**WasteDataFlow User Group meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

**Minutes**

David Lee informed the group that he is leaving the Waste Statistics Team and is moving to the Food team at the beginning of April. The User Group was introduced to David's replacement, Jim Holding.

**Waste Framework Directive (WFD)**

- Issue regarding the definition of recycling under the WFD. There has been no real change regarding this issue since the July 2012 User Group meeting.
- Uncertainty regarding how the WFD will be implemented and how this affects WasteDataFlow. The outcome is not known at this stage.
- Ongoing discussions in Defra regarding biowaste and composting facilities and the implementation of the WFD. According to the WFD materials cannot be classed as recycling unless they meet the end of waste protocols. However, a lot of composting facilities are not PAS100 accredited. Therefore a lot of material may then not be classed as recycling. This will impact on the recycling rate.  However, the issue is not this straight forward due to several factors: 1) some LAs are in long term contracts with non-PAS100 facilities 2) the time and cost implications of becoming an accredited composter 3) the costs associated with accreditation for community composting organisations and smaller commercial composters.
- The issue of end of waste criteria applies to other recyclables.
- No decisions have yet been made by ministers regarding the implementation of the WFD.
- Defra has written to local authorities via National Association of Waste Disposal Officers (NAWDO) advising that there are no immediate plans to change the guidance on reporting composting and anaerobic digestion through Waste.

**LATS**

The WET Act was amended a couple of weeks ago, where sections that relate to LATS have been removed. The Environment Agency has now written to all authorities, notifying them of this. Part of the WET Act has been retained where WDA have an obligation to report to WasteDataFlow. We still have a recycling rate target under the WFD so we still need to report to WasteDataFlow to calculate whether we are meeting these targets.

**MRF code of practice**

The Quality Action Plan was published on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013. It includes a consultation on the elements of the MRF code of practice which would last for 12 weeks from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 26 April 2013. The QAP document proposes to promote outputs of high quality dry recyclate from MRFs and also improve transparency of quality material.

WasteDataFlow is mentioned in the QAP, and suggests that Defra will provide guidance and encourage LAs to ask MRFs to give more robust information regarding the reject rate when reporting into WDF. LAs are encouraged to have greater interest in the performance of their MRFs. This would result is more accurate data reported in WDF.

The code of practice requires MRFs to introduce a sampling regime to calculate the reject rate, and will to record this data in a repository which will probably be managed by the Environment Agency. Various options are put forward in the consultation regarding the accessibility of this data in terms of the information being available on request or made public.

This would be potentially a useful data source for Local authorities and WasteDataFlow, particularly during the validation process where validators could perhaps compare reported MRF data with the value recorded in WDF.

**Validation spreadsheet**
LAs were reminded that the Validation Spreadsheet was launched in January 2013 and online training will be available.

**Developments**
Forthcoming developments were discussed including: National Waste Management Reports, NI192 including IBA metals, Carbon Metric, and making the reprocessor reports publically available.

ACTION:  WasteDataFlow to inform Local Authorities when the reprocessor reports are made available to the public.

**Carbon Metric:**

Defra published the carbon metric report last November and intend to publish it again in the annual statistical release later in November.   The intention is to further develop the carbon metric however, no formal timetable has been set to run the report on WasteDataFlow, but if Defra received lots of requests from Local Authorities to have carbon metric report this would be useful ammunition to push forward the development of this tool.  In terms of feedback on the report it was noted that some WCAs may not understand the carbon metric report.

Action Points:  Defra to consult policy colleagues on the development of carbon metric and to consider if the carbon metric reports can be produced for historic data to enable comparison with previous years

**Update from WRAP: Collection survey and LA portal**

WRAP make use of WDF data and also collect data themselves regarding collection schemes using an online questionnaire that Local Authorities are encouraged to complete on an annual basis. The next WRAP survey update is mid-April 2013.  For LAs that completed the survey last year, the system saves data that was previously inputted so the information only needs to be updated where necessary. The site is password protected. LAs can save and submit data when ready.  An email will be sent to Local Authorities to remind them to complete the survey. LAs are encouraged to complete this survey. The WRAP survey is used for planning policies, to answer media enquiries and also to analyse performance of scheme types.

