as a result of having three individual plans. For example, there are inconsistencies between the plans and, in some, high-level issues are not properly addressed, as the following illustrates:

- Two plans are short-term (five years) and do not address the strategy's medium and long-term targets. The third is for twenty-five years, but is a higher level strategy that does not provide the same level of detail as the others regarding council activity;
- Expenditure plans within one Plan are indicative, have not been sanctioned by individual councils within the group and are, therefore, more likely than others to be revised;
- There are variances between the materials being recycled - for example, some councils within the same group offer the facility to recycle plastics, while others do not; and
- The overriding need to plan for an alternative disposal method to landfill, in order to comply with EU requirements and replace NI's current heavy reliance on landfill, has only been referred to in one of the Plans, even though current landfill capacity may run out in 2005 (see Introduction paragraph 5).

## Initiatives have been developed to expand the recycled goods market

3.11 A significant obstacle to achieving

sustainable waste management in NI is the lack of sufficient infrastructure to reprocess recovered goods, or a market to demand reprocessed goods. EHS is involved in a number of initiatives aimed at developing this market, including:

- The Waste Management Industrial Fund;
- The Waste and Resources Action Programme; and



- The North South Market Development Steering Group.

## The Waste Management Industrial Fund

3.12 The WMIF was launched in June 2002 and is sponsored jointly by EHS and Invest NI, an Agency within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which supports business growth and innovation. Its aim is to assist businesses to implement projects that meet the market development objectives of the WMS. During 2002-03, approximately half of the £1 million fund available was issued in grants, but the further £1 million available in 2003-04 was unspent. This was a result of businesses not implementing their programmes, because of factors such as: delays in submitting planning applications and obtaining approval; dissatisfaction with the level of funding awarded from the Fund; difficulties in obtaining additional sources of funding; and perceived level of investment risk.

## The Waste and Resources Action Programme

3.13 WRAP is a not-for-profit company, formed in 2001, focussed on the creation of UK markets for recycled materials and products. It is supported by funding from DEFRA, DTI and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and NI, and EHS is committed to providing a £400,000 annual contribution from 2002 until 2005. WRAP does not have a specific budget allocation for NI but, in March 2003, it appointed a NI liaison officer to develop and promote its activities within Northern Ireland and, in consultation with EHS, develop a market development plan (it has now proposed a draft plan for NI). EHS is seeking to increase its commitment to WRAP to £800,000 in 2005-06, in order to strengthen its role in NI and thereby improve access to funds and business support schemes.

## The North-South Market Development Steering Group

3.14 The NSMDG was established in 2002 under a co-operative agreement through the North-South Ministerial Council, to lead the development of a structured, co-operative approach to establishing an all-island joint market development programme. Its work is aimed at providing a structured programme of activities and initiatives focused on priorities identified in waste management strategies and plans, on both sides of the border.

## Disposal of domestic waste fridges and freezers

3.15 DOE recognised the advantages to be gained from adopting an all-island approach in respect of the disposal and recycling of domestic waste fridges and freezers, which is the responsibility of the 60 local councils and local authorities throughout Ireland. In order to assist Councils, and achieve economies of scale, DOE conducted the tendering exercise, but was not legally empowered to ratify the contract on their behalf. The original contract was to be in place from 2002 to 2006, and included a

disposal/recycling plant, to be located in NI, with the expected creation of around 20 new jobs. However, the planned contract period was shortened at the beginning by negotiation problems, and the time needed to have the contract ratified separately by each Council. It was also shortened at the end, when the EU established 2005 as the implementation date for transferring disposal responsibility from Councils to producers. The reduced period was too short to allow the contractor to recover his initial capital investment and he withdrew, in July 2003, just before the contract was to be signed.

3.16 Under a re-tendered contract, won by a company based in Great Britain, and introduced in March 2004, all waste units have been sent to Great Britain for disposal, at a cost of £13 each, compared with the £11 per unit proposed under the abandoned contract. DOE said that the increase in unit cost reflects the shorter contract term and the additional cost of transport to GB, plus improved service delivery and audit trail.

