



Minutes

12th Meeting of the National Waste Prevention Committee

12th March, 2009

Stillorgan Park Hotel, Dublin

Present:

Environmental Protection Agency

Dr. Gerry Byrne (Chairman)

Dr. Jonathan Derham

Andy Fanning

Marian Lambert (Secretariat)

Odile Le Bolloch

Keiron Phillips

Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government

Ronan Mulhall

Jean Clarke

Pat Fenton

Forfás

John Hill

Pharmaceutical Ireland

Michael Gillen

Enterprise Ireland

Fred McDarby

Irish Small and Medium Enterprises

Dr. John Ryan

Health Services Executive

Helen Maher

Chartered Institute of Waste Management

Enda Kiernan

Comhar

Dr. Cathy Maguire

Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment

Nina Brennan

Apologies:

Irish Waste Management Association

Brendan Keane

IBEC

Conor Gouldsbury

Industrial Products

Marion Byron

IDA

Brendan McDonagh

Not in Attendance

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Tom Quinlivan

Irish Farmers Association

Thomas Ryan

Clean Technology Centre

Noel Duffy

Small Firms Association

Des Cummins

Environmental NGOs

Frank Corcoran

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Dr. Gerry Byrne (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed members and new members.

2. **Minutes of meeting – 21st October 2008**

Minutes were adopted without amendment.

3. **Update on National Waste Prevention Programme Projects**

Dr. Byrne advised that the 2007/2008 Annual Report of the National Waste Prevention Programme was published and presented to the Minister in October 2008. A copy of the report was circulated to all members of the National Waste Prevention Committee in October 2008.

Green Hospitality Awards

Dr. Byrne said he is extremely pleased with progress to date. The goal for 2009 is to have 300 hotels participating.

Mr. Keiron Phillips said that since the awards were presented another 50 hotels have applied to join the project. He said that food waste is the next issue to be tackled by hotels in an effort to reduce the amount of food waste. Water saving measures have also resulted in significant savings to hotels.

Dr. Byrne said the savings being made by hotels is considerable (up to €3m). The hope now is that the sector will be able to continue the projects by themselves.

Local Authority Prevention Demonstration (LAPD)

Dr. Byrne said that the original 14 local authorities are continuing with their projects in 2009. He said that local authorities have done very good work with shopping centres. Ms. Odile Le Bolloch added that agency staff had met with local authority co-ordinators on 11th March and reported that the work that has been undertaken is very impressive and covers a wide range of stakeholders and sectors. They demonstrated a commitment to waste prevention and are keen to continue to explore opportunities for waste prevention.

Greenbusiness.ie

Site visits being conducted to help identify specific resource efficiency opportunities. The on-line tools have been field tested and recommendations made for additional changes. Approximately 120 users are registered with greenbusiness.ie at this time.

Repak

Dr. Byrne advised that the original agreement for this project has ended and said that Repak have done some excellent work implementing ideas suggested by the steering group. A meeting is planned with DEHLG and Repak to see how the programme might be continued.

Green Home programme

Dr. Byrne said there are 9,000 households currently participating in the project being implemented by An Taisce.

Green Communities

Dr. Byrne advised that the EPA and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government are currently working on a communications workshop to take place on 27th April in Farmleigh.

PCBs

Dr. Byrne said the current Garda investigation has highlighted the importance of managing PCBs and indeed all hazardous waste.

Dr. Byrne advised that a pod cast dealing with waste prevention based on a chapter on the *2008 Ireland's Environment* report is available at www.nwpp.ie. (An offprint of chapter was circulated to committee members in October 2008). He also advised that the *Prevention Plan 2009-2012* has been published and he thanked committee members who had submitted comments on the draft Plan.

Ms. Jean Clarke asked how greenbusiness.ie is developing. Dr. Byrne said the project began in September. To date 120 businesses are participating. Links with Enterprise Ireland, IDA and Sustainable Energy Ireland are now well established. The aim in 2009 is to get 300 companies to join.

Mr. Phillips said that because of the confidentiality protocols built in to the project, it is difficult to get information regarding specific users. A critical aim is to overcome the perceived cost or "opportunity cost" of getting involved. A small study has been commissioned to determine barriers to scheme. Initial comments from the author identify that opportunity costs of taking part in the scheme are a potential barrier, as well as the issue of companies being unwilling to commit current time and resources for tomorrow's gains, no matter how significant.

Dr. Byrne said that the EPA has linked up with Waterford Chamber of Commerce who are running an EU Funded EMS scheme called "Green Dragon" based in Wales. Waterford Chamber is working to integrate existing businesses into greenbusiness.ie or Green Hospitality Award. Experience has shown that one way of getting sign ups is by more direct intervention of this type.

Dr. Byrne indicated that the EPA is very interested in extending the Green Hospitality Awards to the health sector. Ms. Helen Maher said there is already an awards scheme in place in the HSE however there would be interest in linking with Green Hospitality Awards and LAPD.

