

Audit Summary Report

September 2005



Waste Management - Follow Up

Cumbrian Local Authorities

Audit 2005/2006

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Introduction

- 1 Waste management in England and Wales is being developed in the context of the Government's Waste Strategy 2000 and the EU Landfill Directive - implemented via the Waste and Emissions Trading (WET) Act 2003. Until 2005/06, the primary driver had been the Government's targets for recycling and composting, and Government funding to support local authorities in achieving those.
- 2 From 2005/06 onwards, this has been reinforced by the allocations to each waste disposal authority of limits on the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) that may be landfilled. An authority that exceeds these limits faces significant financial penalties. The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) provides disposal authorities with an additional flexibility in how they meet their obligations under the WET Act.

Background

- 3 In the summer of 2004, we carried out inspections and reviews of progress in all the Cumbrian waste authorities. These showed that the councils had been slow to tackle the major waste management issues facing the county and difficult decisions had not been made in a timely manner. There was no effective or implementable county-wide plan to integrate waste collection and disposal. Although the County Council was seeking a strategic service partner, the project was still in its early days and the outcomes were, therefore, uncertain. The councils were not tackling the high waste quantities produced in Cumbria, there was no realistic programme for raising awareness of waste issues and very little work was carried out in or with the community.
- 4 The inspection team's recommendations for the County Council focused on:
 - leading the community in municipal waste management;
 - executing a stated commitment to improve waste management in the county; and
 - ensuring the successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process.

- 5 The work in the district councils resulted in a number of common recommendations, which complemented those above. These were to:
- achieve a more effective and collaborative partnership using an integrated approach to waste management to achieve landfill diversion targets;
 - take a partnership approach to achieving waste reduction and involve local businesses;
 - work with stakeholders to develop, publish and promote service standards in a co-ordinated manner; and
 - seek out and make use of learning acquired from other organisations, neighbours and beyond the county.
- 6 Following the publication of the inspection reports and progress reviews, the first step towards improving waste management in Cumbria was taken through an Achieving Cumbrian Excellence (ACE) seminar held in September 2004. The outcome of this seminar was an action plan for all councils, which included actions to be completed by the end of December 2004, including:
- restructuring the waste management partnership;
 - creating an officer support group; and
 - preparing a first draft of a waste strategy by mid-December.
- 7 The risk remained that, if sufficient prominence was not given to the development of a fully resourced waste strategy, co-ordinated across all partners, waste management planning in Cumbria would not match the pace of change set out in environmental legislation and there would be a failure to meet the statutory landfill diversion targets for 2005/06 and beyond.

Scope

- 8 This programme of follow-up work from the inspection and review process was designed to focus on the progress made by the councils in:
- dealing with the waste management issues facing the county;
 - acting upon the recommendations of the waste inspections and progress reviews; and
 - delivering against the commitments made at the ACE waste seminar, where commitment was made to a 90-day action plan.

Unlike our work in 2004, this follow-up review does not cover street cleansing.

- 9 This project has assessed how the partnership of Cumbrian local authorities is developing and implementing an effective waste management strategy. We have reviewed whether the authorities have a shared analysis of the overall Cumbria waste statistics and an understanding of the improvements required to change the current position. The effectiveness of work with external bodies, such as the Environment Agency, DEFRA, GONW, to improve the capacity of the partnership, has also been reviewed. We have looked for evidence of how councils' services have changed and are making a difference for residents and in their overall value for money - both current and prospective.
- 10 The report is set out under headings which reflect the issues identified through the 2004 inspection and review programme and the commitments expressed at the ACE seminar:
- review of the Cumbria waste partnership;
 - officer support for the partnership;
 - partnership commitment to improve waste management;
 - new waste strategy;
 - successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process;
 - securing resources;
 - gaining from best practice;
 - engagement of the public and other stakeholders; and
 - a community lead and influence for municipal waste management.

Audit approach

- 11 The work has included:
- review of documents supplied by all the councils; and
 - interviews with officers and portfolio-holders from all the councils; in some councils, other councillors were also seen (for example, from the relevant scrutiny committee).

Findings

- 12 The main text below addresses issues that concern the partnership as a whole; Appendices 1 to 7 present strengths and weaknesses for each of the seven councils. Those appendices do not attempt a comprehensive re-assessment of each council, but focus on those aspects of service development and delivery pertinent to the functions of the partnership.

Review of the Cumbria waste partnership

- 13 The partnership between the Cumbria councils has been renewed and revitalised. It is now active and meeting regularly, but its effectiveness is not yet clear. It has been renamed as the Cumbrian Strategic Waste Partnership. Each council has nominated its portfolio-holder for waste matters as its representative on the partnership board and some of these members are now regularly attending the board meetings. However, there have been some delays in setting the process in motion and again following the County Council elections, whilst a portfolio-holder was being chosen. These latter delays could have been avoided, as the partnership's vice-chair could have chaired the meeting.
- 14 Whilst councils have nominated their most senior councillors within this field to be their representatives on the partnership board, those individuals have not always attended the meetings and the level of individuals' contribution to the debate has been mixed. Waste is a vital topic, representing up to 25 per cent of a district council's revenue expenditure, with a high national focus. The potential impact of significant financial penalties (if BMW landfill is not controlled) upon the County Council's financial position and therefore its precept requirements, support for joint work and service provision, presents a risk to the Council Tax payers of all districts. Council Tax payers may perceive a reduction in value for money if they are faced with increased tax levels and /or reduced local service provision. It is important for all councillors, whether representatives of their authority on the partnership or not, to have a sound understanding of the issue and the strategic decisions that must be taken in the next year, which will have long-term implications.
- 15 The revised partnership structure has only recently been endorsed by all districts, indicating a lack of urgency in advancing the position. The terms of reference of the board, which has no authority delegated to it by the partner councils, means that all key decisions have to be referred back to all seven authorities. This is likely to cause delays and leave the Board frustrated by its own limited power to move things forward.
- 16 Work to-date has concentrated on undertaking tasks to form a baseline and produce future action plans, with no measurable impacts yet achieved through the partnership. Joint working has improved in the last year but it is not yet clear how collection and disposal arrangements will align. For example, there is no agreement on what the waste streams should be - should cardboard be collected co-mingled with paper, co-mingled with garden waste, or separately? Consistency on the choice of the waste streams can lead to economies of scale in the downstream activities and to better prices for recyclates, due to increased tonnage of a common mix.
- 17 Many of the officers and members we have spoken to have referred to improved trust and mutual understanding that has been developed over the past six months in the course of intensive group working. There is more shared ownership of the problems the area faces - unlike a year ago, when too many in districts were passively expecting change to be driven by only the County Council.

