

Agenda Item No:

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE:

WASTE WATCH EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

REPORT OF:

HEAD OF WASTE STRATEGY & CONTRACTS

FOR SUBMISSION TO:

AUTHORITY MEETING

DATE:

27th APRIL 2005

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report advises Members of a campaign by Waste Watch to urge the Government to invest more in schools-level education on waste awareness, minimisation, re-use and recycling.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Authority confirm its support for the Waste Watch campaign for funding for strategic waste education.

**Signed by Head of Waste Strategy
and Contracts**

.....

Date:.....

1. INTRODUCTION

Waste Watch's Work

- 1.1 Waste Watch is a charity and a leading national organisation promoting and encouraging action on the 3Rs - waste reduction, re-use and recycling. It works with community organisations, and local and national government, encouraging the environmental benefits of waste minimisation and recycling. It also highlights the positive impact on the economy and wider society.
- 1.2 Waste Watch's education projects ensure that the message of waste reduction, re-use and recycling reaches both students and teachers in effective, interesting and innovative ways.
- 1.3 Their education work covers three main projects:
 - the national Recyclerbility Project uses a state of the art robot called Cycler, to dance, rap and chat to primary school children about waste;
 - Schools Waste Action Clubs (SWAC) is a project running in eight areas across England delivering education for sustainable development, with direct support from Waste Watch; and
 - the Waste Education Support Programme (WESP), shares Waste Watch's education expertise with those local authorities wishing to implement and operate their own education programmes
- 1.4 Their children's website, Recyclezone, is an entertaining way to introduce ideas about the 3Rs - waste reduction, re-use and recycling - to children aged between 5-13 years old. There are fun activities, quizzes, and information on the 3Rs. The website also features a teachers' section with ideas for linking sustainable resource use to the national curriculum.
- 1.5 Waste Watch have also made available on their website (www.wastewatch.org.uk) information packs, which can be ordered free of charge for use in the classroom. These are useful tools for busy teachers and show how waste issues can be used to illustrate many aspects of the national curriculum.

Waste Watch's Campaign

- 1.6 A campaign for funding for strategic waste education work in schools was launched initially by Waste Watch at its AGM on 9 December 2004, but re-launched at a parliamentary reception on 22nd March 2005. So far, over 45 organisations and individuals have signed up to the campaign, including other waste disposal and waste collection authorities, and LondonWaste Ltd.

- 1.7 Waste Watch reports that two years after the reform of the landfill tax credit scheme no new public spending scheme for strategic waste education work has been made available. Good projects have already ceased and, at a time when other parts of society are being encouraged to do more to reduce, re-use and recycle, the engagement of young people is in danger of being ignored. Urgent action is needed before the sector's capacity and expertise to deliver education work in schools is lost.
- 1.8 Waste Watch and supporting organisations are calling on DEFRA to recognise the valuable role that education plays in helping to achieve sustainable waste management, and to:
- give urgent priority to the allocation of a proportion of landfill tax revenue to waste education-based work in schools;
 - make provision for a grant scheme for which waste education based projects are eligible without the need to prove a direct effect on household recycling targets as at present; and
 - agree to work with other government departments including DfES and the Treasury to establish a wider funding framework encompassing broader education for sustainable development issues such as energy and water.
- 1.9 Waste Watch's full paper on the subject is at Appendix 1.

2 ALIGNMENT WITH NORTH LONDON JOINT WASTE STRATEGY

- 2.1 The North London Joint Waste Strategy commits us to lobbying Government to take greater action to minimise wastes (4.A1) and to seek external funding to run waste reduction public awareness campaigns across North London throughout the period of the strategy (4.B1).
- 2.2 The campaign therefore fits comfortably with the policy statements agreed by the Authority within the NLJWS.
- 2.3 The Authority is not being asked to provide any financial support.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Authority is recommended to support the Waste Watch campaign

4 COMMENTS OF THE FINANCE OFFICER

4.1 The Financial Adviser has no comments to add to this report.

5 COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

5.1 The Legal Adviser has been consulted on this report and has no further comments to add.

Local Governments Act 1972 – Access to information

Waste Watch literature on campaign for strategic waste education.
“Mayor’s Draft” North London Joint Waste Strategy

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*"If serious issues like waste, rubbish and recycling can be made fun and interesting, children will respond positively. **Education** and awareness-raising **is key** to helping the UK deal with its waste more sustainably. What youngsters learn now will hopefully encourage them to reduce, re-use and recycle in future."*

Environment Minister, Elliot Morley, November 2004,
Defra website

Campaign for funding for strategic waste education

Waste Watch supported the more strategic use of landfill tax credits, historically a major funding source for waste education work. However, two years after the reform of the landfill tax credit scheme (LTCS) in 2002 no new public spending scheme for strategic waste education work has been made available. Good projects have already ceased and at a time when other parts of society are being encouraged to do more to reduce, re-use and recycle the engagement of young people is in danger of being ignored. Urgent action is needed before the sector's capacity and expertise to deliver education work in schools is lost.

