

**HOUSEHOLD WASTE
PREVENTION
-ACTION PLAN
(SCOTLAND)**

FEBRUARY 2007

Household Waste Prevention Action Plan (Scotland)

INTRODUCTION

The average household in Scotland produces just over 1.1 tonnes of waste per year (equivalent to around 540kg per person)¹. Longer term trends suggest that this has been increasing by around 1.5% - 2% per year. There are a number of reasons for this increase such as increased disposable incomes, more single person households, convenience led lifestyles, fashion trends and the relatively low cost of food. These types of demographic and societal issues are difficult to influence.

Scotland has made significant efforts in recent years to increase recycling and composting rates and has now reached around 25%². However, although recycling and composting are better than disposal options such as landfill and incineration, there are still environmental and economic costs related to these activities. Furthermore, as waste arisings increase so does the amount of waste requiring recycling/composting to meet targets. As outlined in the waste hierarchy, it is far better not to produce the waste in the first place.

A key aim of the National Waste Plan is to stop growth in municipal waste by 2010 then reduce it thereafter. This would mean that municipal waste arisings would need to be halted at a maximum of 3.76 million tonnes per annum³. In other words, if waste growth continued at its current long-term rate, the increase in municipal waste arisings between 2006 and 2010 could be over 270,000 tonnes. We need to act now to curb this growth and reverse this trend.

To achieve this, we need to address the elements of waste from the average household which can be reduced, particularly the levels of residual waste being produced which cannot be recycled or composted. A consultation on 'Preventing Household Waste in Scotland' was issued by the Scottish Executive and SEPA in February 2006 requesting responses by the end of April. This consultation can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/02/02131916/0>. A total of 170 responses were received: 91 from organisations and 79 from individuals.

A summary of the analysis of the responses to the consultation can be found on the Scottish Executive website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/09111254/0> and the full analysis at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/09110835/0>. The consultation posed a series of 42 questions based on 5 key themes: product design and manufacture, retailers, consumers, communities and local authorities. This plan outlines specific actions within each of the key themes. We intend these actions to be measurable where possible and to build on existing work being done to prevent household waste.

The following **20** action points have been selected on the basis of responses to the consultation, what is considered achievable at Scotland level and, where possible, what can be measured / quantified in tonnage or other terms.

¹ Based on mid 2005 population estimates and Audit Scotland performance indicators for waste 2004-05

² www.sepa.org.uk/nws/data/returns.htm

³ Table 4.1, National Waste Plan 2003

For the purposes of this Action Plan waste prevention includes the following:-

- Strict avoidance – the complete prevention of waste generation by, for example, reducing unnecessary consumption
- Reduction – reducing waste by designing and consuming products which generate less waste
- Product re-use – re-using a product in its original form, for its original purpose or for an alternative use
- Qualitative waste prevention – reducing the hazardousness of waste

N.B. while strictly speaking, home composting and community composting are not waste prevention (as waste is still produced), they are included in this Action Plan as they are key measures to reduce the amount of waste collected by local authorities.

1. PRODUCT DESIGNERS AND MANUFACTURERS

The design and manufacture of products purchased by householders can impact heavily on what ends up in the household bin. Design and manufacture of goods are, however, difficult to influence as many products bought in Scotland are produced elsewhere. Work to influence design and manufacture of products is more likely to be for the long term and may require action at both UK and EU level.

A number of initiatives are already being undertaken to minimise waste from products and packaging. Examples of these were outlined in our consultation paper e.g. the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Retail Programme and work by Envirowise and the Market Transformation Programme.

Respondents to the consultation were supportive of the need to promote eco-design in Scotland. For disposable products specifically, highest levels of support were for the introduction of producer responsibility legislation.

The following actions are therefore proposed:-

Action 1: SE / SEPA to publish a report by end 2007 on work being done to encourage sustainable design and sustainable products and the impact that work is having on household waste in Scotland.

