The Politics of Waste

Summary

Over the next few years, Britain will need to make a rapid change from waste management based on landfill to using other forms of disposal. This will require the construction of many new facilities. One of the problems facing waste management authorities is the delay in getting these facilities through the planning process.

This document looks at how this problem has arisen and how it may be tackled. Stakeholders in the planning process, from both local authorities and private companies, have been surveyed, and in-depth interviews conducted with a number of people who have different roles in the provision of waste services or in the wider debate.

The report concludes that early, high-quality engagement with those affected by planning decisions may be very beneficial in improving the facilities proposed, increasing public understanding of waste issues, and speeding-up the application process.

Background

Changes in waste management policy

The UK produces about 330 million tonnes of waste each year, of which about a quarter comes from homes and businesses. This mass of waste continues to grow, although the rate of growth has now slowed to below that of GDP.

Historically, the bulk of this waste has been disposed of in landfill. This made economic sense as Britain had a large number of former quarries and mines that were suitable for filling (and still does). Landfill has thus always been a cheap method of disposal. This has not been the case in other European countries where greater use of other methods of disposal, including incineration and recycling, has been necessary. For example, in the Netherlands recycling rates were at 50 per cent even in the 1980s, although this was driven by high levels of recycling of commercial waste. In Denmark, a relatively large incineration industry has co-existed with recycling, as landfill was also comparatively scarce.

However, decisions made at UK and EU level mean that the proportion of waste sent to landfill must decline. In 1999, the EU produced a Landfill Directive that set the following targets for the amount of waste each country could send to landfill:

2010: no more than 75 per cent of 1995 levels
2013: no more than 50 per cent of 1995 levels
2020: no more than 35 per cent of 1995 levels

Thus, over the next few years, the use of landfill must decline sharply.

Furthermore, UK legislation sets other targets for local authorities. The National Waste Strategy sets targets for local authorities on recycling: 25 per cent of household waste by 2005, 30 per cent by 2010, and 33 per cent by 2015 (the revised National Waste Strategy due to be released shortly may increase these targets). The Household Waste Recycling Act demands that at least two forms of separated recyclable waste be collected from households along with mixed or residual waste by 2010.

Two major instruments designed to achieve these goals are the Landfill Tax and the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS). The Landfill Tax aims to provide a disincentive to those disposing of waste by making landfill progressively more expensive. It was introduced in 1996 and currently stands at £24 per tonne, increasing by £8 per tonne each year to £48 per tonne in April 2010. LATS gives waste disposal authorities (WDAs) a landfill allowance. If they don't need it all, they can sell it to other authorities that cannot meet their targets. If an authority cannot meet it's target or buy allowance to cover the excess, they will be fined £150 per tonne (and some expect that it could go as high as £200 per tonne).

These measures have already had some effect. Between 1998/99 and 2003/04, the proportion of municipal solid waste (MSW) sent to landfill declined from 82 per cent to 72 per cent.

Summary: The over-riding aim of waste strategy is to shift away from landfill to other forms of disposal that allow resources - whether the material itself or the energy within it - to be recouped.

The problem of implementing policy

There is still a considerable amount of waste that cannot be diverted from landfill simply because there are not the facilities in place to handle it. According to Professor Chris Coggins, formerly of Sheffield University, around 2,000 new waste facilities will be needed by 2020 – and many of them will be needed much sooner. Ultimately, some of that waste will go to recycling facilities, and some to other kinds of plant including energy from waste (EfW) facilities. Given the various legislative pressures on local authorities, those facilities are needed sooner rather than later.

Unfortunately, the planning system has not kept pace with the urgency of the shift in waste management infrastructure or, to some extent, with developments in waste processing technology. In a typical scenario, a waste disposal authority (WDA) will put together a plan for how to deal with waste arisings within its jurisdiction. On this basis, tenders will be invited from private companies to provide the infrastructure required. After what may be a lengthy tendering process, a preferred bidder will then be chosen to work with the authority on the fine details. Land will be selected and a planning application submitted. However, at this relatively late stage in the process, the application may be rejected. Sometimes this may be for reasons to do directly with waste management itself – perhaps environmental or health concerns arising from the type of facility proposed – or it may be an objection that would apply to any large facility – for example, worries about traffic, concerns about the effect of an industrial plant in a particular area, and so on.