However, weaknesses in communication such as consistent interpretation of objectives remain. The partnership has not reconsidered the framework in the light of the position taken by one of the district councils, which put caveats on their endorsement of the December 2004 draft.

Officer support for partnership

- 18 The County Council has carried out its commitment to establish a new officer structure, has appointed a higher profile service head and is now devoting appropriate officer support to the waste partnership. However, this commitment has been fulfilled later than promised at the September ACE seminar and the new head of service only took up the post in May 2005. Some posts in the new structure are yet to be filled and it is unlikely that the team will reach full capacity until the end of 2005.
- 19 There are limited examples of collaborative working, beyond discussions. For example:
- the partnership between Eden DC and Carlisle CC continues and the extent of its service has been expanded;
 - Allerdale BC and Copeland BC are sharing a contractor for the collection of dry recyclables; and
 - Barrow BC and South Lakeland DC are discussing shared services and recycling promotion.

However, these relationships pre-dated the revitalisation of the county-wide partnership. There is no joint service delivery that has emerged from the partnership as yet.

- 20 The district councils are contributing capacity to the officer support groups; this is typically the equivalent of 0.2 to 0.4 full-time officers per council. For example, South Lakeland DC led the early work on the plan for communication with the public, bringing particular expertise to the group, and Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland officers have all led action planning groups. All the district councils are content to continue their officers' contribution for the time being. However, as there is no overall programme for this development project, neither the county nor the district councils know how for long their staffing resource will be required.
- 21 The districts have taken an active part in the review of civic amenity (CA) site provision. This includes proposing alternative and additional sites. This engagement has been much greater than the traditional consultation that would be expected in any two-tier area. However, the process is far from complete and only the Flusco site has been agreed upon as yet.
- 22 Whilst there has been significant officer input from all councils, this could have been better organised. There has been a lack of strategic direction of the work. The work has largely been done via the officers group and the action groups set up to develop action plans to implement the framework strategy. These groups were only given a deadline for completion of their respective plans in May, so work has had to be completed in haste to meet that deadline.

Participation in these groups has been fluid and the lack of continuity of representatives has affected the progress of some of the work.

- 23 A weakness in the scoping of these groups became apparent when it was realised that no action plan for waste reduction had been commissioned. This issue was originally regarded as only relevant to communication. However, it was recognised this part was of sufficient importance to warrant an action plan of its own and a County Council officer drafted such a plan and sought comments and officer endorsement, without the use of a working group.

Partnership commitment to improve waste management

- 24 The County Council, which came from a position of very poor strategic planning and resourcing of waste management, has significantly increased its commitment to waste issues and the partnership. Senior managers are now devoting significant time to the issue. There is a commitment to financial investment in the construction of one new CA site this year, and County Council officers are preparing a bid for £3 million capital for 2006/07. This would enable the completion of one high quality CA site in each district. Further improvements in CA site provision will be the responsibility of the strategic partner.

- 25 The County Council is conscious of the need to avoid penalties for exceeding the BMW landfill allocations now and for the future and initially intends to achieve this through improvement of the CA sites. The impact of these penalties could be very significant.

- The County Council has predicted (as of August 2005) that it will exceed its BMW landfill allocation for 2005/06 by about 3,000 tonnes incurring a penalty of approximately £500,000; there is no budget for this expenditure.
- Furthermore, it has predicted (assuming waste arisings grow at 3 per cent per year and with the current proposals for recycling and composting) that the penalty would be £3.4 million in 2006/07, rising to £10 million in 2008/09.