3.17 During the period until this contract began, many District Councils stockpiled domestic fridges while awaiting a new contract, while other Councils disposed of them, at costs ranging from £9 to £28. Using DEFRA's calculation of a £12 annual unit cost for storing a domestic fridge, and DOE's estimates of the numbers of units stored/disposed of each year, we estimate that the delay in putting a contract in place cost the public purse at least £0.75 million. Additional costs incurred in respect of the first contract, such as administrative and legal expenses, are not available. This case illustrates the desirability of having a central body, with authority to negotiate and ratify contracts on behalf of all councils in Northern Ireland, in order to maximise opportunities for developing similar all-island initiatives (see paragraph 4.8).

### **DOE must implement new guidance in a timely manner, to enable EHS to carry out its regulatory duties fully**

3.18 When new EU legislation is being introduced, it is essential to inform stakeholders fully about what is required of them, in order to ensure that they can prepare properly for compliance, and to assist them in making any associated investment decisions. Law and guidance should be issued in tandem, as a means of avoiding subsequent problems that could result in EU infringement action in respect of incomplete, or inadequate, implementation.

3.19 In its report "End of Life Vehicles Directive and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive" (HC 557, Session 2003-04) The House of Commons' Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee underlined the importance of guidance. The report stressed the need for improvements in this area, stating that the result of the lack of guidance and clarity "has been that stakeholders, particularly in the recycling industry, have not been clear about what is expected of them - and so have not, for example, been able to make decisions about investment".

3.20 The speed with which DOE has implemented a significant volume of waste legislation in recent years has meant focussing on this aspect of its work, making it difficult to devote sufficient resources to issuing timely guidance to those affected by the new legislation. For example EHS said that when, following the threat of infringement fines, the Special Waste Regulations were introduced in 1998 over a three-week period, the tight timescale put it under considerable pressure, as it did not have the necessary staff in place, nor sufficient time to produce the associated forms and documentation. Instead, EHS staff held extensive discussions with stakeholder groups, and advisory visits to make those affected aware of their responsibilities, and the impact on their businesses. As there is a risk that further resourcing problems may arise in respect of

forthcoming requirements regarding agricultural waste (see paragraph 1.10), we consider it important that DOE and EHS make sufficient staff resources available to provide comprehensive, and timely, guidance to producers, so that they can comply properly with the new requirements, as soon as they come into effect.

3.21 Following the implementation of waste legislation, EHS is responsible for developing policies and procedures to ensure compliance and, where necessary, for taking enforcement action. EHS can prosecute individuals or firms who do not comply with legislation, and this usually results in a fine. In the case of other statutory bodies, potential penalties are much more restricted. DOE said that, should a Council break the law, e.g. by illegally landfilling municipal waste, it would be as much subject to EHS's enforcement powers as any other polluter. However, in its role as the statutory waste management planning authority and waste disposal authority, a Council could not be legitimately compared with a non-compliant business. Under the Waste Emissions Trading Act, which applies to the whole of the UK, and the subsequent Landfill Allowances Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004, each District Council will be allocated a "landfill allowance" each year. Those failing to keep within the limits will be liable to penalties, and this may provide a stronger incentive for Councils to ensure that targets are met. It is most important that Councils comply with statutory requirements and that EHS's compliance activities are applied with proper rigour to public bodies and private businesses alike, in order to ensure equitable treatment under the law.

### **Enforcement policies and procedures have not yet been finalised**

3.22 A formal, unambiguous, enforcement policy is essential to inform the public and EHS staff about the kinds of enforcement action that will be taken, and in what circumstances this



will happen. However, EHS has been slow to finalise relevant waste management enforcement procedures, and some are still outstanding. For example, The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (NI) 1999 came into force on 1st June 1999, but the enforcement procedures were not finalised until mid-2003, and there are still no enforcement procedures in place for the more recent legislation introduced i.e. Waste Management Licensing Regulations (NI) 2003 (operative from December 2003), Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (NI) 2003 (operative from March 2003) or The Landfill Regulations (NI) 2003 (operative from January 2004). EHS said that it does not yet have adequate resources to carry out compliance monitoring and enforcement action, as it only has half the estimated 40 staff in post that it considers necessary to do this work, but that specific procedures will be developed in due course.