Action 2: SWAG to work with Consumer Protection Bodies, Retailers and others to provide better information to consumers on the expected lifespan of key household products, product guarantees and availability of spare parts. Initial information to be on SWAG website by March 2008.

Action 3: SEPA to publish a report by Dec 2007 on potential to introduce further Producer Responsibility initiatives e.g. for disposable products where a reusable alternative exists. SEPA also to continue reporting on existing Producer Responsibility schemes e.g. packaging and those to be introduced e.g. batteries.

2. RETAILERS

It is estimated that approximately 500,000 tonnes of packaging and 500,000 tonnes of food waste are thrown out by Scottish households each year⁴. The Scottish Executive is already supporting WRAP to work with retailers, and others, as part of the Courtauld Commitment (Annex A) to minimise packaging and food waste. As part of this, WRAP are working with retailers and brand-owners to develop packaging principles, guidelines and standards that include consideration of waste prevention and the use of recycled content in their packaging. WRAP is also providing training for the retail sector on waste prevention and are sharing information with retailers on issues such as “Best in Class” packaging weights and formats (i.e. how moving to the most resource-efficient packaging already available can minimise waste, improve customer loyalty and save money).

The retailers have pledged their commitment at executive level to support WRAP in achieving its objectives which are:

- To design out packaging waste growth by 2008
- To deliver absolute reductions in packaging waste by March 2010
- To identify ways to tackle the problem of food waste

Building on this existing work we propose the following actions:-

Action 4: SE will continue to work with WRAP, SWAG and others to reduce the amount of food waste from Scottish households by **10,000** tonnes by 2008 and **15,000** tonnes by 2010. This will be done by:-

- Piloting a new consumer-facing food use / waste campaign, which raises awareness of the environmental and economic significance of food waste and provides practical advice to householders on how to avoid wasting the food that they buy
- developing smarter packaging which may enable food to be kept for longer or which is more appropriate for particular types of households – e.g. better portioning of food for single occupancy households
- working with retailers to develop alternative marketing approaches which will reduce the risk of food being wasted
- working with the Food Standards Agency to improve consumer understanding of food labels and, in particular, “best before” and “use by” dates

Action 5: SE will continue to work with WRAP, SWAG and others to reduce the amount of packaging waste from Scottish households by **8,000** tonnes by 2008 and **34,000** tonnes by 2010. This will be done by:-

- developing lighter weight packaging or reusable packaging
- explaining the purpose of packaging to enable households to recognise what represents excessive packaging

⁴ www.wrap.org.uk

- developing improved systems for consumers to complain to retailers and Trading Standards about excess packaging
- considering, after carrying out further promotion of packaging regulations, whether further action is required
- developing improved packaging guidelines for adoption by retailers and their suppliers

N.B. If the Courtauld Commitment should not produce expected results SE will consider further legislative steps for Retailers in relation to food and packaging waste.

Although not strictly waste prevention, we will also monitor progress on reverse vending systems and deposit return schemes used to encourage reuse and recycling.

In addition we will ask the Scottish Retail Consortium to consider extending their annual Scottish Retail Excellence Awards to include a category on ‘waste prevention’.

3. CONSUMERS

Consumer decisions play a central role in determining the amount of household waste that is generated. We need to ensure that consumers understand the waste implications of their purchases and know the alternatives to disposing of items which are still useable. Respondents to the consultation were very much in favour of raising consumer awareness of issues such as excess packaging and unwanted mail and empowering them to challenge retailers and other providers of goods and services.

The ‘Sort-It’ tool, developed by SWAG, provides comprehensive information on opportunities to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost waste (www.sort-it.org.uk). This information will be enhanced in line with the actions in this plan.