In terms of the difference between the WRAP survey and WasteDataFlow, it was explained that the detailed information collected by WRAP are not captured in WasteDataFlow. The only overlap in data collected is WasteDataFlow questions 4, 5 and 6 (see discussion below)

**Link to LA portal:** http://laportal.wrap.org.uk/

The LA Portal has 4 sections: benchmarking tool, scheme information, statistics section, London Area (for London LAs, which replaces Capital Waste Facts).

Anyone can log into the LA Portal: media, consultants, public, LAs etc. The Portal provides a traffic light analysis of kerbside dry recycling, kerbside residual waste and performance indicators. The data is presented in table format and displays the yield by material type. Yields are compared against UK/Region/ONS area classification and rurality. The benchmarking table allows you to do a comparison.

The data is taken from Qu10 in WDF. This data includes the contamination (unless rejected at the kerbside) and so will be included in the LA Portal data. If a LA collects comingled material this comingled tonnage (recorded in Qu10) is proportioned into the single material streams using the material collected information that was inputted into the WRAP collection survey. The proportions that are applied are in accordance with the WDF guidance (see Recording Co-mingled Materials guidance). Mixed paper and card tonnages are split into paper and card categories using a percentage split from compositional studies.

Organic waste is not represented in the table as it has not been decided whether to use the number of households on the scheme to calculate the yield or the dwelling stock figure.

The LA portal allows you to search for Local Authorities by name or by scheme type. Developments are underway to allow users to download the data from the site.

The waste and recycling statistics section is useful for signposting press queries to. The data in this section is from 2010-11. There is a time lag between the data being publically available on WDF and adding to the WRAP LA Portal as time is spent applying comingled splits to the Qu10 data before it is uploaded. WRAP are hoping to update the site with the next year's data by the end of March 2013.

**Environment Agency feedback**
LATS comes to an end on 31$^{st}$ March 2013. The EA team that dealt with LATS will then be dealing with the amendment regulations to the WET Act, and will also be dealing with the MRF regulations.

**The future of questions 4, 5, 6….**
Defra use the WRAP survey to obtain information about collection schemes. Question 4, 5, 6 are made redundant in this sense. Do we really need these questions? The aim is to reduce the reporting burden on LAs. Defra propose to stop asking LAs to enter data into Questions 4, 5, 6.

A discussion then took place regarding the option of populating questions 4, 5, 6 in WasteDataFlow with the WRAP collection survey data on an annual basis. It was decided that this is the most sensible option and that there is no need for wider consultation with end users as we will not be removing any information from WasteDataFlow.

Most LAs were in agreement that closing off these questions in WasteDataFlow is sensible.

**Action:**
**Gary Armstrong will investigate the development side of populating Questions 4, 5, 6 with numbers taken from the WRAP survey.**

**WCAs managing disposal… how widespread is this?**
The issue is WCAs do not have access to disposal / treatment questions. However, some WCAs are managing the treatment and disposal of their own waste but do not have the appropriate questions to report this in WasteDataFlow. One option would be to give WCAs the UA questionnaire, but would be badged as a WCA that disposes of waste. We need to know how prevalent this is. We don't want to develop this further unless there is demand for it. We need the data in WasteDataFlow to be accurate and useful and this also needs to be balanced against the need to reduce the burden on LAs when reporting data.

The question was presented to the group: How many WCAs manage their own waste?

Some of the WDAs at the meeting reported that this was occurring amongst some of their WCAs. WasteDataFlow are also aware of at least 15 WCAs that do this.