3.23 The NI Assembly Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) report "Control of River Pollution in Northern Ireland"<sup>8</sup>, highlighted the need for clearly stated enforcement procedures, in respect of water pollution prevention

requirements, that are applied fully and consistently, and recommended that EHS formalise an enforcement policy. A related point was made by the Westminster PAC, in its report "Protecting the Public from Waste"<sup>9</sup>, which recommended that the Environment Agency for England and Wales should be transparent about the enforcement action it will take in response to different types of licence breaches and offences. The similarity between the scenarios described in the PAC reports and the current position with regard to waste management underlines the importance of EHS having documented and effective enforcement procedures in place.

### **EHS has taken successful prosecutions but penalties are low**

3.24 The NI PAC also expressed concern over the low level of fines levied by magistrates in respect of water pollution offences, following successful prosecutions. The pattern of fines for waste offences is so low in other parts of the UK that the penalties are not acting as an effective deterrent. This was recognised by the

<sup>8</sup> "Control of River Pollution in Northern Ireland" (NIA 6/00) 6 February 2001, 3/00/R.

<sup>9</sup> "Protecting the Public from Waste", 25th Report of Session 2002-03 (HC 352).

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (England), which said that “penalties imposed by the courts for waste related offences did not match the potential gains of illegal activity”.<sup>10</sup> Similar problems have arisen in NI in respect of waste offences, many of which are lucrative for the perpetrators, through illegal revenue and avoidance of legal disposal costs. In recognition of this problem, EHS is now working closely with the Director of Public Prosecutions to ensure that serious cases are being referred to the Crown Court, where penalties are more likely to be higher (unlimited fines and/or prison sentences). Although EHS costs in taking a case to court are considerable, Courts will only award costs in relation to the direct investigation of a case, e.g. cost of sample analysis. Consequently, polluters are not paying in full for the consequences of their offences. Together with the difficulties in detecting breaches of waste legislation, this underlines the importance of prevention activities.

3.25 To date, EHS has had 31 successful prosecutions for waste management offences, including illegal landfill sites. The most recent example of the latter resulted in a £22,000 fine, for illegal dumping (£12,000) and pollution (£10,000) in January 2005. While this level of penalty represents a significant increase on earlier cases, where some fines were in the range £75 to £120, it still bears no relation to the potential profits to be acquired by illegal carrying and dumping of waste, illustrated by the following example of breach of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, which DOE has referred for prosecution, and which is set for Crown Court later this year.

3.26 Councils had responsibility for landfill sites until the Landfill Regulations (NI) 2003 passed this function to EHS in December 2003 (Councils retain responsibility for running the sites that they own/operate). EHS has no detailed historic data relating to landfill sites but, since taking over this responsibility, has been identifying between one and three illegal sites per week and estimates that up to 200 unregulated sites could be operating in NI.

**Figure 9: Illegal waste dumping on a licensed site**

In 2003 EHS officers inspecting a landfill site that was licensed to receive inert waste and non-putrescible waste discovered that the site was being mismanaged and was receiving waste that it was not licensed to receive, as well as waste from the Republic of Ireland. The officers observed the following:

- Clinical waste including hypodermic syringes;
- Numerous brown rats over large areas of the site;
- Heavy infestation of flies over most areas;
- Underground fires were burning within the site;
- Strong odours of landfill gas and decaying waste matter;
- Biodegradable waste (that the site was not licensed to receive) had been deposited to a depth of approximately 3 metres;
- Large quantities of commercial and industrial waste similar in nature to household waste including electrical components; and
- Plastic chemical containers.

Due to the scale of the waste deposition and lack of containment, it was estimated that the detrimental impacts on the environment would be on-going for more than 15 years.

Conservative estimates by EHS staff indicated that the site had unlawfully received approximately 105,000 tonnes of waste which was likely to have generated in the region of £3.15 million for the site operator.

It was also estimated that the cost to taxpayers of preventing further pollution and protecting human health would be several hundred thousand pounds.

Source: EHS

<sup>10</sup> “The Future of Waste Management” House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2002-03 (HC385-1).



