



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee



Inquiry into Meeting Landfill and Recycling Targets

August 2005

Further hard copies of this document can be obtained from:

Ruth Hatton
APS - Committee Service
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Tel: 029 2089 8020
E-mail: Ruth.Hatton@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.wales.gov.uk>



Printed in the UK on paper comprising 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp

Cover photographs courtesy of Environment Agency Wales



Contents

		Page
	Chair's foreword	
	Committee membership	
	Summary of recommendations	
Section 1	Introduction	1
Section 2	Background	7
Section 3	The inquiry	23
Section 4	Conclusions and recommendations	25
Annex 1	Recommendations of recent waste management reports in Wales	33
Annex 2	Consultation letter sent to Welsh local authorities	43
Annex 3	Information presented to the inquiry	45
Annex 4	Summary of evidence	49


Chair's Foreword



Dealing with the waste for which we are all responsible is a growing and extremely serious problem in Wales. We landfill the vast majority of our waste, while the space to do so is rapidly decreasing, and even though most of us are now more aware of the need to recycle and compost, the tendency is to assume that dealing with waste is someone else's problem.

For our inquiry, the Committee decided to focus on municipal waste and meeting landfill and recycling targets set by Europe and the Welsh Assembly Government. We received and heard evidence from a wide range of public bodies and from the community and voluntary sector, and we visited a number of sites and facilities to see for ourselves the different methods and technologies for recycling and composting at work.

Having considered all the evidence, the Committee believes that Wales, its Government, its local authorities and its people, faces a very substantial challenge if it is to increase the amount of waste recycled and composted. We therefore recommend the introduction of a number of measures to improve the performance of those authorities that are struggling to meet the targets, but we are also of the opinion that every local authority in Wales should plan more efficiently to meet targets in the longer term. The Committee makes a number of recommendations with regard to the planning process and urges the Welsh Assembly Government to provide vision and guidance on those kinds of facilities and technologies that should be employed to meet targets. While acknowledging the substantial funding that the Government has provided to date to ensure higher recycling and composting rates, we are calling for a considerable increase in funding in order to ensure that the targets for 2009-2010 are met. We also make recommendations for educating the people of Wales and changing their attitudes towards dealing with waste and we feel strongly that the Welsh Assembly Government should urge and support businesses to create and make innovative use of recycled products.



I look forward to receiving the Government's response to our recommendations. We would like to thank everyone who gave evidence to this inquiry. My thanks also, as ever, to the Members' Research and Committee Services for their support and guidance.

Alun Fred Jones.

ALUN FFRED JONES AM

Chair, Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee

August 2005



Members of the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee¹



Alun Ffred Jones AM (Chair)
Caernarfon



Lorraine Barrett AM
Cardiff South and Penarth



Mick Bates AM
Montgomeryshire



Glyn Davies AM
Mid and West Wales



Irene James AM
Islwyn



Carwyn Jones AM (Minister)
Bridgend



Helen Mary Jones AM
Mid and West Wales



Sandy Mewies AM
Delyn



Carl Sargeant AM
Alyn and Deeside



Brynle Williams AM
North Wales

¹ In addition to the current membership of the Committee, several other Assembly Members contributed to the inquiry – Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey AM (Preseli Pembrokeshire), Jeff Cuthbert AM (Caerphilly), Elin Jones AM (Ceredigion) and Janet Davies AM (South West Wales)



Summary of recommendations

Targets – recycling / landfill / composting / waste minimisation

Recommendation 1: *That the Welsh Assembly Government identifies local authorities that may struggle to meet the 40 per cent recycling / composting target for 2009–10 and works with them to ensure appropriate measures are put in place to achieve the target.*


Recommendation 2: *That the Welsh Assembly Government ensures that municipal waste management strategies are used as the main tool for individual local authorities to plan for their waste management needs and the delivery of Welsh Assembly Government and European targets.*

Recommendation 3: *That local authorities fully utilise source segregation of recyclable materials and make this as user-friendly as possible. (In making this recommendation, the Committee agrees with the Welsh Assembly Government's view that while householders should segregate recyclable material at source, local authorities should be allowed the flexibility to choose how segregated materials are collected, e.g., kerbside sorting, clean MRF or bring sites).*

Recommendation 4: *That the Welsh Assembly Government removes the perverse incentive for local authorities not to encourage home composting, and develops a mechanism that allows home composting to count towards local authority landfill diversion targets. Local authorities should encourage householders to compost at home.*

Recommendation 5: *That the Welsh Assembly Government introduces material-specific targets for recycling of bulky but low weight materials such as plastics.*

Recommendation 6: *That local authorities continue to work in partnership with the community, voluntary and private sectors in developing minimisation, re-use and recycling schemes in their areas, recognising the particular skills and expertise that these organisations can contribute to the delivery of targets.*



