

LARAC

Annual
Report
2019



LARAC VISION

To be the leading voice for local authorities on recycling, waste and resource management



LARAC MISSION

To influence UK waste policy for the benefit of our members in a manner which advances the waste and resource industry. To provide membership services in a cost effective and quality manner so that our members are well informed. To provide premier local authority national waste conferences that act as a catalyst for information dissemination and promotion of good practice within local authorities.



OUR ORIGINS - OUR STRENGTH

LARAC was founded by and is still run by an Executive of serving local authority recycling and waste management professionals from the whole of the UK. Their experience and working knowledge means they are well placed to represent our members.

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LARAC CHAIR REPORT

Carole Taylor

of Pendle Borough Council



Before I wrote this, I reflected on the content of my annual Chair’s Report from August 2018, in which I anticipated that the Resources and Waste Strategy was imminent, maybe even published by then, which was with hindsight a little optimistic!

Defra



We now know Defra made us wait a bit longer than that, but it did indeed land in December that year. In 2018 I was hopeful that the strategy would give us both direction and certainty of funding going forward to help increase our recycling rates. Well, there is definitely direction, but even though we have four consultations under our belt, we are still to finalise the finer detail of what funding local authorities are likely to gain via the EPR system and from Central Government as we aim for “consistency”.

It was encouraging though to learn that the strategy aims to redress the balance of funding away from the public purse and onto the producers of waste, but then I was a little surprised to see the suggestion that charging for garden waste should be abolished. I feel that charging for garden waste collections is a prime example of the polluter pays principle; a principle strongly advocated in the waste strategy.

Defra has now released its responses to round one of the consultations and we’re getting ready for a further series of stakeholder working groups with Defra and others in the industry. All building up to round two of the waste strategy consultations in spring 2020.

Besides work on the strategy and consultations, I have attended many meetings, including speaking at the Conservative Party Conference, the Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum, Packaging Innovations, RWM and have chaired my first LARAC conference as well as a session at the LetsRecycle Live event.

Awards



I’ve had several judging opportunities (Awards for Excellence, National Recycling Awards and the LARAC Awards), and also had the chance to help judge the entries for the Coffee Cup Grant Fund; a new initiative funded by the Starbucks 5p cup charge on single-use paper cups. The winners are to be announced after this goes to print, so unfortunately, I can’t say who they are here, but I am looking forward to seeing how the funding helps to increase coffee cup recycling across the UK.

Plastics

Plastics has continued to dominate the headlines over the last year, not just in the waste and resources industry, but generally on the news and in TV programmes. It was interesting to see the McDonald’s straws issue unfold as they decided to switch to paper straws to get rid of plastic ones. Unfortunately, there then followed a public outcry as the paper straws were no longer recyclable and useless in milkshakes! My firm feeling on that is look towards the waste hierarchy and reduce the number of straws first.

The UK Plastics Pact is already over a year old, and under this initiative WRAP launched a best practice guide for producers in selecting plastic polymers which are recyclable. This will help the On-Pack Labelling scheme (OPRL) adopt what is classed as recyclable or not. It feels like a good step forward as this is what we have been advocating for quite a while at LARAC; more recyclable packaging that is easier to collect and recycle, as well as clearer labelling for consumers. Add in some stable end markets and we have a full set!

We have even more exciting times ahead as we develop and implement the policies set out in the strategy, and I’m looking forward to guiding LARAC and ensuring the local authority voice is heard loud and strong. I would like to thank Jenny and Lee, at LARAC HQ, for supporting me over the last year as Chair as well as all the valuable work they do behind the scenes for LARAC.

VICE-CHAIRS' REPORTS

Durk Reyner

of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council



The 2019 conference, will be my 25th conference and after every conference, I am always amazed that I come away learning something new, and I expect this year will be no different!

This year, I need to compliment Lee Marshall and Jenny Perry on the hard and excellent work they have performed for LARAC, in what has been a most demanding last twelve months for them both. The same can also be said of the officers on the LARAC Executive. Without everyone's endeavours, LARAC would not have in my opinion, lead the way in responding to all of the Defra's questions and attended key Defra meetings. All of which has helped LARAC produce well-argued feedback regarding the many Resources and Waste Strategy consultations (RaWS).

Going forward the Executive is ready to represent local

authorities in the next up and coming second round of RaWS consultations. The Government, we believe, are listening to LARAC's ideas and concerns, and this should help to benefit local government and minimise unhelpful legislation.

LARAC's continued success is linked to the enduring support of its membership. The ability for LARAC to state with confidence that it represents a significant majority of councils across the United Kingdom; reinforces our position that we are the voice of recycling.

With your help, LARAC should continue to promote local government as one of the leaders in sustainable waste management and address the pressing concerns of climate change.

As always, I wish everyone an enjoyable and rewarding 2019 Conference

Dan Roberts

of South Staffordshire Council

The LARAC Conference and AGM offers a brief opportunity to pause and reflect on what has been an exciting 12 months. The demands on the Executive have been greater than at any time I can remember and this is primarily due to the level of engagement with individuals and organisations resulting from the launch of the Resources and Waste Strategy. This is very positive and I have been proud to represent the organisation through presentations, panels, forums and workshops across the UK covering topics from food waste and anaerobic digestion to textile action plans, from consistency frameworks to plastic packaging.