3.27 As well as setting rigorous controls that have to be applied when operating a landfill site, the Landfill Regulations set definitive closure procedures to be applied to prevent subsequent environmental damage. The 30-month delay in implementing this legislation has allowed sites that are below EU standards to continue to operate in the interim. As it may not be economically viable for many of these sites to carry out the improvements necessary to meet the new standards, many operators may close them, in order to avoid having to comply with the legislation. In such cases, closure may not be conducted in accordance with prescribed measures, leaving the public purse to pay for any remedial action required to prevent environmental damage. Closures are costly in term of EHS resources: for example it cost £1 million to ensure the safe containment of waste matter when the Drumaduff site in Limavady was closed in November 2003.

### **EHS considers that initial marketing of the Strategy was successful**

3.28 A fundamental cultural shift in attitude and behaviour is essential to achieving the Strategy's objectives. In order to encourage this shift, EHS employed media consultants, in December 2001, to drive a £1.5 million public awareness campaign: "Wake up to Waste".

3.29 The campaign was designed on the basis of two distinct phases:

- Phase 1 (February - May 2002) was aimed at increasing awareness of waste issues and high public involvement in the consultation process of the Councils' WMPs; and
- Phase 2 (October 2002 - March 2003) was aimed at creating awareness of specific actions that the public and industry could employ to reduce the amount of waste produced.

3.30 EHS evaluated the campaign and found Phase 1 to be “highly successful”, reflected by increased public participation in the consultation process and an increase in materials collected for recycling reported by some Councils and waste collectors. The evaluation of Phase 2 concluded that “the campaign continues to be effective in raising awareness and changing attitudes to waste”.

3.31 We recommend that any future awareness and education campaigns should be geared towards achieving specific, measurable, targets, which would form the basis of subsequent evaluations of outcomes. We also recommend that such evaluations should be carried out by independent external reviewers not involved in drawing up the campaign objectives or strategy.

3.32 In order that all campaigns can achieve their full potential, it is important to ensure that the availability of recycling facilities, and other opportunities for avoiding waste disposal, are maximised. As these improvements have progressed only to a limited degree (see paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9), the success of “Wake up to Waste” may have been limited, in the short term, and will be more difficult to maintain, or expand, in the longer term. EHS acknowledged this problem during the first phase of the campaign, and focussed Phase 2 of the campaign primarily on the top of the waste hierarchy, i.e. reduction and re-use (see Figure 2), partly to take account of the fact that some facilities are still not available in all Council areas.

# Part 4

## Reviewing progress and designing improvements for the future

### The Waste Management Advisory Board has reviewed the Strategy

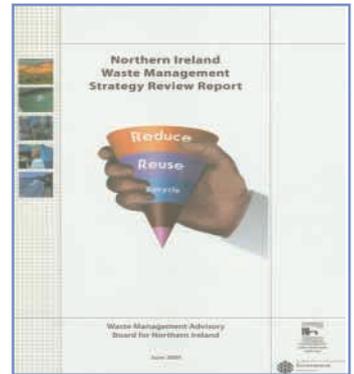
4.1 The Waste Management Advisory Board was formed by DOE, in May 2001, as a forum for key stakeholders to advise on, and assist with, the implementation of the Waste Management Strategy (WMS). Its membership consists of waste management experts, and other sectoral representatives, from both the public and private sectors. The Board was also charged with preparing a strategy progress report in 2003, after the first phase of implementation.

4.2 In June 2003, EHS commissioned consultants to begin the first stage of a review of the WMS, consisting of:

- Stakeholder consultation;
- Assessing the WMS in the context of EU Directives;
- Evaluating the implementation of phase one; and
- Identifying the barriers and constraints to successful implementation.

The findings of each stage were submitted to the Board for consideration in its assessment of progress. DOE also said that it took a central role in the review of the Strategy, and provided a number of key documents to the Board, including a detailed assessment of all stakeholder returns and analysis of targets and actions, in order to inform and assist its review.

4.3 The Board's report<sup>11</sup> contains its assessment of the current situation, and recommendations in relation to each aspect of the WMS (see Appendix 3). Overall, the Board found that success so far has been limited, as the following summary shows.