Some of these difficulties may be tackled by a new planning regime based on Planning Policy Statement 10 on Sustainable Waste Management (PPS10) being rolled out at present. However, this new framework may well come too late in terms of the current need to get facilities built quickly. Therefore, this report looks at other ways in which the process could be expedited, in particular the role of communications.

Summary: Legislation means that waste disposal authorities are under considerable pressure to shift from landfill to other forms of disposal. However, the lack of co-ordination between government, waste disposal authorities and planning authorities – means that delays are occurring in delivering the infrastructure required to implement policy.

The surveys

Two surveys were produced. One was sent to 675 people involved in waste management and planning at local authorities, including planning officers, waste managers and councillors. Of these, 44 were returned, a response rate of seven per cent. The other was sent to 148 staff and directors at private sector waste companies. Of these, 17 were returned, a response rate of 12 per cent.

The survey sample was thus quite small and this summary of the findings will focus on those questions for which very clear results were found.

The public sector survey

Most of the respondents (84 per cent) said their authority had dealt with waste planning applications in the previous three years, with the type of facility breaking down as follows:

facility type	authorities receiving an application for this type
Landfill	52%
Energy from waste/incineration	23%
Recycling	64%
Composting	59%
Waste Transfer Station	59%
Mechanical Biological Treatment	11%
Other	18%

How contentious were these planning applications? Nearly 60 per cent of respondents said there was a 'high' level of public interest in these applications, but levels of press coverage were very variable. Over 40 per cent said there was a 'high' level of formal objection, with just 16 per cent suggesting a 'low' level of such objections. However, respondents were almost evenly split (38 per cent v 34 per cent) on whether such contention had led to delays beyond the statutory 8-16 week determination period.

Is waste planning unique in having this level of attention? Respondents were asked how waste applications compared with retail, residential and employment planning applications. Waste applications were most likely to be

regarded as attracting 'high' public interest (59 per cent) followed by residential (32 per cent), retail (14 per cent) and employment (4.5 per cent).

Where there is controversy over a proposed facility, concern seems to be caused by a combination of the location of the facility (mentioned by 84 per cent of respondents), its proximity to residential areas (80 per cent), and the perceived environmental or health impact (82 per cent). The type of facility seems to be of slightly less importance (57 per cent). However, where the type of facility is an issue, our respondents said that EfW/incineration plants were the most likely to be regarded as very highly contentious (43 per cent) followed by landfill (27 per cent).

When it came to communications, public sector respondents felt that applicants were either not effective (30 per cent) or only moderately effective (55 per cent) in communicating with stakeholders. Only 23 per cent of respondents thought applicants were effective in communicating with council members, compared to 48 per cent who believed applicants needed to do better.

Respondents clearly thought good communications mattered, with 87 per cent believing that pre-application consultation and engagement was beneficial.

Opinion on the best way to get a message across was divided, but face-to-face interaction, through meetings, exhibitions and site open days were more often regarded as the best tools than websites or advertising in the media.

The private sector survey

The company-based respondents also had experience of applications for a wide range of facilities:

facility type	companies making an application for this type
Landfill	53%
Energy from waste/incineration	65%
Recycling	77%
Composting	71%
Waste Transfer Station	35%
Mechanical Biological Treatment	59%
Other	17%

A majority of respondents felt that public interest in these applications was 'high' with, perhaps, a perception of greater press interest and formal objection than found in the public sector survey. While public sector respondents were split on the issue of delay, in the private sector survey there was a clear majority who believed that contention or public interest had delayed applications beyond the 8-16 week determination period (53 per cent) over those who had not experienced such delays (18 per cent).

