

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

**CERTIFICATE IN MANAGEMENT**

**CERTIFICATE PROJECT**

**REVIEWING COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES  
WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON WASTE  
PLANNING**

**DATE DUE**

187	JAN	2001	

Demco, Inc. 38-293

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**30th April 1998**

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### **Abbreviations used in the text**

<b>ELSG:</b>	The External Liaison Sub Group a focus group of the National Waste Strategy Group
<b>ESA:</b>	Environmental Service Association
<b>GDPO's:</b>	General Development Planning Order a requirement to consult the Agency on developments within 250 metres of a closed landfill site.
<b>LARAC:</b>	Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee
<b>LGA:</b>	Local Government Association
<b>LPAC:</b>	London Planning Advisory Committee
<b>MoU:</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NWG:</b>	National Waste Group consisting of Regional Waste Managers and Head of Waste Regulations
<b>NWSG:</b>	National Waste Strategy Group a working group of the NWG consisting of Regional Waste Planners
<b>PPG:</b>	Planning Policy Guidance
<b>REPAC:</b>	Regional Environment Protection Advisory Committee
<b>SERPLAN:</b>	London and the South East Region Planning and Advisory Committee
<b>SWOT:</b>	Strength, Weaknesses Opportunity and Threats
<b>POS:</b>	Planning Officers Society
<b>LEAPs:</b>	Local Environment Action Plans

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the waste and local government liaison team for their thoughts and ideas throughout the research. Particular thanks go to Amanda Barratt and Julie Nunn for their assistance and proofreading.

## SUMMARY

This report reviews the communication links between the Agency's Thames Region and local authorities on waste planning and analyses whether existing liaison with the local authorities on waste planning is satisfactory or whether improvements can be made. A multi-discipline Team, the Waste and Local Authority Liaison Team, was formed to analyse the problem. The members included staff from Tactical Planning, Planning Liaison, Campaigns and Customer service.

The report starts by examining the existing liaison arrangements between the Thames Region and the local authorities on waste planning matters. This examination identified that improvements could be made. The Team decided to adopt a marketing approach to analyse the problem. Local authorities are one of the Agency's major customers, and therefore we need to be clear on the main services waste planning provides and how we tailor the service more closely to their needs.

The Team has undertaken market research in the following ways:

- A questionnaire completed by identified the current situation with local authority liaison.
- Discussions have taken place at National level on a Memorandum of Understanding with the local authorities on waste planning.
- The Team has given presentations to local authority officers at various County Waste Forums and waste planning seminars. The question and answer sessions gave valuable feedback on what the authorities require from the Agency.
- Information was collected at various meetings with the local authorities, Business Links and waste minimisation clubs.

A SWOT analysis was undertaken to assist in interpreting the information gathered. A need for improvements in communicating with the local authorities was the conclusion drawn from the analysis. The strengths and weaknesses revealed the current situation and the particular concerns we have in delivering a quality service. The opportunities and threats revealed our findings on the marketing environment and the future prospects of delivering a quality service. To decide and plan for improvements, we developed a marketing-mix framework.

Having analysed the problem, the main aims and objectives with measurable criteria for success to improve the quality of service were agreed. The main aims of the project are to develop formal communication links and improve the quality of service to the local authorities in the Thames Region on waste planning matters within the next six months. To achieve the main aims, the following objectives must be reached

- agreeing outward facing management structure within one month
- provide a clear role and direction for Thames staff involved in waste planning within two months
- agree communication links with the local authorities within three months

A Total Quality Management system was recommended as a suitable way forward. This was a consensus decision agreed by the Team. Having carried out an improvement plan, the Team agreed that we continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the quality improvements. The elements of review include the staff resources, the processes affected, staff commitment and the impact on customers. The final stage in the improvement project is to review customers' requirements. This will include talking and writing to customers. Finally we undertook a cost-benefit analysis on the implications of adopting the plan.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of the report**

This report reviews the communication links between the Agency's Thames Region and the local authorities on waste planning and analyses whether the existing liaison with the local authorities on waste planning is satisfactory or whether improvements can be made.

### **1.2 Scope of the report**

The report concentrates on examining the Thames Region's internal management structure and investigates possible improvements. Both Regional and Area staff need to develop communication links with the local authorities at various levels. This includes the Regional Planning Conference level, County level, Districts, and Unitary Authority level. Regional and Area teams need to understand their role in waste planning and how the roles relate to each other.

The Agency's document 'Environmental Strategy for the Millennium and Beyond' (Environment Agency, 1998a) sets out the strategic aims for protecting and improving the environment. It explains that working in partnership with others can only achieve the delivery of the strategy. Consultation and regular feedback will measure the successes. The Corporate Plan (Environment Agency, 1998b) explains the priorities and targets for the next four years to achieve a better environment and building partnerships is a key objective for promoting sustainable waste management.

### **1.3 Background**

The White Paper, 'Making Waste Work' (DoE, 1995a) sets out the Government's strategy for sustainable waste management. This waste strategy prepares the way for the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and Regions to draw up a statutory waste strategy, (HMSO, 1995). This statutory strategy will give guidance on waste management in England and Wales, replacing the waste disposal (management) plans drawn up by Waste Regulation Authorities. It will meet the requirements of the EC Framework Directive on Waste in relation to waste management plans. The Secretary of State will draw up the strategy using advice from the Environment Agency. The legislation gives no specific guidance on the format and content of the advice required by the Secretary of State, other than the inclusion of the national waste survey results.

