

The magazine of the
Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee

Strictly LARAC Conference



Including

An overview of the 2018 LARAC Conference

LARAC Celebration Award winners

EPR and increasing packaging recycling rates

Interview: ReLoop's Clarissa Morawski



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Editorial



Welcome to the post-conference edition of *the Loop*.

This year, with waste and resources firmly on the public agenda, the conference had everything a waste manager could wish for. Carole's chairing of the morning session brought the speakers together and gave the conference a clear sense of coherence. We had speeches and presentations from across the spectrum: from the political arena, central government, third and private sector and, of course, local authority colleagues showcasing best practice. The subject matter generated lively debates on issues like Brexit implications, deposit return schemes and extended producer responsibility.

As Blue Planet has captured the public's attention, single-use plastics and their best alternatives were at the heart of discussions, both inside and outside the conference suite and at the sponsors' stalls. How do we make carrying reusable cups and bottles as critical as taking the house key or wallet with us when out and about? How do we make it more convenient to recycle and more inconvenient to litter and contaminate? These were two – among many – topical and engaging issues creating a buzz in discussions. Those of you that attended the workshops were spoilt for choice.

Not to forget the tenth year of the Celebration Awards, where local authority achievements were celebrated in the most glamorous way, showcasing projects that pushed the boundaries and highlighted the innovative work happening across the country.

Last but not least, our scholars. I was fortunate enough to meet them the day before the conference, spend some time with them and absorb some of their enthusiasm. Talking to them after the conference and seeing how inspired they were filled me with confidence about the future of the waste industry.

If you weren't able to make it to the conference this year, this edition of *the Loop* will give you a flavour of the key highlights from the conference. Have an enjoyable read and I look forward to seeing you in October next year or chatting to you via LARAC's discussion forum.

Dimitra Rappou
LARAC London Representative

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LARAC news

LARAC AGM looks back on active year

The LARAC AGM took place during the 2018 LARAC Conference in Nottingham on 10 October. The AGM this year took a slightly different format with members given a more rounded view of the activities that LARAC had been undertaking on their behalf, as well as reporting on the financial situation of the organisation.

Presiding over her first AGM as Chair, Carole Taylor gave a review of her time moving into the role, the industry backdrop and the issues that were impacting on it, such as the 'Blue Planet effect'. She also announced the results of the national and regional elections, which included a change of LARAC rep for the South West, with Dawn Fearn of Gloucester City Council moving into the role.

CEO Lee Marshall used the AGM to expand on the extensive policy work that LARAC does on behalf of its members. This is often unseen by members but could be seen as a more important and valuable part of the membership benefits of LARAC than the discounted conference places, vacancy advertising and the LARAC online newsletter. He highlighted the publication of the LARAC policy paper, 'The future of local authority waste funding', as a major step forward for the organisation in their policy work. This built on the work that goes into responding to consultations and the variety of industry working groups.

On top of this, members were told how LARAC had been at several meetings with Defra on specific policy areas included in the forthcoming Resources and Waste Strategy and that these had been a major opportunity to engage at length and in depth on areas contained in the strategy that will impact on local authorities.



DRS consultation response

The topic of extended producer responsibility (EPR) has been a hot one for a few months now with agreement of the EU Circular Economy Package and all the discussions in the lead up to the Resources and Waste Strategy. Within current debates around EPR there has also been discussion about the role of DRS and this was the subject of a large consultation by the Scottish Government that ran until the end of September.



LARAC provided a very long and comprehensive

response to the consultation, one of the longest consultation responses it has put together in recent years. To help inform the consultation response LARAC conducted an online survey of members views on DRS, covering all LARAC members, not just Scottish authorities, as this would help LARAC in discussions on any DRS put forward by Defra or the other devolved nations.

Broadly speaking, members preferred a DRS to focus on materials that were used 'on the go' and didn't want it to cover the materials that are currently already collected via kerbside schemes. This formed the basis of the LARAC response that highlighted the ongoing concerns councils have about the impact a DRS will have. LARAC highlighted the danger that a DRS will cannibalise the kerbside schemes and result in reduced income and less efficient collection schemes for councils.

