



Dublin Waste to Energy Project



waste wise

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Experts divided on solution



Recycling and Rhythms

ON A POSITIVE NOTE!

As part of the commitment to achieving their 60% recycling target, Dublin City Council has embarked on one of its most imaginative and exciting recycling initiatives to date. Recycling Rhythms is a project for Primary Schools that incorporates waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling with the joy of making music.

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No fewer than seven well known experts, highly respected nationally and internationally, accepted invitations from the Community Interest Group to speak at the Group's meetings in February and March. The Group wanted to hear the experts' opinions and take the opportunity to ask them questions about Dublin City Council's proposal to site a thermal treatment plant on the Poolbeg peninsula.

As often happens, all the experts didn't agree with each other and Members of the CIG and observers at the meeting didn't agree with all the experts. The meetings were really lively and so interesting, they went on a lot longer than usual. Here is an overview of what each expert felt:



Dr Jim Wilson
"...undertake studies in Dublin Bay, in advance of any thermal treatment plant being built.."



Hendrik Van der Kamp
"CIG members have a real opportunity to get involved in the planning process before the statutory process begins in 2004".



Karin Dubsy
"...do we need an incinerator / thermal treatment plant at all, if we are at the peak of waste generation now?"



Frank McDonald
"..enforcing waste management legislation is the key to making progress".



Prof Yvonne Scannell
"...the CIG process allows you to influence what will happen and individuals can enforce environmental law".



Martin Hederman Robinson
"The EU priority is to divert biodegradable waste from landfill".



Dr Conor Skehan
"...have realistic expectations, know what you can expect from the EIS process".

More details of all seven experts on the next page ▶

INSIDE:

Detailed chart for the timeline of the Waste to Energy Project

Facts and figures on how we fair against our European neighbours

New waste policy will charge by weight

Community Interest Group hears from experts

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At the meeting in February Dr. Jim Wilson, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Science, Trinity College and Karin Dubsy, Environmentalist and Director of Coastwatch Ireland both gave short presentations and answered questions from the Group and observers in the audience. At the meeting in March speakers included Prof Yvonne Scannell from Trinity College; Dr. Conor Skeehan CAAS Environmental Services; Hendrik Van der Kamp from the DIT; Frank McDonald from the Irish Times and Martin Hedemann Robinson from the EU Commission.



NEED FOR STUDIES IN ADVANCE

Dr Jim Wilson, Senior Lecturer Environmental Science, Trinity College, stressed the importance of undertaking studies in Dublin Bay, in advance of any thermal treatment plant being built in the area, to determine the existing contaminant loads on the Bay and the assimilative capacity. He spoke of the economic, scientific and recreational value of the estuary and the Bay and said the impact of a modern incinerator on the marine environment would be relatively slight. Far-field impact would come through air emissions to the atmosphere as the prevailing winds blow out into the Irish sea.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR SCOPING

Karin Dubsy, Coastwatch Ireland wondered if an incinerator/thermal treatment plant is needed at all, since we could be at the peak of waste generation now. As recycling levels continue to increase, we could be planning for a large amount of waste that won't be there any more. Some incinerators work brilliantly, "the technology is there," but she asked how our local authorities would act if there were a problem. Our history of monitoring, compliance and trust is not good. She advised the Members of the CIG that neither the EU Habitats Directive nor the Bird Directive is likely to be of help in any campaign to stop the proposed project. She also said that nature can be helped and suggested that local residents should ensure that when the impact on the site is studied, the former natural status of the site should be considered as the baseline for any study. This is a very important recommendation to the CIG, which should be included in the scoping for environmental impact assessment.

ANYONE IN IRELAND CAN ENFORCE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Prof Yvonne Scannell lectures in Environmental Law and Policy at Trinity College. She agreed to come to the meeting because she thought the CIG process "very interesting". She

told the Members of the Group that the CIG is a process which allows them to influence what will happen and they could ensure advantages for their community in doing so. She advised the Group to concentrate on the future rather than on what has or has not happened in the past. "You're in a policy forum which allows you to influence what happens from now on," she said.

Prof Scannell said Case Law shows that traffic and property values are the two main issues on which proposals such as this are fought. She identified the following areas which could be useful for local people who want to fight the proposed project;

- *Traffic*
- *Neighbourhood amenities*
- *Heritage considerations*
- *Individual and public authority enforcement*
- *Air Pollution*

"Anyone in Ireland can enforce environmental law", Professor Scannell concluded. "We are unique in Europe in that anyone can appeal against planning permission or the granting of a waste license."

'WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE HERE' IS THE BASIS FOR FIGHTING PROJECT

Conor Skeehan, Managing Director of CAAS Environmental Services Ltd and Environmental Impacts Services Ltd specialises in the prediction and evaluation of the impacts of large scale projects. Conor addressed the group on a Pro Bono basis and advised the CIG to "listen very carefully" to Prof Scannell's advice that they look to the future when deciding on their approach to the project. "Participate from the beginning", he suggested. "Decide, if we're going to have thermal treatment, it'll be the best". Or alternatively, decide "we'll stop this project and use the Environmental Impact Statement to demonstrate this is an impossible site."

Conor Skeehan advised the Group not to fight against the proposed plant on emotive grounds. "Issues like emissions from the chimney stack will not succeed, since modern thermal treatment plants or incinerators, if properly run, are not dangerous", he said. "Rather, people should concentrate on the effects of the proposed plant on the community; traffic, fauna, wintering geese etc."

All the facts will be published in the EIS for the project, Conor Skeehan confirmed. By participating in the CIG, local people have the best of both worlds, he concluded. "You can have your cake and eat it". People can make sure the best possible application is made and then object to it when the statutory process starts. He went on to say that CIG members are not doing themselves any harm by participating and are not losing any rights. The only downside Conor Skeehan could see is that people may lose objectivity through their familiarity with the project.

"Have realistic expectations", he concluded. "Know what you can expect from the EIS process".

MORE COMPREHENSIVE METHOD FOR SITING STUDY SUGGESTED

Hendrik Van der Kamp, Head of Planning and Development Department, DIT, Bolton Street, Dublin 2 has already written a report for the CIG, looking at the planning process as it relates to the siting study for Poolbeg. Describing the CIG process as being "very innovative and novel", he told the Group Members that they have a real opportunity to get involved in the planning process before the statutory process begins in 2004.

He confirmed the siting process was rational, correct, systematic and in accordance with the normal siting process you might expect. "A very meticulous process and very explicit." MCOS who did the siting study looked at all the suitably zoned areas and created their short list. Hendrik suggested a more comprehensive approach could also have been tried, which might have required a Material Contravention or a variation of the Development Plan for the City or the three other Dublin Local Authorities. This would have involved MCOS looking at all land in the region, regardless of zoning and picking the best site and then looking to have the site rezoned or getting planning permission by material contravention.

(However, Prof Scannell, who said she was neither for or against the project, interjected to say that a developer directed to look for planning permission on a site that did not have the correct zoning could take legal action based on the fact that this is an unreasonable request.)

ENFORCEMENT IS THE KEY

Frank McDonald, Environment Editor of The Irish Times and author of three books on Dublin said that enforcement of waste legislation is key to making progress with the needs to be addressed. An article he wrote that day on the latest thinking from the Department of the Environment & Local Government is re-produced on the back page.

SAFETY ISSUES OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO EU

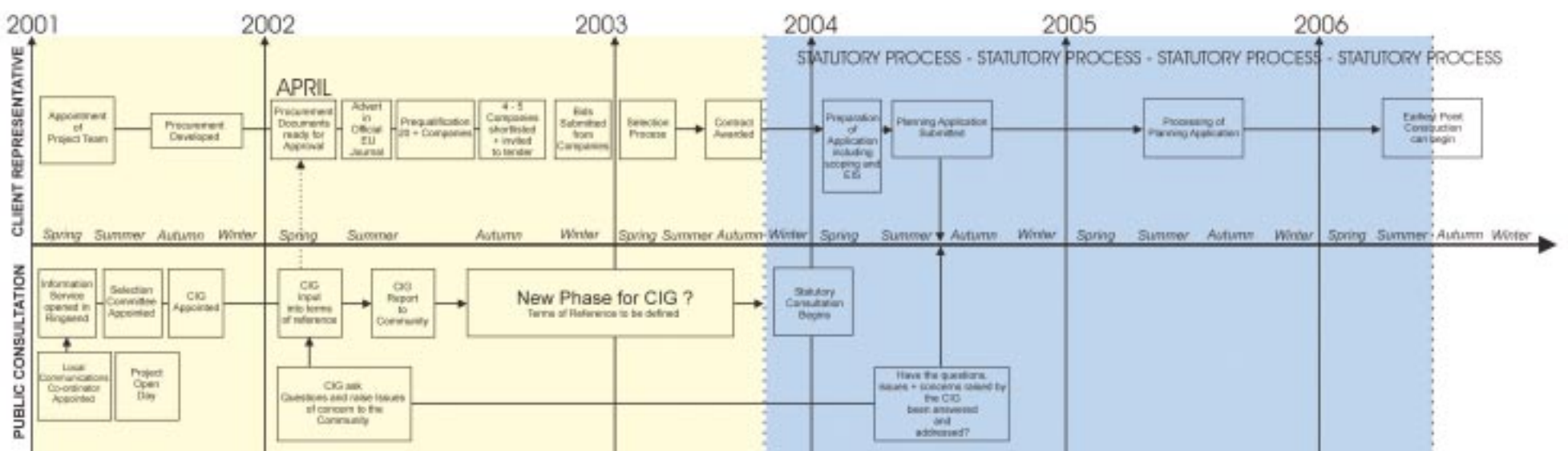
Martin Hederman Robinson, a Brussels based lawyer from the European Commission's DG Environment, EU Unit for Sustainable Development represented Marianna Klingbeil, his Head of Department. His Unit enforces environment law and tries to develop best standards throughout the EU. Safety issues remain the touchstone of EU policy, he confirmed. "The EU priority is to divert biodegradable waste from landfill, not to force incineration or recycling on any State. The EU has a neutral view. It's up to each Member State to come up with its own plan."