It was decided that either WasteDataFlow or the User Group reps need to contact WCAs to determine how many are managing the treatment of their waste. Data Protection issues need to be investigated to determine whether WasteDataFlow can pass Local Authority contact details to the User Group reps in order for them to do this for the regions they represent.

## 4) Reporting supermarket bring bank waste

Local Authorities can now report material collected at supermarket bring banks regardless of there being a formal or informal agreement/contract in place. Defra's position is that material collected at supermarket bring banks is household waste and should be included in WasteDataFlow recycling figures.

This is detailed in the Bring Bank Guidance note on the WasteDataFlow website.

## 5) Question 100

Qu100 was developed for Wales. It does not ask different questions than already exists in WasteDataFlow. It allows LAs to map the true linear flow of waste and build the structure of their own waste management route to then report tonnages into. Welsh LAs have an obligation to complete Qu100 as it is used to calculate their KPIs. Qu100 is not active in the English questionnaire. To make it active there needs to be development to integrate Qu100 into reporting outputs. Is there enough demand from LAs to develop Qu100?

There was no conclusion on this. One LA was keen to use Qu100. Other LAs preferred the existing question set.

It was emphasised that Qu100 does not ask for additional information. It is an alternative to completing the waste treatment and disposal questions. Once the waste management tree is set up in Qu100 it is saved in the system and can be adapted and changed.
 If Qu100 was made optional, the danger with this is that some LAs would use Qu100 and others would continue reporting the data the old way and you would then lose comparability of the data. It was highlighted that developing Qu100 for use by English authorities would consume a third or more of the annual 30 day development budget. It is important that the demand for Qu100 is determined before using this budget. It was also suggested that we get feedback from the Welsh LAs regarding whether Qu100 leads to a work increase or decrease when completing WasteDataFlow. We also need to decide what we mean by implementing Qu100. Do we want to move to it or make it optional?

It was suggested that the development list is shared with the User Group Reps.

**Is there an appetite to continue back allocation?**

It was stated that there is no Defra policy on back allocation. This is a local arrangement between the WDA and WCA. The general feedback from the User Group was that they wanted to keep back allocation, but the process of WCAs reporting back allocated tonnages in Qu18 and Qu19 means that the back allocated tonnage detail is then lost.

There was a general consensus that we need a better reporting system for WCAs to record back allocated tonnages so that source segregated recyclate is reported separately from residual recyclate.

One option would be for WCAs to have a Qu19 and Qu19a to distinguish between clean/dry and residual recyclate, respectively.

## Local Authority Questions/Answers

### Back allocation:
*Question*
*Why can we back allocate some materials to WCAs but we can't back allocate IBA metals?*
*Answer*
*Although IBA metals are now classed as recycling, NI192 does not count IBA metals as recycling. Although NI192 is no longer used by government, it may be used by LAs and for this to be calculated correctly IBA metals cannot feature in the calculation. If IBA metals were back allocated to WCAs there is no separate question to record this data so it would be included in the NI192 calculation if recorded in Qu18/Qu19. However, Defra pointed out that in a world where NIs no longer exists we should not be bound by this.*

*Question: I am a WDA and we have been asked about back allocation of street sweepings for two quarters now, with regards to recording the data in accordance with the EA guidance on street sweepings. Will we be asked further questions this quarter?*
*Answer: The details you have provided WasteDataFlow regarding street sweepings will be added to your validation notes. If you record the data in accordance with the guidance in quarter 3 you will not be asked further questions. Further questions would be asked if you started using a different treatment process for street sweepings or if your data was not recorded in accordance with the guidance.*

*Actions:*
- **To add a note to the LACW report to state WCA back allocated tonnages are being back allocated.**
- **To resolve the data reporting issues for back allocated tonnages by next WasteDataFlow reporting year. Source segregated recycling tonnages need to be reported separately to residual recycling tonnages.**

### Question 100
*Question*
*If Qu100 was to be made active, could you also allow the recycling collection and sent questions to be split by facility so you map each material from the point of collection to the end destinations?*
*Answer*
*This could be a logical the next step, so you could trace each material throughout its waste journey. There is no policy driver for us to do this though.*