- Education work has been marginalized by the reform of the LTCS. To date there is no provision for strategic national waste and resources education work, local waste education work or wider education for sustainable development (ESD) work, either in the formal school environment or in the non-formal setting.
- The Environment Minister, Elliot Morley recognises the long-term contribution to sustainability that working in schools can deliver, yet such funding as is currently available is solely linked to delivering on household waste recycling targets, ignoring the positive long term impacts on waste, recycling and sustainable consumption issues as well as the inherent educational value of the work.
- Links between household recycling targets and education are hard to prove but evidence suggests that education at school leads to action at home.
- Education has a vital role to play in helping to meet strategic government objectives.

We call on Elliot Morley the Environment Minister to back his statement recognising the valuable role that education plays in helping to achieve sustainable waste management in the UK and to:

- **give urgent priority to the allocation of a proportion of landfill tax revenue to waste education-based work in schools**
- **make provision for a grant scheme for which waste education based projects are eligible without the need to prove a direct effect on household recycling targets**
- **agree to work with other government departments including DfES and Treasury to establish a wider funding framework encompassing broader ESD issues such as energy and water**

Waste Watch asks all individuals and organisations that support the principles and actions in the *Campaign for funding for strategic waste education*, to sign the response form, and return it by fax or post to Waste Watch. Help us demonstrate to government the depth of support for, and importance of, waste education. A list of supporting organisations and individuals will be sent to Defra, DfES and Treasury ministers. Supporting background information can be found on page 3 of this document



Campaign for funding for strategic waste education
response form to fax back to 020 7549 0301

I /we (individual/organisationsupport the principles and actions in the *Campaign for funding for strategic waste education*, and urge the Environment Minister and others involved to make these actions a priority.

Signed Date

(Print name)

(Print organisation)

Address

Post code Tel Fax

E-mail

Note to respondents: thank you for taking the time to do this. Your details will be held by Waste Watch in connection with this initiative, and your name will become part of a list of respondents that will be updated and published during 2005, and be included in submissions to Defra, DfES and Treasury ministers. Your name will only be used in support of this initiative.

RETURN TO
WASTE WATCH (EFC), 56 – 64 LEONARD STREET, LONDON EC2A 4JX

FAX BACK 020 7549 0301

EMAIL education@wastewatch.org.uk

Supporting background information

1. **Education work has been marginalized within the reform of the LTCS. To date there is no provision for strategic national waste and resources education work, local waste education work or wider ESD work, either in the formal school environment or in the non-formal setting**

- 1.0 The only remaining category within the LTCS community fund which recognizes education is DA (biodiversity), and education “can not be the main intent of the project”.
- 1.1 To be eligible for the LTCS community fund a project must be within a 10 mile radius of a landfill site. This does not allow for national or county wide education projects and limits a project to working with a very few schools in a specific area.
- 1.2 To date no element of the Waste Implementation Programme (WIP) funding, including that administered by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) makes provision for schools-based education work. WRAP has clearly stated that young people are not part of their remit.
- 1.3 Lottery funding under the Community Recycling and Economic Development programme (CRED) has proved very difficult to access for organisations wishing to deliver primarily schools based recycling projects. (See also 2 below)
- 1.4 Strategic education does not appear to be included within the Waste Partnership Community fund, which is only available for one year, or within the Business Resource Efficiency & Waste Programme.
- 1.5 The landfill tax affects the running costs of schools and colleges in the same way it affects households and businesses, they should therefore also benefit from funding enabling them to minimise their waste with consequent environmental and economic benefits.