DG Environment has responsibility for handling complaints to ensure community law is enforced. The way the system works is that the European Commission writes to the Member State Government to ask for an explanation about complaints made by EU citizens or organisations. "It's not immediate. It takes a long time, but it is possible for a member of the public to get an informal view from the EU Commission on technical aspects of any complaint".

DID YOU KNOW?

The Dublin Region produces over 2m tonnes of waste, almost all of which goes to landfill. If we succeed in diverting 50% of this waste from landfill by 2006 in line with Government targets, 1m tonnes annually will remain.

Waste to Energy Project Timeline



This is the proposed timeline for the Dublin Waste to Energy Project. It shows the role of the Client Representative (Project Team) and the Community Interest Group. A developer will be appointed in late 2003 who will undertake the statutory process. Only after planning permission and the necessary licences have been obtained can a thermal treatment plant be built. The CIG are preparing, with the help of experts, for the statutory process.

THE CIG PROCESS

The CIG process was set up by Dublin City Council last September. The role of the Community Interest Group is to reflect the views and concerns that their community have about thermal treatment. The statutory consultation process will not start until 2004, when the necessary planning and licencing applications will be prepared. The local authority feels that the proposal is too important to wait until 2004 for the community to have access to valid, up to date information. The voluntary Community Interest Group is an innovative initiative. It consists of 18 men and women picked by an Independent Selection Committee to reflect the local community's concerns.

Four facilitated meetings have taken place to provide a forum where they can voice their concerns and/or opposition to the proposed project. A further meeting is planned with experts selected by the group, being invited to give presentations. Members of the general public can attend meetings as observers.

IMPORTANT FOR COMMUNITY TO BE INVOLVED EARLY IN THE PROJECT

Matt Twomey, Assistant City Manager attended the February and March meetings. He confirmed that Dublin City Council is following a schedule to appoint a developer and commence the statutory process in late 2003. The developer will be appointed following a procurement/ selection process, the guidelines for which are set by Dublin City Council. Included in the guidelines for prospective developers will be Terms of Reference for Environmental Scoping.

'Scoping' outlines (in general terms), the environmental impacts the developer will be obliged to study in detail when the environmental impact assessment is being compiled. Any comments that the Members of the CIG put forward in relation to scoping, will be included in the Terms of Reference and passed on to the developer as part of their contract. The guideline documents (or procurement documents) will be finalised by the end of April 2002. Comments made after this point will also be passed on to the eventual developer for consideration, although they will not form part of the contract.

The statutory public consultation phase will not begin until a developer is chosen in late 2003. Dublin City Council is committed to providing information, as it becomes available, to the local community, between now and then.

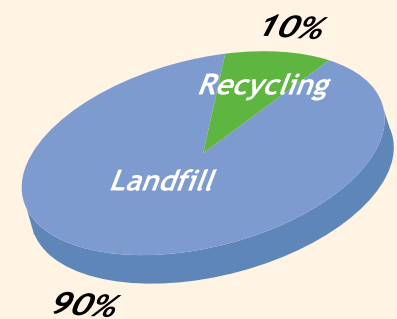
NEXT CIG MEETING

The next meeting of the Community Interest Group will be held on Tuesday 9th April 2002. Invited experts include Prof Dr Dieter Schrenk and Paul Johnston who will both talk about the health aspects of thermal treatment; Dr. Andrew Farmer will talk about air quality and Donal Mathews from Dublin City Council will talk about traffic.