## MRF code of practice

*Question*

*I am concerned that we are likely to end up with a set of materials that does not meet the standard, which can therefore not be classed as recycling and cannot be recorded in WasteDataFlow. Compost that does not meet PAS100 is not classed as recycling and also is not classed as disposal. The assumption that the quality protocol for organics and the MRF QAP may mean that we end up with a two tier system: good versus bad quality recyclate. Where would you record material that does not meet the standards?*

*Answer*

*The purpose of the MRF Regulations and the Quality Action Plan (QAP) is to promote high quality recycling as required by the Waste Framework Directive. Neither of them establish a standard/s for the quality of dry recyclates which has to be met to be counted as 'recycling'. Reject rates should already be reported within WDF and these are deducted from recycling rates. The MRF Regulation will enable LAs to obtain more accurate and robust data on reject rates for reporting within WDF. It is true that recycling rates may drop as a result of more accurate reporting on reject rates; this should act to encourage LAs / MRFs to take action to improve quality.*

*For compost specifically, we currently ask local authorities to report the amount of material sent for composting (and we do not ask how much of that material meets the PAS 100 standard). We have no immediate plans to change the WDF guidance on this though we are considering whether any changes to reporting may be needed in the future as a result of the 2020 target for recycling 50% of household waste.*

*Question*

*There is an issue of business confidentiality. Operators may not want to supply this information in terms of publishing how well or badly they are doing.*

*Answer*
*Yes the industry has raised concerns and various options of improving transparency without breaking confidentiality have been raised in the consultation exercise. Question 8 in the consultation document seeks views on how to improve transparency [http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/files/mrf-env-permit-consult-doc-20130201.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/files/mrf-env-permit-consult-doc-20130201.pdf)*

*Question*
*Concerned that WasteDataFlow would prescribe the LAs to get this information from the MRF operatives as there may be a problem getting this information from the MRF.*

*Answer*
*As above, the consultation considers options for ensuring transparency, in particular ensuring LAs are able to obtain access to information on quality to (a) improve accuracy of reporting within WDF, (b) inform decision-making by LAs when procuring waste services and (c) help LAs monitor performance of MRFs. Encourage LAs to think about what information they need from MRFs and respond to the consultation accordingly.*

*Question*

*There is no legal requirement for WCAs to report to WasteDataFlow?*

*Answer*

*There is no legal requirement. However, the Single Data List of central government requirements published by DCLG contains WasteDataFlow, and of course we have a legal obligation to report our national recycling rate to Europe under the rWFD. Notwithstanding this, there is a huge incentive to completing WasteDataFlow in the data is valuable to the public and local authorities alike, averting FOIs, supporting transparency and accountability.*

## Carbon metrics
*Question*
*When would it be possible to run a carbon metric report on WasteDataFlow?*
*Answer*
*No formal timetable but if Defra received lots of requests from Local Authorities to have carbon metric report this would be useful feedback to help prioritise the development of this tool.*

*Question*
*Will the carbon metric figures be back-dated? If we start publishing carbon metric figures from this year onwards we will have nothing to compare the figures to, and would have to wait a few years to see a general trend otherwise.*

*Answer*
*The policy team have not asked us to do this. However, we will consider doing this.*

## WRAP survey and LA portal
*Question*
*I am concerned that the portal does not take into account data that is entered into other questions such as Qu17 and Qu18. My authority collects glass at bring banks rather than at the kerbside so this collection of glass will not be reflected in the LA Portal data.*
*Answer*
*Good point. We are developing the benchmarking tool and need to decide whether to combine Qu10/Qu17 or not.*

*Question*
*Why do we need to provide this information for WasteDataFlow as well as the WRAP collection survey?*
*Answer*
*The detail provided in the WRAP collection survey is different to WasteDataFlow. For example flats and houses may have the same collection containers, but different materials may be permitted to go into those containers. This detail is not captured by WasteDataFlow.*

***Question***

How many LAs report into the portal?