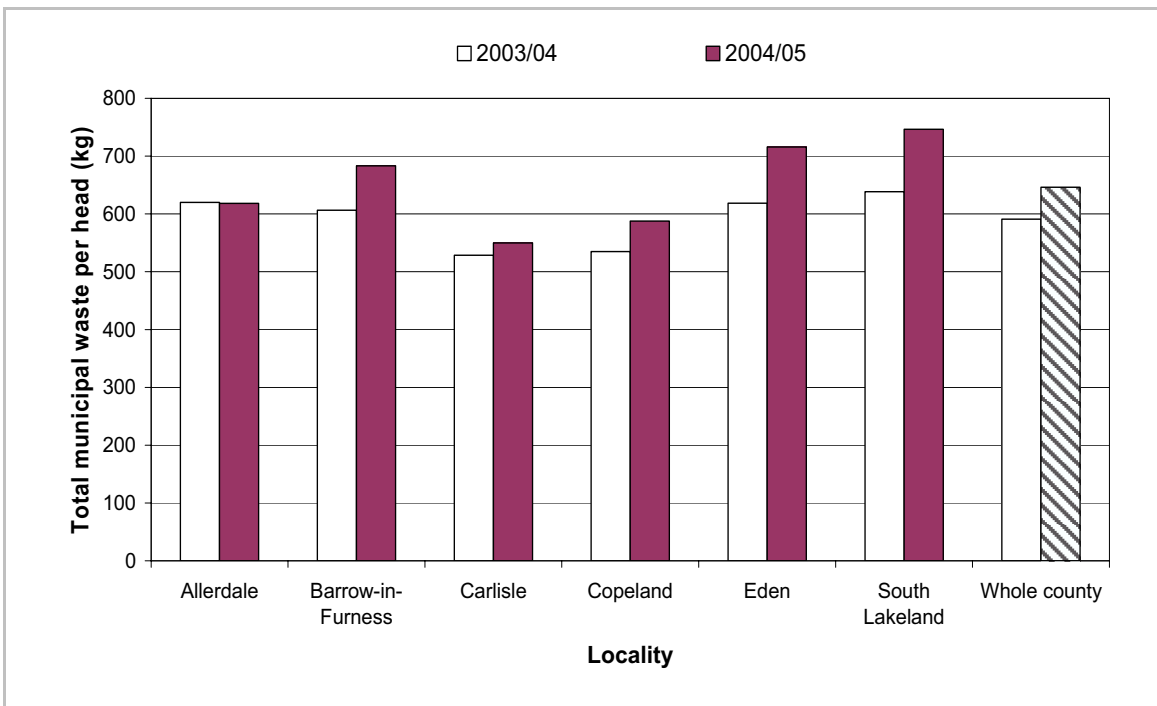
These expenditures do not feature in the medium-term financial plan, but a July 2005 report to the County Council's cabinet noted indicative costs of £1 million in 2006/07 and £2 million in 2007/08. However, these figures are not based on realistic estimates of the likely costs.

- 26 There is partnership commitment through the waste strategy framework with a proposed recycling rate of 30 per cent by 2006/07. However, South Lakeland DC has only accepted this as 'something to move towards'.
- 27 On the other hand, through much hard work and imagination, many Cumbrian districts have either already exceeded that performance or predict a higher than 30 per cent recycling and composting rate in 2006/07, showing this 30 per cent aim to be unchallenging for most districts. This represents a missed opportunity to use challenging targets to realise the potential of all the districts' current and prospective investments - with significant financial benefit in terms of reduced penalties for failure to meet the BMW landfill diversion targets.

- 28 No partnership targets have been set for total waste arisings or for landfill of BMW. This is important because tackling waste should begin at the top of the waste hierarchy, by reducing total waste produced. It is particularly important in Cumbria because of the very high level of waste arisings compared to other counties. The continuing growth of waste in Cumbria is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1 Changes in waste arisings 2003/04 to 2004/05

Waste rose in all districts (except Allerdale) and in the county as a whole.

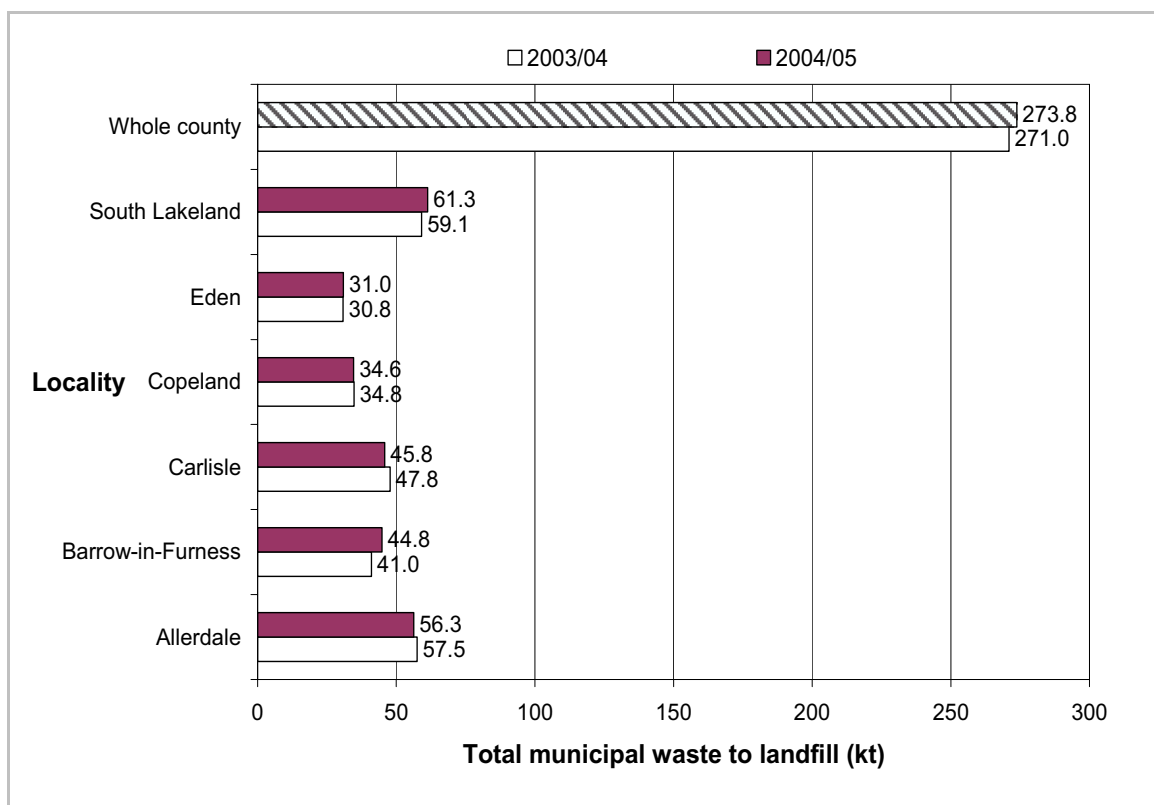


Source: Cumbria County Council records June 2005. Tonnages combine waste collected and that deposited at bring sites and CA sites - including inert wastes, but exclude tonnages arising from the floods.