For private sector respondents, the most commonly cited issue for stakeholders was the perceived environmental or health impact of the proposed facility (77 per cent) with location and type of facility being slightly less important. However, as with the public sector survey, EfW/incineration plants and landfill were regarded as by far the most controversial types of facility.

Almost all the private sector respondents (94 per cent) said that their company undertook communications and engagement work in support of applications, with 82 per cent regarding such work as 'very important'. Over 90 per cent thought there was at least some benefit to pre-application consultation or engagement.

As with the public sector survey, few respondents favoured websites and media advertising to get their message across. Public exhibitions (59 per cent) and site open days (41 per cent) were deemed to be the most effective

tools, with individual meetings (29 per cent) and stakeholder workshops (24 per cent) also receiving positive support.

In both surveys, respondents were asked to give three words or phrases to illustrate why they felt communications was important. The results are very interesting. For both private and public sector respondents, the most commonly used term was *understanding*. Other commonly used terms were *involvement*, *dialogue* and *inclusion* in the public sector survey, *transparency* and *openness* in the private sector survey, and various synonyms of *information* and *knowledge* in both, particularly in the sense of getting better comment and decisions because they were *informed*.

What comes across in the use of these phrases is a frustration with controversies caused by rumours or speculation arising from misinformation, and a feeling that participants in the process, particularly from the private sector, were treated initially with suspicion by stakeholders. As one estates manager put it, communications 'makes them see you're human'. In other words, an underlying concern – only occasionally stated explicitly – was one of *trust*.

Summary: for both public and private sector respondents, waste facility planning applications receive a high level of public interest. Much of this interest is concerned with issues of location, and environmental and health concerns. Landfill sites and EfW facilities are regarded as the most controversial. For both groups of respondents, good communications – preferably commenced early in the process – are regarded as important.

Discussion

The worst-case scenario for operators and local authorities is a long-running battle to get a proposed facility through the planning process. Perhaps the best recent example of this problem is the Belvedere plant in south-east London, an EfW facility that has finally been approved after 16 years of applications, protests, inquiries and court hearings.

All parties want to avoid this kind of situation. For operators, planning delays can mean a long period before the outlay on tendering, application and design costs can be recouped. For authorities, delay could mean missing targets with financial penalties as a result. For the public at large, there is the desire to balance the problem of waste disposal with numerous other

concerns both local and national. Changes to the planning system that allow for greater co-ordination between central government policy and local implementation with take time to come through. But it is clear that, regardless of such changes, communication - that is, talking to all the parties concerned so that everyone's interests and concerns are dealt with as efficiently as possible - is widely seen as very important in avoiding long delays.

The role of communications

"Good communication is not cheap, it's not easy, but boy does it bear fruit", says Steve Lee, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Waste Management. He points to the experience of EfW plants in Hull and East Riding, and in Hampshire, as examples of the benefits of early, well-managed engagement with local stakeholders. Asking the right questions is key in Lee's view, allowing the operators to alleviate fears and improve their own plans: "What is it we want? What is it we fear the most? Would you prefer a strategy that did this or that? And by asking the public questions like that, they're working out their strategy, they've consulted on their strategy..."

Mike Snell, external affairs director for Waste Recycling Group (WRG), the operators of the Hull and East Riding contract, is less definitive: "You cannot lose sight of the fact that these days, the public engagement aspect is absolutely paramount... But you don't always get the benefits that you hope for, even if you have innovative and well-delivered communications strategy. You could still get knocked back for all sorts of reasons."

In the case of Hull and East Riding, an initial application to build a plant in Hull city centre was turned down because it would overshadow a listed building. "It wasn't a listed building you might anticipate though", says Snell. "It was former grain silo - a huge concrete monolith that had been derelict for many years and was indeed an interesting architectural building." So, overall, the experience wasn't as straightforward as it might have appeared from the outside. Nonetheless, a regrouping of the teams involved, and further extensive consultation, resulted in the approval of a site straddling the two authorities.