2. **The Environment Minister, Elliot Morley, recognises the long-term contribution to sustainability that working in schools can deliver, yet such funding as is currently available is solely linked to delivering on household waste recycling targets, ignoring the positive long-term impacts on waste, recycling and sustainable consumption issues as well as the inherent educational value of the work**

- 2.0 By planting seeds of knowledge at an early age we lay foundations that can grow and develop in the future. The value of waste education is to open minds and give children the opportunity to make moral decisions about the use and abuse of the world's resources. Examples of how Waste Watch's work does this is consistently shown in emails we receive from children who have just had a visit from Cycler the rapping robot which educates children about the 3Rs (reduce, re-use, recycle) *'We had a visit this week from Cycler robot and I am writing to tell you the changes we have made at home since we met him. We have got a recycle bin at home and we are going to recycle all the stuff we can.'* pupil (age 7) East Preston Junior School

2.1 Funding for education about sustainable resource use is paramount to ensure the UK government's sustainable consumption and production (SCP) framework addresses all UK consumers. Young people are often cited as decision makers of the future but they are also consumers of today. Research shows that they strongly influence the purchasing decisions of their families and wield significant independent spending power

2.1.1 The recent pocket money survey *Shifting Fortunes for the Nation's Children - Wall's 27th Annual Pocket Money Monitor 2001* showed that Britain's 9 million plus children aged between 5 and 16 have a combined **weekly** spending power of approximately £60 million.

2.1.2 A recent BBC Panorama programme estimated that children control over 60% of household spending decisions. In particular, children increasingly control expenditure on food as well as their own eating patterns. It is estimated that in 2002, UK schoolchildren spent £1.3 billion a year on food, with one third of their pocket money - around £11 million for every school week – being spent on snacks (Western Mail [Cardiff, Wales] September 18, 2002).

3. **Links between household recycling targets and education are hard to prove but evidence suggests that education at school leads to action at home**

3.0 In a survey conducted by the University of East Anglia, work in schools by Essex Schools Waste Action Club was shown to have a positive impact on knowledge of the 3Rs of waste management amongst children in the study group. Furthermore, more than 55% of parents in the sample indicated that their children influenced their waste management behaviour at home.

3.1 Part of a wider survey conducted by the Open University/MORI in the western riverside area of London in which a Waste Watch school-based education programme is running, found that 9% of households with children interviewed recalled waste education work at school. As the Recycle Western Riverside project had at this point only delivered education work in 20% of the schools in the area, this figure equates to about 50% of these.

3.2 A wider national survey carried out by Waste Watch in 1998 concluded, on the basis of claimed behaviour from a sample group, that a third of the UK population had altered their waste recycling behaviour due to the influence of children.

3.3 Independent research carried out for the Centre for Sustainable Energy into the impact of their Energy Matters programme found that 76% of parents had changed their behaviour to save energy as a result of their children's involvement in the programme.

3.4 Waste education projects in school can help the implementation of waste minimization and recycling programmes. Waste Watch Schools Waste Action Club (SWAC) has achieved an average rate of reduction of school waste of 47%, some as high as 90%. Global Action Plan (GAP), other organisations and local authorities have achieved similar results. Visits to schools by Cyclor have also proved to *complement and enforce local authority initiatives*. *'Cyclor promotes use of our services at home and I was very pleased to see you emphasising the need for pupils to take the messages home. It also encourages schools to utilise the services we can offer them and we know from feedback from the schools you visited that they have either signed up to our recycling services or at least have been given a fresh impetus to increase recycling activity within the school.'*
Principal Recycling Officer, Hounslow

4. **Education has a vital role to play in helping to meet strategic government objectives**

4.0 Within the *Waste Not Want Not* report '*information and **education campaigns***' to support waste minimisation and recycling programmes was identified as a strategic investment measure.

4.1 The report *Where next for the UK on Sustainable Development?*(2003) produced by UNED-UK committee on behalf of Defra, identified the top priorities for progressing sustainable development in the UK as **sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency; energy and climate change; and education, raising awareness and capacity-building**.

4.2 The Defra consultation document, '*Taking it on: Developing UK Sustainable Development Strategy Together*' (2004) also recognized that '**schools, colleges and universities can play their part in encouraging learning for sustainable development**' and that behavioural change will only result from a combination of measures including information and public involvement, **education**, economic incentives and standards.

4.3 In Waste Watch's experience schools and teachers want practical help on the ground to implement sustainable development education projects. In practice this means specialists from outside the school or college being able to provide additional support to hard pressed teachers and tutors – in the form of training, access to resources, advice, lesson delivery and monitoring plans

4.3.1 At the end of a three year Schools Waste Action Club (SWAC) project in York, 1998–2001, Waste Watch asked teachers to evaluate the project and to indicate what they felt had led to the success of the project within their school. Among the factors mentioned many indicated that SWAC education officers are essential to the success of the project and its long-term sustainability as they provide expert knowledge, which teachers can not provide or do not have the time to research.