Action 6: SWAG and others to further promote ways in which consumers can consider their purchasing decisions and prevent household waste. For example by:-

- promoting online waste exchanges e.g. Ebay, Freecycle
- promoting the use of charity shops and auctions for unwanted but reusable items
- promoting buying ‘experiences’ rather than gifts
- promoting borrowing / hiring of items

Carrier bags

The majority of retail purchases involve issuing plastic carrier bags. Following withdrawal of the Member’s Bill to introduce a levy on plastic carrier bags the action proposed is based on a voluntary code of practice to reduce the environmental impact of carrier bags.

Action 7: SE to work with the British Retail Consortium, retailers, UK Government and plastics industry to agree a code of practice to reduce the environmental impact of plastic and paper carrier bags by 2008 (equating to **1,000** tonnes per year).

Unwanted Mail

There are a variety of ways of reducing unwanted mail such as signing up for the Mailing Preference Service; opting out of the Royal Mail's door-to-door service for delivering unaddressed mail; ticking the box on the voter registration form so that your details do not appear on the edited version of the electoral register, which anyone can buy; opting to receive utility bills on-line, rather than through the mail; writing to bodies to request that they stop sending you mail; being careful about providing your name and address to bodies who might then add you to their mailing lists.

Action 8: SE / SEPA will take further action with SWAG and others to reduce the amount of unwanted mail delivered to householders by 10% by 2010. We will ensure any code of practice with the Direct Mailing Association extends to Scotland and is publicised.

Action 9: WRAP, SWAG and others to further encourage home composting to increase diversion rates from **8,500** in 2006-07 to **17,000** tonnes by 2007-08 and **24,000** tonnes by 2009-10 (see Annex B). WRAP, SWAG, community groups and others to support Master Composter schemes and to further encourage the use of home food digesters.

Action 10: SE / SEPA to continue to work with SWAG, Local authorities, manufacturers and Community sector groups to reduce the waste impact of nappies (to divert **3,000** tonnes per year).

N.B. SEPA is producing a 'Household Waste Prevention Guide' for local authorities, community groups and others seeking to develop and implement waste prevention projects or campaigns. The guide will be available in March 2007 at: <http://www.sepa.org.uk/nws/prevention/toolkit.htm>

4. COMMUNITIES

Community groups are well placed to promote household waste prevention. They can engage local communities in raising awareness of waste prevention measures through links with existing groups such as youth groups, parent and toddler groups and pensioner groups.

Information from the Community Recycling Network for Scotland (CRNS) suggests that there are significant amounts of goods which could be reused/refurbished which are not being captured from the waste stream at present. Many respondents to the consultation felt that a more strategic approach to reuse should be taken for items such as furniture, paint and carpets.

The following actions are proposed for communities:-

Action 11: SE / SEPA will develop a 'Reuse Framework' with the Community Recycling Network for Scotland (CRNS) and local authorities by Dec 2007. This will include actions such as:-

- encouraging the establishment of local waste exchanges
- improving collection methods for large household items
- improving reuse facilities at recycling centres
- ensuring bulky uplift materials are put to good use
- running a campaign to discourage householders from putting reusable items in the residual waste bin
- consider whether further action can be taken to encourage repair and refurbishment (taking into account WEEE regulations).
- ensuring leftover paint is used e.g. through REPAINT schemes
- encouraging further reuse of goods such as furniture, carpets, mattresses etc
- learning from experience in other jurisdictions e.g. Flanders
- encouraging retailers and the community sector / social economy organisations to work together
- considering the establishment of skills training for refurbishment activities

Action 12: SE / SEPA will work with CRNS to encourage the establishment of a further 20 community compost schemes by 2008 diverting an additional **500** tonnes. This will be done in line with existing regulations and involve volunteers where possible (see Annex C). We will also consider what further work can be done in this area.

Action 13: SE will work with Momena to monitor and report the success of projects funded by INCREASE (the Scottish Executive grant scheme for the community recycling sector) in 2006-07, 2007-08 which contribute to household waste prevention. Some of these projects relate to the provision of in-depth advice to householders on what they can do to minimise waste.

Action 14: SE / SEPA to ensure waste prevention messages are mainstreamed in the Ecoschools Programme and other waste awareness / education initiatives.

