

FELLOWS ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS UPDATE – 25TH APRIL 2012

1.1 Schemes

Energy Efficiency Deployment Office

The Energy Efficiency Deployment Office (EEDO) has been formed as a 50-strong department within DECC. The EEDO will pull together expertise to continue supporting the Green Deal, Smart Meters & Renewable Heat but will primarily develop an Energy Efficiency Strategy to identify the potential for improvements across the economy. The strategy will be unveiled towards the end of 2012 and begins with an eight week “[Call for Evidence](#)” ending 4 April. Ed Davey set up the EEDO after a Siemens survey of 600 companies showed negative results related to faith in energy efficiency investment.

AD Start-up Firm Attracts Investors

Tamar Energy was officially launched on 27 February to build 100MW of organic waste-fuelled green power capacity through 40 Anaerobic Digestion plants over the next five years after receiving £65m of investment from a number of sources such as Sainsbury's and the Prince of Wales. Tamar Energy will be led by Alan Lovell, a previous chief-exec of Infinis (producers of 10% of the UK's RE), and has acquired Adgen Energy for their strong, AD-experienced management team. Ed Davey welcomes the organisation for attracting investment from “familiar high-street names and big international investors”.

ADBA Service for Farmers

The Anaerobic Digestion and Biogas Association are to launch a free service for farmers to consult landowners whether or not anaerobic digestion is a viable business option. AD is an opportunity to improve yields, create new income and generate renewable energy as well as to reduce dependence on traditional fertilisers and transport fuels. At the same time, it keeps farmers farming.

CRC 12-Week Consultancy

Energy Secretary Ed Davey is trying to save the Carbon Reduction Commitment by reducing red-tape to make the scheme more simplified. The unpopular CRC is costing businesses too much by enforcing a wide range of compliance issues. The consultancy period comes in light of the 2012 Budget release which stated CRC will be replaced by a less cumbersome Green Tax if Government fails to develop simplifications. DECC claims the changes under consultation will save businesses 2/3 of administrative costs adding up to £330million up to 2030.

1.2 Documents Released

1.3 Waste and Recycling News

End of Waste Criteria for Glass, Paper & Copper Expected in May

The European Commission's Technical Adaption Committee is expected to agree criteria for the point at which paper, glass and copper are no longer considered as waste at a meeting on 4 May. Initial criteria were forwarded in March 2011 and member states have been notified of the upcoming vote.

The glass criteria will only allow glass that is sent for re-melt but 80% of collected glass should meet the criteria following a proper sort and treatment. Commingled glass will also be included should it produce a cullet with high enough standard. The paper criteria are set to exclude layered waste papers, such as those in drinks cartons, due to the high proportion of non-paper materials and the copper criteria are set to include a tolerance level between 2-5% for non-copper material impurity.

UK Paper Recycling Rates Hit New High

After a 5% increase from the previous year, the UK's paper recycling rates have risen to 78.7% according to the Confederation of Paper Industries. Collection of used paper stood at 8 million tonnes (up 0.4% from 2010) but consumption of products made from board and paper was down 4.2%



Poor Take-up of WRAP's Business Recycling and Waste Services Commitment

The commitment announced by WRAP in October to introduce an increase in best practices for the collection of business waste and recycling has, disappointingly, only attracted seven councils over the first five months of the scheme. The commitment was introduced to ensure that SMEs experience negligible disruption when attempting to do the "right thing" by maximising their recycling stream.

CRR - Defra's Alterations to Waste Regulations "Not adequate"

Following Defra's proposals to change the definition of separate and commingled waste collections and the circumstances with which commingled collections are permitted, reprocessors and environmental campaigners have, again, slammed the wording of the regulation. The Resource Association has expressed concern that Defra and the Welsh Government have not gone far enough when allowing commingled collections instead of separate collections where the "appropriate" quality standards are met. The initial rWFD, used the term "necessary" to describe quality standards and it is thought that Defra have taken the focus off quality in order to prevent the need for total reorganisation of collection systems throughout the UK.

Scrap Metal Cash Deals Banning to Threaten Charity Deals

Government's plan to ban cash deals for scrap metal, part of the Legal Aid, Sentencing & Punishment of Offenders Bill, could have a negative effect upon charities which raise money through collections of used drink cans or milk bottle-tops. The ban is being considered to put a stop to waste metal theft but the sale of aluminium is generally very cheap so is rarely involved in theft. Defra & BIS have met the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation about the inclusion of an AI-exemption from the ban.