- 29 The strategy framework does not acknowledge the North West regional waste strategy which sets regional targets to reduce the rate of growth of municipal waste to:
- 2 per cent per year by the end of 2008;
 - 1 per cent per year before 2010; and
 - 0 per cent before 2014.
- 30 Furthermore, as the figure below shows, despite the increase in recycling and composting, the total waste going to landfill also rose.

Figure 2 Landfill tonnages 2003/04 and 2004/05

Although the tonnage from some districts fell, overall, it rose by 1 per cent.



Source: Cumbria County Council records June 2005. Tonnages combine waste collected and that deposited at bring sites and CA sites - including inert wastes, but exclude tonnages arising from the floods.

- 31 The County Council has committed its Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant (WPEG) to improving recycling across Cumbria. Other councils within Cumbria have already made significant individual investment in this area. However, there has been no agreement to pool the grants for this financial year, despite DEFRA encouragement to do so, and only an expectation that the funds will be pooled next year, although this is likely to be influenced by a DEFRA preference for the future aggregation of grants in two-tier authorities. No mechanism or policy has been agreed yet, and no other resource sharing has been agreed upon. This lack of joint investment will impede the achievement of optimum value-for-money which can only be realised via economies of scale.
- 32 None of the districts yet has waste plans aligned to those of the County Council, as the framework was only first issued in December 2004 and not formally endorsed by all districts until March 2005.

- 33 Only limited progress has been made in seeking landfill capacity for the next decade. This is particularly important when current facilities in the south of the county are due to run out of space within three years. The process of gaining planning permission including the preparation of the mandatory strategic environmental assessment can take up to two years. If a public inquiry is needed, there is a risk of an even longer lead time.
- 34 Whilst several district councils have put in place their own interim waste strategies, not all have up-to-date strategies. None yet has plans which show their responsibilities and accountabilities to deliver the new waste strategy, and this detail does not appear in the waste strategy action plans either. The councils have not yet identified the cost implications of diverting waste from landfill. This is true for both county and district councils. However, it is encouraging that district council members and officers recognise that if the Government imposes financial penalties on the County Council, this could have an impact on their residents in the level of Council Tax and the levels of service available.
- 35 There had been a lack of consistency in data monitoring for waste between the county and districts. No standard definitions had been agreed for data up to 2003/04. The need to supply data to DEFRA (through the prescribed Waste Data Flow system) has to a degree resolved this issue for the future. In addition, the county's IT partner has run workshops to enable all the councils to work in a standard way.

New waste strategy

- 36 The previous joint waste strategy was a statement of principles without an implementation plan, was not clearly driven by the waste hierarchy and did not show a clear picture or vision for the future. The new waste strategy framework and supporting action plans is an improvement, but the councils have yet to establish implementation/action plans that are resourced and have accountabilities set out clearly, in order to ensure their impact.
- 37 Whilst the current framework is providing a basis for ongoing discussions, it lacks a long-term vision for the future and has only one, short-term target for recycling. No targets have been set for the reduction of total waste arisings which, in 2003/04, were higher in Cumbria than in all other counties bar one. Unaudited data suggests that Cumbria may have the highest arising of any county in 2004/05.
- 38 Furthermore, whilst all parties are agreed that the framework is to be replaced by a full-blown strategy document, no timetable or responsibility for that development has been agreed. And there is no long-term timetable for the implementation of the strategy, which is likely to stretch to 2010 at least. The strategy will inevitably be partly conditional on the proposals from the selected strategic partner.
- 39 There have only been minor actions or activity to implement action plans to date. Although there are some quick wins – such as ensuring publicity for recycling and the development of the Flusco CA site – much of this year's activity has been getting the people, processes and policies in place.

- 40 The partnership has done some modelling of alternative strategies in the light of the new BMW landfill limits. These models are producing some unexpected results, which are at variance with national policy and need to be explored further.
- 41 A major immediate feature of the waste strategy is to achieve increased recycling through CA site improvements. The County Council is in the process of investigating investment routes for interim solutions but as yet there is no confirmed funding strategy for CA site development, though for next year, as already noted, a capital bid is being prepared. It is unclear how limits on landfill of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) will be met in the absence of detailed action plans that take waste trends into account. Waste compositional analysis has just been completed by consultants and will be used for this purpose.
- 42 There is one scheme (at Flusco CA site) which has secured funding and planning permission. The County Council is also introducing a trade/van ban this year to reduce the illegal trade waste deposited at CA sites, and thereby reduce landfill of municipal waste, in order to limit penalties for exceeding BMW landfill allocations.
- 43 The action plans, which are designed to underpin the waste strategy and its implementation, are at an early stage. Of the four plans intended:
- three have been drafted and approved by the Board as the basis for more detailed work; and
 - one has been worked upon in two groups, which were subsequently merged; this work is temporarily suspended pending receipt of a consultants' report.

Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process

- 44 The County Council has now taken positive steps to take forward the procurement process, following criticism from the Audit Commission, the County Council's internal current performance and improvement assessment and an independent review carried out by 4Ps. It has, therefore, demonstrated an ability to use external challenge to good effect, by changing the procurement approach.
- 45 The County Council is showing a greater ability to drive the strategic partner process. Through a three-month extension of the procurement programme, the County Council has introduced more flexibility into its procurement of a long-term solution to limit the risk of becoming tied into old waste technology, and to maintain interest within the waste industry in becoming the Council's partner.