N.B. To encourage partnership working between local authorities and community groups to divert waste from landfill, guidance has been issued on accessing Strategic Waste Fund support up to a maximum of £150 per tonne (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/19130159/0>). In light of this no further changes to recycling credits are proposed at this time. However, we will consider in due course whether to extend recycling credits to reuse if an appropriate legislative vehicle can be used.

5. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities have a central role to play in influencing household waste generation. The Waste Aware Scotland programme provides a framework for local authorities to promote a variety of reduce and reuse messages. Following the recent improvements in relation to the

collection of recyclate, many authorities have already moved to fortnightly collections of residual waste (which mainly goes to landfill). As well as supporting work on recycling, this also helps to reduce the overall amount of waste collected (eg by encouraging home composting).

Several respondents to the consultation were supportive of the Executive providing advice on the size of residual bins and frequency of collections, although it was acknowledged that local needs would have to be taken into account. Many were also supportive of a review of the existing legislation on the types of waste for which local authorities may make a charge when they collect it. From those commenting, there was majority support for further research to be done on direct variable charging to address issues such as enforcement, impact, cost and technologies.

WRAP run a number of courses for local authority and community sector recycling managers one of which is focused on waste prevention. All the courses are open to Scottish-based bodies. More details can be found on the corporate events section and on the Local Authority pages of the WRAP website (www.wrap.org.uk).

The following actions are proposed for local authorities:-

Action 15: SE will provide advice to local authorities on size of residual bins, frequency of residual collections and use of receptacles for recycling, taking into account local variations.

Action 16: SE, working with SEPA, will review annually the possibility of introducing further landfill bans on materials (Annex D).

Action 17: SE, working with SEPA, will review the existing regulations (the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992) which allow charges to be made by local authorities for the collection of specific types of household waste.

Action 18: SE will issue guidance to local authorities on mainstreaming waste prevention into Service Level Agreements / Contracts.

Action 19: SE will consider further with local authorities and others the role of incentives in recycling / waste prevention.

Action 20: SE will consider, as part of Spending Review 2007, if further resources should be allocated to waste prevention specifically and how resources should be allocated to ensure waste is prevented.

Waste Charging

N.B. Any moves to introduce direct variable charging for household waste will not take place without further full and detailed consultation. SEPA has commissioned a research study on Direct Variable Charging for Waste which will examine issues such as enforcement, impact, cost and technologies. We will continue to monitor progress on waste charging in other areas of the UK / EU.

Local Authority waste

Although not household waste, the Scottish Executive has provided local authorities with resources to enable them to carry out audits of their own waste and draw up internal waste prevention plans. One local authority, for example, has indicated that it can reduce its own waste by around 600 tonnes. If this was replicated across all 32 local authorities, this would suggest a reduction of around **19,200 tonnes**.

SUMMARY

Annex E shows that **260,500** tonnes of household waste would be prevented by implementation of this Action Plan. Measurement of individual action points will be carried out by various means depending on which of our partner organisations are involved. However, the true impact of these measures should be reflected in the local authority waste data collected by SEPA on a quarterly basis.

The commitment to halt waste growth in the National Waste Plan relates to municipal waste i.e. all waste collected by local authorities. We will continue to work with Envirowise and Business Environment Partnership to address the non-household element of municipal waste as well as commercial and industrial waste generally. We will also ensure that data collected by SEPA reflects household and commercial waste arisings separately as far as this is reasonably practicable.

Commitments in this Action Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis in collaboration with our delivery partners. We will also ensure that we share information on waste prevention measures with DEFRA and the other devolved administrations. This Action Plan will contribute to the Scottish Executive's wider objectives on Climate Change and Sustainable Development.

