



Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee

Mark Filley  
DEFRA  
Waste Data Consultation  
Area 5/C1, Ashdown House  
123 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1E 6DE

7 January 2005

Dear Mr Filley

### **WIP - Development of a National Waste Data Strategy**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation paper on the development and implementation of a three-year strategy to improve data across all waste streams in the UK. The comments below are sent on behalf of the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC). LARAC is an association of over 430 local authorities, drawn from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, whose waste management and recycling professionals co-ordinate and operate waste management services for their authorities. Membership is drawn from all types of authority including statutory Waste Collection (WCA), Waste Disposal (WDA) and Unitary Authorities. As a national organisation LARAC would like these comments to be considered as representative of the general feelings of all UK local authorities and considered by DEFRA accordingly.

LARAC has been pleased to contribute to the WIP Waste Data Advisory Panel and the preceding WasteDataFlow Steering Group. As such LARAC feel that they have already contributed greatly to the debate and will be in a position to continue doing so through its role on the Advisory Panel.

Overall LARAC welcomes the aims and objectives of a co-ordinated and detailed waste data collection and dissemination system and feels it is right that DEFRA and the Environment Agency (EA) takes the lead in this respect.

Unlike other waste streams a data collection system for domestic waste in the form of the WasteDataFlow system is already in place as stated in the consultation document. Although it has been successfully implemented LARAC does feel that there is further work that needs to be done to make the system more user friendly to ensure that local authorities can input data



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in an effective and efficient manner. This needs to be drawn into any emerging data strategy.

LARAC is slightly concerned about issue of the ongoing costs of the data system and how this is to be financed. LARAC would assume that the stated savings from the reductions in surveys would be ploughed back into the data system. If further finance were needed we would not want this burden to fall to local authorities, which are currently faced with ever tightening budgetary pressures. One possible solution would be to include an element for the data system within any site licence fees, as this is where the large majority of the data will be captured.

Local authorities themselves are having to provide extra resources to meet the requirements of WasteDataFlow that far exceeds the previous survey completions. This aspect may need recognition in future funding arrangements for local authorities.

Any changes to the WasteDataFlow system to make it compatible with the emerging 'Hub' need to be done in such a manner that still retain the relevance of the data to local authorities, for example for use with the BVPI's. There is also a danger that in linking WasteDataFlow with the Hub focus will be lost from the input end and this must remain as easy as possible so that it is useable by waste professionals rather than by IT professionals.

We hope these comments are helpful and whilst not specific to your suggested questions are reflective of the issues that are of key concern to local authorities.

Yours sincerely

Lee Marshall  
Vice Chair, LARAC