- 4.3.2 Since 2001 North Yorkshire SWAC has worked with 35% of schools in the area. A survey of all schools in North Yorkshire in September 2004 has indicated continued high demand for SWAC in the area - 74% of respondents indicated that they would like to work with the project between April 2005 and March 2007 and 21% that they would possibly want to work with the project.
- 4.4 Funded strategic waste education projects, on a national and local level, can play a vital role in implementing a number of education strategies
- 4.4.1 The DfES **Sustainable Development Action Plan** for Education and Skills, launched in 2003, recognizes that the education sector as a whole has a potentially large environmental footprint that needs to be reduced if the UK is to meet its environmental targets and commitments. It also acknowledges that the education sector has an inherently vital role to play in the promotion of sustainable development. Waste Watch has identified links between our education project work and three of the four objectives within this action plan.
- 4.4.2 Chapter 3, paragraph 33 of the DfES '**Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners**' states '*Every school should be an environmentally sustainable school, with...**an active and effective recycling policy** (moving from paper to electronic processes wherever possible)*'.
- 4.4.3 Sustainable development requirements within aims, values and rationale of the national curriculum and within specific subject areas including citizenship, PSHE, geography, science and design and technology '*In Norfolk, Schools Waste Action Club have undertaken invaluable work that has linked into the highest County Council priorities, enabled high quality action within school communities and helped to deliver elements of the Education Development Plan. The work that SWAC undertakes is especially valuable in the area of citizenship, where a whole school approach, pupil initiated action and team work is encouraged and enabled.*' Environmental Education Co-ordinator, Norfolk Education Advisory Service
- 4.4.4 National Healthy Schools Standard – '*A compost bin provides children with a real opportunity to make a difference to their environment. The Bexley Healthy Schools Programme fully supports the work of the Schools Waste Action Club as part of the citizenship curriculum*' Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, Bexley

**Speech to launch the
Waste Watch campaign for funding for
strategic waste education work in schools**

**Waste Watch AGM
Thursday 9 December 2004**

Waste Watch has been working successfully with schools for over 10 years, but now ours and others' education projects are under threat.

Current waste orientated funding streams are focused on reaching household recycling targets. While this is extremely valuable, the role that education, and education in schools particularly, plays in achieving sustainable waste management has been ignored.

It's difficult to prove a direct link between school based education and an increase in household recycling – However, evaluation work Waste Watch has carried out, anecdotal evidence from ours and others' projects, indicates that education does have a positive effect on household recycling. Over 50% of parents in a small sample study stated that their children had influenced their waste behaviour at home.

Results from our school waste audits show we are achieving an average of 47% reduction in waste to disposal in schools we work with. Partner local authorities and other organisations such as Global Action Plan, are achieving similar results. Some of our schools have hit a staggering 90%. I think that it's difficult to argue that, that is not making a difference.

But some educationalists would argue that linking education work to recycling targets is missing the point. Education has an important role to play in society, in changing attitudes and behaviour, in helping young people to make informed decisions about the choices they make.

We speak of young people as decision makers of the future – they are decision makers of today – a recent Panorama programme estimated that children control over 60% of household spending decisions. You only have to look at a child's lunch box, adverts between children's TV programmes and their budgets, to see who the advertising agencies think are making the decisions. Advertising to children by the processed food industry has been so successful that there will now be controls on that advertising.

Young people also represent an increasingly significant consumer group. Wall's 2001 pocket money survey estimated that young people aged 5–16 years, have a combined weekly spending power of approximately £60 million. If we are to face the challenge of sustainable consumption we can no longer afford to ignore young people.

The landfill tax affects the running costs of schools and colleges in the same way it affects households and businesses. They should therefore also benefit from funding enabling them to minimise waste.

It is for these reasons that today we're launching a campaign for funding for strategic waste education. We are calling on Defra to recognize the valuable role that education plays in helping to achieve sustainable waste management, and to:

- give urgent priority to the allocation of a proportion of landfill tax revenue to waste education-based work in schools
- make provision for a grant scheme for which waste education based projects are eligible without the need to prove a direct effect on household recycling targets
- agree to work with other government departments including DfES and Treasury to establish a wider funding framework encompassing broader education for sustainable development (ESD) issues such as energy and water

Please join us in taking action by signing up to our campaign, before the sector loses jobs in waste education, loses skills and experience in waste education and loses the capacity to deliver waste education projects.

Lisa Cockerton
Education Manager
Waste Watch

Report Ends