Mr. Michael Gillen commented that the Green Hospitality Awards is an excellent programme and asked if there is provision for keeping the project going. Dr. Byrne said that any budget cuts would impact on the programme. Mr. Gillen asked how many businesses as opposed to the public service were participating in the programme. Dr. Byrne advised that it is solely businesses, however, public organisations are involved through their own green teams and LAPD. Mr. Fred McDarby said that 120 companies participating in the greenbusiness.ie project is very good – particularly in the current climate. Mr. Ronan Mulhall said that in the present climate it is hard to grab peoples' attention to get involved. He wondered whether it would be worth investigating using trade organisations or representative bodies to build interest.

Dr. Byrne said that IPPC companies focus mainly on compliance. Mr. Gillen said that so much time is spent on complying with regulations that little time is available for anything else.

Ms. Maher suggested that perhaps a mailshot as a package could be used to see for example how much waste is being generated or how much water is used etc. Ms. Jean Clarke wondered if the web based tool is a good way of determining the level of energy being saved. Mr. Mulhall said the sell has to be on the cost savings. Mr. McDarby said that the pay back time should be shown, for example, in six months. Mr. Phillips said that the value of the savings must be the driver, and that Green Business projects are marketed with this specifically in

mind. Mr. McDarby added that Enterprise Ireland projects were also marketed in the same way, emphasising cost savings and not necessarily environmental benefits.

Dr. John Ryan said that at the moment businesses are worried whether they will be in business in six months time. He said the tool that is there is useful, however the reality is that saying to a business that *'you get the pay back from this in three years'* is not an incentive at this time.

Mr. Pat Fenton noted that prevention programmes are being addressed across the EU as required by the new Waste Framework Directive. Value for money is now a key driver for any public funding.

Dr. Byrne said with Green Homes we have identified significant behavioural changes in individuals. He said NWPP is trying to address a whole range of stakeholders but that if funding is withdrawn the projects will die. He said that the EPA cannot do waste prevention on its own but must involve stakeholders throughout society. Many of the NWPP projects are exploratory in nature as there is no known one way to prevent waste.

4. National Hazardous Waste Management Plan – Implementation

Dr. Byrne said that the NHWMP was published in September 2008, the EPA Board has approved an action plan and budget is in place at present. He said that the National Waste Prevention Committee was originally set up as the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan Implementation Committee. A range of recommendations is set out in the plan. A copy of the NHWMP was circulated to committee members at the last meeting. The DEHLG representatives agreed with recommendations 1 and 2 affirming the oversight role of the NWPC and nominating the EPA to co-ordinate the implementation of the Plan.

Dr. Byrne said that the EPA will be working with Civic Amenity Sites and will develop, in conjunction with the sector, Best Practice Guidance for garages. Dr. Ryan said that whatever guidance is produced must be 'user friendly'. A project on Farm Hazardous Waste will also be undertaken. Mr Gillen queried if pharmachem companies needed attention given their Responsible Care programme. Dr. Byrne commented that NWPP needs willing stakeholder partners in order to prevent waste.

Mr. Fenton asked how soon will the budgetary situation be known. Dr. Byrne said that the budget will dictate whether projects can continue. The budget was approved by the Minister but with the current position in relation to public finances this could change.

Dr. Byrne said that the EPA would like to work with the HSE. Ms. Maher said the HSE would like the LAPD targeting the HSE. She said that the Waste Prevention Plan doesn't address issues across the public service. She said an EU Directive is nearing completion in relation to Green Procurement. Dr. Byrne said that a separate meeting with the HSE will be required to address the issues highlighted by Ms. Maher.

5. Presentation by Dr. Cathy Maguire on the work of Comhar

Dr. Cathy Maguire gave a presentation on the work of Comhar. She said Comhar are delighted to have representation on the National Waste Prevention Committee. She outlined the 2009-2011 Work Programme of Comhar - a handout of the Programme was circulated at the meeting. She sought comments on the specific projects for 2009.

Dr. Byrne thanked Dr. Maguire for her presentation and commented that the work of the NWPP committee contributes to the policy objectives of Comhar.

Ms. Clarke commented in regard to the Green Procurement Project – she said RPS Market Development Group need to be made aware of European energy policies. She said a lot of documentation is already available.

Ms. Maher commented that the ordinary person may not be aware of what Comhar are achieving.

6. A.O.B

Mr. McDarby commented that the National Waste Report is very useful in providing data on waste generation and management in Ireland but given the timeframe in publishing the report he queried whether it would be possible to publish advanced estimates so that the amounts of waste were not a surprise when they were published. Ms. Le Bolloch explained that the way the data is currently collected and collated bottom line figures are not available until September at the earliest every year so it would be unlikely that advanced estimates could be produced. The project is continuously looking for ways of getting the data out sooner and the new approach taken this year and future developments in relation to waste acceptance criteria at landfills may result in the data being available sooner.

Dr. Byrne closed the meeting by thanking those in attendance and said date for next meeting will be advised.