A large proportion of my time this past year has been spent contributing to the LARAC responses to the

plethora of consultations and requests for evidence. A personal highlight was presenting evidence to and answering questions from MPs as part of the EFRA Committee inquiry into plastic packaging in the House of Commons this summer. The evidence session expanded to cover a range of issues such as DRS, consistency, producer responsibility and labelling and represented the culmination of a great deal of effort by many people, not least our members through their responses to surveys and attendance at workshops/events.

I have enjoyed forging links with organisations which share our values and challenge in the right way what I consider to be misleading and sometimes unhelpful portrayals of local authorities and the services that we provide. I will continue to champion what we do and am proud that LARAC continues to grow as an organisation.

We are driven and directed by you and this is the basis of our solidity, which is more important than ever as we go forward together to face the challenges and opportunities ahead.

TREASURER REPORT

John Coates

of Lincolnshire County Council



The accounts for 2018/19 have been independently audited by Thorne and Co and are shown on the next page. The Executive had again set a budget for the year that was broadly neutral, with a working surplus of just £141 for the year. This was similar to the previous year, although both expenditure and income were budgeted to be at slightly higher levels overall than in 2017/18.

End of Year Position



The end of year position was very positive for a second year in a row, with a surplus of £10,112 being posted. This was largely due to better than predicted income from conferences and helped to offset an overspend on expenditure. The overspend of about £3,000 was mainly related to activities connected with the consultations on consistency, DRS and EPR that were run between February and May 2019. LARAC ran a series of workshops to gain members views and there were costs associated with these that LARAC had not planned for in its budgets but that the Exec supported. They were felt to be too important not to do and in light of the increased income levels it was felt worthwhile incurring the overspend to run the events for such important consultations.

Expenditure



There was also extra expenditure for a business planning away day that was needed to help formulate the new LARAC Business Plan, the current one ending in 2019 and also for site visits to new conference venues

following the decision to change venues in 2019 after five years at Nottingham. The change in venue allows the conference to grow slowly and enables the possibility of increased sponsorship opportunities that we hope will help maintain income levels going forward.

Income



Membership fee income continues to hold up as again we kept membership numbers higher than we had budgeted for. Despite this we have again taken the decision to have a small increase in the membership fee for 2020/21 as LARAC's operating costs are also increasing in line with local government pay settlement and other costs associated with running an office and IT requirements. We believe the fee still represents good value, something members agreed with in the last annual member satisfaction survey, but we are looking to work hard through the next business plan to give you and demonstrate the "value" of your LARAC membership.

This healthy position may allow LARAC to undertake some activities in support of further consultation responses, as we did with some funding for the Anthesis/Suez DRS tool, and also modernise the organisation further as we look to continue to be fit for purpose and increase our ability to represent members' views and provide member services that you will all value and use.

The budget for the current financial year has been set at a deficit of £3,000. The move to a new conference venue means we have been potentially conservative in our estimate of income from that. Costs have increased slightly and some of this relates to the Chair, Executive and CEO attending industry meetings as we work through the possible details of the various consultations and prepare for the next batch in spring 2020. This still leaves LARAC carrying reserves at a level that the Executive has considered acceptable.

LARAC ACCOUNTS

Thorne and Co

1 St Mary's Street, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire



We have prepared the accounts shown from the books, vouchers and information supplied to us and we certify that they are in accordance therewith. We have not carried out an audit.

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2019

| | 2019 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Income | | |
| Membership Subscription | 109,630 | 109,374 |
| Sale of Loop and copies | 4,071 | 4,043 |
| Webs Sales | 22,494 | 23,400 |
| Conferences | 35,891 | 31,732 |
| Interest | 907 | 1,060 |
| Miscellaneous | - | 497 |
| Other commercial activities | 2,000 | - |
| | 174,993 | 170,106 |



| Expenditure | 2019 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| LARAC Administration | 83,054 | 81,908 |
| LARAC Website | 605 | 3,217 |
| Honoraria | 3,850 | 3,850 |
| Secondees | 13,260 | 14,969 |
| Meetings | | |
| Executive | 8,117 | 5,606 |
| Regional | 2,131 | 1,020 |
| Other | 11,397 | 11,569 |
| Conferences | | |
| LARAC | 1,514 | 738 |
| Other | 1,270 | 1,210 |
| Insurance | 1,552 | 1,589 |
| Subscriptions | 600 | 600 |
| Magazine publications | 29,145 | 29,485 |
| Exhibitions | 1,257 | 998 |
| Promotional material | 35 | 35 |
| Accountancy fees | 640 | 630 |
| Depreciation | 506 | 506 |
| VAT | 3,298 | 3,832 |
| Business Plan | 2,650 | - |
| | 164,881 | 161,762 |
| Surplus for the year | 10,112 | 8,344 |