Scottish Executive
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
February 2007

ANNEXES

Annex A – Courtauld Commitment

Annex B – Home Composting

Annex C – Community Composting and regulatory issues

Annex D – Landfill Bans

Annex E – Estimated Tonnage reduction figures for 20 action points

ANNEX A – COURTAULD COMMITMENT

1. In July 2005, 13 grocery retailers representing 92% of the UK grocery market demonstrated their commitment to reducing the amount of packaging and food waste by signing up to WRAP's Courtauld Commitment. The agreement was developed in partnership with DEFRA, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government, the British Retail Consortium, the Scottish Retail Consortium and the Institute of Grocery Distributors.
2. Senior representatives from Asda, Boots, Budgens, the Co-operative Group, Londis, Iceland, Kwik Save, Marks and Spencer, Morrison's, Sainsbury's, Somerfield, Tesco and Waitrose pledged their commitment at executive level to supporting WRAP in achieving its objectives to:-
 - a. Design out packaging waste growth by 2008
 - b. Deliver absolute reductions in packaging waste by March 2010
 - c. Identify ways to tackle the problem of food waste
3. Working in partnership with WRAP, retailers are developing their own individual implementation plans to support delivering these objectives. Several have undertaken research of demonstration projects on packaging optimisation and reducing the food households throw away. Some of these projects have been funded through the Innovation Fund which is dedicated to research and trials to stimulate innovation across the retail sector and reduce household waste.
4. Since the original agreement was signed four major brands – Heinz, Northern Foods, Premier Foods / RHM and Unilever – have also now signed up to the Courtauld Commitment.

ANNEX B - HOME COMPOSTING

1. Home composting is recognised as one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing the amount of waste put out for collection by householders. To be effective, householders need to be provided with full information about how to use their home composting bin and what material can be put into it.
2. The Scottish Executive has supported WRAP's scheme on home composting. In the past 3 years, WRAP, working with local authorities, SWAG and community sector groups, has distributed over 100,000 home composting bins. WRAP have worked closely with SWAG to ensure that accurate information is provided to householders.
3. WRAP estimate that the average diversion for each home composting bin distributed is approximately 160kg per year. WRAP also estimate that the current penetration of home composting in Scotland remains low when compared with the rest of the United Kingdom.
4. In 2006 WRAP distributed 54,000 bins in Scotland reducing the amount of waste put out for collection by an estimated 9,000 tonnes per year.
5. In 2007/08, WRAP intend to work with all local authorities in Scotland, to distribute a further 50,000 home composting bins, reducing the amount of waste put out for collection by an estimated 7,000 – 8,500 tonnes per year.
6. The Scottish Executive is considering if an allowance could be made in the Landfill Allowance Scheme to reflect the full impact of home composting.
7. WRAP will also build on the success of the home composting programme to encourage local Master Composter schemes and consider other enhancements such as the promotion of food digesters.

ANNEX C: COMMUNITY COMPOSTING

1. The Scottish Executive recognises the potentially valuable role that community composting schemes can play to utilise household garden waste, as compost for local use.
2. Currently regulation, through the Waste Management Licensing Regulations Schedule 3 Paragraph 12, allows up to 100 tonnes per annum of material to be composted with no charge. Up to 400 tonnes waste material may be composted with a reduced fee with some restrictions on the type of materials that can be accepted for composting depending on the infrastructure in place at the site. The Scottish Executive propose no changes to this part of the regulations at present as we believe these allow balanced regulatory controls on community composting schemes.
3. Under current regulations compost created in any community compost site remains classified as a waste material, unless the scheme meets an approved composting standard. Currently in Scotland the only recognised compost standard is PAS 100:2005.
4. Compost not complying with the PAS 100 standard must be used in a manner which complies with the Waste Management Licensing Regulations. Normally compost would be spread on land to improve crop yield or aid growth of some plant species. The regulations would usually therefore require that the operator apply for a Schedule 3 Paragraph 7 Waste Management Exemption. These exemptions are fee paying and also require that the compost is tested for quality and also that the receiving soil is tested.
5. To comply with the PAS 100 standard the compost must also undergo quality testing. We recognise that for a small community scheme the costs of either a Paragraph 7 exemption or obtain PAS 100 accreditation may prohibit the scheme getting underway and may be disproportionate to the potential environmental risk posed by such scheme.
6. SEPA in partnership with The Composting Association: Scotland, have completed a study into the quality of compost made at community compost sites which are not accredited under the PAS 100 standard. Once published, the results of these tests will help us decide whether changes can be introduced, which can maximise the potential of community composting schemes, whilst still retaining appropriate regulatory controls when required.