The contemporary problem: an individualist society

One of the problems may be beyond the narrow confines of the planning process - the general lack of a sense of ownership of social problems in the

UK as compared to other countries, a point made by Philip Cozens, technical director at RPS Planning: "These things in Scandinavia were no less controversial in their day than they are here, it's just that they spend a lot of time getting consensus for a course of action before they do things – and reduce the amount of controversy that follows. And also because there's more of a community buy-in to the fact that the community's got a problem that it needs to solve. [In the UK] we all live in our own four walls but think we shouldn't be inconvenienced by anything which goes on out there – but dealing with waste, it's an effect of our lifestyle."

It's a point of view echoed by Fiona MacIntosh, of communications company PPS Group, who specialise in waste planning applications. "It takes us to the heart of one of the challenges that the industry faces. There is a lack of joined-up thinking on all of us in the public between putting our bin out on a Monday morning and what happens to its contents thereafter."

Philip Cozens illustrates the point about 'joined-up thinking' in relation to EfW plants, regarded as the most controversial form of waste plant in our survey. He argues that EfW plants are much better than they were in the past. However, in environmental terms, they make much more sense as part of combined heat and power (CHP) schemes, where waste heat is used to warm houses, swimming pools and other buildings. In that respect, the joined-up planning of Scandinavia is extremely useful: "[In Britain] we've got the very disjointed private ownership of much of the housing stock and a liberal energy market. Both of those things work against the development of CHP schemes. It's not technical innovation – it's to do with our organisation, or lack of it."

In terms of the planning process, there is also the issue of trust. In a society where individual interest is emphasised over collective action and responsibility, any political decision or position can ultimately be put down to narrow personal or sectional interest. However, this seems to affect participants in the process to varying degrees. Private companies are often seen as purely interested in profit at the expense of the community, while campaigning groups are seen as honest brokers (even if they may be relying on information of dubious merit from sources like the internet), with politicians caught somewhere in-between.

For Fiona MacIntosh, education is key. "In some respects, what we do on these projects is different from planning for a supermarket or a housing development because there is a strong need for education on these issues."

She notes that the level of discussion on waste management issues is much higher than it was 10 years ago, but there are still problems. "Where it gets more difficult is where the public trust a source whose veracity isn't checked. If you type into Google 'incinerator' and 'cancer' you can scare yourself to death without anyone checking the veracity of what comes back." In relation to who is trusted, this means that "the field on which we debate is not always even". For example, people may believe what comes from a search engine more than a professor of toxicology simply because he has been commissioned by a private sector waste company.

Mark Broomfield, technical director at Enviros Consulting, thinks that decision makers are generally prepared to give different arguments, in his case on the environmental and health aspects of facilities, a fair hearing. However, even if a good scientific argument is presented plainly and honestly, that may not always be enough. In his experience, the objections raised to facilities – from whatever source – shouldn't always be taken at face value: "If someone has a vested interest in not having a particular scheme go ahead, there is a temptation to look for any argument that will work in his or her favour. And the health one is an obvious one to do that with."

Thus, even when good communications are employed, side issues may act to scupper even the best application.

What are the issues that need to be communicated?

As noted in the survey results, there are two different kinds of arguments put forward against facilities: one set would apply to any industrial facility, including what might be called the Nimby argument (Not In My Back Yard). This kind of issue can often involved local politics, too. These would have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The other kind of objection is based on scientific arguments about the environmental or health implications of a plant.

Roger James, secretary of the Portsmouth Society, has direct experience of the process from the other side: the Portsmouth Society opposed the building of a new energy from waste plant in the town which was first proposed in the late 1990s. For the Society, there were two distinct grounds for opposition.

Firstly, the feeling that the incinerator had been foisted upon the town by a local authority (Hampshire County Council) that Portsmouth was no longer a

part of. "We thought it was very unfair that Portsmouth would be getting rid of the rubbish which largely arose from other places", says James. Secondly, there were uncertainties about health in relation to the possible emissions from the plant. "Although there was no direct evidence, we thought that probably it would be bad for the health of Portsmouth people."