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2019

| | Cost less Depreciation To 31.03.19 | Additions | Sales | Depreciation | Balance |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| Fixed Assets | | | | | |
| Canon Photocopier | - | | | - | - |
| HP Printer | 100 | | | 100 | - |
| HP Printer | 100 | | | 100 | - |
| Furna Desk | 112 | | | 56 | 56 |
| Computer | 500 | | | 250 | 250 |
| | 812 | | | 506 | 306 |
| Current Assets | | | | | |
| Debtors | | | 54,285 | | |
| Community A/C | | | 73,571 | | |
| Deposit A/Cs | | | 94,039 | | |
| | | | 221,895 | | |
| Current Liabilities | | | | | |
| Received in Advance | | | 118,145 | | |
| VAT | | | 907 | | |
| Creditors | | | 4,410 | | |
| | | | 123,192 | | |
| | | | | 98,703 | |
| Total Net Assets | | | | 99,009 | |
| Represented by:- | | | | | |
| Capital Account | | | | | |
| Balance at 1st April 2018 | | | | 88,897 | |
| Surplus for the year | | | | 10,112 | |
| Balance at 31st March 2019 | | | | 99,009 | |



BUSINESS PLAN

Lee Marshall

LARAC CEO



The past twelve months have seen the development of a new four-year business plan for LARAC to guide the organisation through to 2023.

Whilst a lot was achieved in the life of the previous plan it was acknowledged that our ambitions had not matched the resources available to do the work. We had over-reached ourselves in terms of targets and actions and as a result not all of them were achieved.

Resources



In reviewing where LARAC was and what the next four years had in store, it was obvious that with the then upcoming Resource and Waste Strategy, the greatest focus needed to be on the LARAC policy work. Coupled with that was the understanding that at heart LARAC is a membership organisation not a waste organisation. With those ideas in mind the new business plan was built around two key areas: membership services and policy work. In order to progress actions in these areas it was recognised that the resources LARAC need in the future might not be the same as they have now. During this new business plan resources will be reviewed and developed so that they are aligned with delivery of the two priority areas.

Policy Work



The launch of the Resource and Waste Strategy and the resultant consultations highlighted how valuable the policy work can be to members. The need for more resources meant some of the work to deliver the action plan had to be put on hold in order to address the work members needed us to do on the consultations. Never a good start to a four-year plan but some of the actions we hope to achieve in the first-year centre around our policy

work and consultation responses. However, the work we did on the big consultations will inform the reviews and changes we make on the policy work.

Membership Services



In terms of membership services, we know we need to ensure that being a member of LARAC has value and that we retain the members we have and try and grow those numbers. Without members LARAC does not exist. The type of membership services we offer and how they are delivered have evolved over the life of the previous business plan. LARAC needs to continue to improve them to ensure that they are perceived as having value and are seen as a reason for being a member of LARAC. We want to improve satisfaction in our services, increase membership numbers and increase the breadth of services we can offer to members.

The Next Four Years

BUSINESS PLAN 2019 - 2023



The next four years will see a big shift in waste policy in the UK and some fundamental changes in how local authority services are funded. The business plan and the actions in it are designed to support our members through this period. It also seeks to ensure LARAC has the resources to represent members to Government and industry in a way that achieves good outcomes for the members and the wider UK waste industry.

POLICY OFFICER REPORT

Dianne Hewgill

of Staffordshire County Council



The release of the long awaited 25-year Environment Plan in January 2018 and the Resources and Waste Strategy last December was the catalyst for the development of proposals which promise fundamental shifts in national waste policy.

Some of this year's proposals have been supported by LARAC, whilst others have raised concerns over the potential negative implications on local authority waste services and budgets. The proposed changes to the UK Packaging Producer Responsibility System, the proposed introduction of Deposit Return Schemes and Consistency of Collections in England and Wales were the biggest consultations LARAC has responded to in a long time, if ever. The issues generated considerable debate at member workshops and within the LARAC Executive, with valid differing opinions on some topics. LARAC's responses to the consultations provided a balanced view, and in situations where there was no consistent answer, reasoned options were given to ensure the membership was properly represented. In summary the key points from the responses are below.

UK Packaging Producer Responsibility



- Producers should meet the full net cost recovery for household and household-like packaging waste. This should not be extended to commercial/industrial applications.
- Full net cost recovery should include all the costs that local authorities incur for the collection and onward processing of the packaging. This should not only cover the recycling collection costs, but also the packaging element in residual waste and litter. Payment rates should not be based on minimum standards as this would be contrary to the polluter pays principle.
- If a DRS scheme is introduced, this is not considered a duplication and producers should be responsible for items that fall within both systems to ensure all collection methods are funded.

Deposit Return Scheme

In September LARAC responded to the DRS consultation for Scotland and in May 2019 responded to Defra's consultation for a DRS for England and Wales. The LARAC responses to these consultations were consistent expressing:

- Concerns that the costs to local authorities were uncertain and further research should be completed before the government commits to introducing a scheme.
- The Defra consultation was issued simultaneously with the proposed packaging EPR reforms and Consistency. These policies could bring substantial changes in the current way we recycle and it was recommended the decision for a DRS should be deferred until the outcomes of these other policies are known.
- If a DRS is deemed appropriate, 'on the go' materials should be targeted to offer a genuine potential to increase recycling rates, rather than duplication of materials currently collected through existing and extensive kerbside collections.