**Figure 10: Summary of Waste Management Advisory Board findings**

Degree of Progress	Number of Strategy Targets/Actions
Achieved	5
Some progress/action	46
Little progress/action	11
No progress	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>

The Department provided a response to the Board, in its "Reflections" Report,<sup>12</sup> challenging some conclusions and highlighting where recommendations had already been addressed.

### Specific actions are required to ensure the future success of the Strategy

4.4 In order that the next stage of the WMS can achieve real improvements, it will be important to put in place enhancements to the framework

<sup>11</sup> "Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy Review Report" WMAB June 2004.

<sup>12</sup> "Reflections on the Waste Management Advisory Board Strategy Review Report", September 2004.

used in stage 1. It is essential that any future Strategy is based on a reliable assessment of the baseline position, i.e. the current waste problem in terms of nature, source, volume and rate of growth of each waste stream, and the resources available for treatment and disposal. Despite the ongoing discussion about the definition of agricultural waste (see paragraph 1.9), we recommend that DOE should agree a working definition with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, to cover the main types of waste produced by farms, and begin urgently to gather data in preparation for measures to be applied in future to manage its production and disposal.

4.5 Armed with more accurate information, EHS could more readily derive a valid estimate of the resources and facilities needed to meet EU requirements in respect of all waste streams. This would make it easier to identify the actions required to do so, to prioritise them over the required time frame and match them with available resources. In order to monitor progress, we consider that the Strategy should include interim targets, as well as final, overall targets, so that the impetus for progress can be maintained, and outcomes measured, on an ongoing basis.

4.6 EHS has produced a programme comprising the key actions required, identifying Government roles and interfaces, and providing guidance for reporting implementation progress. We welcome this, but consider that it should be formalised into an overall Action Plan, and supplemented with costing information, and estimates of potential savings. We also consider that it could be enhanced by including more detailed information on all aspects of the infrastructure development, including quantifiable targets, objectives and timescales, to ensure that the co-ordination and implementation of new measures is managed and monitored centrally. This would make it easier for EHS to schedule future publicity and educational campaigns so that they coincide with such improvements. It would also provide a good basis for EHS to plan for the delivery of advice and guidance to stakeholders affected by

new developments, and to design suitable, and timely, enforcement measures to ensure their success. In our view, such a co-ordinated approach would assist greatly in translating improvements in public awareness into tangible reductions in waste generation and disposal problems. The success of this approach would depend on enhancing the current levels of co-operation between all stakeholders.

### **DOE should keep the organisational responsibilities of EHS and Councils under review**

4.7 We consider that the difficulties that beset the implementation of the first stage of the Strategy should prompt a review of the responsibilities allocated to EHS and Councils, and demonstrate the need for improvements to be driven centrally. In particular, the existence of several different Council plans, and the need for individual Councils to ratify decisions, caused considerable problems, for Councils themselves, and for DOE.

4.8 Given outcomes to date, Northern Ireland's small size and the need for a strategic approach to providing facilities to serve the whole region, we recommend that consideration be given to alternative structures. These might include:

- creating an overarching District Council Waste Steering Group with the authority to make decisions on behalf of all Councils; or
- EHS taking on the role of waste management authority for the whole of NI, relieving Councils of the responsibility for making strategic decisions and freeing them to concentrate on driving forward improvements in local delivery of waste services.

4.9 In 2001, the NI Public Accounts Committee's report on river pollution<sup>13</sup> referred to what it described as the "wholly unsatisfactory nature of the watchdog role within government" and expressed concern that Northern Ireland is the

only part of the British Isles without an independent environmental protection body. The Waste Management Advisory Board's report supports the establishment of an independent environmental protection agency within Northern Ireland, with responsibility for the delivery of "robust and accountable monitoring, enforcement and regulation". More recently, the Westminster Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's report on the NI Waste Strategy also supported the establishment of an Environmental Protection Agency<sup>14</sup>. In our view, any re-examination of waste management roles and responsibilities (see paragraph 4.8) should take into consideration the recommendations of these reports, as well as any relevant findings emanating from the forthcoming report on the ongoing Review of Public Administration.