Making Waste Work states that "... the Environment Agency has a key role in the improvement of information about waste management" and has a statutory role in providing formal advice on the content of the strategy. The results of this work will not only enable the Secretary of State to prepare a statutory waste strategy but can assist local authorities in their consideration of regional planning guidance and preparation of development plans. The data must also serve the needs of

industry that develops and operates the waste treatment and disposal facilities. For effective waste planning the Agency should maintain a dialogue with the local authorities (DoE, 1995b)

To reinforce the Agency's role, the consultation draft Planning Policy Guidance Note 10, (PPG 10), (DETR, 1998a) on waste issues recommends the setting up of regional fora. This fora will consist of the waste planning authorities and the Environment Agency, acting in consultation with the industry and other interested organisations. The document proposes that the regional fora will assess waste arisings data provided by the Agency. The fora will also consider likely future trends and the need for waste management facilities within the region, taking account of existing waste management capacity and interactions with other regions.

The Agency is in a position to play the roles of data collector, information provider and impartial advisor. This sets the Agency apart from the decisions local authorities must take on the choice of options and the development of facilities. The Agency is uniquely suited to these roles and can: -

- establish how much waste there is, which industries produce it and what it consists of
- establish what processes are used by industry
- establish what facilities are used to treat, recover and dispose of waste and what is the need for future facilities
- base views on sound objectives and scientific information
- inform on the environmental effects of different ways of disposing or recovering waste
- take an objective view.

The Agency takes a proactive approach towards its involvement in the planning system and we see this as an integral part of our work to protect and enhance the environment.

#### 1.4 Research Methodology

The following methodology was undertaken to carry out the research: -

- i. I formed a regional internal waste and local authority liaison team to discuss waste planning matters and to come up with ideas on the best way forward.
- ii. Through the group, a market-lead approach was adopted and investigations were undertaken to establish the present situation. We obtained the information through a questionnaire, meetings and seminars.
- iii. A briefing paper was presented to the group to facilitate discussions and generate ideas and identify options.



- iv. The Team produced organisation charts of the existing management structures at National, Regional and Area level. From these charts suggestions were discussed on improving lines of communication.
- v. The group evaluated the options, against the aims and objectives, by consensus so all are fully committed to the outcome.
- vi. Draft proposals for an improvement plan were drawn up to consult other interested colleagues and managers for their support and opinions.
- vii. We will produce a briefing document for senior managers and Regional Environment Protection Advisory Committee (REPAC) members for their input and the final report is to be signed off by the Regional General Manager.

Noted - good variety

### 1.5 Structure of the Report

*Section 2* considers the existing liaison arrangement between the Thames Region and the local authorities on waste planning matters. ✓

*Section 3* analyses the problem and discusses the advantages of teamwork and a market-led approach. A SWOT analysis and a marketing mix framework were tools to interpret the information. Conclusions were drawn. ✓

*Section 4* sets out the main aims and objectives and identifies criteria for success with appropriate timescales for an improvement plan. ✓

*Section 5* identifies scope for improvement by generating and identifying options. ✓

*Section 6* options are evaluated against the aims and objectives, and an appropriate solution is recommended. The improvement plan and the advantages of a Total Quality Management system are discussed. The success of the plan is reviewed. ✓

*Section 7* examines the cost and benefit of the plan

## **2.0. EXISTING LIAISON ARRANGEMENTS**

This section reviews the existing arrangements with the local authorities at the national, regional and local level.

### **2.1 National Level**

The National Waste Strategy Group (NWSG) has representatives from each region that deal with all waste planning matters at the national level and report to the National Waste Group (NWG). The NWG consists of Regional Waste Managers and the Head of Waste Regulation. The External Liaison Sub Group (ELSG), a working group of the NWSG, provides a policy interface between the Agency and the local government on waste strategy matters. The Group consists of three representatives, one each from Thames, Anglian and Midlands Regions. The National structure is shown in Appendix I.

The Agency has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Local Government Association (LGA). The MoU outlines the general intentions of both the Agency and LGA to build a relationship based on cooperation, openness and exchange of information. In addition a number of topic-based protocols are to be drawn up covering activities on which close liaison is imperative. These will outline areas of specific and shared responsibilities and will form a framework within which local agreements can be progressed. One such protocol will be setting out the respective roles in waste planning. Through the ELSG the Agency is consulting the local authorities and other interested parties on the proposals for the national waste survey, and the protocol for waste planning.

Regular meetings are held between members of (ELSG) and the Environmental Service Association (ESA) and Planning Officers Society (POS). These meetings update all parties on developments and emerging views in strategic waste planning and give these bodies early information in relation to work the Agency is undertaking to try to ensure their support. The work programme includes: -

- Life Cycle Analysis
- National Waste Database,
- National Waste Classification Scheme,
- National waste surveys
- Outputs from the Agency on waste strategy

The NWSG also provides Agency representation at Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) meetings. Meetings are also held between ELSG and representatives from the Local Government Association in preparing the protocol for waste planning.