Report from the chair



As I come to the end of my first year as Chair, it has been a year of firsts. We've seen the government finally release its long-awaited 25 Year Environment Plan with a heavy emphasis on plastics. Shortly after that, the Voluntary and Economic Incentives Group released its report on deposit return schemes (DRS). Despite the report recommendations being clear in needing more research for the UK, Michael Gove promptly announced that the government would introduce a DRS subject to consultation later this year.

In April, we launched our first ever policy paper, 'The future of local authority waste funding', which gained a lot of attention from the media. Whilst the national press was slightly negative, leaping on the possibility of direct charging being introduced, we did get a lot of positive support from colleagues in the waste industry.

Attending the LARAC Scotland Conference in May as well as the LARAC Wales Conference in July were also firsts for me, as was chairing my first UK LARAC Conference in October. I was very impressed with the programmes, number of attendees and quality of speakers at all three conferences. Of course, chairing the UK conference was a bit daunting, but apart from a few technical hitches at the start, it went really well, and I have had lots of positive feedback about the conference from delegates, speakers and sponsors.

Having Mary Creagh as our keynote speaker was a highlight for me as I really admire her knowledge and down-to-earth approach when it comes to our industry. She told us how she was opposed to the possibility of an incineration tax as the experiences from other European countries showed that it did nothing to boost recycling rates and would drive up costs to councils and council tax-payers, a point the government appears to have taken on board, confirming in the recent Budget that it won't be introducing one for now.

I got to have a break from chairing whilst we had the Big Debate. This year the panel considered why recycling rates were falling and what we could do to

“ I have had lots of positive feedback about the conference from delegates, speakers and sponsors ”

reverse this trend. The usual point about consistency of collections was made by one of the panellists, but I think we are all agreed that we first need to see consistent materials being used in products before we can make our collections more consistent than they already are.

Another first for conference this year was our food bank collection. Delegates were asked to bring a couple of non-perishable items, which we then gave to the Hope Nottingham charity. I was amazed by how much we managed to accumulate – it was more a food mountain than a bank!

As always, the Celebration Awards (pages 20-21) were an opportunity to highlight the best of the best, and as a judge it was difficult to choose some of the winners as the standard of entries was very high.

I had thought that by the time I was writing the final *Loop* piece of 2018, we would have seen the Resources and Waste Strategy released. Sadly, not even the magicians at the LARAC Celebration Awards could make that one appear!

Carole Taylor

Carole Taylor, LARAC Chair

Taking on responsibility



Targets for reuse and recycling are set at the European Union level under the Waste Framework Directive. The current municipal waste recycling and reuse targets for Member States to achieve are set at 50 per cent by 2020, due to increase to 55 per cent by 2025. These targets can be achieved by recycling materials from household and commercial streams such as metals, plastic, paper and glass, but also through the composting of food and green waste.

The latest UK Government data shows a 45.2 per cent overall recycling rate for 2016. This is an increase from 2015, but the year-on-year increase has started to slow down, meaning that achieving the 2020 target is looking challenging, and the 2025 target even more so.

Packaging recycling forms an important part of the UK's overall recycling performance. Of course, packaging also has its own specific recycling and recovery targets, which are set at the EU level under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive. These require a minimum overall recycling rate for packaging of 60 per cent, which the UK has been comfortably meeting or exceeding in

recent years. Packaging is therefore a significant contributor to the current overall UK recycling rate and this is set to increase even further over the next few years.

Future of the UK packaging system

Although the current packaging recycling system, the Packaging Recovery Note (PRN) system, is performing well against the existing targets, it has become clear over the last few years that it will need to change and adapt in the future to continue achieving more ambitious requirements.

The EU Circular Economy Package (CEP) has now put in place targets to reach by 2025 and 2030 and the UK Government and devolved administrations have signalled ambitions that may go significantly beyond these (a consultation is expected later in 2018 proposing new packaging recycling targets).

In addition, the CEP places other important requirements on extended producer responsibility (EPR) systems, including that in the future producers should cover a minimum of 80 per cent of the full net costs of achieving the targets. This means that producers will need to fund at least 80 per cent of the costs of collection, sorting and treatment (minus any revenue from sales).

