



Mr. Kevin Swift
Regional Waste Coordinator,
Connaught-Ulster Region Waste Management Office,
Mayo County Council,
Aras An Chontae,
Castlebar,
County Mayo.

3rd July 2014

**Re: Waste Management Plan for the Connaught-Ulster Region
Strategic Environmental Assessment - Draft Scoping Report**

Dear Mr. Swift,

The Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA) has reviewed the above referenced Draft SEA Scoping Report dated 3rd June 2014 and wishes to make the following comments.

Firstly, as you are no doubt aware, the EU Commission yesterday issued a Communication entitled "*Towards a circular economy: A zero waste programme for Europe*". We expect that the scope of the SEA should be revised or expanded to take account of this new programme.

Secondly, we are very concerned about Section 2.2 of your draft document, which addresses the area of "*Key Pressures*". This section appears to contain pre-judgement and bias with regard to several issues, including the areas of waste collection and waste treatment. The IWMA has been concerned for quite some time that the new regional waste management plans would contain such prejudice and bias and we outlined some of our concerns in a letter to Minister Hogan in November 2013 (see Attachment 1).

At the briefing session held in Mullingar in March 2014, we were assured by the Regional Coordinators that the regional/local authorities would write the plans, not the consultants, yet the commentary on "*Key Pressures*" in Section 2.2 appears somewhat consistent with the comments in the article in The Sunday Business Post in November 2013, as detailed in the attached letter to the Minister.

In particular, we have difficulty with the following statements in Section 2.2:

“There is fragmented household waste collection services with low rates of coverage particularly in rural areas leading to increased illegal dumping and/or backyard burning. In rural areas where no kerbside collection service is offered, viable alternatives need to be provided.”

IWMA Comment – We strongly contest this statement and suggest that it is biased against the current household waste collection system in several ways. The scoping document pre-determines that there are low rates of collection coverage, particularly in rural areas, due to the privatized nature of the household waste collection market. We are informed by our Members that waste collection companies offer kerbside waste collection services in all but the most remote parts of the country.

DKM economic consultants prepared an independent report on household waste collection in Ireland in 2012 that included the geographic extent of the collection network. This report was submitted to the DECLG in 2012 and we suggest that it be consulted prior to any further statements on the extent of household waste collection coverage in Ireland.

Our members have also been proactive in introducing dual compartment collection vehicles, with the specific intent of reducing costs and lowering prices to customers in rural areas.

The statement in the draft scoping document misrepresents the problem of uncollected household waste, which in our view should be attributed to the fact that householders can ‘opt out’ of a waste collection service and can engage in illegal dumping and backyard burning with little fear of enforcement action. If the option to ‘opt out’ is successfully removed and illegal activities such as fly-tipping and backyard burning are properly enforced, there would be little or no uncollected household waste, so the scope of the SEA should focus on that issue rather than focusing on an incorrect assumption that a large number of householders do not have access to a kerbside waste collection service because of the current household waste collection system.

The statements on waste collection in the Draft SEA Scoping Document are clearly inconsistent with the information provided by the IWMA in our submission of 19th December 2013, where we addressed the issue of uncollected household waste as follows.

“Uncollected Household Waste

The IWMA supports National Policy in relation to uncollected waste as summarised on Page 6 of A Resource Opportunity, as follows:

“all householders will be obliged to demonstrate that they are availing of an authorised waste collection service or are otherwise managing their waste in an environmentally acceptable manner, in accordance with legislation and the provisions of waste management plans, in order to combat illegal fly-tipping, littering and backyard burning of waste by a minority of households, and to avoid the compliant majority having to bear the costs of dealing with the consequences of such activities.”

There are two scenarios whereby household waste remains uncollected. First, there are parts of the country where no collection service is available due to accessibility issues and second, there are householders that refuse to take-up a service even when one passes their door.

Some roads in rural Ireland are unsuitable for waste collection vehicles, so it is inevitable that some households will never have a waste truck passing their door. In these situations, some waste companies (with the agreement of relevant local authorities) provide alternative

arrangements for such householders to deliver their waste to communal points and some CA sites accept residual as well recyclable waste. The extent of this issue is limited and can be managed with a little flexibility by waste companies and local authorities, with respect to secure and sanitary drop-off locations.

There is no evidence to suggest that accessible areas are being deprived of kerbside waste collection services and the IWMA believes that Ireland currently has full coverage household waste collection in all, except the most inaccessible, areas.

The second issue is a greater problem and must be addressed. It is recognised by local authorities and waste companies alike, that many householders are passed by one or more waste collection service, but these householders refuse to avail of a collection service.