In April 2019 Scotland confirmed a DRS for Scotland for containers up to 3 litres in size. The Defra consultation summary released in July has also indicated the government wishes to pursue an 'all in' system.

Consistency of Collections



- Support was given for local authorities to collect a consistent set of material subject to sorting and end market infrastructure being available. The difficulties of extending this to flats and HMOs was presented.
- Separate collection of the core set of dry recycling was not supported, advising it should be at the local authority's discretion to determine what is most appropriate for the area.
- The concept of food waste was supported on the provision that long term guaranteed funding is provided to cover all related cost burdens.
- Free garden waste services were not supported urging a lifecycle assessment to be completed which considers the overall environmental impact, such as the carbon impact.
- Businesses should be mandated to recycle municipal waste.

LARAC will continue to engage with Defra and the devolved Governments over the next few months to work on the detail of these policy areas with further public consultations anticipated in 2020.

THE LARAC YEAR

Lee Marshall

LARAC CEO



The past twelve months have largely been dominated by significant movements in waste policy across the whole UK, which has necessarily meant LARAC has spent a great amount of effort in this area. But before we get into the depths of all the 2018/2019 Policy work there were a few other things occupying our minds here at LARAC.

Conference



As soon as the 2018 UK Conference was over, we had the small matter of reconsidering the UK conference venue for 2019. As good as the Nottingham venue had been for the past five years, it had become clear that the LARAC event was in danger of out-growing the facilities. The decision was made to review potential alternatives, which resulted in series of site visits to assess all aspects of the venues against the conference, accommodation, the awards and the exhibition space. It was decided to go to the Hilton Metropole at the NEC complex in Birmingham for 2019. Such a move is not without risk, but we hope the venue will allow the event to grow without losing that relaxed and intimate atmosphere that the LARAC has become known for.



LARAC Ezine

LARAC OnLine



Another visible change that happened around the same time was in LARAC Online as we moved away from sending out a PDF newsletter and utilised Mailchimp. It also saw a move from monthly to fortnightly with less content in each edition. We were aware that some systems had trouble with the pdf attachments and we felt this provided a good alternative. It also means we can track opening rates and better link web site stats to LARAC Online publications. The results show a much higher than average opening rate and that traffic to the website has increased since the introduction of the new format.

Resources and Waste Strategy



A lot of our communications this year, though, were related to the Resource and Waste Strategy and the resultant consultations launched in February 2019. We worked hard to keep you informed and briefed in as timely manner as we could manage for these major pieces of policy from the UK Government. This wasn't helped by our not knowing when they would appear. For the Strategy itself we had only a couple of days' notice, and a final copy at 7pm the night before it was released. For a small organisation a schedule like that tests the systems and processes we have, but we were able to get a briefing paper out to members on the day of release, which we then did with the consultations as well.

Our recent survey has shown that you valued these briefings, used them internally and want to see them again the future. That is great to hear and gives us the welcome challenge of meeting your future needs.

THE LARAC YEAR Continued



Workshops



It wasn't just communicating the release of the Strategy and consultations that we focused on. We ran a series of workshops designed not only at getting your views on the consultations but helping to inform our local authority views as well, and to that end we also ran an online survey. Your information helped to shape our final response, which we were also able to share with you to help you in turn shape your authority's response. Using members' feedback on our process, we know it would have been better for us to get that response to members even earlier to help users progress it through their internal systems before the response deadline. That feedback from members was very welcome and we will take it on board for future large consultations.

Meetings



Our work on the strategy and the consultations started way before the documents were released. LARAC was involved in several meetings with Defra and working groups organised by them that helped shape the content of the strategy and the consultations. That sort of engagement is continuing now with Defra and others as we work towards a second set of consultations on DRS, EPR and consistency, due to come out sometime in 2020.

It is this element of LARAC work that we are looking to get better at sharing. It is not always easy as some of these meetings, by their nature, must be held on a confidential basis. But the policy work that LARAC undertakes is a key part of your membership and while not as visible, it could be argued it is at least and maybe more important than the more visible communications

we do and the national conferences we put on for our members, either free or at reduced rates. You can read more about how we hope to do that in the business plan section on page 6.

Exec Skills



Looking forward, we are considering how we make best use of the skills we have within the Executive and how we can respond positively to the various meeting requests we get from governments and the wider industry. They cover topics such as mattresses to plant pots, to textiles. There is a lot going on just beneath the headline policy areas that others want and need a local authority view on. That too, could have impacts on how we operate our services.

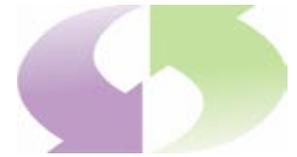
Events



Alongside our Scotland and Wales Conferences, there have been an increasing number of England regional events run by LARAC, some in conjunction with CIWM. The North West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and The Humber regions all had one day events that were well attended and well received. Running joint events has worked well and it is likely the model will continue for some regional events in the future.