What might be expected

If producers are going to be required to pay more, it is highly likely that they would expect some degree of control or influence over collections and improvements to costs, efficiencies and consistency of materials covered over time. For example, producers would want to ensure they are getting the maximum revenue from collected material in order to reduce the overall costs.

To maximise recycling collections and minimise contamination it is also likely that some kind of nationally coordinated communication and awareness-raising programme will be required, combined with a much more consistent collection

infrastructure, to make it easy for householders to 'do the right thing'.

These are only a few of the elements that we expect to be covered in a government consultation on reform of the PRN system mentioned earlier. However, it is clear that reforms to the packaging system will only be one element out of many required to meet the demanding overall household recycling targets.

Reform in other areas, such as food and textile waste, will be equally important to meet the required levels. We expect this to be set out in more detail in the Resources and Waste Strategy, to be published later this year.

CHAIR'S RESPONSE

LARAC Chair Carole Taylor says:

The fact that the current packaging targets are being easily met whilst the overall household target isn't shows that the two are not fully aligned. This is one aspect that the new Resources and Waste Strategy could usefully address along with a fundamental reform of the producer responsibility system for packaging. As LARAC outlined in its policy paper 'The future of local authority waste funding' earlier this year, there needs to be a flow of finances into council services from producers to drive up recycling and allow for services to be expanded. Whilst it is reasonable that producers will expect efficient services in return, councils have already been working hard to drive efficiencies in their services, something that has become a necessity to cope with a decade of austerity measures. By first making both materials and end market infrastructure more consistent, we can then look at the possible advantages of making elements of LA collections even more consistent than they already are.

With several key policy announcements set to change the face of the UK waste sector, delegates gathered once again at LARAC 2018 to discuss the outlook and share ideas. *the Loop* reports



Looking to the future at LARAC 2018

DAY ONE: 10 OCTOBER 2018

SESSION ONE

Kicking off her first conference as Chair, Carole welcomed all in attendance to an information-packed day one by launching the first interactive poll of many, which showed that two thirds of delegates felt the upcoming Resources and Waste Strategy would make a positive difference to councils. We're an optimistic bunch!



Carole Taylor
LARAC Chair



Keynote Address
Mary Creagh, Labour Member of Parliament and Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee

Opening the conference, Mary put in a typically no-holds-barred performance – calling for standardisation of recycling services because “people are stupid” in a Q&A drew the biggest laugh – highlighting the importance of the conference at a time where “waste and resources has been on the agenda like never before”, while getting in a few not-so-sly digs at the government’s environmental performance.

Moving on to an issue at the forefront of everyone’s mind – getting the UK’s environment strategy on track post-Brexit – Mary called for greater producer responsibility to deal with the scourge of single-use plastic bottles and coffee cups. She also reiterated her calls for an environmental watchdog to assume the roles of the European Commission and the European Court of Justice, revealing that the EU Withdrawal Bill has a clause that states the government must publish a draft environmental bill before the Christmas parliamentary recess.



A strategic overview of what is to come in the waste sector
Chris Preston, Deputy Director for Waste and Recycling at Defra

Stepping up to provide an update – as far as possible – on the eagerly anticipated Resources and Waste Strategy, Chris stated that the “landscape had changed so much” since he assumed his post, and that Brexit can provide a “huge opportunity” to become a more resource-efficient country and “forge a new path”.

He went on to explain that the UK could review how it meets EU Circular Economy Package targets, which the UK has signed up to, targeting materials with the highest environmental impact rather than just the heaviest. Calling for a “coherent, holistic strategy” that set a framework to allow business to innovate, Chris told the room that they could expect the Resources and Waste Strategy “before the end of the year”.

Those hoping for a big reveal were left disappointed, but not unsurprised, in the ensuing Q&A, with Chris ruling out pay-as-you-throw as a way to increase recycling engagement.



The public sector – Strategy, finance, business and service too
Brendan Fatchett, Chief Executive of 365 Response

Brendan gave an interesting and engaging presentation encouraging local authorities to take risks to improve environmental outcomes. With a lot of experience in the public sector, he called for government to help small businesses who become “frustrated by the barriers to innovation”, particularly in terms of procurement processes, and urged local authorities not to fear working with new technologies and new ideas: sometimes the risks can bring great reward.



