

ACP Task Group 1 – Chairman’s Report.

Report on progress to ACP group 28th April 2015.

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Following agreement on the terms of reference and members for the this task group, has met twice, the first being a conference call on 13th March 2015, and the second a round table meeting at DEFRA offices on the 20th April 2015.

Our first meeting focused on data, discussing what is available nationally, and what individual group members have relevant to their organisations, which could be beneficial in identifying relevant data for packaging in the household waste stream.

From our discussions the following actions were agreed –

- Data - we will have to use what’s available and the most relevant. Waste Data Flow may not be a good source as it does not analyse residual waste apart from quoting overall tonnage, and recyclable material flows are calculated by Local Authorities on a mass balance approach particularly where fully comingled collections take place.
- Glass Flow, Metal Flow and Plastic Flow reports are available and have been provided to the group
- LARAC would undertake research in looking at what sources of national compositional analysis is available and whether it fit for our purpose. Through the LARAC exec data would be gathered on which if, any Local Authorities had undertaken compositional analysis of residual waste over the last couple of years.
- Dover and Shepway have recently undertaken full compositional analysis, and this has provided to the group.

Work undertaken following discussions has revealed that there was a great deal of compositional analysis undertaken on household waste arisings around 2004 to 2007, not surprisingly the time when the majority of LA’s were rolling out kerbside dry recycling collection schemes.

The last National Waste compositional analysis we have been able to find dates from 2010/11, compiled by Resource Futures. This analysis is built up in large part from estimates, but appears statistically robust, and therefore the best figures we have nationally. For completeness we have also looked at analysis undertaken for the devolved governments of Wales Scotland and Northern Ireland, and it would appear the latest data for them also originates from 2010/11.

Comparison with this data and more recent individual authority data, which usefully for Dover and Shepway, the analysis was also undertaken by Resource Futures, shows that broadly material breakdowns are similar, with no surprises. However the national report does not necessarily tie up with the data produced in the material flow reports but if we look closely at the more recent compositional analysis, which is ‘real’ rather than using estimates, there is commonality between the two sets of data. The volume of packaging waste remaining in the up to date authority specific shows around 30% of the material remaining in the residual waste stream is packaging.

We will now look to obtain as much recent analysis of residual waste within the UK, to use alongside the material flow reports, and these will be the data set's which the task group members will use in looking at opportunities and recommendations moving forward.

Our second meeting on the 20th April 2015, evaluated the data sourced, in order to agree the most appropriate data sets for achieving the aims of this task group.

The group agreed to use the material flow reports in conjunction with as up to date compositional analysis as possible, and this is our recommendation to the main ACP on the 28th April 2015. Rick Hindley stated Alupro have now commissioned further analysis of the metals report to drill down further on household element. The cost for this work is very reasonable, and therefore might be worth applying to the other material flow calculations, in order to better inform the group.

Our meeting on the 20th also agreed our approach to the other issues identified for consideration by this task group. The outcomes of these discussions are detailed below under the headings of the relevant issues

Communications

Discussion took place on the various systems for communication with householders. It was noted that many Local Authority's had cut their communication budgets, which will have an impact on the quality of materials being collected, as residents don't know how to use services as intended.

WRAP are undertaking a lot of work in the communications area, through a revamp of 'Recycle Now' and other initiatives, which focus on simple messages and 'Golden Rules'. There was consensus in the group that a 'drip feed' of communications looking at specific materials at a time, rather than trying to talk about everything in one go is more effective. The group discussed and agreed the fact that there are some easy wins, in having effective and consistent communication with residents, and retailers have a key role to play. Currently they appear to be 'Brand' focused, with little money being spent on promoting sustainability.

Economics

Discussion took place on economics, and it is clear that raising levels of recycling further requires financial investment. This can be clearly demonstrated by the investment and work undertaken in Wales and Scotland. It was noted that in Scotland there is a Compliance Fee, which has to be paid to help facilitate guaranteed investment.

There is a lot of information on this subject which the group will consider moving forward. PRN's are clearly an important part of this discussion, and we need to work closely with task group 2 on this issue.

Commercial Relationships

There are a number of different types of relationships between Waste management Company's and Local Authority's, some better than others. With regard to recycling and reprocessing, it is very much a mixed bag, and the group agreed there needs to be far greater transparency about markets and end users.

Regulatory obstacles.

We discussed regulatory obstacles in relation to LA's and the reprocessing industry. In terms of LA's it was agreed that regulatory obstacles had been withdrawn in England with the removal of LAT's and individual recycling targets. In terms of reprocessors there appears to be a downward trend in companies registering for accreditation because of the cost and bureaucracy involved. This presents a potential risk for the future, not least because of maintaining accurate data, but also the long term risk to the PRN system.

Our meeting concluded with a discussion on the fragility of the domestic reprocessing infrastructure on Local Authorities collection expansion plans. The recent closure of Aylesford news print, and the problems being faced by Closed Loop, illustrates fully how fragile the market is. Discussion took place on the role of the Green Investment Bank and Innovate UK and whether such organisations were able to help make these UK reprocessing plants more sustainable for the future.

There is a need to reference quality in these discussions, as it has a significant impact on reprocessing, and parties in the supply chain need to work together to better understand one another's requirements.

Next Steps

Our next stage is to look at the opportunities available using the data, and expertise within the group. A retail perspective would be very helpful in these discussions, especially around effective communications. Liaison between the other two task groups will also be required in order to incorporate where necessary their thoughts into this area of work.

A meeting for task group 1 has been arranged for the 1st July 2015, and a report will be presented to the ACP on our findings for the ACP meeting on the 28th July 2015.