- 46 The County Council has also maintained stakeholder involvement. However, the district councils' involvement in this activity and their understanding of the current position, is limited. There is no formal mechanism for the districts' representative on the County Council's procurement steering group to obtain the views of all six districts or to feed back progress. Meshing the collection systems (particularly the choice of waste streams) with the disposal route is critical to achieving a low-cost, flexible solution. Hence, effective district involvement is vital. District council engagement will also significantly enhance the chances of gaining public acceptance of the preferred solution and sites. At present, only Barrow BC is pressing for waste facilities to be located within the district to satisfy the 'proximity principle' and create local jobs. The position on the West Coast is more complex, with some interest in the employment opportunities offset by concerns about the environmental impact of some forms of waste treatment.

Securing resources

- 47 The councils, in partnership, have moved from a position of inability to secure external funding jointly to that of making successful joint bids. The partnership has now secured external funding for research and studies (eg WRAP ROTATE collection appraisal by an external consultant, and extension of the green waste capacity at Hespin Wood). A separate successful bid has funded a two-stage analysis of waste composition across the county, and assessment of the effectiveness of both kerbside and CA site recycling.
- 48 However, there have been weaknesses in the quality control of these pieces of consultancy work, and it is unclear how the findings on recycling are going to be used.
- 49 Some individual authorities continue to gain funding which contributes to the progress of the partnership as a whole. For example:
- South Lakeland DC has been successful in gaining funding for educational and promotional campaigns which have enhanced the success of new recycling schemes;
 - Eden and Carlisle obtained extra DEFRA funding to expand their garden waste scheme;
 - Copeland and Allerdale have used ROTATE funds to improve the management of their kerbside recycling collections contractor; and
 - WRAP has part-funded development of a new CA site at Flusco for Cumbria CC.
- 50 The Partnership also shows it is able to seek joint working beyond the Cumbria boundary; it is joining with other north west authorities and has secured £200,000 DEFRA funding to pilot incentives to increase recycling participation.

Gaining from best practice

- 51 The learning capacity of individual councils, and especially of the partnership, has increased from a low baseline. All councils in the partnership are keen to learn from good practices. Details of good practices are being learned from other councils.
- The partnership is seeking guidance from councils that operate alternative waste treatment facilities.
 - The review of civic amenity sites included visits to neighbouring council's facilities.
 - There has been extensive seeking out by the County Council of how other waste disposal authorities operate.

There is significant learning from other councils which is being transferred to the Cumbrian situation, for example the introduction of a van ban to the CA sites and an increased capacity for managing waste at the County Council.

- 52 The County Council is now also well-engaged with external bodies, such as GONW and IDeA, and is using 4Ps for external scrutiny, though little of its learning has filtered out to the districts. There is regional engagement through more active membership of the Waste Regional Advisory Group. In addition, individual districts have acquired knowledge of better procedures via APSE, RECOUP (the national advisory body for plastics recycling) and from visits to other districts.
- 53 However, while there are a few examples of transfer of ideas within the county (such as part-emulation of Eden DC's two bags limit), there is currently no systematic capture and sharing of learning across all the Cumbrian councils. There is potential for this to improve through the ongoing joint commissioning of consultants' reports and development of action plans. The experience of officers working together to develop action plans has increased the opportunities for sharing expertise, but this has not yet actually happened to any great extent.
- 54 Successful initiatives and good practices within Cumbria are not being captured and emulated. Gaps in service provision are not being addressed: for example, cardboard recycling, sourcing recyclates markets, reducing councils' own waste and re-use schemes are either not been carried through in any council or, if implemented in one, are not being adapted for use by all.

Engagement of the public and other stakeholders

- 55 The stakeholders within the waste partnership – the county and district councils – are well-engaged in the process of looking at alternatives to landfill, through the visits to other councils operating new and different technology. This includes both elected members and officers.
- 56 However, district officers and members we have talked to are unclear about many aspects of the county's thinking. Until they adequately know and understand the key elements of the partnership's approach, they will not be able to effectively advocate the strategy to their fellow councillors or the public.
- 57 As the work by Entec has shown, the participation rate in kerbside collections is below the national benchmark in all districts and only exceeds 50 per cent in Allerdale and Copeland districts. Only about one third of the total waste that could be easily recycled is being put into the recycling receptacles - two thirds of it is going into the residual waste containers. This shows that many householders are either not engaged with the business of recycling at all, or are missing opportunities to achieve more.
- 58 The engagement of the community is an under-developed area, with no framework or building blocks yet in place. This weakness is recognised and is starting to be addressed through the communications action plan.
- 59 The waste awareness part of the communications action plan takes a very considered approach and plans to work from a research base. However, it misses any opportunities for quick wins or transfer/join-up immediate working across council boundaries. A joint launch of information on councils' services with the awareness campaign is planned for June 2006. Websites will be linked in December 2005, but there is no planned interim action. It is only in the waste prevention plan where some short-term and potential quick win activities are included through promotion of home composting and use of real nappies, enabled by WRAP funds. This real nappy campaign has been short-listed for a national award by the Women's Environment Network.
- 60 Within individual districts, there is a variety of public engagement taking place. Examples of recent activities include the following.
- Allerdale BC has continued with its programme of leaflets to householders, based on an evaluation of the effectiveness of communication channels.
 - Carlisle CC has set up a focus group of members on the scrutiny committee, combined with voluntary sector representatives, to explore the options for a radical overhaul of its residual waste collection systems.
 - Eden DC has been discussing with local businesses their needs for advice and services to boost recycling.
 - South Lakeland DC has undertaken extensive work in schools, and has evaluated the impact of this on both children and adults.