## 2.2 Regional level

It is at the Regional Planning Conference level that many key interactions on strategic waste planning will take place, and a wider view of the provision of waste management facilities within a region can be taken. The Environment Agency will give each region information to enable them to develop their views.

As mentioned in Section 1.3, draft PPG 10 was prepared to take account of the formation of the Agency, the Government's waste strategy and to clarify other waste matters. It proposes the setting up of Regional Technical Advisory Bodies. These would provide specialist advice on options and strategies for dealing with the waste that will need to be managed within each planning region. The Guidance states "These Bodies should consider the implications of data on waste arisings, movements, deposits and management facilities provided annually by the Environment Agency".

Any strategy would embody two key principles: *regional self-sufficiency* and *the proximity principle*. Each region must deal with waste in its own area and reduce the distance waste travels for treatment and disposal. Both principles require accurate information on waste movements. Although it is not yet clear how the groups will be organised or what powers they would have, the Agency would expect to be able to provide information on waste management for each planning region.

The London and South East Planning Conference Region (SERPLAN) is already established and is one of the most developed regional fora. The regional facing groups should also provide the mechanism for consulting in detail with local government before the Agency embarks on surveys, either with the local authority regional officer groups or where these do not exist, with the Waste Planning Authorities within the planning region.

### 2.2.1 Thames Region

The Thames Region has established inter and intra region officer groups and is working with SERPLAN and the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) to develop a regional view on managing waste and determining the mix of options that provide the greatest overall benefit compared with both financial and environmental costs.

## 2.3 County, Unitary and District level

Waste Regulation was a responsibility of the county council. Internal communication links existed between the planners, and collection and disposal authorities. Waste regulation is now part of the Agency these lines of communication were broken. Both Regionally and Area staff have meetings and discussions with the local authorities, but there are no formal arrangements.

### **3.0 ANALYSING THE PROBLEM**

Having considered the existing situation, this section analyses whether the situation is acceptable or whether improvements can be made. How information was collected and interpreted is explained.

#### **3.1 Teamwork**

I considered the best way to approach the problem was to set up a multi-discipline team involved in waste planning and local government liaison to ~~considered~~ whether the existing situation is acceptable or if improvements are necessary. Although a team approach is not necessarily appropriate for all tasks, it is one of the most important ways of developing a creative and constructive contribution to shared tasks. Local government liaison is one of the Agency's key tasks that require a shared approach.

The Waste and Local Authority Liaison Team, (the Team) consists of myself as chairman, representatives from Regional Technical Planning, Customer Services, Tactical Planning and Campaigns. At the first meeting I explained the background to the problem and the Team members agreed that we needed to investigate communications with local authorities urgently.

I prepared a briefing paper for the Team to facilitate discussions, generate ideas and identify options for the way forward. I also prepared organisation charts of the existing management structures at National, Regional and Area level (see Appendices I and II). From these charts the Team suggested further improvements to the lines of communication.

#### **3.2 Market-led approach**

The local authorities are one of the Agency's major customers. We need to plan and organise the waste planning outputs of the Thames Region so that the service matches our customer's needs. The Team decided to adopt a marketing approach using the following marketing concepts:

- Marketing environment
- Market research

as methods of collecting information and

- SWOT analysis
- Marketing mix

as methods to interpret data and plan for further action.

### **3.2.1 Marketing environment**

In considering the market environment, the Team had to think about circumstances involving waste planning beyond the control of the Agency. The Agency and the local authorities are continually influenced by a wide range of factors that affect the relationship between us. One of the main influences is Central Government policy and changes in legislation, as discussed in Section 1.3.

### **3.2.2 Market research**

Gathering and generating information is a vital part of the marketing process. To make sensible decisions information was collected in the following ways.

- A survey was undertaken using a questionnaire to find out what arrangements are currently in place for liaison with the local authorities.
- Discussions took place at the National level on a protocol with the local authorities for waste planning.
- Presentations have been given to local authority officers at various County Waste Forums and at Institute of Wastes Management seminars.
- Discussions have taken place at County Waste Forums, Business Links and waste minimisation clubs.

### **3.3 Interpreting the information**

Both Area and Regional staff completed the questionnaire. The combined results are shown in Appendix III and confirm that liaison at the county, unitary and district level is piecemeal and largely reflects arrangements carried over prior to the Agency's formation. Discussions with the local authorities at various meetings and seminars gave the following results. The assistance required includes:

- data provision - quality data on the types and quantities of waste
- decision making tools - life cycle analysis and waste classification system
- strategic direction - assistance in preparing waste strategies
- environmental protection policies - an understanding of the Agency's policies
- advice on the future waste management options - to assist in the decision-making process on investment in future waste management options

Most importantly they also need to know who in the Agency they can contact regarding waste planning matters. It is at the local level that the policies and strategies agreed nationally can be delivered. It is at this level, in partnership with the local authorities and others, that we can deliver sustainable waste management practices.