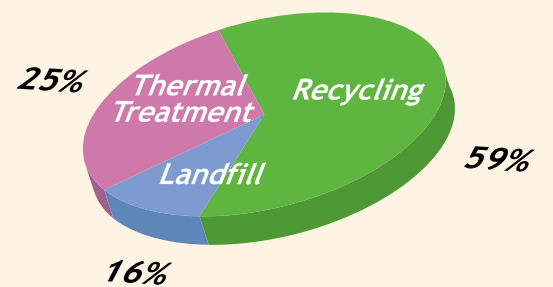
Observers are welcome to attend. At the end of each meeting, observers are invited to comment/ask questions.

Facts & Figures

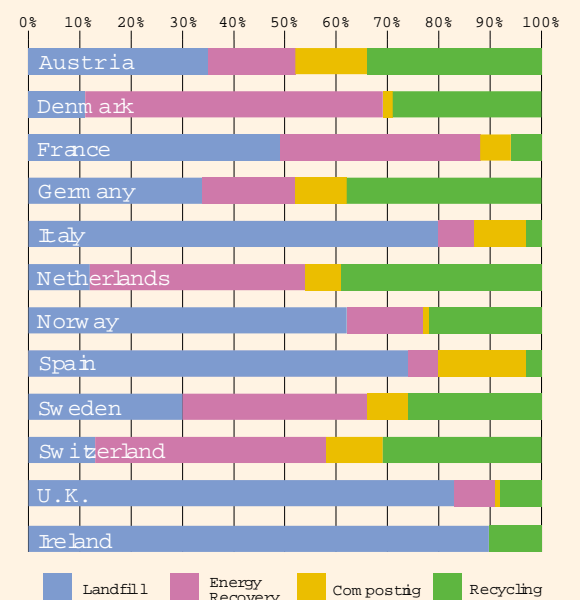
DUBLIN - WASTE MANAGEMENT IN 2000



DUBLIN - WASTE MANAGEMENT TARGETS FOR 2014



WASTE MANAGEMENT IN EUROPE



What is Thermal Treatment?

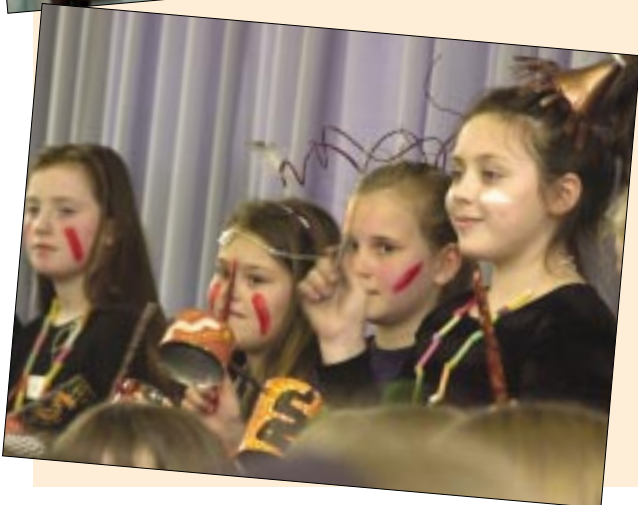
Thermal Treatment is the name given to a variety of technologies (of which incineration is the best known) which reduce the volume of waste prior to final disposal in a landfill. The process releases energy from the waste, which can be used to create heat and electricity. Thermal treatment is used successfully throughout Europe to help achieve integrated waste management.

- Pictured here is Vienna's thermal treatment plant. A modern facility in the city centre.

WORKSHOP

Are you concerned that there is not enough reduction, reuse and recycling of waste in your area? Dublin City Council together with the Irish Wildlife Trust is hosting a Composting Workshop on the 15th of May in Ringsend. If you would like to know how to turn your kitchen waste into fertiliser then this workshop is for you. Contact Elizabeth Arnett (01 2815918) for details

From Didgeridoos to bean-can Marakas...