- 61 Eden DC has re-issued its successful A-Z Waste Directory, however this has been done alone, rather than in partnership with Carlisle CC or with Allerdale BC/ Copeland BC. The West Cumbria districts are producing their own directory, partly inspired by Eden's. It seems likely that a better product at lower overall cost could have been achieved by combining forces, even if much of the detailed text had to be district-specific.
- 62 School-oriented education work is also proceeding piecemeal with each district doing its own thing. In Eden, Eden LA21 takes the lead on these activities. Allerdale officers are just beginning to develop engagement with schools. Although South Lakeland DC has carried out an evaluation of its schools work, this has not been shared with the other partners. Currently, the County Council's education department does not co-ordinate the work in schools. This is an opportunity for improvement.

A community lead and influence for municipal waste management

- 63 In the past year, since the programme of work on waste management in Cumbria, the County Council has moved forward on the areas of recommendation but, in some cases, not as speedily as was anticipated at the September ACE seminar.
- 64 There are many issues related to taking the waste strategy forward – the use of appropriate technology, costing the strategy, integrating collection, treatment and disposal – which are still under discussion. The full programme of boosting CA site recycling is yet to be committed to and investment identified.
- 65 Whilst officers and members in the districts universally feel that the quality of the partnership is immeasurably better than in 2004, many also are frustrated by the delays they perceive. Greater transparency is needed for the districts to understand and be part of the process.
- 66 The partnership has made progress in preparing itself to provide community leadership, through revitalising the waste partnership and ensuring cross-council commitment, but this has not yet achieved the required influence in the community. Whilst Copeland and Eden have both imposed limits on the waste they will collect, Carlisle and Allerdale both have arrangements that allow more freedom as to what their householders may leave out for collection.
- 67 Councils have not yet tackled the need to communicate the 'hard' messages about the need for waste reduction. Indeed, the partnership has not itself discussed waste arisings. The unaudited data for 2004/05 shows a rise of 9 per cent in the waste arisings per head of population for the county as a whole. This is against a background of a national improvement in this measure between 2002/03 and 2003/04, and Cumbria's position as the county with the second highest value of all counties in 2003/04. It is unclear how and when the decisions on the type and location of disposal facilities will be made.

- 68 A serious weakness is the omission of a clear strategy for consulting residents and other stakeholders about the technology to be used for waste disposal, though the public will be consulted on the siting of facilities as part of the evolution of the minerals and waste development framework.
- 69 There are examples of individual councils taking a lead in the community but little evidence of promoting this in partnership. South Lakeland District Council has undertaken limited promotion with Barrow Borough Council and is piloting plastics recycling. Eden too has responded to strong public demand and significantly widened the opportunities for bring site recycling of plastics. That Council is also piloting recycling of beverage cartons, in conjunction with the carton manufacturers' trade association.

Conclusions

- The councils are showing greater combined commitment to taking the waste agenda forward in Cumbria than a year ago. There is better networking between the districts than previously; some districts had been operating very much in isolation but now report a real sense of team-working.
- A framework for a waste strategy has been agreed by most parties and the development of action plans to implement this is underway. However, there is no overall project plan or outline costing.
- However, there is a lack of tangible progress.
 - The Partnership cannot afford to permit slippage in its plans, as the financial consequences in terms of penalties for exceeding the landfill allocations could run into millions of pounds. There is some doubt about the validity of the modelling of strategies to avoid these penalties.
 - There have been limitations in the management of the imminent exhaustion of licensed landfill capacity.
 - The very high levels of waste arisings are not being addressed vigorously.
 - There are no clear plans for public consultation on the long-term solutions.
- There are still only discussions, rather than firm project plans, for developing large-scale projects to limit penalties for exceeding BMW landfill allocations. The County Council has not developed a strategy for trading in landfill allocations to mitigate its potential fines.
- The communications between the County and districts show some lack of clarity. Districts are unclear how the County is taking forward its plan to achieve diversion from landfill - both through the future strategic partner and also any interim means.
- The partnership has not yet established clear, resourced plans that will ensure improved value for money is achieved over the medium and longer-term.

- 70 This report will be discussed in detail with the Cumbria strategic waste partnership. The partnership is invited to address the following recommendations within its plans for future improvement.

Recommendations	
<i>R1</i>	<i>Develop an overall project plan with clear milestones, which explicitly addresses: partner procurement; consultation with residents on choice of technology and siting of facilities; development of waste streams; opening of new landfill sites; planning, approval of and commissioning of new waste disposal plant; and establish a regime to review progress against this programme.</i>
<i>R2</i>	<i>Agree challenging but realistic partnership targets for reducing total waste arisings and for diversion from landfill.</i>
<i>R3</i>	<i>Strengthen the understanding of officers and members of all councils of the overall programme, the strategic procurement process and the aspects where district contributions may have best effect.</i>
<i>R4</i>	<i>Improve sharing of expertise between districts and with the County Council.</i>
<i>R5</i>	<i>Plan and carry out the development of, consultation upon, and publication of a comprehensive waste strategy.</i>
<i>R6</i>	<i>Obtain external validation of the modelling of strategies to avoid penalties before committing to the use of those strategies.</i>

Appendix 1 – Strengths and Weaknesses: Allerdale BC

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Review of the Cumbria waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed framework. • Much better co-operation between all councils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residual concerns over weak partnership working with County Council.
Officer support for the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers contributed to action groups (~0.2 FTE since January 2005). • Allerdale officers collated best practice in Cumbria and options to mitigate BMW penalties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers unclear about partnership working groups structure.
Partnership commitment to improve waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste minimisation officer post made permanent (unrelated to partnership resourcing needs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional funds towards partnership activities, beyond officer time. • No changes to council activities as a result of Framework and action plans.
New waste strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling/composting rose to 20 per cent in 2004/05, exceeding council target of 18 per cent. • Accepted 30 per cent recycling target for 2006/07. • Piloting bring sites for plastic bottles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerbside collection from 73 per cent of properties, cf 84 per cent target.
Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District staff not well-informed about strategic partnering and partner evaluation criteria.