Recommendation 7: *That the Welsh Assembly Government makes representations to the UK Government to introduce measures to promote waste minimisation / penalise unnecessary waste creation. The Committee believes that the UK Government should consider producer-responsibility levies and tax reductions on more environmentally-friendly products. The UK Government's response should be made available to the Committee.*

Planning / regional working

Recommendation 8: *That Regional Waste Plans should be made statutory.*

Recommendation 9: *That, in the meantime, Regional Waste Plans should be revised to ensure they identify suitable geographical locations for regional facilities and that the Welsh Assembly Government provides local authorities with clearer guidance to deliver this objective.*

Recommendation 10: *That private sector engagement with local authorities should be promoted more vigorously via the Wales Waste Forum, Welsh Local Government Association and regional waste groups.*

Recommendation 11: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides clear advice and guidance on the sustainability of different waste management options.*

Recommendation 12: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides clearer guidelines to local authorities on:*

- i. which technologies it would like to see operating in Wales and which it wishes to discourage;*
- ii. which technologies should be used to deal with residual waste, until it is possible to eliminate it.*

Recommendation 13: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides assistance and guidance to local authorities on how best practice from elsewhere in the UK, Europe and worldwide can be applied in Wales.*



Funding

Recommendation 14: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides an indication to local authorities of the level of capital and operational funding that will be available to them until at least 2013, in order to enable long-term planning and business security.*

Recommendation 15: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides regional hypothecation of some waste management funding to encourage local authorities to work together on developing regional facilities, especially for more specialised facilities such as composting of kitchen waste.*


Recommendation 16: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides sufficient funding to ensure that local authorities are able to roll out kerbside collection systems to a level consistent with securing the delivery of recycling, composting and landfill diversion targets.*

Recommendation 17: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides a central source of advice to local authorities on legal, contractual and funding issues to enable them to access expertise, reduce expenditure and improve success in securing external sources of funding, including European funds.*

Public Awareness

Recommendation 18: *That sustained, local, targeted education should be introduced to reduce, re-use and recycle. Liaison officers should be appointed in each local authority to visit residents and schools, to run road shows, etc., to increase householders' knowledge of what they can do, what can be done with recycled materials and how individuals' actions impact on the local environment and community. Initiatives should include the use of incentive schemes and positive feedback on how well schemes are doing and how they benefit the local community.*

Recommendation 19: *That the Welsh Assembly Government encourages more schools to be part of the 'eco-schools' programme run by Keep Wales Tidy. The benefits of the programme should be more widely promoted in terms of education, compatibility with curricula and the potential for cost savings for the school.*



Recommendation 20: *That the Welsh Assembly Government works with Environment Agency Wales and local authorities to build public confidence in the monitoring and pollution prevention processes in place for waste treatment facilities. This could include education initiatives in schools and communities near such facilities, tours of facilities, community liaison officers and working with schools / eco-schools.*

Recommendation 21: *That the Welsh Assembly Government maintains funding of organisations that contribute to promoting recycling and composting.*

Markets / business support

Recommendation 22: *That the Welsh Assembly Government encourages and supports business to create recycled products and markets by:*

- i. providing greater financial and business support, including research and development funding, for new and existing businesses in Wales to use recycle from the municipal waste stream, create recycled products and develop markets for recycled goods and services;*
- ii. encouraging business to apply for European funding to help develop their businesses;*
- iii. supporting the development of a recycling facility for farm plastics and a market for the products. (While not directly within the remit of the inquiry, the Committee recognises that agricultural waste and farm plastics are important issues).*

Recommendation 23: *That the Welsh Assembly Government provides help and advice to public sector organisations, including local authorities, to procure more recycled products and that this should be built into the normal procurement process. The Welsh Assembly Government should be an exemplar in procuring recycled products.*

Recommendation 24: *That the Welsh Assembly Government encourages and supports businesses to reduce, re-use and recycle waste by:*

- i. working with Wales-based businesses, particularly large retailers, to encourage waste minimisation, consumer education and provision of recycling facilities;*
- ii. providing advice and support for Wales-based companies to reduce waste and make the best use of waste, in particular by providing a central source of advice for businesses / organisations on how to audit waste streams, reduce and recycle waste and make cost savings.*



Research and development

Recommendation 25: *That the Welsh Assembly Government*

- i. encourages the setting up of exemplar / demonstration projects to illustrate to local authorities and the general public how different technologies operate;*
- ii. funds research and development and commercial-scale field trials / demonstration projects for potential treatment options for residual waste, until it is possible to eliminate it, in order to inform local authority choices;*
- iii. funds research and development into the innovative use of recycled materials to make new products.*