### 3.3.1 SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis was undertaken to assist in interpreting the information gathered as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 SWOT Analysis**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
The strengths are the available staff resources. We have Government policy and legislation on our side and it is in keeping with the Agency's Corporate objectives.	Individuals in the Areas and Regions are carrying out tasks in isolation and are not aware of the interrelationship of their work with other teams and often do not have a complete picture. Restructuring has confused and demoralised staff and many do not understand their new role. Resources are not focused in the important areas and there is duplication of effort.
<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Threats</b>
There is an opportunity for the Agency to be recognised as a sound advisory body on waste planning matters and can influence local government policy. Regionally, we can assist in developing sound waste strategies for the Thames Region and London in particular.	The Agency will lose credibility if it is not performing its duties. There are inconsistencies interregionally and within regions. Local government may lobby the government that they take over this role or pay consultants to do the work.

The strengths and weaknesses reveal the current situation and the particular concerns we have in delivering a quality service. The opportunities and threats reveal our findings on the marketing environment and the future prospects of delivering a quality service.

### 3.3.2 The Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a useful framework for thinking about building up the 'total offer' we can give to the local authorities. There are eight possible elements to the marketing mix in relation to provision of a service. How they relate to the waste planning function is discussed below:

#### 1. Product

By taking a marketing approach and understanding customers' requirements, the product can be considered as a package or bundle of benefits providing the service. The product is more than just the provision of information or expert advice. We need to tailor our product to our customers' requirements.

## *2. Price*

The 'price' element is concerned with value for money that relates to how quickly and efficiently the Team can provide the required service. How the Team works and is managed will affect value for money. In this case 'price' refers to informing customers of the benefits the service will provide. This service has no direct financial cost to the customer. However, they may appoint consultants if the Agency does not provide an acceptable service, who will charge for their services.

## *3. Place*

The 'place' element is about distributing the service. This means selecting the best way to communicate the information. One of the most effective ways would be providing information and advice in a report. We could arrange an appropriate launch to promote the publication. The national help line should be improved so that a one free phone call will get someone that can answer a customer's query. The Agency's web site on the Internet also provides information related to waste planning.

## *4. Promotion*

Promotion is about communicating the service to customers and ensuring that it matches what they require. Meetings and seminars can carry this out effectively, as can providing leaflets and contacts for help and advice. This process will assist in building an appropriate image for the Agency. By consulting widely we involve our customers in our decision-making processes. To improve our services we need to ask our customers what they think of our performance. We also need to influence our customers attitudes to change their way of thinking in handling, treating and disposing of waste. Monitoring communication internally between the National, Regional, and Area levels is also important.

## *5. Process*

The process is the mechanism by which we continuously develop and deliver the service to keep pace with our customers' needs. Continuous improvement in providing a quality service to meet customers' requirements is important in providing value for money. Gaining and keeping customer confidence in the quality of service provided is important in promoting the Agency's image as a good source of environmental information and advice.

## *6. Physical Evidence*

The physical evidence that we are providing advice and information regarding waste planning to the customer includes Agency reports, guidance notes and leaflets. Evidence that our customers apply this advice and information is in the action they then undertake. For example, Local authorities could reflect this advice in their Development Plans, suggesting a high level of confidence in information provided.

## *7. People*

We can only deliver a service through people. The Team consists of valued staff with skills and dedication and who receive continuous training. This ensures consistently high standards of information and advice are given. The Team have agreed objectives and we reflect the Agency's key behaviours in the way we undertake our work. The Team operate to the standards of service set by the Customer Charter (Environment Agency, 1997a). It is important that the Team continues to build a reputation for providing good advice and quality data. This also improves the reputation of the Agency as a whole.

## *8. Philosophy*

Considering the Agency as a whole is important and to be aware of the wider picture. How we do our work in the Team must reflect the image that is to be developed for the Agency. The Agency needs to be recognised as an organisation that has a reputation of providing expert advice and guidance on environmental matters. We can only achieve this by keeping abreast of the science, techniques and technologies. We need to consider the developing culture of the Agency and how this can impede the effectiveness of our work, which could reduce the quality of service to our customers. The Agency also has a general duty to promote sustainable development. This means working closely with all our customers to achieve a common aim, as the Agency alone cannot achieve sustainable practices in waste management.

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## **3.4 Conclusions**

The analysis concluded that there is considerable scope for improving our communication links with the local authorities, especially at the Area level. It is this level that the Agency needs to focus on. No formal lines of communications exist with the local authorities on waste planning. As Waste Regulation was a responsibility of the county council, internal communication links existed between the planners, and collection and disposal authorities. When waste regulation became part of the Agency these lines of communication were broken and urgently need to be reinstated. Conclusions were also reached that both the Agency and the local authorities are receptive to any change necessary.

The Thames Region urgently needs an up to date framework of local authority



Waste Local Plans and Integrated Waste Management Strategies (Environment Agency, 1998c). The Region is committed to working with many groups and organisations concerned in the production, management and disposal of waste materials to achieve a sustainable waste management strategy. This commitment must include better integration between waste planning in London and the rest of the South East. Therefore developing our relationships with our external customers, especially the local authorities, is paramount. The Thames Region also will need to develop a relationship with the proposed Greater London Authority to work together in developing a much needed waste strategy for London (DETR, 1998b).

*This should appear on O and T on the map!*

The Agency will need to be consulted and seek input into the development plan process including Waste Local Plans, Recycling Plans, and Municipal Waste Strategies. The Agency will also seek input from Waste Disposal Authorities and Waste Collection Authorities in the preparation of Strategic Waste Management Assessments that will replace Waste Management Plans produced by the Waste Regulation Authorities.