SESSION TWO



The coffee cup conundrum – Building the capability to recycle paper cups in the UK

Ollie Rosevear, Head of Environment at Costa

With coffee cups still big on the agenda, especially for those of us that have to deal with them when they're chucked by consumers, Ollie provided an interesting insight into what Costa has been doing to address the problem, stating a desire to "make sure we're leading and take a real responsibility for the environmental impact" of the coffee cups the chain puts on the market.

After highlighting work done by Costa to build recycling capacity, Ollie spoke on the topic of on-the-go recycling, stating that "we haven't kept up" with the required waste infrastructure, and that accompanying communications needed to be stronger, though he rejected the option of banning disposable cups when questioned in the Q&A, saying that people wanted coffee on the go and banning things doesn't "bring people with you".



A successful communications campaign from a comms expert

Stine Wilhelmson, Creative Partner at Hubbub

With communications often the key to engaging residents, but communications budgets frequently the first to go when austerity bites, Stine shared some key principles for what makes a good communications campaign, with findings from Hubbub's many vibrant and engaging campaigns. According to Stine, the four key principles are to make a campaign relevant to people, to keep it simple, be playful and fun and to collaborate with partners. Hubbub's behaviour change results are certainly impressive, though as someone pointed out in the following Q&A session, it is hard to know what lasting effect many of the campaigns have due to their short-term nature.



A successful communications campaign created by a local authority

Daniel Roberts, Waste and Recycling Team Manager, South Staffordshire Council

The session ended with a thoroughly enjoyable, informative and laughter-filled presentation from the perspective of a small communications team at South Staffordshire.

It was heartening to hear how the team achieved such a positive response from residents through their campaign, 'The festive bin men of Christmas', which encouraged residents to appreciate their bin men but also saw bin men communicate service messages to residents.

Dan also provided tips on how to deal with unforeseen circumstances, such as snow stopping services – and the rather colourful complaints of residents on social media! – as well as how good communication, using print literature as well as social media, can elicit help and support from the public, encouraging those crews working through difficult conditions. Leaving us with a smile from Giblet George, one of the festive bin men, it was an inspiring way to end Session Two!

SESSION THREE



Live Debate – Why have recycling rates been falling and what can we do to reverse this?

- **Durk Reyner, Head of Environment, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council**
- **Allison Ogden-Newton, Chief Executive, Keep Britain Tidy**
- **Beverley Simonson, Local Authority Support Manager, Resource London**
- **Robbie Staniforth, Policy Manager, Ecosurety**

Calling the session and conference "very timely", given the promise of fiscal measures targeting waste and resources in the Autumn budget and the imminent – we hope – release of the Resources and Waste Strategy, Chair Robin Latchem laid out the issues surrounding UK recycling rates.

All panellists were more or less agreed that consumers were "confused" when asked how to boost engagement, not just at home but on the go. As Robbie Staniforth stated, while there is lots of "brilliant" information out there, "it might be being

heard, but is not being acted upon". Durk Reyner suggested implementing pay-as-you-throw would boost engagement – a popular opinion – but all agreed this would be “politically too high a risk”. Part of the confusion, it was largely agreed, comes from having different systems in different local authorities rather than a standard system across the entire country – perhaps, as Allison Ogden-Newton suggested, due to “local authorities having been left to do the heavy lifting”.

Packaging drew the ire of the panelists, with Beverly Simonson suggesting that consumers take more of a steer from packaging than from council communication, and that messages such as ‘widely recycled’ on packaging were inaccurate and leading people to put things in the wrong bin. Producer responsibility for packaging also came under the spotlight – with an acknowledgement that producers won’t sign over a “blank cheque” to local authorities to increase recycling – and Allison Ogden-Newton commented that it would drive producers to use recyclable materials and provide a fund to invest in better technologies for sorting, thereby reducing the cost burden on councils.

The session concluded with almost 77 per cent of delegates calling for a standardised collection system across the UK.