Historically in Ireland, household waste was collected by local authorities without direct charging to customers, so this issue did not arise. However, the introduction of direct charges for household waste in accordance with the polluter pays principle has had positive and negative effects. On a positive note, householders are encouraged to prevent and reduce the production of waste by methods such as selective purchasing, reuse in the home, home composting, etc.

Differential charging between residual, recyclable and compostable wastes also encourages source segregation of wastes in the home and this assists with the achievement of recycling targets for household waste.

The OECD in a 2008 report¹ stated the following in relation to the charging system to householders for waste management in Ireland:

“With respect to the pricing of waste collection, Ireland’s extensive use of volume-based waste collection charges and the market pricing of services seems to have worked well once the principle of user charges was accepted. Ireland’s application of the “polluter-pays” principle would probably be a good model for other countries to follow. It has given Ireland a relatively high cost recovery rate for waste management services, and has probably been an added incentive for household recycling.”

The negative effect of direct charging to the householder is that many householders see an opportunity to avoid paying for their waste management and illegally dispose of their waste rather than pay for its collection and treatment.

One obvious solution to this issue is the requirement for Statutory Declaration Forms to be completed by householders that do not utilise a waste collection service. Such a form would require householders to declare their method of waste management, where they do not avail of an authorised waste collection service. Failure to make the declaration or provision of false information would both be deemed an offence under the relevant legislation. The waste industry can assist in identifying houses that have no waste collection service.

A number of local authorities have sought to resolve this issue by the introduction and enforcement of bye-laws. A co-ordinated approach is clearly required to address this issue.”

We suggest that our comments that were previously over-looked are now taken on board in the final version of the SEA Scoping document.

¹ Ireland, Towards an Integrated Public Service, Public Management Reviews, OECD, 2008.

“The region, at the end of 2010, remained over reliant on landfill for disposable of municipal waste streams;”

IWMA Comment – The EPA has compiled accurate landfill data for 2011, 2012 and 2013 that shows a major reduction in landfill disposal of municipal wastes for the 2010 to 2013 period, so this statement is very much out of date and should be reviewed.

“There is a national deficit of thermal treatment capacity to deal with residual and residual biodegradable waste going to landfill or for export.”

IWMA Comment – This statement is biased towards ‘*thermal treatment*’ infrastructure ahead of other forms of residual waste treatment such as MBT, autoclaving, gasification and pyrolysis². At the briefing session in Mullingar in March 2014, we made the point strongly that the RWMPs should not be specific on type and location of necessary infrastructure as this can prove very restrictive in an ever evolving sector with constant technological developments. We suggest that the ‘*thermal treatment*’ should be removed from this statement.

We also wish to comment on some of the statements included in “*Table 5-2 : Draft SEA Environmental Objectives*”, as follows:

“Other Recovery

The provision of over 1 million tonnes of residual waste treatment capacity which can and generate energy as a by-product through a combination of 320-350K tonnes at existing facilities at Indaver Waste-to-Energy and 2 Cement Kilns and the coming on stream of Poolbeg, a possible WtE plant in Cork and a possible third cement kiln.”

IWMA Comment – Similar to earlier statements, this statement is biased towards waste-to-energy facilities and thermal treatment, ahead of other forms of residual waste treatment such as MBT, autoclaving, gasification, pyrolysis, etc. There are several proposed MBT plants with planning consent in Ireland that have been overlooked here (Bord Na Mona, Panda, Clean Ireland). We also question why the Poolbeg facility is named and other proposed facilities are not, as this also appears to show bias. We suggest that WtE, cement kilns and MBT all have a part to play and all are valid technologies for treatment of residual waste. The RWMP should not be used to promote one facility ahead of its competitors.

In our submission to the RWMP in December 2013, we made the following comments in this regard.

“We suggest that the new RWMPs should recognise that provision of future waste infrastructure in Ireland will be predominantly market-led. The Government must provide the appropriate fiscal measures to encourage provision of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate movement of waste up the waste hierarchy and improve Ireland’s self-sufficiency in this area. For these fiscal measures to be effective, the RWMPs must not be specific with regard to the provision of infrastructure at specified locations and/or using specified technologies. Successful fiscal

² Gasification and pyrolysis may be considered forms of thermal treatment, but some new technologies are not necessarily subject to the Waste Incineration Directive, so may not fall under this heading.

instruments will encourage the market to react by providing the best infrastructure at the best locations, in accordance with county development plan policies.

