

WasteDataFlow

**REPORT OF THE FIFTH WASTEDATAFLOW
USER GROUP WORKSHOP
10th October 2007**

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1. Purpose & Structure of the User Group meeting

This was the fifth meeting of the WasteDataFlow (WDF) User Group (UG), consisting of waste managers from local authorities and representatives of local authority groups, Defra, the Environment Agency and Enviros. A full list of attendees can be found in appendix A. The main topics for discussion were:

- Summary of recent WDF system developments
- Outline of future development plans
- 2006/7 LATS report
- Reflection on reporting of 2006/7 BVPIs through WDF

Presentations (All slides available on the WDF website)

2. Summary of new functionality – presentation by Gary Armstrong, Enviros

The main development items completed over since the last meeting in March were:

- Reports: new excel reporting functionality launched Sep 07. More reports to be developed.
- Question expansion for 51-65: enables up to 15 transfer stations per facility, completed Sep
- Updating destination lists: one update in year, process being put in place
- System question management: completed Sep.

Several other areas of development had also been completed:

- System maintenance
- Mass Balance Reports
- Queued processing of data roll-ups
- Calculated variables (for summary reports)
- Quarterly question management by LAs
- User feedback on data submission (rev)
- On-line status report
- Review of Questions: done with some changes made

Main development priorities over the next few months would be:

- Keep adding to available Excel based benchmarking reports
 - Including question reports
 - Reports for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales
 - Remove crystal reports
- Pre-authorisation validation checks page – to facilitate LA data authorisation and improve data quality
- Auto upload of data
 - For fixed-structure questions by Christmas

- For variable length (destination/district) questions start of 2008
- Selection list update process to go quarterly

Also on the development list are the need to:

- Improve the authorisation screen
- Improve user management screens
- Improve authority management screens
- Improve list creation screens
- Add a scrolling WDF news
- Bring log-on to before you see menus

Discussion:

The developments were well received by local authorities. A few had used the **new excel based reporting tool** and had found this very useful. It was requested that rolling total columns be added to the reports. The reporting tool was demo'd as not all had used this – guidance is available at <http://www.wastedataflow.co.uk/Documents/GuidanceManual/SummaryReportFunctionality170907.pdf>

Local authorities were invited to identify any new reports that would be useful to them for their performance monitoring, benchmarking and to meet requests for data. Roy Burton suggested a summary of recycling by materials would be useful. The WDF helpdesk will log such requests.

Authorities underlined the need to update the **selection lists** on a regular basis and were keen that these included all sites they used.

There was some discussion around the ability to **automatically upload data** into WDF. The file for upload would need to be in XML format, to a specification to be provided by Enviros. This XML file could either be generated from local authority systems (their IT teams would probably need to be engaged to produce this), or by using the Excel converter to be provided by Enviros. The Excel converter would have a fixed layout for the WDF questions and from this would produce the XML file to the required specification for upload.

Whilst the WDF team could provide the specifications and the ability for WDF to receive these files, the responsibility for generating files in the correct format from LA systems would lie with the local authorities.

Following upload of a file (which could be done for one or many questions), the WDF process would continue as normal – check questions complete & correct, run summary, BVPI and Mass balance reports and check and authorise returns.

Auto-upload would be optional, authorities who wished to could continue to enter some/all of their data in the usual way.

Initially, this would be implemented for those questions with a fixed layout (i.e. no facilities/destinations). This is simpler to develop and would enable authorities to get used to the process prior to doing this for more complex destination questions (qu 19, 35, 14, 51-65).

3. Information on the 2006/7 LATS year – presentation by Heather Barker, Environment Agency LATS Ops team.

Heather set out the headline outcomes for the 2006/7 LATS year. All authorities operated within their allowances, incorporating banking and trading. In total 11.55 million tonnes of BMW was sent to landfill, 79% below the national allowance for 2006/7 and 93% of that sent to landfill in 2005/6. The presentation was well received and there was little substantive discussion.

4. Reflection on BVPI reporting

Jane recapped on the process that had lead to BVPIs being provided central by Defra from WDF for 2006/7. The Audit Commission had been very supportive of this approach and were keen for this to be successful as it is consistent with government's objective to minimise duplication & burdens of reporting.

One issue that had arisen was queries by local performance teams and district auditors as to why the figures from WDF were different to that released in BVPPs. BVPPs were generally compiled for June publication and therefore based on provisional figures. Whilst the figures from WDF were often more complete and up to date, this message was not being communicated clearly enough throughout the LA community. Jane agreed that a joint letter from AC and Defra to local performance teams, waste managers and district auditors would be useful to hopefully prevent such queries next year.

There was some concern that in a few cases the sum of BV82a-d was <>100%. This may legitimately occur due to other waste treatment methods being used or stockpiling of wastes. However, there may also be some confusions around data entry for Qu69 (hh residual adjustment factor) causing this. Defra agreed that the use of Qu69 needed reviewing.

The inclusion of 'gully waste' from Question 23 in total household waste was questioned by several LAs. Discussions illuminated different interpretations of gully waste. It seems that where authorities are emptying gully pots and acting under the Highways Act, this was non-household waste, whereas the cleaning of gutters and gullies (by the edge of the road) was household waste. This clarification will be incorporated into the WDF guidance – the former should be entered as 'Highways waste' in Question 23 and the latter continue to be entered as 'Gully emptyings'.

5. AOB

The next meeting will take place on 5th March 2008.

Appendix AList of attendees, WDF User Group 10th October 2007**UG members**

Gary Armstrong	Enviros
Richard Horsnall	Broadskill
Jane Hinton	Defra, Environmental Statistics & Indicators
Isabella Hayes	Defra, Environmental Statistics & Indicators
Ian Barham	Defra, Environmental Statistics & Indicators
Heather Barker	Environment Agency

LA Representatives

Dave Hawes	Barking & Dagenham LB
Steve Didsbury	Bexley
Carolyn Partridge	Buckinghamshire County Council
Peter Kirkbride	City of Sunderland Council (on behalf of Colin Curtis)
Justin Lomax	GMWDA (+ WCAs) (on behalf of Dave Langley)
Frances Clephan	Hampshire County Council
Neil Conway	Lancashire
Julia-Ann Thompson	Richmondshire DC (on behalf of Sean Little)
Andrew Baker	Harrow
Colin Curtis	Gateshead MBC
Erica Phillips	Hampshire County Council
Malcolm Akroyd	Calderdale MBC (WDA)
Roy Burton	Warwickshire County Council
Jo Riley	
Robin Hall	GOEM