Both these arguments come back to a question of trust. Were the local authority being even-handed in deciding to site the plant in Portsmouth? Could the people of Portsmouth rely on the assurances made about emissions?

In his experience, "we were all talking with insufficient knowledge". The council did create a panel (of which James was a member) to look at the experience of plants in other parts of the country and as far afield as Copenhagen. The exercise, it seems, did not have the expected effect. "The general effect I think, certainly on me, was to turn us against incineration." Better consultation might have helped, but there was the obvious problem in relation to health concerns of proving a negative: that there was no risk. However, James now believes the completed plant (it began operation in April 2005) is not a source of controversy and - ironically - the Portsmouth Society even gave the plant a design award. "We like it. It's a very nice building, actually."

In relation to the environment, public perceptions clearly favour recycling or composting over other kinds of plants. That is scarcely surprising given the way recycling has been discussed in recent years. Emphasising resource efficiency is a good thing, according to Steve Lee: "After six months only two percent of the resources that we use remain in the economy; 98 percent falls back out of use. [That's] a lot of stuff on a one-way trip to landfill...it's becoming increasingly important that we do something more sustainable with it."

The question then arises: why not recycle everything? But Lee explains that not everything can be recycled - there will always be a residue. He thinks we need to "waste less in the first place, put more waste back to work when we've thrown it away, or re-use it or regain some of the value from it before we throw the residue away - that's code for sucking the energy back out of it. We think that one of the things we're going to have to do in the future is recover energy."

Thus, the black-and-white presentation of waste management (eg, recycling good, incineration bad) is misplaced. Even if greater efforts are made to reduce waste at source, a variety of methods of waste processing are going to have to be used to one degree or another. Incineration, once regarded as a dirty process that wasted resources, is seen by many authorities as a way of meeting targets, disposing of large quantities of waste and producing energy in a clean manner.

However, according to Julie Hill, co-author of the IPPR/Green Alliance report *A Zero Waste UK*, the emphasis must be on recycling as much as possible in the context of a 'cradle-to-cradle' approach to materials use. ('Cradle-to-cradle' means making things so that they are easily recycled or reused as opposed to a 'cradle-to-grave' approach of making something that will probably be thrown away once it has been used.) For Hill, the benefits of burning waste are overstated and may ultimately divert waste that could be recycled or reused. "There are going to be thermal solutions. They have to be small-scale, flexible and as clean as possible", she says. "Big, mass-burn incineration - meaning mixed waste - is just not sophisticated, it's not the solution for our materials future." The danger is, she argues, is that the rush to meet landfill diversion targets will lead authorities to go with mass-burn incineration when it is not the best option long-term. Hill argues that government must be prepared to continue to subsidise recycling.

This suggests there is a debate to be had about the environmental impacts of different forms of waste disposal, a debate with no simple solution: what is the right balance between technical feasibility, cost, resource efficiency, flexibility - even aesthetics? Underpinning an emphasis on communication is the presumption that the public can, and must, be trusted with this kind of sophisticated discussion if armed with the proper information.

In terms of health, Philip Cozens doesn't see how the actual (as opposed to perceived) health impacts of EfW schemes - like the release of dioxins - could be a problem today. "Like the depletion of the chemicals that form the ozone layer, in a similar way, concerted efforts from across the world have dramatically reduced the release of dioxins in to the environment. It's hard to argue now that it is a problem at all, and it's hard to argue now that energy from waste is a significant part of the problem."

This is a view echoed by Mark Broomfield. "My experience from a technical point of view - especially since incineration technologies have been around for a long time, we know them quite well and the controls have been well-

developed – it is possible to produce a good design that meets all the criteria and by normal standards is a safe and good application."

For Broomfield, it is the poor reputation of EfW plants that needs to be addressed: "There is a very big gap between that and public perception. And so the problem is – you can do a good job on the technical side; you can almost always do that. The hard bit is persuading decision makers and members of the public that the issues have been properly addressed and the systems are in place to give the controls they're looking for."

