

# WasteDataFlow (WDF) User Group for England – minutes of meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023

## 1 Introductions

As was done in October 2021, the User Group meeting was hosted online.

The introduction outlined the planned schedule for the day, including a brief outline on how attendees can contribute to the meeting through providing feedback and general comments.

## 2 Actions points from last meeting (19<sup>th</sup> October 2021)

Action point/owner	Progress
<b>Action 1</b> Action: Newsletter to signpost the WRATE tool. When published the Defra carbon metrics for England due in 2022 will be signposted in the Newsletter.	Completed Post-meeting note: An update on the LCA tool, which is called WRATE, is now hosted by Golders and is still being maintained and marketed. It is believed that the licences were recently reduced in price, more <a href="#">here</a> . WfH carbon metrics announced in November 2022 newsletter and SN presented at this meeting.
<b>Action 2</b> Guidance around Wood reporting will be reviewed, and a Newsletter update reminder will be issued.	Completed – November 2021 newsletter.
<b>Action 3</b> Waste data management system survey – updated list of questions to be agreed with Defra and circulated via WDF newsletter.	October 2021: A draft survey had been prepared but this initiative has not been progressed due to uncertainties around future LA waste data management reporting obligations following the launch of the Waste Tracking Service (WTS). Agreed that Defra WTS team would consider whether to take this forward as part of LA consultation process. January 2023: Not taken forward at this time – user research with LAs on their needs including any reporting and data needs is expected to be taken forward in spring summer 2023.
<b>Action 4</b> Defra to seek assistance from a few user group members to learn about data gathering and QA process at LA level.	This was shelved due to the continuing Covid epidemic and lack of available Defra resource. This work will cross over into work under WTS.

## 3 Update from Defra Waste Statistics Team

### 3.1 Waste Statistics Publications

Defra provided an update on the publication of the waste and fly-tipping statistics, with it being stated that resource constraints, alongside the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic during the reporting years (2021-22), has meant that the publication of these figures has been delayed.

The publication of the fly-tipping statistics for 2021-22 occurred on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. These figures are now available on the Gov.UK website [here](#).

The waste and recycling statistics for 2021-22 are currently being prepared for publication in March 2023. These figures will be published on the Gov.UK website [here](#).

### 3.2 Carbon emissions from Waste from Households 2020

Defra provided an overview of the [Carbon emissions from Waste from Household 2020](#) report, which was published in December 2022.

These are provisional figures which show net greenhouse gas emissions from the management of local authority collected “Waste from Households” relative to the use of virgin materials, fuel or disposal to landfill. Factors and emission figures are on a [Carbon WARM](#) basis.

This publication is classified as being ‘experimental statistics’. The emission factors and some methodologies used to produce the net emission figures will be subject to revision as research is updated and data sources improve, hence the above description.

Carbon Warm factors were produced for Defra by WRAP. They are not time-specific and reflect the latest available information at the time of publication, so the emission factors may be revised in future publications. The methodology used by Defra for preparing the report was to combine local authority data from WDF with the emission factors.

The factors are presented by material type, so the same value cannot be applied directly to multi-material recycle or waste e.g. WEEE, mattresses, tyres, sanitary products – these were split down to material composition using research reports. See links in the Data & methodology section of the statistical notice.

Residual waste has been split into material types using a waste composition report prepared by Eunomia on 2017 data. This split is applied to each year.

The statistics are not directly comparable to data presented within the United Kingdom National Inventory Report (NIR), the underpinning Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHGI), or National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI). It was also noted that a similar publication has been produced by SEPA, but that differences in the calculation methodologies mean that conducting a direct comparison between the reports isn’t advised.

The publication contains a lot of background and detail on the assumptions and calculations within the statistics, which should be referred to when understanding the figures and what they encompass.

An overview of the some of the report’s findings is given below:

- Overall net emissions were highest in 2016 at 1.4 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, reducing to 1.1 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019.

- In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted waste collections and increased time at home and waste from households increased to 22.6 million tonnes. Residual waste from households increased by 0.5 to 2.7 million tonnes, slightly higher than in 2016.
- Food waste emissions have fallen by 416 thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e to 194 thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2020.
- Paper & cardboard and mixed fibres have decreased by 325 thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e to -372.
- Plastics – despite some increases in recycling, greater use of EfW has increased emissions by around 0.4 thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, to 2.5 million tonnes in 2020.
- Garden waste emissions have remained steady over the years at around 200 to 230 thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.
- Overall emissions for metals (including metals recovered from IBA) have remained constant across the years at around -2.0 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.
- Glass emissions are relatively stable at around 70 but fell by 9 to 81 thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2020 as a result of higher tonnages of glass collected for recycling.
- The large net increase in emissions from textiles in 2020 up 468 to -895 thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e is as a result of less material collected for recycling and reuse, chiefly driven by charity shop closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3.3 Proposed amendments to the Fly-Tipping Module data entry page.

Defra provided an overview of proposed changes to the current data entry page for reporting fly-tipping statistics.

The first proposed change would be to amend list of available periods to remove the quarterly period, so that local authorities can only report on a monthly basis. At present, local authorities can choose to either report on a quarterly or monthly basis.