In some respects it will generally be more of the same for the next 12 months as we work behind the scenes on the policy direction that the Defra is looking to take and try to influence the detail of how the policies will be implemented and which will no doubt be contained in the next set of consultations on consistency, DRS and EPR.

THE CONFERENCES



Over the past couple of years LARAC has developed a closer working relationship with Environment Media Group to deliver the LARAC national conferences. As well as our UK Conference we run conferences in Scotland and Wales.

These events are now run on a more commercial basis, primarily with a view to making them free or at as low a cost as possible to LARAC members. If we can also generate any income from them, it reduces the burden on membership fee income.

Scotland 2019



The Scotland event returned to the Grand Hotel in Glasgow and featured a good size exhibitors' area with several stands. The first session focused on the legislation and policy driving waste management in Scotland, including EPR and the landfill ban on biodegradable waste that will come into force in 2021, as well as an outline of the latest work by Zero Waste Scotland. The second session was full of case studies from Scottish local authorities and suppliers on topics including reuse, IT and garden waste charging. Zero Waste Scotland then appeared again in the final session to talk about developments on implementing DRS as well as a talk considering the potential impacts of the EU exit on the waste sector.

Wales 2019



After many tears at Maes Mawr the Wales Conference moved to the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells. This allowed space for a small number of exhibitors' stands to support the conference programme. The opening session looked at the bigger picture for Welsh waste policy and covered EPR and end markets as well as looking at the more general context that Welsh local authorities are operating in at the moment. Session two took a slightly different tack from previous years with a focus on litter and litter prevention and then a talk on how waste links to wider climate change issues. The final session saw a series of local authority case studies that showed how a

variety of approaches are being taken to meet the high recycling targets set by the Welsh Government.

UK Conference 2018



Two months after the UK LARAC Conference in Nottingham the new Resource and Waste Strategy would be out. The Conference opened with Mary Creagh showing why she is one of the most respected MPs in the House of Commons; her knowledge of the waste sector clear. Chris Preston from Defra wasn't giving too much away of just what was to come. Later we looked at coffee cups and communications and had the first case study, from South Staffordshire Council. Later, still on day one, North London Waste Authority and Daventry would showcase how they operate their services. In between there was the lively debate session that discussed how recycling rates could be increased across the UK.

Day two workshops addressed residual waste frequencies, communications, food waste and risks in waste contracts. This opportunity to make the Conference content work-relevant is really valued by members.

This would be the last event at Nottingham after five strong years and 2019 sees a switch to the Hilton Metropole in Birmingham. All accommodation and the event is under one roof and we think it will take the conference to the next stage.

Scholarship 2018



Support from REPIC meant that 18 local authority officers at the start of their careers were able to attend the UK LARAC Conference. Their scholarship experience began with a special workshop the day before the conference where they considered current issues around WEEE collections and topics related to EPR and DRS, ahead of the strategy coming out. Feedback showed us, and happily this is usually the case, just how much the scholars gained from attending the conference, how useful it was to them in their day job and how they felt it was going to help with their personal development.



EAST

Rebecca Piper, Suffolk County Council

I only joined the Exec in July this year, to cover Hilary Garlick's maternity leave, so it has been a bit of a whirlwind introduction! (I wish Hilary and her new baby boy all the best!)

As I have only just started, I will sum up Hilary's and others' efforts in the eastern region for the past year. In this region, we have continued to look at ways to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities, and in the past year that has resulted in a new shared contract for recyclables as well as a joint food waste reduction communications campaign.

Hilary represented the LARAC authorities by presenting

at a CIWM meeting (December 2018) on an "LA perspective on the future of textiles collections". In this she explored the challenges of collecting textiles from local authorities' (how to collect & divert from disposal) and the textile recycling sector's (textiles commodity prices & reusing/ recycling processes) perspective, especially in the context of national & international changes! She attended the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan group meeting (February 2019) to find out the latest developments on textiles, as well as being involved in the effort of pulling together the LARAC responses to the Defra consultations.

I am looking forward to getting stuck into the Eastern region representative role over the next year and it's great to have this LARAC forum so that our voices are heard at the national level!

EAST MIDLANDS

Eloise Attwood, South Northamptonshire Council

I have been the representative for the East Midlands for just over a year and it's certainly been a busy one for the Executive! With all the work that was put into the strategy consultation responses it really felt like the voice of our members was being heard by Defra and wider audiences such as the LGA.

We now have a date for local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire and unitary status is set for 2021. This will replace the current county council and seven district councils with two unitary councils. This sadly led to the decision that South Northants could no longer

share services with Cherwell District Council. With consistency on the agenda there will be work to be done to achieve this across the new unitary Council areas and to decide how best to communicate with people in the

future.

Gate fees for dry recycling continue to be a challenge and one of the biggest areas of risk for many authorities. There is a lack of processing capacity in the right places which itself is a barrier to consistency. Councils in the East Midlands are currently looking at the financial and practical implications of building their own MRF to try and manage this better.