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<sup>14</sup> "Waste Management Strategy in Northern Ireland", Sixth report of Session 2004-05, HC 349.

# Appendices

# Summary of EU Waste Management Legislation and Transposition Progress in GB and NI

# Appendix 1

(see paragraphs 1.1 and 1.3)

EU Legislation/Directive	EU Objectives and Targets	EU Transposition Date	GB Legislation & Date	NI Legislation & Date
Waste Framework Directive (75/442/EEC as amended by 91/156)	The "Framework" Directive introduced waste planning, permitting and inspection requirements to prohibit the uncontrolled discarding, discharge and disposal of waste. The Directive also establishes requirements for licenses and registration of carriers and the polluter pays principle. Specifically: Art 3 encourages the use of the Waste Hierarchy and promotes recycling. Art 5 requires that the relevant authority is to be made responsible for waste disposal and an adequate network of waste disposal facilities to be established. Art 6 states that a strategy is to be developed to deal with waste. Art 7 instructs member states to draw up Waste Management Plans.	Various	Control of Pollution Act 1975 Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Part II) and various pieces of of subordinate legislation: Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations 1991; Controlled Waste Regulations 1992; and Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994.	Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 and various pieces of subordinate legislation: Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations (NI) 1999; Controlled Waste (Duty of Care) Regulations (NI) 2002; Controlled Waste Regulations (NI) 2002; Controlled Waste (Amendment) Regulations 2003; and Waste Management Licensing Regulations (NI) 2003.
Hazardous Waste Directive (91/689/EEC)	To create systems to ensure the safe management and control of hazardous waste.	12-Dec-93	Part II of Environmental Protection Act 1995 Special Waste Regulations 1996	The Special Waste Regulations (NI) 1998
Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC)	Requires member states to: Introduce systems for the return and/or collection of packaging so it can be recovered or recycled; Set targets for recycling of Waste Packaging; and Ensure users of packaging are given the necessary information about management of packaging waste.	01-Jun-01	Part V of Environmental Protection Act 1995 Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997	Producer Responsibility (NI) Order 1998
The Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive (96/62/EC)	Requires member states to look holistically at pollution and not just one issue in isolation. Sought to introduce an integrated approach and control system for industries covering emissions to air, water and land, site restoration and accident prevention. This Directive is aimed at activities which have the potential to cause harm to the environment and /or health and includes certain waste management operations.	31-Oct-99	Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000	The Environment (NI) Order 2002 Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (NI) 2003

EU Legislation/Directive	EU Objectives and Targets	EU Transposition Date	GB Legislation & Date	NI Legislation & Date
Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)	Aims to provide new controls on the design, operation, management and monitoring of landfill sites to eliminate disparities between technical standards for the disposal of waste by landfill and the lower costs associated with poor practices. It also aims to reduce the amount of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas emitted from landfill sites. Article 5 requires members states to produce a strategy to reduce the quantity of Biodegradable Waste going to landfill by setting three progressive targets to achieve by: 2010 a reduction to 75 per cent of 1995 levels; 2013 a reduction to 50 per cent of 1995 levels; and 2020 a reduction to 35 per cent of 1995 levels.	16-Jul-01	The Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 The Landfill (Scotland) Regulations 2002 Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003	The Landfill Regulations (NI) 2003 Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003
End-of-Life Vehicles (2000/53/EC)	Objective is to reduce the environmental impact of end-of-life car and light commercial vehicles (ELVs) by preventing the waste arising from and promoting the recycling of materials from scrapped vehicles. Under this Directive vehicle manufacturers, importers and others in the vehicle use and disposal chain will be responsible for the collection of ELVs and the recovery and recycling of all usable materials from them. By 2007 producers must meet all, or a significant part of, the cost of applying this measure. Article 5 makes members states responsible for collection of all ELVs and they must make sure that all vehicles are sent to authorised treatment facilities. Recovery and recycling targets are set for 2006 and 2015.	21-Apr-02	The End of Life Vehicles Regulations 2003 (partly UK-wide) Further UK-wide Regulations to be made later this year	Waste Management Licensing Regulations (NI) 2003 (Article 6 Requirements) Regulations are being finalised following consultation.
Waste Incineration (2000/76/EC)	To prevent or to limit as far as possible pollution by emissions from incineration and co-incineration of waste.	28-Dec-02	Waste Incineration Regulations 2002 and Directions under PPC Act and EPA 1990 made December 2002	Waste Incineration Regulations 2003 and Directions under PPC Regulations and IPC Order made August 2003