***Answer***

*Generally, about 80% of LAs complete the survey. To obtain data for the remaining authorities WRAP complete a web search and chase remaining LAs for data.*

***Question***

What is the data used for?

***Answer***

The data gives us statistics regarding recycling schemes which are used by Defra for planning policies. The data is also used to answer media enquiries. Studies are also carried out regarding the performance of scheme types.

***Question***

Why have another survey to complete?

***Answer***

WDF does not have data WRAP needed for analysis and reporting on collection systems.

**The future of questions 4, 5, 6….**

***Question***

*Would turning off these questions in WDF create problems as the WRAP survey is not mandatory so you may not get all the data needed from just having the WRAP survey?*

***Answer***

*Yes there is a risk of losing a consistent piece of data. However, Defra refer to the WRAP survey anyway.*

***Question***

*The purpose of WasteDataFlow was to have a one stop shop for data reporting and we seem to be moving backwards by having another survey to complete. Why can't the WRAP collection survey questions should be added to WasteDataFlow instead?*

***Answer***

*With current government policy on reducing mandatory response burdens it is difficult to make changes to WasteDataFlow and increase the data requirements in the Single Data List. There is a commitment to review WasteDataFlow in the light of the Waste Framework Directive, but we also don't want to commit to any major changes to WasteDataFlow until we know what changes will be required for the Waste Framework Directive.*

**User Group feedback**

*Question: Could we have a total tonnages section at the bottom of Qu19a?*
*Answer: Yes. This is currently with our developer and will then require Defra approval*

*Question: In Qu19a can you make it possible to upload comments from the previous month?*
*Answer: Yes. We will add this to the development list*

*Question: The WDA LACW report double counts tonnages back allocated to WCAs. Can you resolve this?*
*Answer: This is an issue because there is no separate question for WCAs to report back allocated tonnages. This is an issue that needs to be resolved before next WasteDataFlow year. For the time being we will add a note to the report to state that WCA back allocated tonnages are being double counted.*

*Question: We now have to report all construction and demolition waste sent for disposal in the collected non-HH construction and demolition category in Qu23. However, if the construction and demolition waste is collected at CA sites, pulling this figure out of the CA site category distorts the CA site tonnage reported in Qu23. Our levy is calculated using the CA site figures in WasteDataFlow, but this is no longer accurate as some tonnage is reported in the construction and demolition category.*
*Answer: We need to see if this is a big issue for other LAs to determine if a change to Qu23 is required. Do other LAs need to separate CA site construction and demolition waste from other sources of construction and demolition waste? If so it would be possible to add further material categories to Qu23, so that under CA site HH and CA site non-HH there could be a drop down for construction and demolition waste.*

*Question: Our district has a commercial recycling collection which is sent to a MRF. The district is confused as to how the non-HH MRF rejects are accounted for in the National Indicator calculations.*
*Answer: In NI 192 the proportion of rejects due to non-HH sources is added onto the calculation as follows:*

*MRF rejects\* [Q.11 co-mingled recycling/all co-mingled recycling tonnages from Q.10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 33,34].*

*All MRF rejects will have been deducted from the tonnages entered into Q.19 / 35 earlier in the calculation. However, as some of these rejects will be due to waste from non-hh sources, a proportion of these rejects will need to be added back on.*

*WDAs have Qu69 which allows the calculation of HH to non-HH splits. However, WCAs do not have Qu69. It is possible to allow WCAs to have Qu69 and add a row within Qu69 for WCAs to record the HH to non-HH split. There would then need to be an update to the calculation. However, is this worth the development time when NI192 is no longer used by Defra?*

*Question:* At the moment the destination drop down list in Qu19 is not in alphabetical order. Can you make it alphabetical?