"My feeling is that if you're concerned about emissions and waste incinerators then there are much more significant sources of pollution that people should be more concerned about", says Broomfield who co-authored a report for Defra on these issues in 2004. Other waste processing techniques and industrial processes - popularly regarded as safer - have had little research done to confirm this. For example, he notes: "In comparison to waste incineration, there's also next to nothing on composting. There's a situation where compost workers are known to be at risk of bronchitis. We have to take specific measures to make sure that their health is protected and yet we don't seem to know very much about emissions of particles and dust from composting facilities. Things are moving forward very slowly, so we don't know a whole lot more about those things than we did three years ago."

Summary: One way around the problem of implementing waste management policy without unnecessary delays at the planning level is through better communication. By engaging with stakeholders at an early stage, waste disposal authorities can devise plans which meet their statutory obligations while satisfying the interests and concerns of other stakeholders, reducing the possibility of delays in the planning process.

However, there are problems facing private sector waste companies and, to a lesser extent local authorities, in relation to gaining the trust of stakeholders. There is also a problem of educating the public about the range of issues related to waste management and modern waste processing technology. Good quality engagement with all parties is very important but not a complete solution to these problems.

Conclusion

Public debate in relation to waste has focused heavily on the collection of household refuse. But more attention needs to be given to what happens to that waste once it is collected.

To that end, the issues surrounding planning delays in relation to waste management should be given a higher profile. The government has set tough targets for local authorities to meet. The problem is that local authorities can work with private companies to produce plans to meet these targets that are then delayed and even rejected at the planning stage. Better co-ordination between national and local waste strategies on the one hand, and planning departments on the other, would be helpful in this regard - and might produce facilities with greater spin-offs for everyone.

Such co-ordination will take time to develop. In the meantime, solutions need to be found to the urgent problem of implementing targets in the here and now. Above all, the quality of engagement between planning applicants and stakeholders is an important factor in producing facilities that meet the interests and concerns of all parties in the process.

There are wider problems that cannot be dealt with simply within the confines of the planning process. For example, as a society, we tend to see waste as a problem that is 'out of sight and out of mind' rather than something that we all need to take an interest in. As long as we produce waste, facilities to deal with that waste will have to be built somewhere, so we all need to take some responsibility for that. There are also issues of trust between the public, politicians and private companies that will not be resolved overnight. However, making sure that the people affected by a new waste facility are talking to each other effectively and openly is a good place to start.

Appendix 1: responses to survey of local authorities

Percentages quoted as a proportion of total questionnaires returned. Hence, for some questions, the total percentages are less than 100% where some of the respondents did not answer that question.

1. Has your authority dealt with waste planning applications in the last three years?

response	percentage	no. of responses
Yes	84.1%	(37)
No	15.9%	(7)

2. If yes, for what type of facilities:

facility type	authorities receiving an application for this type
Landfill	52.3%
Energy from waste/incineration	22.7%
Recycling	63.6%
Composting	59.1%
Waste Transfer Station	59.1%
Mechanical Biological Treatment	11.4%
Other	18.2%

3. If yes, how would you describe the level of contention amongst stakeholders (local residents, interest groups, parish councils, etc) over applications?

Type of response	low	medium	high	don't know
Level of public interest	6.8%	20.5%	59.1%	0.0%
Level of press coverage	25.0%	29.5%	29.5%	0.0%
Level of formal objection	15.9%	25.0%	40.9%	2.3%

4. Do you believe that the contention or public interest surrounding the application(s) led to a delay beyond the statutory 8-16 week determination period?

response	percentage
Yes	38.6%
No	34.1%
Don't know	11.4%

5. What level of public interest has your authority experienced in different areas of planning?

planning area	low	medium	high	don't know
Waste	4.5%	22.7%	59.1%	0.0%
Retail	11.4%	43.2%	13.6%	6.8%
Residential	6.8%	27.3%	31.8%	6.8%
Employment	25.0%	29.5%	4.5%	9.1%

In 20% of responses, 'Other' types of planning were mentioned as contentious, including parking, minerals and dumps.