LONDON

Dimitra Rappou, North London Waste Authority

2019 was an exciting year to start my new two-year term as the London LARAC representative. In February, following the launch of the Resources and Waste Strategy, the four consultations dominated the waste agenda.

At the London workshop, which was held to inform LARAC's response, colleagues held lively discussions over different options and the best way forward for the waste management industry to meet future challenges. I was pleased to continue being part of the LARAC conference committee and also represent LARAC at a variety of meetings and workshops, such as at the WRAP

workshop in May to explore what a potential post-2020 Sustainable Clothing Action Plan might look like, at a parliamentary debate in June to discuss the Nappies (Environmental Standards) Bill and with Defra in August to discuss emerging policy areas following the publication of the responses to the consultations.

I would like to thank once again the LARAC team for their continued support, as well as North London Waste Authority for allowing me to serve on the LARAC Executive. I look forward to the conference in October, this year at its new home in Birmingham, meet our new scholars and chair a workshop session on the second day. I hope to see you all there.



NORTH EAST

Victoria Burrell, Durham County Council

Our very active North East Recycling Forum quarterly meeting topics this year have been varied: from the announcement of the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy; its national implications and the impact on local waste and recycling services.

Key topics have been: DRS, Extended Producer Responsibility, consistency of recycling collection services, food and free garden waste collections. The North East responded to the proposals set out within the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy consultations and voiced its opinion via a range of stakeholder engagement sessions including those hosted by LARAC. The NE local authorities acknowledge the level of commitment LARAC has provided in relation

to helping shape future waste policy for England.

Within the NE region many local authorities have been tackling the plastics agenda as a result of public interest following national media coverage. Within my own local authority, a single use plastics (SUPs) network has been created across the County, and work to influence the supply chain to seek alternatives to SUPs has been developed via the collaborative working between local authorities and the NE Procurement Organisation (NEPO). The day job is certainly interesting and varied!

As a policy team member, I encourage all NE LARAC members to use the LARAC website and read LARAC Online - valuable sources of information. And, if you have not previously attended the annual LARAC Conference, I would highly recommend it!

NORTH WEST

Carole Taylor, Pendle Borough Council

November 2018 saw the third annual joint CIWM/LARAC Open Meeting kindly hosted by Saica at their Manchester paper mill. Robert Vaughan, from Defra gave an update on what the strategy may bring, just ahead of its publication in December 2018.

The joint event is proving to be very popular, so we are trying a bigger venue this year. Suez are hosting it at their new Darwen facility on Friday 15th November 2019.

Some of the North West highlights this year have been: Cumbria brought back in-house the service provision of

the HWRC permit scheme; Merseyside launched a Community Fund with £115,000 available for waste prevention & reuse projects; Cheshire West and Chester aims to end its contract early

with Kier in March 2020; Cheshire East aims to complete construction of their IVC composting plant in November 2019; Lancashire will be including plastic pots, tubs and trays into kerbside recycling from October 2019; Manchester CC won a National Recycling Award for their apartment recycling improvement scheme; and Greater Manchester Combined Authority has signed up Suez to manage waste from the region's 2.3 million residents.

Hopefully I will see a few North West people at the LARAC conference this year, or if not, then at the joint CIWM/LARAC event on 15th November 2019.

SOUTH EAST

Ian Upstone, Cherwell District Council

I recently joined the Executive in March 2019 after Amy Bridford stepped down. I would like to thank Amy for all the great work she put in on behalf of EM members - certainly some big shoes to fill. I decided to join the Executive to further my own personal development but I also bring with me 30 years of operational experience in local government. I have the drive and passion that will be required to support LARAC in this time of uncertainty and with the new government waste strategy. As the regional representative I'm very keen to set up regional meetings to discuss the issues we all face as local authorities, so we can help and assist each other and bring informed debate to the LARAC executive.

Locally in the South East there are changes with both Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire moving slowly towards unitary councils or just working closer together!! The issues for the South East

councils are the same as many others across the country:

- Contamination rates rising with processors requiring a better quality of recycling
- Paper prices have dropped
- Negative publicity in the media and the demonization of plastics, giving residents doubts if they should recycle at all.

These issues occupy our waste and recycling discussions along with the government consultations, which may be good or bad for local authorities we will see! These are exciting times to be in waste?



SOUTH WEST

Dawn Fearne, Gloucester City Council

I can't believe it is almost a year since I signed up to be the South West representative on the LARAC Executive. I am grateful that I will be able to join future SWWRF meetings by SKYPE, now that my IT issues are hopefully sorted.

I'm pleased to see the developing connection between SWWRF and CIWM, I'm sure this will make future events even more successful. I have attended several South West CIWM workshops which mainly focused on the W & R strategy and I also helped to facilitate LARAC's Bristol workshop. The recent changes in Government leaves us with a degree of uncertainty and the next year will

see further consultations for us all to sweat over.

The challenges that face Local Authority budgets are exacerbated in the South West by challenging materials markets affecting the kerb side sort services. Several authorities in the South West are having problems finding an alternative off taker to JMP Wilcox for kerb side collected textiles. This is another material stream affected by the flooding of the market by China, another headache for those of us collecting textiles. I am pleased that I have managed to get my whole team to conference this year and I look forward to widening all our networks and meeting more of you. Please do get in touch with me, if I can help in any way.