*Answer:* This has been discussed in the past and it was decided that the facilities should be added in the order that LAs add them to the selection list. It is possible for the list to be filtered in any way, alphabetically or by number. We could develop the system to allow Users to sort the list in the manner that they want to see it in the drop down list. However, we do need to prioritise development items and get feedback from LAs regarding what are the most pressing issues for them.

*If you do want to view the selection list in alphabetical order, when you are in Qu19 you can click on the 'select' tab. The facilities in your selection list appear alphabetically here.*

**Actions:**

- **To add a total tonnage section to Qu19a after being approved by Defra**
- **To make it possible to upload comments from the previous month in Qu19a**

*Question:* Is the XML generator going to be developed to include all questions?

*Answer:* This needs to be added to the development list

**Actions:**

- **The XML generator needs to be developed to include all questions in WasteDataFlow.**
- **The XML generator is not guaranteed to work with anything above Excel 2010. We need to ensure the generator will work with these versions of Excel.**

*Question:* Is it possible to freeze the headings in the recycling / reuse collection and sent questions? When the full list of materials is on the screen you can't see the headings for data entry when you scroll far down the list?

*Answer:* This can be done. However, before spending time developing this, have you used the Material Lists function (accessed via the Management tab) which allows you to select the materials you collect/send for reuse and recycling. When you are in the relevant collection and sent questions you can select either the 'Show All Materials' view or the 'Show My Materials' view. Using the My Materials view will shorten the material list that appears and so you may not then lose sight of the headings when scrolling down the material list.

*Action:*
- **If there is demand to freeze panes in the collected/sent for recycling/reuse questions this is something that can be added to the development list**

**Any other business**

None


**Next meeting:** July or August 2013

Agreed to use the video conferencing format again


### List of Action Points

1) Defra to review reporting in WasteDataFlow now that NIs, and soon LATs are no longer with us. Rules that have applied to data reporting that may have been restrictive will no longer be binding us. What will we be able to do differently after LATS has ended?

2) Defra to ask the Policy Team if the carbon metric reports can be produced for historic data

3) WasteDataFlow to inform Local Authorities when the reprocessor reports are made available to the public.

4) To send a link to the WRAP Local Authority Waste and Recycling Information Portal to LAs

5) **Canvass Local Authorities to get their opinions on the following points:**
   - Contact all WCAs and determine how many of them are managing the treatment of their own waste
   - Contact WCAs/WDAs to determine if there is an appetite for back allocation and if so if WCAs would want a Qu19a to report back allocated tonnages sent for recycling (to distinguish them from source segregated recyclate)
   - Contact WDAs and UAs to see how many want to use Qu100

6) Gary Armstrong will investigate the development side of populating Questions 4, 5, 6 with numbers taken from the WRAP survey.

7) WasteDataFlow to investigate ways of overcoming Data Protection issues which do not allow LA email addresses to be passed on to User Group reps without having positive confirmation from each LA to do so.

8) WasteDataFlow to send User Group Reps a list of all the Local Authorities they represent.

9) WasteDataFlow to share the development list with the User Group Reps.

10) WasteDataFlow to get feedback from Welsh LAs regarding Qu100 and whether this has increased or decreased the reporting burden

11) Defra to decide what they mean by moving to Qu100. Will Qu100 be mandatory or optional?

12) To add a total tonnage section to Qu19a after being approved by Defra

13) To make it possible to upload comments from the previous month in Qu19a

14) To add a note to the LACW report to state WCA back allocated tonnages are being back allocated.

15) To resolve the data reporting issues for back allocated tonnages by next WasteDataFlow reporting year. Source segregated recycling tonnages need to be reported separately to residual recycling tonnages.

16) The XML generator needs to be developed to include all questions in WasteDataFlow.

17) The XML generator is not guaranteed to work with anything above Excel 2010. We need to ensure the generator will work with these versions of Excel.

18) If there is demand to freeze pains in the collected/sent for recycling/reuse questions this is something that can be added to the development list