The second proposal is to add the 4 below additional questions to the data entry page:

1. “For Fly-Tipping offences under section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, please enter the maximum amount you have set your fixed penalty notice at?”. The response will be a numerical value limited to 3 digits.
2. “Do you offer a reduced FPN for early payment?”. The responses will be ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.
3. “If ‘Yes’ to the above, then please enter the total value you have set your reduced FPN for early payment at?”. The response will be a numerical value up to a maximum of £999.
4. “If ‘Yes’ to the above, then please also enter the time frame in which the reduced FPN for early payment is available”. The responses will be a numerical value limited to 2 digits, expressed in days or weeks.

Those in attendance were asked whether they had any initial concerns regarding these changes.

The responses were generally positive and stated that these changes wouldn’t present challenges to them. However, many attendees stated that they would need to consult with others within their Authority to ensure that the required information was readily accessible.

There was also a question as to whether this change would be made at the start of a new reporting year, which Defra confirmed would be the aim.

### 3.4 Waste Tracking Service Update

Defra provided an update on the Waste Tracking Service (WTS), which will provide a digital platform for the tracking of waste across the UK. The WTS will replace the currently WDF system once fully operational.

The procurement of a build partner has now been completed and the building of the core elements of the service is underway. A private beta testing of the service will commence shortly with a small number of invited participants, initially focusing on Annex VIII forms for green list waste. This initial focus has been decided upon due to this waste having a relatively small user base and relating to a more discrete and straightforward element of the service which can be expanded over time.

The WTS is expected to largely collect the same type of information that WDF currently does on waste collection and treatment. However we will need to undertake more detailed work with users so this can inform the design and content of the service rather than simply aiming to duplicate the current content of WasteDataFlow and to have flexibility to adapt to changes. .

It's already been agreed that it is not within the current scope for the WTS to collect information on LA waste management costs, or Fly-tipping information around costs and enforcement actions.

Defra plan to undertake detailed research on local authorities' needs in relation to the WTS. As the WTS and the data itself are a high priority, this work is expected to begin over the first half of 2023.

The attendees were encouraged to contact Defra with any queries at [Waste.Tracking@defra.gov.uk](mailto:Waste.Tracking@defra.gov.uk).

Defra also stated that it's currently thought that the WTS and the WDF systems will both operate at the same time for a period. The question was raised as to whether local authorities would be required to input data on both systems, with Defra stating that this may be the case but that submission deadlines would be reviewed in light of this.

### 3.5 Feedback

Feedback	Response
Could Qu18 (Composting / Recycling tonnage collected through other schemes) be updated to allow for specific materials to be stated?	Qu18 is intended as a catch-all question, so in many instances it is not expected that a user will have details by material type. It might be worth considering whether anything currently reported in Qu18 could in fact appropriately fall within another question which already has a material-specific list.  Qu18 is also used by both Northern Ireland and Wales, so any changes would need to be agreed with them.
Would it be possible to generate Validation Summary Reports on a monthly, rather than quarterly, basis.	Although technically possible, this would require significant development time. Also, the majority of local authorities are known to complete their submissions on a quarterly basis and so wouldn't see any change from this development.  Therefore, interest in undertaking this should be assessed before any further actions are taken.

<p>Would it be possible to link fly-tipping incidents to a tonnage according to the size category?</p>	<p>Although this would provide a useful insight, this would need to be looked into further to assess the feasibility, specifically the need to gather tonnages for each size category.</p>
<p>We suspect that some local authorities are misreporting FPNs as court fines.</p>	<p>Defra has raised this issue with the local authority in question and we have been working with them to understand their data. This will be reflected in the latest fly-tipping statistics.</p>
<p>We record the number of fines by level, but we think that prison sentences and community orders should be recorded in the same way.</p>	<p>This information would be potentially useful but further work would be needed to identify whether this level of detail is available for all local authorities to provide and whether this would overburden local authorities.</p>
<p>The Validation Summary Reports has a limit on the number of both final destination nodes and total number of nodes that can be used. Please can this be reviewed as we regularly get this query.</p>	<p>The current limits in the Validation Summary Report were set as to encourage the removal of redundant sections in Qu100. It was hoped that this would make Qu100 more manageable for data entry and it would also limit the size of Qu100 reports.</p> <p>This point has recently been raised by a number of local authorities, including during the User Group meeting.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Validation Summary Report be updated to include more nodes.</p>
<p>Would it be possible to sort Qu100 by Facility Description, as currently the sort order for Question 100 is done by Facility Type and then Facility Name.</p>	<p>This would be technically possible, but it would require development time to implement. Qu100 is also used by Scotland and Wales, so any changes would need to be agreed with them.</p>
<p>Will we be required to report Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) separately on WDF in future?</p>	<p>Defra stated that it was unlikely that the WDF system would be updated to require for the separate reporting POPs.</p>
<p>My question is regarding Tonnage Collected for reuse but actually rejected / disposed on Q10, 11, 16. I understand that the default disposal method is landfill, so can this be changed to EfW?</p>	<p>The WDF team confirmed that the default disposal method was landfill as this was the principal disposal method utilised when these questions were first set-up.</p>