WEST MIDLANDS

Dan Roberts, South Staffordshire Council

Firstly big thanks to all West Midlands colleagues for their support in what has been a hectic but thoroughly enjoyable 2019. Information shared through various online requests, surveys, workshops and meetings has directly enhanced my ability to represent the views of members at the highest level and it was a privilege for me to attend a House of Commons inquiry in July 2019 to share our experiences directly with lawmakers.

The views of WM members have supported a number of improvements to LARAC over the past 12 months, like the new look LARAC OnLine. Our region (Stafford) was lucky enough to host one of the LARAC Resources

& Waste Strategy workshops in the summer - with around 40 attendees - the information from which fed directly into our consultation responses. Feedback from the

workshop was very positive and we will look to repeat such activities as needs (and further consultations) arise.

Our annual joint event in June with CIWM in Telford was again well supported and heard from industry experts on topics such as electric vehicles, PRNs, food waste and route optimisation. Big thanks to Craemer PLC for again sponsoring the event and also to Andrew Bird for co-ordinating on behalf of LARAC.

LARAC is here to represent you, the members and if I can support you in any way please don't hesitate to get in touch.

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

John Coates, previously of North Lincolnshire Council

I've attended all the Exec meetings during the year and continued as LARAC's technical advisor to the RECOUP board (REcycling Of Used Plastics). Like many in our sector the big event of this year was the publication of the new government strategy and the consultations that followed.

We have quarterly meetings of waste and recycling officers and managers hosted by Leeds City Council and I cover LARAC matters there. We discussed the consultations at our February meeting, authorities attended the LARAC workshops in March and we reviewed these at our May meeting.

Councils in my region continue to deal with the annual

pressures of savings and income generation to help balance budgets. Removing source separated kerbside collections for co-mingled ones, reviewing HWRC provision and

charging for garden waste have been constant topics for discussion. Among the more esoteric topics we covered included a failed batch of bin lids and animal waste from a council zoo! Best practice continues to be shared on how to increase reuse and recycling with our ever dwindling comms resources and I hope councils from my region are successful at the LARAC awards in October as we have some great projects being done on the ground.

Finally this is my last report as regional rep as I am leaving the region. I would like to thank all the LARAC member councils for their help and support during my time here and I wish you all continued success.

LARAC NORTHERN IRELAND

Declan Donnelly,
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

The Resources and Waste Strategy launched in late 2018 will have impacts and implications for local authorities in Northern Ireland.

DRS



While consistency proposals were England focused the elements of Extended Producer Responsibility will be applicable in Northern Ireland. The consultations that were released in February 2019 outlined how this might impact on authorities here and also included outlines for a DRS. It is yet to be established if Northern Ireland will be included in a system covering England and Wales and what, if any, differences there might be. Further consultations on EPR and DRS are expected in spring 2020 when the impacts on local authorities in Northern Ireland will hopefully become clearer.

Recycling Rates Rising



2019 saw recycling rates continue to increase and overtake England with a rate of over 48% and Mid Ulster achieving recycling of 56.3%. This was driven in part by the requirement to collect food waste that was introduced in April 2017, in a move already taken in Wales and Scotland. The biggest leap was last year

but the services are still helping to increase the overall recycling rates.

New Funding



A new fund was launched by DAERA along similar lines to systems that have been operating in Wales. The Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme is designed to help councils improve their services and ensure that recycling rates continue to rise. With £23million available it will be interesting to see how many authorities take this offer up and what projects the funding gets used for in the next couple of years.

LARAC Event for Northern Ireland



For LARAC we hope that the coming year will enable us to work closer with our members in Northern Ireland and also relevant stakeholders and policymakers as well, as the waste policy landscape continues to become ever more devolved. It has been a few years since we held a conference and that is something we are keen to do in 2020, with other partners potentially. Any thoughts and ideas on how this might look and work and what it could usefully cover are always welcome, just email admin@larac.org.uk

LARAC SCOTLAND

Stephen Gilfillan, West Lothian Council



I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year (nearly, 10 months actually) representing LARAC in Scotland during 2019. The experience of representing Scottish local authorities on the LARAC Executive has been an incredibly rewarding and fulfilling one, and I would highly recommend it.

Clearly, public sector recycling and waste management services are currently operating in a highly dynamic political and policy landscape, especially in relation to the potential impacts of Brexit, DRS, EPR, and the proposed BMW landfill ban (in Scotland) to name but a few. By this time next year, we should all at least be a little clearer about our direction of travel. My thoughts on some of these factors is summarised below.

DRS



The Scottish Government is forging ahead with its plans for its all-in, “return to retail” 20p deposit refund DRS for glass, PET and aluminium cans. How the planned scheme will impact the precise tonnage drop collected by local authorities can only be estimated currently, but it’s only heading in one direction. I know Zero

Waste Scotland is committed to delivering the scheme by the middle of 2020; however, this is significantly affecting their delivery of other project areas. Their equivalent “Brexit” effect if you like.