SESSION FOUR - Maximising dry recyclates

Case study one: Contamination



Sarah Forgione,
Communications Manager,
North London Waste Authority



Stephen Baker,
Waste Services Manager,
Keep Britain Tidy

The final session of a highly informative first day included two case studies, with the first on contamination in North London. Sarah and Steve took delegates through an investigation into how to reduce contamination in the area – standing at about 11-12 per cent – which primarily came from dirty nappies. The pair explained how existing strategies to reduce contamination weren’t working, leading them to carry out 1,201 interviews to find out why nappies were going in recycling bins, with 68 per cent of respondents stating they’d

never been told where to put their nappies. It was concluded that clearer and targeted messaging was needed for expectant and new parents about how to dispose of nappies, and the problems dirty nappies pose to recycling.

Case study two: Implementing a significant service change



**Julie Lewis, Contracts and
Performance Manager, Daventry
District Council**

The second case study saw Julie Lewis of Daventry District Council take attendees through the major service change implemented in her local authority. She spoke about the rural authority’s move to bring waste services in-house, changing to a co-mingled recycling collection with a three-weekly residual waste collection service and charges for garden waste – a move made particularly tricky due to the previous waste contractor owning all equipment and no overlap between the end of the contract and the start of the new service!

As had been heard many times during the first day of the conference, communications were key, with leaflets distributed and roadshows and school assemblies keen to get the message across; a special ‘bin app’ was launched to send residents reminders straight to their phone.

Julie was delighted to reveal performance had greatly improved in Daventry, with residual waste falling by 23 per cent, food waste collected increasing by 56 per cent and dry recycling rising by 21 per cent, though the quality of the service and access to communal properties remain a work in progress.



DAY TWO: 11 OCTOBER 2018

SESSION THREE – Plenary session



Local authority collections, quality and consumer engagement **Simon Prior, Head of Local Authority Development, Viridor**

Following a night of awards (pages 20-21) and a morning of workshops (pages 18-19), we gathered in the conference suite for the final session of the day. Simon focused on local authority collections and quality, using results from Viridor's UK Recycling Index 2018 to examine how consumers view recycling, the barriers to recycling and how to better engage consumers. He revealed that scepticism has increased, with only 16 per cent believing that all waste that can be recycled is actually recycled, underlining that the public want to know more about where their recycling is going – there was much frustration regarding communication, which Simon warned must not solely happen through social media but be produced in “hard copy” as well.

Consistency was once again put forward as a solution to improve engagement, though he acknowledged “one size doesn't fit all”, while investment in better sorting technology would also be needed, with the Resources and Waste Strategy expected to provide steer to businesses.



Paper **Robbie Warden, Head of RCP Sales and UK RCP Sourcing, UPM**

In the first of two overviews on material markets, Robbie (standing in for Simon Walker) discussed the difficulties posed by China's import restrictions on certain recyclable materials. Kicking off on a positive note, Robbie praised the UK paper recycling industry, with 85 per cent of paper collected for recycling in the UK and 97 per cent of paper products recyclable.

Five million tonnes of paper is exported for recycling, but as we know, the export markets have been disrupted and more restrictions are on the way – Robbie suggested that a ban on cardboard in 2020 would follow China's ban on mixed paper. His advice for UK recycling was to focus on quality, both for domestic and export markets, with UK paper holding a “poor quality reputation” in Europe especially, and Brexit still an unknown quantity for how that could affect exports to EU countries. Economies that have attempted to take on China's lost capacity are also pushing for similar 0.5 per cent contamination limits – quality is really taking precedence over price. Robbie maintained that paper and cardboard is still “the recycling giant” but it would take a “monumental effort” to keep it there.



Plastics **Stuart Foster, CEO, RECOUP**

Rounding off the material overviews, Stuart thanked the room for the opportunity to speak to RECOUP's “local authority friends” on the high-profile issue of plastics recycling, where RECOUP's work is “more important than ever before”. Underlying the continued uncertainty regarding Brexit and the UK's relationship with the new European recycling targets, Stuart did state that “in principle” we should consider an incineration tax if it's the only way to stop plastics getting into landfill and incineration, while plastic market uncertainty raised questions over whether plastic would continue to be sorted as it currently is.