ANNEX D LANDFILL BANS

1. The Landfill (Scotland) Regulations 2003 already lay down that a number of materials cannot be landfilled. These materials include: waste in liquid form, waste which in landfill is explosive, corrosive, oxidising or flammable, infectious clinical waste, chemical substances which are new or not identified and the effects of which on man or on the environment are not known, tyres other than tyres used as engineering material, bicycle tyres and tyres with an outside diameter above 1400mm. In addition, Animal By-Products legislation prohibits retail outlets from sending raw eggs, meat and fish and rare cooked meat, Parma ham and smoked salmon to landfill.
2. Other countries have introduced more widespread landfill bans, often in relation to material which can be recycled, composted or incinerated. In the UK, major landfill bans have been a difficult policy option to pursue, given our heavy reliance on landfill. However, recent moves towards sustainable waste management means that more extensive landfill bans may be appropriate.
3. In the Scottish Ministers' view, further landfill bans, using the powers under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 should be introduced for clear environmental or health reasons or to help divert further waste away from landfill. Before introducing further landfill bans to support the strategic aim of reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill, we would need to be clear that there are alternative ways of dealing with the waste, such as recycling, composting or thermal treatment. In addition, time would have to be given to allow markets to develop and adjust. Consultation would be required. Landfill bans would also need to be enforceable.
4. It could be argued that there is already scope for landfill bans for some materials where there is already a strong recycling or composting market: such materials include clear container glass, scrap metals, green waste, paper/card, plastic bottles, untreated wood and textiles. There might also be scope to ban material which can be re-used (eg second-hand furniture) from being sent to landfill.
5. The Scottish Ministers intend to produce an annual report on the scope to introduce more landfill bans. The first such report will be produced by 31 December 2007.

**ANNEX E – ESTIMATED TONNAGE REDUCTIONS RESULTING FROM
20 ACTION POINTS**

Action	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
1. Sustainable design	0	0	0	1000
2. Product Lifespans	0	0	0	1000
3. Producer responsibility	0	0	0	0
4. Food waste	0	10000	10000	15000
5. Packaging	0	8000	20000	34000
6. Purchasing decisions	0	0	1000	2000
7. Plastic / paper bags	0	1000	1000	1000
8. Unwanted mail	0	4000	6000	8000
9. Home composting	8500	17000	21500	24000
10. Nappies	3000	3000	3000	3000
11. Reuse framework	0	4000	10000	20000
12. Community composting	1000	1000	1500	1500
13. INCREASE waste prevention projects	1000	1000	1000	1000
14. Education / awareness	0	0	0	0
15. Guidance on bin sizes / collection frequency	0	0	0	10000
16. Landfill bans	0	0	0	0
17. Review regulations on charging for other types of waste	0	0	0	0
18. Guidance on SLA's / contracts	0	0	0	0
19. Incentives	0	0	500	1000
20. Spending Review 2007	0	0	0	0
Total each year	13500	49000	75500	122500
Grand Total	260500			

Glossary

CRNS – Community Recycling Network for Scotland

DEFRA – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DTI – Department for Trade and Industry

INCREASE – Investment in Community Recycling and Social Enterprise

NWP – National Waste Plan

SE – Scottish Executive

SEPA – Scottish Environment Protection Agency

SRC – Scottish Retail Consortium

SWAG – Scottish Waste Awareness Group

SWF – Strategic Waste Fund

WEEE – Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

WRAP – Waste and Resources Action Programme