The UK Rises Up the European Recycling League Table

Eurostat has released the 2010 figures for cross-Europe municipal waste recycling showing that the UK has overtaken Norway to move into 11th place, per capita. The UK recycled 24% of waste per head and composted a further 14% to give an overall recycling rate of 39%. The 129kg waste recycled per head was a small increase on the 128kg per head of 2009 and is above the 121kg/head European average. Our composting rate of 73kg/head is marginally above the 72kg/head European average. Britain produces more waste per head (521kg) than the average European (502kg) but the figure is down from 2009 (529kg) as is the majority of Europe's. The main worry from the statistics is the over reliance of some countries of incineration (average 108kg/head) with countries like Sweden (226kg) and Denmark (365kg) likely to burn re-usable and recyclable materials.

Greater Manchester Expands recycling Targets

The GM Waste Disposal Authority has outlined a new series of targets based on increasing the rate of quality material provision for closed loop recycling. A target of 50% for recycling and composting had previously been set for 2015 but this has been extended to include 90% diversion from landfill and a 50%. Additionally, ambitious targets have been set to reduce household waste by 50% for 2025 as well as increase recycling to 60% by the same time.

Visionary Panel's Advice for Ban on Food Waste to Landfill

To avoid short term chaos, the "Visionary Panel" has advised that a proper plan be put in place prior to any enforced landfill bans being put in place. Food waste is an important resource which is wasted when left to rot in landfill sites but the waste stream is problematic when considering the producers and collectors. The Visionary Panel hope to develop a Roadmap to eradicate the use of landfill for food waste by 2020. The Panel is led by Lord Deben who, as Energy Minister, introduced landfill tax.

Competition for E-Waste Tracing

Innocentive are running a competition to find methods of tracing e-waste through the waste stream to final destination. As a main block to the environmental performance of the electronics industry, the competition aims to identify scalable systems which allow customers to trace the progress of individual parts and sub-systems of their e-waste from the customer drop-off site to the materials' final destinations. The systems can include processes and devices already in use; however, current processes and technologies make tracing far too difficult so a level of invention is expected in all submissions. A prize pot of \$10,000 is available for prizes of at least \$1,000.



Mexico's Waste Management Mistake

Mexico has closed the Bordo Poniente landfill site a little too soon. 4,000t of waste arrived at its doors everyday making it an extensive site, even on global scales. However, the Mexican government closed the landfill site without putting in place any alternate management options for the city's waste. Waste is therefore now piling up adjacent to the site and within the city, near famous landmarks.

Cashless Metals Trading

There is to be an introduction of a cashless system for trading scrap metals later this year which will combine a strengthening of criminal sanctions and wider police powers. The measures will be further supported by a revamp of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act where the introduction of strong licensing requirements will bring the industry into the modern world to professionalise a business which is open to unlawful tax-free cash deals and metal thievery due to the low level of regulation.

1.4 Energy News

Solar FiT Appeal Thrown out of Court

The long-running saga surrounding solar FiT incentives seems to be coming to a close after the court rejected Government's appeal over the ruling that its actions were unlawful. The result of this ruling is that households and companies who installed solar panels prior to 4 March will receive a full pay-back to match the level of incentive before the Government tried to cut them in December by 50% ahead of the end of the consultancy period. Government focus now moves on to RHIs and The Green Deal.

Further Political Anti-Wind Attitudes

An "anti-wind" letter has been sent to the Prime Minister having been signed by more than 100 back-benchers calling for the £500m paid in subsidies for wind power generation to be cut each year. There is belief that this letter won't diminish Government's support of the renewable energy form due to the support received from the PM, George Clegg and Ed Davey (newly appointed Energy Secretary). For example, just this month, Davey pledged commitment to open of the world's largest off-shore wind farm, near Walney Island, Cumbria, consisting of 102 turbines capable of powering 320,000 homes.

British Public Back Wind Power

Research by Ipsos MORI has found the majority of the British public to be in favour of wind power. 28% of the poll's voters stated they were strongly in favour of wind power in comparison to the mere 3% who said they were strongly opposed. 20% said the appearance on the landscape of turbines was completely acceptable with 57% accepting the look. This widespread support is not often shared by the media who have just announced the creation of a new anti-wind body, National Opposition to Windfarms (NOW), to oppose wind farms construction by tackling policy.