A SWOT analysis was undertaken to assist in interpreting the information gathered. To decide and plan for improvements, we developed a marketing-mix framework. A marketing-mix framework for designing and building up the total offer to our local authority customers is shown in Appendix IV. The mix of marketing tools will assist with the implementation plan to deliver a quality service. However, first, aims and objectives have to be agreed.

#### **4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Having analysed the problem, and identified the weakness in the existing arrangements the Team agreed, by consensus, that there is a need to improve the quality of service to our local authority customers. This section sets out the main aims with clear objectives and measurable criteria for success to improve the quality of service.

##### **4.1 The Main Aims**

The main aims of the project are to develop formal communication links and improve the quality of service to the local authorities in the Thames Region on waste planning matters within the next six months.

## 4.2 The objectives

To achieve the main aims the following objectives must be reached

- i. agreeing outward facing management structure within one month
- ii. provide a clear role and direction for Thames staff involved in waste planning within two months
- iii. agree communication links with the local authorities within three months

## 4.3 Establishing Success Criteria

Having established the main aims and objectives, success criteria need to be identified and agreed to evaluate the success of the improvement plan. Agreement was reached with the Team on the following short and long term criteria for success.

### *Short term (three months)*

Criteria for success are: -

- Solutions acceptable to staff and senior management ✓
- Noticeable improvements in the lines of communications within four weeks and subsequently improved work efficiency by area and regional staff involved in waste planning
- Staff understand their roles and the procedures for working with the local authorities
- Local authorities notice the improved lines of communications within three months

### *Longer term (1-3 years)*

Once the lines of communication improve we are in a better position to work with the local authorities to:

- reduce the amount of waste produced ✓
- obtain and make available good baseline data about waste arisings
- change attitudes towards sustainable behaviour with reduction, reuse and recycling being part of the individual and corporate culture, and with greatly improved awareness across industry, public services and the public overall.

#### **4.4 Measuring success**

We will measure our successes against the following Agency documents:

- Customer Charter - eg we will consider all consultation and draft plans within six weeks or other specified local authority timescales
- An Environmental Strategy for the Millennium and Beyond - eg close and responsive relationship with local authorities should be developed
- An Action Plan for Waste Management and Regulation (Environment Agency, 1998d) - eg in partnership reduce the amount of waste produced

#### **5.0 IDENTIFYING SCOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT**

The analysis concluded that there is considerable scope for improving our communication links with the local authorities, especially at the Area level. The Team was then tasked with identifying scope for improvement. Using the marketing mix framework and a brainstorming session, the Team identified the following options: -

- form working group
- produce guidance note
- publications
- give presentations
- arrange seminars
- produce organisational charts
- regular meetings
- introduce quality management approach
- design a staff training programme
- devise some reporting mechanisms

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section makes recommendations based on the evaluation of the options, and how the recommendations can be implemented.

##### **6.1 Evaluating and choosing options**

Having produced a range of options an appropriate and effective one needs to be chosen. The technique used to make the choice was a consensus reached by the Team. The advantage of this method is that everyone is committed to the outcome. The Team recommended that a Total Quality Management (TQM) system would be a suitable way forward as it encompasses many of the other options.

## 6.2 Implementing the improvement plan

Having considered the possible way forward for improving the quality of service, the Team agreed by consensus the following plan of action. Having chosen a quality system, the next step is to ensure we implement it. Devising a clear plan for action best achieves this. The main features of a quality management system, and how these features reflect the aims and objectives, are described below:

1. *Senior management support* - We will require senior management support for the quality initiative and agree an outward facing management structure.
2. *Customer requirements* - We need to gain accurate knowledge of our customer's requirements and agree communication links with them.
3. *Standards and Procedures* - all aspects of the system should be fully planned and documented. Each stage of the process should have agreed standards and written procedures and records. This will provide a clear role for staff.
4. *Monitoring Quality* - Techniques are required to monitor and improve the quality. This will provide direction for management and staff.
5. *Staff commitment* - ensuring staff competence and commitment is important. We should identify training needs. There must be a commitment for continuous improvement.

These main features are built upon, using the marketing mix framework as discussed in Section 3.3.2, to provide a Total Quality Management system for local government liaison and are discussed below:

### 1. *Senior management support*

This is critical as without it the effectiveness of our attempts will be limited. Having reached a consensus in the Team it is also important that the other functions share the same view. A paper will be drafted and presented to senior managers and REPAC members with our proposals to gain their support

### 2. *Customer requirements*

Continuous improvement in the quality of service from the Agency is crucial, if it wishes to be a recognised professional organisation for protecting the Environment. The Agency document *Self Development* (Environment Agency, 1997b) gives ways in which we can make the organisation more effective, and create a process for regular feedback. The document also promotes some values on how we are to operate. One key area is *customer focus*. It means thinking about things from the customer's viewpoint, both internally and externally. Good

communication through taking the time and trouble to explain things properly is an example of customer-focused behaviour.

The service we provide to the local authorities is reinforced in PPG 10 that defines our role as data provider and technical adviser as discussed in section 2.2. We need to spend more time talking to local authorities to find out exactly what they require from us. This can be done by arranging more seminars, and having regular meetings. We can work in partnership towards common goals in areas such as waste minimisation and recycling. Also, we can work together on Research and Development projects such as novel waste treatment processes like anaerobic digestion.