Household Recycling Charter



Those Councils which have signed up to the Household Recycling Charter in Scotland (30 so far) are at various stages of implementation, but I am sure that the benefits of a more standardised collection system across Scotland will deliver the aims and objectives of the Charter. It will be very interesting to see how these new collection systems perform across the country and the effect they have on recycling rates and also the quality of materials being collected. My own council, West Lothian, has signed up to the Charter and we are currently in the process of discussing with Zero Waste Scotland how we approach the primary objectives of the Code of Practice through our business case. This does seem to have been put on hold for the moment due to DRS.

LARAC Scotland Conference



The Scotland conference was held once more in the Grand Central hotel in Glasgow on 2nd May, and I believe the event was well received by the 100 or so delegates and sponsors. It was my first time chairing a major conference, and while it was quite a thought to be doing it in the run-up to the conference, overall I found the experience incredibly satisfying. There were a number of very good speakers on the day, including Janet McVea, Head of Zero Waste Unit, Scottish Government; Charlie Devine, Head of Resource Management, Zero Waste Scotland; and David Barnes, Programme Manager, Zero Waste Scotland.

Hot topics included the Scottish Government’s proposal for DRS and the proposed BMW landfill ban in 2021, with several interesting case studies from local authorities including Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils plus my own authority’s Head of Waste Services talking about our move to a new multi-service operational depot. Thanks to all the speakers and delegates for their support for what, according to our feedback, was another very successful event. I look forward to starting to plan for next year’s conference.

I continue to be impressed with how Scottish local authorities continue to deliver excellent collection, recycling and disposal services in the face of increasing financial pressures. The level of professionalism and commitment in our sector is something to be proud of and also something LARAC has helped support in providing our membership with an informative website, regular policy updates and a helping hand when needed.

In Conclusion

Over the past 10 months in the Exec role I have learnt a lot in terms of what’s involved in representing our Scottish members, how our Executive members represent LARAC up and down the country at various events, and how they are working incredibly hard to influence key policy changes within the resource management sector. Their level of experience, energy and determination to make positive changes while supporting our members is incredibly inspiring and I hope for some of it to rub off on me in my stint as Scotland Executive rep.

LARAC WALES

Paul Quayle, Monmouthshire Council



Wales needs to hit 64% recycling this year – it's the law!

Wales LARAC conference



The annual Wales LARAC conference took place in July and (hopefully) summed up the mood. After 7 years as Wales Representative it felt a good time for a new venue, and we chose Llandrindod Wells, with a change in format seeing a small exhibition area for delegates to engage with sponsors during coffee and lunch breaks.

Kicking off with an overview of the material of the moment, Susan Jay of WRAP, outlined the work of the UK Plastic Pact. The need for change but how to manage public perception of Plastic Free and the risk of unintended consequence. Robbie Staniforth of Ecosurety took on the challenge of unpicking Extended Producer Responsibilities in 20 minutes, including the topic of the moment – the deposit return scheme! The global situation was discussed by Peter Sainsbury of WRAP – so much is out of our control with China situation now superseded by the China v USA situation, but quietly the UK has doubled its own plastic reprocessing capacity over the last 10 years.

Litter



A slight change of direction but another topical item – litter. From Keep Wales Tidy, Lesley Jones discussed the Caru Cymru (Love Wales) project, designed to promote a pride in the place we live. Sue Parkinson from Monmouthshire looked at the local level and the publishing of their Litter Strategy, the first in Wales. Although you might struggle to convince the public, we are going in the right direction with litter reducing overall, but a long way to go particularly when it comes to 'on the go' waste.

Stop Climate Change Chaos



On the theme of being topical, what does all this talk of a climate change emergency mean? To take us into lunch Ann Jones of Stop Climate Change Chaos talked about the place of the resource industry in helping to stem climate change.

After lunch we focused on case studies with three great presentations. First up Torfaen, in partnership with Viridor and Capital Plastics looking at LDPE recycling – Sinead Jackson and her team looking at carrier bags, bubble wrap, those six pack rings and lots of other stretchy plastics. Caerphilly on HWRC residents permits with Gareth Pettit stirring emotions around the ever escalating tensions between neighbouring authorities struggling with their own budgets.

Enforcement



To end the afternoon fun a fascinating insight from Rebecca Tribe into the banning of recyclables to landfill in Swansea, both at kerbside and at the HWRC. How is best to deal with people who just refuse to recycle and the threat of Fixed Penalty Notices (rarely has a Wales conference presentation received so much interest from English authorities!). It gave us the concluding thought of the conference – why is it confusing? It takes the same amount of effort and time to put something recyclable in the residual bin as it does to put it in the recycling container.

Meetings

During the year, specific to Wales, I have attended meetings on the Behaviour Change Program and the concept of normalising recycling, and numerous workshops on Extended Producer Responsibilities and the Deposit Return Scheme – contributing to the WLGA responses to Welsh Government.



www.larac.org.uk
admin@larac.org.uk
01982 382 650
@LARACSpeaks

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