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Securing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROTATE funded consultants to develop waste minimisation action plan and education and awareness plan. 	
Gaining from best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued partnership with Copeland. • Emulating Eden with waste directory - but not a joint project with Eden. 	
Engagement of the public and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High participation rate in kerbside collection and good recycle capture rate. • Leafleting of households - based on evaluation of householders' recall. • Funded plans for waste directory. • Household waste per head fell by 4 per cent in 2004/05, bettering council target - but combined collected and CA site waste unchanged. • Outline plans for work in primary schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No published service standard.
A community lead and influence for municipal waste management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to disseminate hard messages about waste. • Continue to accept side waste. • No knowledge of plans to consult public on long-term solutions.

Appendix 2 – Strengths and Weaknesses: Barrow BC

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Review of the Cumbria waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed framework. 	
Officer support for the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers contributed to action groups on communications and CA sites. 	
Partnership commitment to improve waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated to assist County Council avoid penalties which will hit deprived communities via increased council tax/ changes in service support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local action plan. • No additional funds towards partnership activities, beyond officer time. • No changes to council activities as a result of framework and action plans.
New waste strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted 30 per cent recycling target for 2006/07 'in principle'. • Recycling/composting rose to 19 per cent in 2004/05, just exceeding council target - but recycling rate fell due to paper collection body folding. • Piloting plastics recycling. 	
Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process		

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Securing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEFRA and WRAP funds secured for local actions. • Preliminary discussions with South Lakeland about sharing resources/staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WPEG planned to be used locally, jointly with South Lakeland council for promotional campaigns, without consultation with partnership.
Gaining from best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had presentations from South Lakeland DC and from Lancaster CC on waste minimisation and recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only limited intra-Cumbria learning - some emulation/adaptation.
Engagement of the public and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited promotion, with South Lakeland DC, via bus advertising campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No published service charter. • Household waste per head rose by 6 per cent in 2004/05, contrary to council target for fall of 5 per cent. • Entec study showed low participation in kerbside recycling and under 30 per cent capture rate for recyclables. • Council has deferred decision to carry out door-stepping campaign.
A community lead and influence for municipal waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will press for waste treatment facilities to be located within the district to satisfy proximity principle and create local jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to disseminate hard messages about waste - but county-wide proposals in scrutiny reports.

Appendix 3 – Strengths and Weaknesses: Carlisle CC

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Review of the Cumbria waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio-holder is vice-chair of CSWP. • Endorsed framework. 	
Officer support for the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlisle officer has done work on LATS prompting partnership to take greater interest. • Officer-led merged collection and recycling action group. 	
Partnership commitment to improve waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing complement of waste team by three posts (unrelated to partnership resourcing needs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for increased staffing not discussed with partners. • No changes to council activities as a result of framework and action plans.
New waste strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan in place for extension of kerbside recycling and development of bring sites. Developing its own strategy for residual waste collection. • Recycling/composting rose to 25 per cent in 2004/05. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling/composting did not reach council 30 per cent target. • Kerbside collection from 86 per cent of properties - below 90 per cent target. • Target-setting not robust.
Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District staff not well-informed about strategic partnering and partner evaluation criteria.

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Securing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers sought to pool WPEG in 2005/06 per DEFRA guidance. • Gained DEFRA funds (not via partnership). • Prepared bid to ROTATE for partnership work on collections. • Council is funding enhanced activity in 2005/06. 	
Gaining from best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued effective partnership with Eden and seeking information on Eden's blue bag scheme. • Visits to other WCAs scheduled to learn about collection regimes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No benefit from attendance at WRAG. • Limited intra-Cumbria learning.
Engagement of the public and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and scrutiny committee active on waste matters. • 'Focus group' established to explore options for residual waste collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household waste per head rose by 7 per cent in 2004/05 (excluding flood-related waste). • Public engagement is limited. • No published service standard.
A community lead and influence for municipal waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning to consider how to engage with public over waste reduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to disseminate hard messages about waste. • No limit on waste accepted from householders and no charges for bulky waste collections. • No knowledge of plans to consult public on long-term solutions.

Appendix 4 – Strengths and Weaknesses: Copeland DC

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Review of the Cumbria waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed framework, but with reservations about wording. 	
Officer support for the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers contributed to action groups Copeland officer-led collection group until it merged with recycling group. 	
Partnership commitment to improve waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported local kerbside collection contractor with additional funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional funds towards partnership activities, beyond officer time. Council has been very short of staff for waste management. No changes to council activities as a result of framework and action plans.
New waste strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling/composting rose to 25 per cent in 2004/05, but fell short of council target of 27.5 per cent. Adopted short-term local waste strategy as cannot afford to wait for county-wide strategy. Accepted 30 per cent recycling target for 2006/07. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed framework, but subject to amendments in wording of high level objectives. Kerbside collection from 68 per cent of properties, cf 78 per cent target. Doubts about viability of kerbside collections contractor.
Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative of all districts on county procurement group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal mechanism for representative on steering group to liaise with other districts.