The data in each RWMP will be based on a moment in time and the Irish waste management market is very dynamic and market driven. Overly prescriptive statements on infrastructure provision are more likely to prevent new infrastructure than encourage it as companies lose and gain market share in ever evolving geographical markets. Companies are likely to select locations and technologies (within appropriate levels of the European waste hierarchy) that suit their businesses rather than any which could be identified in regional plans.”

These comments were re-iterated by our members at the briefing session in Mullingar in March 2014, so we are disappointed to see that our contributions are failing to make a noticeable impact on this issue. The previous plans failed to deliver the necessary residual waste treatment infrastructure, so we respectfully suggest that pro-active engagement with the waste industry is needed now to ensure that previous failures are not repeated.

“Disposal

The rate of exporting of residual waste continues to gather momentum and increase annually.”

IWMA Comment – Residual waste currently exported from Ireland is sent abroad for recovery not disposal.

I hope that our submission is helpful and I look forward to further engagement during the preparation of the Plans.

Yours Sincerely,



Conor Walsh

IWMA Secretary
7 Dundrum Business Park,
Windy Arbour
Dublin 14

Email. cwalsh@slrconsulting.com

Tel. 01-2964667

Attachment 1

IWMA Letter sent to Minister Hogan in November 2013



Minister Phil Hogan TD
Department of the Environment,
Community and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.

18th November 2013

Re: Implementing Waste Management Policy

Dear Minister Hogan,

The IWMA has welcomed and embraced the new Waste Management Policy “*A Resource Opportunity*” published in July 2012. Our members have been very active in improving waste collection services in Ireland, in line with achieving the policy statement’s objectives, including implementation of the following measures over the past 15 months:

- Introduction of a Customer Charter agreed by all our members
- Increased and ongoing roll-out of organic (food waste) bins
- Engagement with the National Consumer Agency to ensure that household customers are treated fairly by our members
- Consultation and agreement with Dublin City Council on designated days for household waste collection in Dublin City, as provided for in the new Dublin City Council Bye-Laws. This means that, in all areas of Dublin City outside the Central Commercial District, there will be only one day in the week when bins will be presented for collection, compared to seven days currently. This is a big step forward in cleaning up the look of household collections.
- Engagement with your Department on implementation of your new Policy, including a progressive discussion on mandated service levels and pay-by-use charging systems
- Engagement with the National Waste Collection Permit Office to assist with data collection and policy implementation
- Engagement with the EPA on the area of enforcement of unauthorised waste collection
- Continuation of Waiver schemes in many areas without seeking recompense from the State.

In the context of these and other on-going efforts by our members, we are surprised and disappointed to read the attached article published in the Sunday Business Post on 10th November last. The article extensively quotes a consultant, whose firm was appointed in 2011 by the Department as “*National Waste Co-ordinator*” and is expected to be in the running for a key role in the drafting of the new Regional Waste Management Plans.

The quotes in the article indicate that the consultant is now calling for competitive tendering of household waste collection in Ireland. This is clearly contrary to current waste management policy and undermines performance improvements in the household waste collection sector.

The consultant is also credited with the following statement:

“Ireland is the only country in the EU that allows holders of waste to self-manage their waste, which has led to a range of environmental and social issues which are a burden on society such as uncollected waste; backyard burning; inequitable waiver schemes and quality of service levels.”

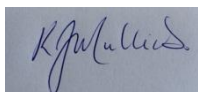
This statement is not true and we suggest that it represents an unfair and biased view of private sector waste collection in Ireland. The issues described above are long term problems that existed prior to the extensive privatisation of the household waste collection market and our members are supporting your Department and the EPA in combating these issues.

In light of these public statements, we ask that you confirm that the new Regional Waste Management Plans will be based on the policy document *“A Resource Opportunity”*, which envisages retention of the current household waste collection market structure with enhanced contributions from the private waste sector to achieve the policy objectives. We recognise that a mid-term review of the implementation of the policy statement is likely to include a formal review of the waste collection market, including a report by the Competition Authority in 2016, but the outcome of this review must not be predetermined at this time.

Our members are participating fully with the relevant State Agencies to implement Government Policy and the attached statements from a consultant, whose firm is engaged by the Department, have the potential to de-stabilise the waste market, introduce uncertainty for investors and impede our progress in raising standards in waste management in Ireland.

I look forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely,



Kieran Mullins

Chairman

Irish Waste Management Association
7 Dundrum Business Park,
Windy Arbour
Dublin 14.

cc.

- **Mr. Philip Nugent**, Principal Officer - Waste Policy, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Customs House, Dublin 1.
- **Mr. Owen Keegan**, City Manager, Dublin City Council, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8.