SERPLAN and LPAC are the Region's main local authority customers, but will work with Area Tactical Planners at the County level, including planners and the Waste Disposal Authorities. It will be mainly Area staff that liaise at the District and London Borough level, which includes recycling waste minimisation officers and the Collection Authorities. An organisational chart has been drafted indicating possible liaison at regional and Area level, see Appendix V.

### *3. Standards and Procedures*

Standards of achievement are set out in the Customer Charter and other Agency documents as previously discussed. A working practice guidance document will be drafted by the Team to give clear indication of who is responsible for particular aspects of waste planning. It will include organisational charts so that staff can easily identify their role and how the role links with other colleagues. The charts should also identify the local authority contact, the service required and at what standard. The first draft of this document will be produced in six weeks.

### *4. Monitoring quality*

We need to adopt a mechanism for customer requirements to feed into our policy for continuous improvement. This will involve asking customers for feedback on our performance in delivering a quality service. The team will continue to have regular meetings to discuss progress. Invitation will be made to local authority staff to attend some meeting and give some feedback on progress.

### *5. Staff commitment*

All the Team members have signed up to this quality programme and are fully committed. We see this as a way forward in improving our job satisfaction knowing that we can provide the information and advice quickly and having the information to hand is less frustrating for the staff. Knowing we satisfy our customers gives a sense of achievement and job satisfaction.

### **6.3 Reviewing success**

Having carried out an improvement plan, the Team will need to review the work and evaluate the improvements against the agreed success criteria. A plan needs to be developed to enable the Team to work towards continuous improvement. The Team agreed that we should continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the quality improvements. The elements of review include the staff resources, the processes affected, staff commitment and the impact on customers.

#### **6.3.1 Staff resources**

The work to carry out the improvements will require directing staff resources into producing written procedures and agreeing standards. Also, we require that resources coordinate generating statistics with the Area staff on waste planning matters. However, the time spent on achieving these tasks in the short and medium terms will definitely save time in the long term and give our customers a better level of service.

#### **6.3.2 Processes affected**

As staff become more aware of their responsibilities and a system of collecting and collating data is formalised, efficiency will improve. This makes available staff resources to concentrate on developing a rapport with the local authorities and receiving regular feedback on their requirements.

#### **6.3.3 Staff commitment**

All Team members have signed up to this quality programme and are fully committed. We see this as a way forward in improving our job satisfaction knowing that we can provide the information and advice quickly and having the information to hand is less frustrating for the staff.

#### **6.3.4 Reviewing customers' requirements**

The final stage in the improvement project is to review customers' requirements. This will include talking to and writing to customers. The Team will undertake the following tasks within the next six months.

- Arrange visits to local authority customers as a matter of urgency by responsible staff. The purpose of these visits will include establishing how we can assist the Counties in drawing up their waste local plans and the new municipal waste strategies.
- Seek to establish what our local authority customers want from us now and in the future on waste planning matters

- Use the seminars we are to organise to gain feedback on the quality of our service.
- Send out questionnaires to customers asking for their views and future requirements that they expect from the Thames Region on waste planning matters.

#### ***6.3.5 The review***

We will include progress on the project in our monthly report of the Team work produced for senior managers. We will revisit and review objectives for the quality programme, linking in with the staff appraisal system and other objectives for the Team. This will ensure that we will build quality management into the daily work of the Team. Finally, we will produce an update report in three months to review the progress on the plan.

## 7.0. COST-BENEFITS ANALYSIS

This section discusses the costs and benefits of implementing the recommended plan. The Agency has a duty to consider cost and benefit in the way it does its work.

### *Cost*

We incur no additional costs in staffing resources. Local government liaison is a key task for the Agency and any management structure should take this in account. Ongoing costs require limited financial resources. This will include arranging seminars, printing leaflets and publications. There will be staff training costs.

### *Benefit*

The benefits include:

- providing a quality service to one of our main customers
- achieving the main aims and objectives in the Corporate Plan
- fulfil some of our statutory duties on waste management
- provide direction and satisfaction for staff
- work more effectively with one of our key partners in achieving more sustainable waste management - a principle aim of the Agency
- Provides a mechanism to give consistent messages to local authorities and for promoting our policies.
- Provides communication channels for advice on waste management and to influence the land use planning system to improve the standards of waste treatment and disposal.