...Continued from page one

Pupils from Scoil Mhuire, Sandymount have been very busy this term making musical instruments from what other people throw in the bin. From didgeridoos to bean-can marakas, this project brings to life the importance of recycling waste in as many different ways as possible. The aim of the project is to heighten awareness of waste issues, starting with primary school children. Letting their imagination run wild the children have made a wide variety of instruments from everyday objects that they found in the bin. Once the instruments are tuned they become part of the 90 piece recycled orchestra that is led by Gordon Douglas, the Project Co-ordinator. The culmination of the term's work is a concert where friends and family are invited to come to the school to learn about recycling and to listen to the children play their instruments. 'This is a very exciting recycling and educational initiative that we have undertaken this term. The pupils and staff alike are getting a lot out of the project and I am sure that the parents who attend our concert

will also learn a lot about how much fun recycling can be' says Mary Price, Principal of Scoil Mhuire. The project is also supported by Wavin Pipes, who provide a lot of the materials for the pupils to make instruments out of.

Assistant City Manager Matt Twomey said of the project 'Recycling Rhythms is a great initiative where the local authority, businesses and schools can come together to encourage recycling in a fun and educational way'.



New waste policy will charge by weight

Householders are to be charged by weight for the waste they put out for collection within three years under a new policy aimed at providing more incentives for re-use and recycling.

The Minister for the Environment, Mr Dempsey, also announced yesterday that a new landfill levy will be imposed on all local authorities and private contractors from June 1st - initially at €15 per tonne, increasing by €5 per year.

National bans on landfilling specific recyclable materials are also to be introduced this year to support greater recovery rates. A total of 10 material recovery facilities are to be developed under the programme, aided by a €127 million grant scheme.

A National Waste Management Board is to be established "as a matter of urgency" to co-ordinate, monitor, review and advise on all aspects of waste management policy, as well as a Recycling Consultative Forum and a Market Development Group for recyclables.

The new structure is one of the key elements of a major new policy statement, Preventing and Recycling Waste: Delivering Change, which builds on Changing Our Ways, the 1998 policy emphasising prevention, minimisation, reuse and recycling.

Mr Dempsey made his announcement at the Oxygen Materials Recycling Facility in Clonsilla, near Dublin Airport, where recyclable material from 150,000 households in the capital is sorted, segregated and baled for processing into new products.

"We have made real progress in recycling in recent years," he said. By the end of this year, 250,000 Dublin homes will

have segregated waste collection and similar programmes have been "rolled out" in Galway, Nenagh, Waterford and parts of Meath and Louth.

There are now 1,300 "bring banks" compared to 400 in 1994 and more than 200,000 tonnes of packaging waste - 25 per cent of the total - was recycled last year. "More waste prevention plus more recycling equals less waste equals less landfills", the Minister said.

Under the regional waste management plans now being implemented, bring-bank density will increase from one to every 3,000 people to one for every 500 to 1,000 and segregated waste collection will be extended to most urban centres "where economically feasible".

The €127 million capital grant scheme under the National Development Plan will provide assistance for new "civic amenity sites", bring banks, transfer stations, material recovery facilities and composting and biological treatment plants, Mr Dempsey said.

He emphasised that the National Waste Management Board would be "an active body, quickly put in place to support achievement of change". Its associated market development group would support recycling by developing new markets for recyclables.

The new board would be asked to advise on the development of a national strategy on bio-degradable organic waste with a view to creating marketable compost products from this waste and support the development of widespread home composting.

Mr Dempsey said market development was crucial to recycling. In this regard, he regretted last year's closure of the Ispat Irish Steel plant in Cork Harbour and the recent bad news about Irish Glass. However, many businesses were turning to recycled materials.

The Minister announced that a National Waste Prevention Programme would be implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency to eliminate production waste by industries subject to integrated pollution control licensing. The policy statement places emphasis on producer responsibility for waste. In addition to the recycling of packaging and farm plastics, this will be extended to end-of-life vehicles, electrical and electronic equipment, builders' rubble, tyres and newspapers.

"Prevention is better than cure. We need to eliminate waste from the earliest stages of resource extraction and production. We also need to ensure that manufactured products are more easily recycled and more environmentally friendly if they are discarded", he said.

Thanking the public and retailers for their positive response to the 15 cent levy on plastic bags, he stressed that the revenue it generated - as well as the revenue from the landfill levy - would go to a new Environment Fund to support a range of programmes.

"I have already pledged a very significant proportion of funding from the landfill levy to support dedicated and measurable enforcement initiatives aimed at controlling fly-tipping and unauthorised waste activities" - such as the illegal dumps in Co Wicklow.

His priorities had always been waste minimisation, re-use, recycling and finally disposal. "Yet the debate in Ireland has all too often descended into arguments about incineration or landfilling. We have got to re-focus, to get back to basics", Mr Dempsey declared.

By Frank McDonald, Environment Editor

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13 March 2002



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Dublin City Council
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