Quoting RECOUP's Household Plastics Collection Survey, Stuart then looked at the issues of on-the-go recycling, with a majority of local authorities stating that contamination levels were the reason they didn't offer on-the-go systems. A bugbear of many was the variety of different polymers and formats, with PET bottles not always able to be recycled with PET tubs. One word of advice, seeking to combat ‘fake news’: leave the cap on plastic bottles when putting them out for recycling!



Will EPR funding mean the return of individual local authority targets? **Stuart Hayward-Higham, Technical Director, SUEZ**

To round off this year's conference, Stuart took the remaining delegates – the previous evening's awards celebration clearly taking its toll – through SUEZ's work on how EPR would impact local authority recycling, saying that “massive policy intervention” was needed to get the UK on track to achieve EU recycling targets.

Applying targets across the country, Stuart showed, unsurprisingly, that it's urban councils that have the most work to do. SUEZ has done significant work, including a model based on numerous factors such as deprivation, language and housing density, to understand how level the playing field is in reaching national targets – it's not.

“If Defra wants to achieve a national target, it needs to set local targets”, said Stuart – which would need to be adjusted every five years, taking into account the changing nature of local authorities, with full cost recovery helping to fund collection and transition to new systems, while any DRS should only target on-the-go materials, as “household is the most effective system, with some improvements”.

And with that, it was left for Carole Taylor to close yet another successful conference, sending attendees off to spread their newly acquired knowledge far and wide, eager to return next year.

The **LARAC 2017 scholars** look back on their experience over the past year and recount how it has improved their understanding of the ever-evolving waste sector

2017 SCHOLARS

Tales of a scholar

Janet MacKenzie – Fife Council

As someone new to the sector, the LARAC Conference was a great opportunity to learn more about waste management. The workshops and talks provided insights into some of the challenges local authorities face and the solutions to overcome these. In the year since the conference, I've been able to use the contacts I made to help with projects I've been involved with. I would thoroughly recommend the LARAC scholarship experience to anyone who gets the chance!

Gabrielle Asara – Braintree District Council

Before LARAC I had only been to a one-day recycling conference on plastics, and I couldn't imagine talking about recycling and waste for three days! The presentations, case studies and group work were very interesting and thought-provoking. I used the information collected at the conference and, later, on the website and forum for our research on garden waste and our waste minimisation projects.

Rachael Melvin – Staffordshire County Council

The most beneficial part of the scholarship for me was the dedicated time built into the programme to share experiences with colleagues, which deepened my understanding of the complexities and opportunities facing local authorities in relation to waste management on a regional scale. Through exploring the creative and innovative ideas, I have been better prepared to tackle the challenges facing my own authority.

Sean Letheren – Devon County Council

I can't believe it has almost been a year since LARAC 2017. The experience was great and has helped further my understanding of the UK's waste sector. Having only worked in the waste sector for two years, the opportunity to listen/talk to experienced waste professionals is one I would highly recommend to anyone who works in the industry.

Sophie Beck – Chorley Council

The LARAC scholarship has helped me to develop far quicker into the role of waste management officer. I came into the industry with very little knowledge about it; however, seeing those with more experience speak so passionately about the issues that local authorities and others involved in waste management face was a real eye-opener, and spurred me on to try to make a positive change. My confidence was also boosted as a result of attending the conference, and I would definitely recommend anyone new to the industry to attend.

Curtis Ross – Powys County Council

LARAC 2017 was a great opportunity to meet representatives of the private industry and understand the problems they face and be able to adapt our methods to work with them, rather than work



disjointedly. It can also be easy in your workplace to slot into a role and not challenge the status quo. I now go about my job with a greater belief in my own knowledge and understanding, and do not sit idly if I believe the 'accepted' needs challenging.

Christin Kowaiké – West London Waste Authority

Having attended the conference, I feel an increased sense of confidence that allows me to be more assertive and contribute more freely to my team. I am really looking forward to developing my professional skills further to make lasting and valuable contributions to the sector. Thank you very much LARAC!