EU Legislation/Directive	EU Objectives and Targets	EU Transposition Date	GB Legislation & Date	NI Legislation & Date
<p>The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive (2002/96/EC)</p>	<p>Member states should adopt measures to minimise waste from disused electronic and electronic equipment by prevention, promoting reuse, recycling and recovery. Member states are to ensure that systems are set up, by producers, to provide for recovery and reuse of separately collected WEEE according to set recovery, reuse and recycling targets. Targets are set as a proportion of collected WEEE from private households. By 31 December 2006, member states must achieve a collection rate of at least four kilograms on average per inhabitant per year of waste electrical and electronic equipment from private households.</p>	<p>13-Aug-04</p>	<p>Government is in the process of transposing this Directive.</p> <p>A Discussion Paper was issued in March 2003 and this was followed by more detailed consultation papers of November 2003 and July 2004. Implementation of the WEEE Directive in the UK will lead to the establishment of a collection network for waste electrical and electronic equipment. These provisions will apply in the UK from August 2005.</p>	

# Appendix 2

(paragraph 2.16)

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## Waste Management Strategy Targets

### Primary Targets

1. Recover 25 per cent of household waste by 2005.
2. Recover 40 per cent of household waste by 2010, of which 25 per cent shall be by recycling or composting.
3. Reduce the landfilling of industrial and commercial wastes to 85 per cent of 1998 levels by 2005.
4. Reduce the quantities of biodegradable municipal wastes being landfilled to 75 per cent of 1995 baseline levels by 2010, 50 per cent by 2013 and 35 per cent by 2020.

### Secondary Targets

1. Stem the increase in waste arisings per household, returning to 1998 levels by 2005 and thereafter reduce arisings by 1 per cent every three years.
2. Each District Council to set out in a Waste Management Plan provision for recycling or composting 15 per cent of their household waste arisings by 2005.
3. The Department to specify, and introduce in 2002, a mandatory recycled content for selected products and materials purchased.
4. Recover a minimum of 50 per cent of packaging waste, of which at least 25 per cent shall be recycled and at least 15 per cent of each packaging material recycled.
5. Reduce the quantity of biodegradable municipal waste being landfilled to 85 per cent of 1995 levels by 2005.
6. The Department to reduce its overall paper use by 10 per cent by 2002.
7. Recover a minimum of 85 per cent of the materials in End-of-Life Vehicles by 2005 and a minimum of 90 per cent by 2015.
8. Recover a minimum of 90 per cent of large Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and a minimum of 70 per cent of small WEEE by 2004.
9. Recover 85 per cent of waste tyres by 2005 and 100 per cent by 2010.
10. Reduce the amount of construction and demolition waste landfilled to 85 per cent of 1998 levels by 2005.

## Waste Management Advisory Board 2004 Review of NIWMS: Key Recommendations

1. Establish an independent Environmental Protection Agency for Northern Ireland, with responsibility for delivery of robust and accountable monitoring, enforcement and regulation.
2. Establish a cross-departmental delivery group for the Waste Management Strategy, with membership at Permanent Secretary level and chaired by a Minister.
3. Address the huge infrastructural deficit which exists in NI in terms of waste treatment, recycling, recovery, disposal and processing capacity.
4. Review a number of critical areas, including land-use planning, waste management planning, procurement and partnerships.
5. Waste reduction, production and prevention must be addressed by all sectors.
6. The potential for developing a Single Waste Management Plan for NI should be explored, and may provide the scope for the establishment of a Single Waste Management Authority.

# NIAO Reports 2004-05

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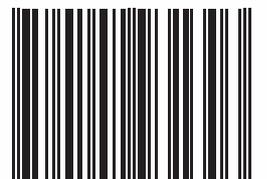
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