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Securing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROTATE funded development of contract specification and operational guidance for kerbside collection. • WPEG to be pooled in furtherance of county-wide aims. 	
Gaining from best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emulating Eden with waste directory - but not a joint project with Eden; to learn from Allerdale plastics recycling pilot. • Active in APSE activities and CIWM. • Learnt from experience over its own twin-bin scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Engagement of the public and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service charter published. • Funded plans for waste directory. • Overview and scrutiny committee active on waste matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong adverse reaction of residents to alternate weekly collections regime. • Household waste per head rose by 5 per cent in 2004/05, contrary to council target for fall of 5 per cent, due to additional garden waste collected.
A community lead and influence for municipal waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge for extra bags and some bulky waste collections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to disseminate hard messages about waste. • No knowledge of plans to consult public on long-term solutions.

Appendix 5 – Strengths and Weaknesses: Cumbria CC

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Review of the Cumbria waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated the revitalisation of the partnership. • Lead and major contributor to partnership. • Brought openness engendering improved trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for delays in partnership meetings.
Officer support for the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried out commitment to develop new officer structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of speed in establishing new officers in post.
Partnership commitment to improve waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increase in public commitment to waste matters. • Senior manager involvement. 	
New waste strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New waste framework supported by action plans (but under development). • Some CA site investment for 2005/06. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans not yet ready for implementation and limited early quick wins. • No long-term timetable or plan for consultation. • Investment after 2005/06 only now being sought.
Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexibility introduced to procurement process, maintaining waste industry interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate engagement of districts in the strategic partnering process.

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Securing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful joint bids coming from partnership. • County WPEG invested in recycling improvements. 	
Gaining from best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking out best practice from other waste disposal authorities and transferral of learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations of transferring good practice across Cumbrian councils.
Engagement of the public and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement with external bodies. • Engaging partner stakeholders in ownership of tough decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building blocks not in place for raising public awareness (so waste quantities remain very high).
A community lead and influence for municipal waste management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to disseminate hard messages about waste. • No clear timescales for public engagement on long-term solutions.

Appendix 6 – Strengths and Weaknesses: Eden DC

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Review of the Cumbria waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed framework. • Active contribution to debate in CSWP. 	
Officer support for the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers contributed to action groups (~0.4 FTE since January 2005). • Planning increased officer contribution. 	
Partnership commitment to improve waste management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional funds towards partnership activities, beyond officer time. • No changes to council activities as a result of framework and action plans.
New waste strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling/composting rose to 33 per cent in 2004/05, exceeding council target of 20 per cent. • More bring sites taking plastics, and all polymers accepted. • Piloting beverage carton recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target-setting not robust as composting rate of 14 per cent greatly exceeded council target of 3 per cent, and opportunity to set targets for new BVPIs not taken. • Kerbside collection from 87 per cent of properties, cf 90 per cent target.
Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District staff not well-informed about strategic partnering and partner evaluation criteria.
Securing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased council funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WPEG in 2005/06 committed locally without consultation with partners.

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Gaining from best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued effective partnership with Carlisle. • Collecting aluminium foil - learnt from bring site collections contractor. • RECOUP advice on plastics recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited intra-Cumbria learning. • Not sharing experience on plastics and beverage carton recycling within Cumbria.
Engagement of the public and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited consultation with public and wide consultation with businesses - but no action yet on latter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives for engagement exist, but no action plan to put into effect. • Household waste per head rose by 2 per cent in 2004/05, contrary to council target for 1 per cent fall. • No published service standard.
A community lead and influence for municipal waste management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to disseminate hard messages about waste. • Development of communication with public is local - not in consort with partnership. • No knowledge of plans to consult public on long-term solutions.

Appendix 7 – Strengths and Weaknesses: South Lakeland DC

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Review of the Cumbria waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed framework. 	
Officer support for the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers contributed to action groups, led on communications action plan and produced report on local CA sites. 	
Partnership commitment to improve waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant officer capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional funds towards partnership activities, beyond officer time. • No changes to council activities as a result of framework and action plans.
New waste strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling/composting rose to 23 per cent in 2004/05, already exceeding the Government 2005/06 target of 21 per cent. • Waste Management Strategy 2003 to 2011 in place - but will need amendment to align with county-wide recycling plan. • Kerbside collection increased to 66 per cent from June 2005. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only accepted 30 per cent recycling target for 2006/07 as something to 'make progress towards'. • Uncertainty about whether to switch to co-mingled recycle collection - could affect VFM if transport costs written-off. • Landfill sites used are close to full - council plans on hold pending decision on replacement.
Successful implementation of the waste strategy through the strategic partnering process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clear what costs will fall on South Lakeland DC.

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
Securing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External funds gained for educational and promotional campaigns which have been effective in improving recycling achievements. • Preliminary discussions with Barrow about sharing resources/staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision that WPEG not to be used on waste management, without consultation with partnership, in light of high investment already made. • Costs remain high although council is to review cost of waste collection in preparation for 2006 market-testing.
Gaining from best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong capacity and expertise to share. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited intra-Cumbria learning. • Council's evaluation of education work not shared with partners.
Engagement of the public and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory participation rate in kerbside recycling collections, with better capture rate than other Cumbrian districts - but also high contamination rate. • Consultations with households not yet on recycling scheme. • Active education programme evaluated to measure impact on children and adults. • Limited promotion, with Barrow, on bus advertising campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No published service charter. • Household waste per head rose by 9 per cent in 2004/05 as a result of increased green waste.
A community lead and influence for municipal waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only limited side waste accepted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to disseminate hard messages about waste. • Work needed on analysis segregating commercial waste from household.