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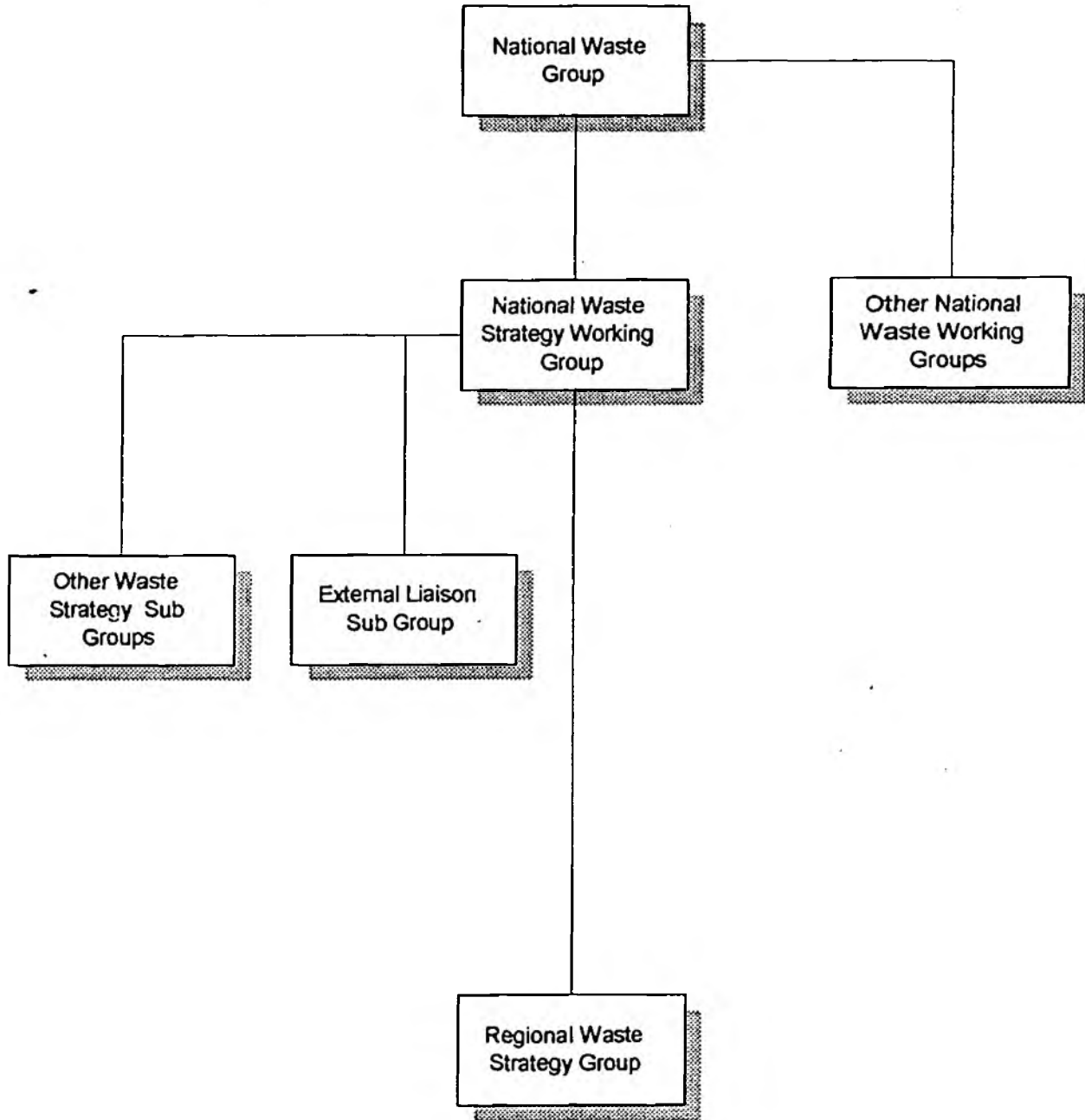
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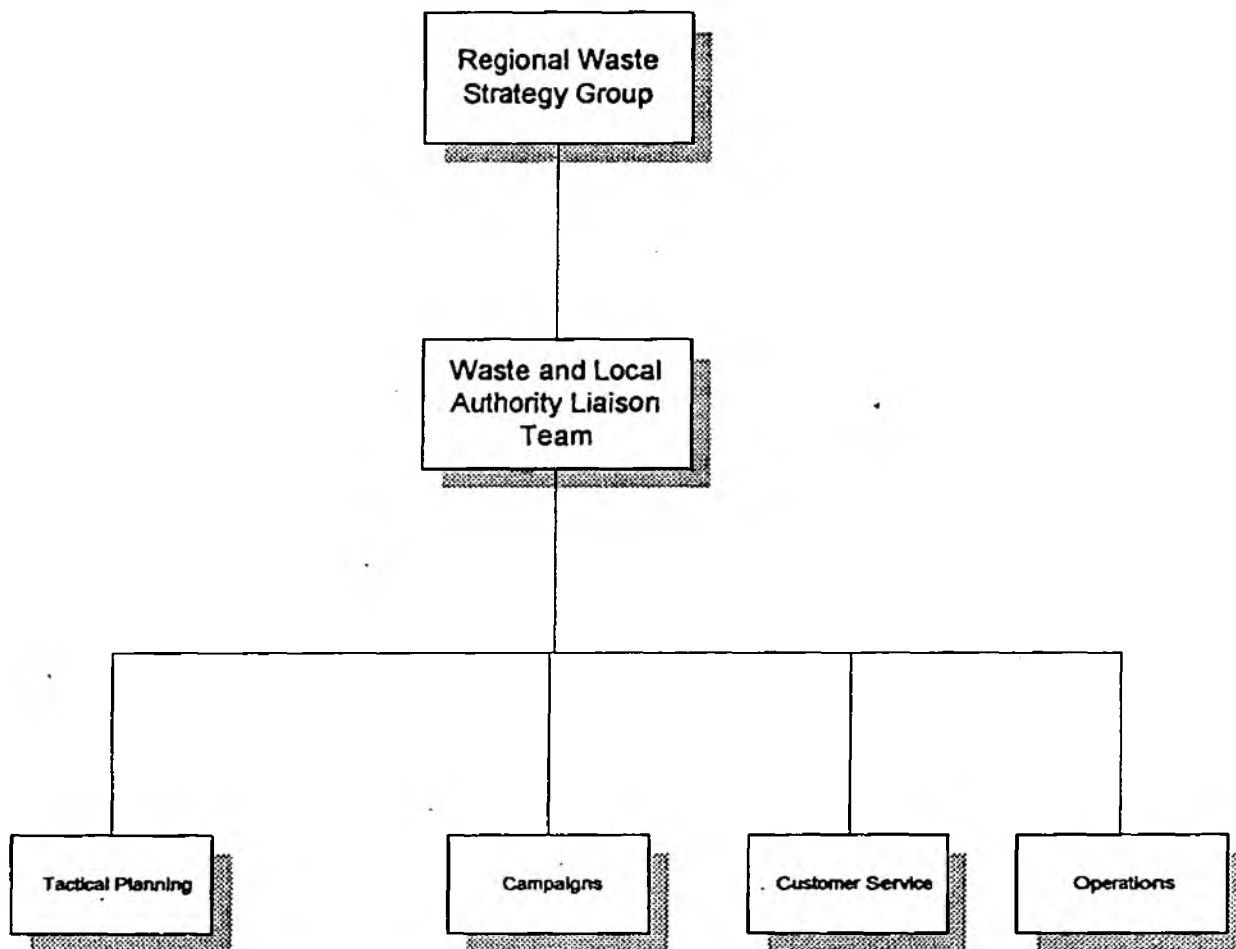
# National Structure