6. What issues relating to waste management do you believe caused most interest or concern with stakeholders?

issue	percentage
type of facility/technology proposed	56.8%
location of facility	84.1%
proximity to residential areas	79.5%
perceived environmental or health impact	81.8%
actual environmental or health impact	20.5%
other	18.2%

7. What type of waste facility do you believe is the most contentious with stakeholders? Please rank on a scale of 1-6 with 1 being the most and 6 being the least contentious.

type of facility	1	2	3	4	5	6	just ticked
Landfill	27.3	36.4	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	6.8
EfW/incineration	43.2	13.6	11.4	2.3	4.5	0.0	13.6
Recycling	0.0	4.5	15.9	9.1	18.2	25.0	2.3
Composting	6.8	2.3	15.9	11.4	22.7	13.6	2.3
Waste Transfer Station	6.8	2.3	27.3	20.5	13.6	0.0	4.5
Mech Biological Treatment	4.5	9.1	18.2	20.5	0.0	6.8	0.0

8. How effective do you believe applicants are in communication with stakeholders on waste planning?

response	percentage
Not effective	29.5%
Moderately effective	54.5%
Very effective	6.8%

9. Do you believe applicants are communicating effectively with members on waste planning?

response	percentage
Yes	22.7%
No	47.7%
Don't know	15.9%

10. Do you believe there is a benefit to pre-application consultation/engagement?

response	percentage
No benefit	0.0%
Limited benefit	9.1%
Some benefit	22.7%
Positive benefit	63.6%

11. At what stage would you like applicants to start communicating with stakeholders on waste planning?

response	percentage
Well before the proposals are fixed	65.9%
Shortly (3-6 months) prior to submission	27.3%
On submission	2.3%
Other	9.1%

12. Which communication tools do you believe are effective in discussing waste planning applications? Please rate on a scale of 1-8, with one being the most effective and 8 being the least effective.

It was clear from the responses that this question was interpreted in two different ways: some respondents scored the effectiveness of each tool on a scale of 1-8. Other ranked the tools in order of effectiveness. Since there were nine tools listed, this meant that scores of 9 were possible.

To interpret the results is therefore tricky. Below is the percentage for each tool where it was given a score of '1' or '2' by respondents. On either interpretation, this would suggest that the respondent thought this was an effective tool.

tool	percentage
Written materials (newsletters, brochures, leaflets)	22.8%
Websites	6.8%
Advertising (radio, TV, print)	2.3%
Individual meetings	41.3%
Public meetings	20.4%
Public exhibitions	31.8%
Facility open days/site visits	36.4%
Stakeholder workshops	29.6%
Focus groups	13.7%

13. Is your authority's Statement of Community involvement prescriptive about the timing and methods of public engagement expected?

response	percentage
Yes	45.5%
No	38.6%
Don't know	13.6%

14. Do you believe the emphasis on stakeholder engagement in planning legislation post 2004 has led to better decision making?

response	percentage
worse decision making	6.8%
no change	47.7%
better decision making	29.5%
don't know	11.4%

15. Please use 3 words or phrases to describe the benefits you believe active communication and engagement with stakeholders brings to waste planning decisions.

terms or ideas that appeared more than once:

term	instances
understanding	16
involvement/dialogue/inclusion	10
information/knowledge	7
informed opinion/comment/decisions	7
reduce fear/speculation/myths	5
awareness	4
balance	2
better conditions	2
early	2
responsibility	2
transparency	2

Appendix 2: responses to survey of private companies

Percentages quoted as a proportion of total questionnaires returned. Hence, for some questions, the total percentages are less than 100% where some of the respondents did not answer that question.