Reaseheath College AD Plant Begins Pumping Slurry

The Reaseheath AD plant funded by the NWDA and RDPE has started feeding slurry through its main Continuously Stirred Tank Reactor (CSTR) for the first time. The facility is funded to provide information regarding the running of an on-farm facility for the benefit of the industry by educating prospective AD managers of real experiences difficult to predict without practical involvement. The college has ~200 cows housed throughout the year, grows energy crops and uses solid manure for the digester. They have started a monthly blog in the college magazine to inform readers of the facility's progress.

1.5 Vehicle News

VW Pledge CO₂ Cuts

In a U-turn on previous statements, Volkswagen has pledged to cut CO₂ emissions from its cars by 2030 compared to a 2006 baseline. Initially VW seemed unwilling to pledge commitment towards an EU Automobiles Emissions Target but this new pledge places the company 10g below the 130gCO₂ per km target. VW's proposals specify a 25% drop in the environmental impact of its factories (2010 baseline) and a 10-15% increase in efficiency for new vehicles as well a 40% cut in GHG emissions.



Second Hand RCVs Likely to be the Answer for a Return to Weekly Collections?

Outsourced refurbished RCVs are likely to gain in popularity, if the UK returns to weekly collections, due to the lack of available budget for councils to buy new machinery with. Fully refurbished RCVs are two-thirds the cost of a new machine and are less time-consuming to purchase when compared to the potential research time and long wait for a suitably affordable deal on new vehicles to emerge.

Funding for Green Bus Network

The Department of Transport has unveiled plans to increase the number of low-carbon buses across the country. £101m has been made available, of which £70m will go to local authorities under the Better Bus Area (BBA) Fund to promote growth, partnerships and passenger numbers. The remainder will go to the Government's Green Bus Fund to reduce emissions and help councils switch to hybrid-electric, electric or gas buses. The money will be spent on 439 low carbon buses.

Honda Mass-Production RE Metal Extraction

Honda are to run the first ever mass-production process to extract Rare Earth metals from used car parts. They have teamed with Japan Metals & Chemicals Co. to recover metals from the nickel-metal hydride batteries used in hybrid vehicles all around the world. A recovery rate of 80% is expected with the metals to be used in the next line of nickel-metal hydride batteries on the production line. It is the first time that extraction hasn't been performed at a small scale plant or in experimental conditions.

Trek Bicycle Announce Carbon Recycling Pilot Results

One of the world's leading bike manufacturers, Trek Bicycling, has announced that its pilot trial in Wisconsin, USA has recovered >31,750kg of carbon fibres. The recycled material is collected from scraps, non-compliant frame materials and reclaimed warranty claims and is reused in reinforced thermoplastic applications in the aerospace, automotive and medical industries. Carbon frames have only recently become common so the problem of carbon waste has not been encountered previously.

1.6 Other News

Call for Waste Management Tax Relief

The ESA has called on the Treasury to include tax relief for companies developing sustainable waste management infrastructure into the next budget. These "Green Infrastructure Investment Allowances" could offset the costs of financing recycling and energy recovery facilities by reducing the amount of corporation tax for companies with assets that do not qualify for other forms of tax relief. It could be structured to ensure that businesses pay the tax rate on their profits and would replace the Industrial Building Allowances which used to support waste infrastructure but have gradually been phased out.

DECC Embarrassment

The Department of Energy & Climate Change was named and shamed by the Sun which reported that the porch light at its headquarters is left on 24 hours a day. The department has since released a statement saying that they are to fit a daylight-sensor to help save energy and cut costs.

1.7 Personnel

Stephen Pathirana Leaves SZW Post

The head of Scottish Zero Waste, Stephen Pathirana has left his post with the Scottish Government. Looking back at his time in charge, he reflects with pride the progress made since initially penning Scotland's Zero Waste plan in August 2009. Very little groundwork had been set and Scotland was playing catch-up with the rest of the UK. Unlike many civil service positions, there was a real opportunity to explore different options and start at the very beginning.

Working with the passionate people in Scottish waste management, the scale of the challenge has become apparent and appreciated by the masses and tough targets have been set. The company still performs marginally less well than England and Wales but great changes to the nation's waste industry have been put in motion and they are well beyond the position they were in back in 2009.