14 April, 1998



# Regional & Area Structures

14 April, 1998



**Interface with Local Government questionnaire**

The following questionnaire has been designed to determine what arrangements are currently in place for liaison between the Thames Region and Local Government on waste strategy matters.

1. What arrangements exist for liaison between the area/sub area and Waste Planning Authorities in connection with Structure Plans/Waste Local Plans and UDOS? If so who attends and who chairs the meetings?

**no formal arrangement, only discussions on the back of planning liaison**

2. What arrangements exist for liaison with Waste Collection Authorities regarding Recycling Plans? If so who attends and who chairs the meetings?

**none**

3. What arrangements exist for liaison with Waste Disposal Authorities regarding household waste strategies? If so who attends and who chairs the meetings?

**Ad hoc meetings with the Berkshire Forum and Buckingham Waste Forum. Attended by various regional and area staff. Forum has reps from WDA & WCAs & ESA. Chaired by WDA**

4. What arrangements exist, other than the formal consultation arrangements through planning liaison, for liaison with local authorities for general development planning purposes? If so who attends and who chairs the meetings?

**Ad hoc meetings with London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) Attended by Regional waste planners and Area Planning Liaison.**

5. What arrangements exist for liaison with Regional Planning Conference waste functional groups and if so who attends?

**Phil Ackerley - Thames Region rep for liaison with SERPLAN**

**Waste Monitoring sub group of SERPLAN**

**Regional reps -Phil Ackerley, Julie Nunn**

**Area reps- Jon Newton, John Waxman, John Weir**

6. What arrangements exist for liaison with outside bodies/organisations and if so what for and who is involved?

**(i) Ad hoc meetings with ETBPP on waste minimisation and producer responsibility-Julie Nunn/Amanda Barratt**

**(ii) London Waste Action- promoting recycling in London - Julie Nunn**

## The Marketing Mix

Product	Price	Place	Promotion	Process	People	Physical evidence	Philosophy
Provision of information or expert advice.	Value for money that relates to how quickly and efficiently we can provide the required service	Considering the distribution of the service	Communicating the service to customers and ensuring that it matches what they require	The mechanism by which we continuously develop and deliver the service to keep pace with our customers needs.	We can only deliver a service through people. The Team consists of valued staff with skills and dedication who receive continuous training.	Evidence that we are successfully delivering waste planning to the customer includes Agency reports, guidance notes and leaflets.	Considering the Agency as a whole is important and to be aware of the wider picture. The Team's work practices must reflect the image that is to be developed for the Agency.
Consider how our customers are going to use the information and advice	How we develop and manage an effective internal structure will affect value for money.	Selecting the best way to communicate the information.	Arranging meetings and seminars and providing leaflets and contacts for help and advice	Gaining and keeping customer confidence in the quality of service provided is important in promoting the Agency's image as a good source of environmental information and advice.	It is important that the Agency continues to build a reputation for providing good advice and quality data.	Customers actions after receiving the information provided further evidence	The Agency has a duty to promote sustainable development. This means working closely with all our customers to achieve a common aim, as the Agency alone cannot achieve sustainable practices in waste management.
	Informing customers of the benefits the service will provide	Advice in a report	Assist in building an appropriate image for the Agency				
	This service has no direct financial cost. However, customers may appoint consultants who will charge for their services	The Agency's web site on the Internet also provides information related to waste planning.	By consulting widely we involve our customers in our decision-making processes. To improve our services we need to obtain feedback from customers We also need to influencing customer's attitudes towards waste management.				

# Organisational Chart Liaison with Local Authorities on Waste Planning

14 April, 1998