1. Has your company submitted waste planning applications in the last 3 years?

response	percentage	no. of responses
Yes	88.2%	(15)
No	11.8%	(2)

2. If yes, what type of facilities?

facility type	companies making an application for this type
Landfill	52.9%
Energy from waste/incineration	64.7%
Recycling	76.5%
Composting	70.6%
Waste Transfer Station	35.3%
Mechanical Biological Treatment	58.8%
Other	17.6%

3. If yes, how would you describe the level of contention amongst stakeholders (local residents, interest groups, parish councils, etc) over applications?

Type of response	low	medium	high	don't know
Level of public interest	0.0%	29.4%	52.9%	0.0%
Level of press coverage	5.9%	41.2%	35.3%	0.0%
Level of formal objection	5.9%	23.5%	47.1%	5.9%

4. Do you believe that the contention or public interest surrounding the application(s) led to a delay beyond the statutory 8-16 week determination period?

response	percentage
Yes	52.9%
No	17.6%
Don't know	11.8%

5. What issues do you believe caused interest or concern with stakeholders (please tick as many as you wish)?

issue	percentage
type of facility/technology proposed	64.7%
location of facility	64.7%
proximity to residential areas	58.8%
perceived environmental or health impact	76.5%
actual environmental or health impact	11.8%
other	0.0%

6. What type of waste facility do you believe is the most contentious with stakeholders? Please rank on a scale of 1-6 with 1 being the most and 6 being the least contentious.

type of facility	1	2	3	4	5	6	just ticked
Landfill	17.6	70.6	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
EfW/incineration	76.5	11.8	2.3	4.5	0.0	13.6	5.9
Recycling	0.0	0.0	17.6	11.8	23.5	35.3	2.3
Composting	0.0	11.8	29.4	29.4	17.6	0.0	0.0
Waste Transfer Station	0.0	0.0	47.1	5.9	17.6	0.0	0.0
Mech Biological Treatment	0.0	0.0	17.6	23.5	11.8	23.5	0.0

7. Does your company undertake communications/engagement work in support of planning applications?

response	percentage
Yes	94.1%
No	5.9%
Don't know	0.0%

8. If yes, how is this work resourced?

response	internally	externally
Specialist communications team	35.3%	70.6%
Within the planning & estates team	58.8%	11.8%

9. In your company's experience, how important is communications support for planning applications?

response	percentage
Not important	0.0%
Not very important	5.9%
Important	5.9%
Very important	82.4%
Don't know	5.9%

10. Has the approach your company takes to communications changed to reflect the new emphasis on engagement in the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and in PPS10?

response	percentage
Yes	58.8%
No	29.4%
Don't know	11.8%

11. Do you believe there is a benefit to pre-application consultation/engagement?

response	percentage
No benefit	0.0%
Limited benefit	5.9%
Some benefit	23.5%
Positive benefit	70.6%

12. Do you believe the emphasis on stakeholder engagement in the new planning legislation has led to better decision making?

response	percentage
worse decision making	11.8%
no change	35.3%
better decision making	29.4%
don't know	23.5%

13. Which communication tools do you believe are effective in discussing waste planning applications? Please rate on a scale of 1-8, with one being the most effective and 8 being the least effective.

It was clear from the responses that this question was interpreted in two different ways: some respondents scored the effectiveness of each tool on a scale of 1-8. Other ranked the tools in order of effectiveness. Since there were nine tools listed, this meant that scores of 9 were possible.

To interpret the results is therefore tricky. Below is the percentage for each tool where it was given a score of '1' or '2' by respondents. On either interpretation, this would suggest that the respondent thought this was an effective tool.

tool	percentage
Written materials (newsletters, brochures, leaflets)	23.6%
Websites	5.9%
Advertising (radio, TV, print)	5.9%
Individual meetings	29.4%
Public meetings	0.0%
Public exhibitions	58.8%
Facility open days/site visits	41.2%
Stakeholder workshops	23.6%
Focus groups	17.7%

14. Please use 3 words or phrases to describe the benefits you believe active communication and engagement with stakeholders brings to waste planning decisions.

terms/ideas used more than once:

understanding	7
clarity	3
openness/transparency	3
support	2
education	2
address fears/reassure	2