Claire Shears – Torbay Council

I was very grateful to have the opportunity to be part of the scholarship and as I had only been working within waste for a year it was an eye-opener to the world of waste. The seminars and workshops were engaging, thought-provoking and were so relevant to the type of challenges we are experiencing as a local authority. It was great to hear from those speakers who have transformed their waste collections and are now achieving great recycling rates.

Violetta Lynch – London Waste and Recycling Board

Having come into the waste and resources world from a completely different sector, hearing from a broad spectrum of speakers with diverse expertise, from recycling officers to communications managers to materials reprocessors, was enlightening. I came away with a much deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the various industry players.

Karl Jones – Bolton Council

One year on and my LARAC scholarship is now complete! The knowledge I have gained within the last 12 months has been invaluable for my future career in waste. The opportunity has also allowed me to make numerous contacts with fellow officers and leading experts who I plan to stay in contact with. To round off the scholarship, we were invited to a WEEE recycling centre, which opened my eyes to the procedures involved in controlling the hazardous waste involved.

With many thanks to REPIC's generosity for providing another batch of scholars with the opportunity to attend the LARAC Conference, we hear the views of the **2018 scholars**

2018 SCHOLARS

Scholars' conference hot take

Ben Mailes – Cornwall Council

The scholars' seminar was a great opportunity to get to know the other scholars. I particularly enjoyed the role-playing task undertaking the roles of different jobs within waste management.

Joseph Kenny – North Norfolk District Council

The scholars' seminar on the first day was a great way to start the event and allowed us newcomers to settle in nicely.

DAY ONE

Kirsty Early – Fife Council

The morning and afternoon sessions on day one provided a wealth of information surrounding very relevant topics. I also really enjoyed the Glisser app and thought it was a brilliant way to engage without having to hold a microphone!

Rhys Gwyther – Caerphilly County Borough Council

Day one was brilliant and hugely informative and I now feel I can inform residents of work that is being done behind the scenes when questioned about issues such as plastics.

Declan Donnelly – Causeway Coast and Glens Council

The highlight of the entire conference was Mary Creagh. She transformed my view of the political establishment and her desire for change should provoke us to strive towards this locally.

Robyn Downs – Wakefield Council

I found the sessions very interesting and thought that all of the speakers had some great talks about how we should approach waste management as a country.

Lauren Walker – West Berkshire Council

It was a great opportunity to engage and meet with other like-minded individuals in the waste industry, and to see that we all agree on the same principles.

David Hamlyn – Lichfield District Council

The Big Debate highlighted competitive advantages enjoyed by local authorities that could be leveraged to fund a recycling service, such as trusted provider status, superior market knowledge and better buying power through partnering.

AWARDS

Dan Williams – Dorset Waste Partnership

The awards evening was amazing! Great food, and an opportunity to get dressed up and socialise with people I didn't get the chance to speak to during the day.

DAY TWO

Matthew Sharp – Preston Council

The workshops were a great way to exchange ideas and share the challenges we at the sharp end face, allied to some thought-provoking presentations.

Stephen Beresford – Durham County Council

During the workshops I was able to offer my opinions and thoughts and often found other people experiencing similar situations, sometimes with helpful solutions.

Aman Shaikh – London Borough of Waltham Forest

The workshops on day two were really good and hearing experts talk and debate made me realise there truly is so much to the waste industry, more than I initially thought.

OVERALL

Carol Campbell – Braintree District Council

I enjoyed the conference and have a lot to take away to enable my career. Collecting stamps from sponsors was a great exercise, ensuring I spoke to everyone.

Kate McCall – Kent Resource Partnership

I really enjoyed my time at the LARAC Conference. I found it very informative and helpful networking with the other officers at the conference.

Jane Jordan – North Lincolnshire Council

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and would like to thank LARAC for giving me the opportunity to attend.

Heather Lomax – Rochdale Borough Council

The LARAC Conference gave me an in-depth insight into waste services as a whole and a better understanding of how other local authorities approach and embrace waste and recycling issues.



Iain Gulland, Chief Executive of Zero Waste Scotland, presents the steps taken to promote and advance the circular economy in Scotland



ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

Circular economy progress



ZWS Chief Executive Iain Gulland

The benefits to the planet, and to all of us, of reducing, reusing and recycling as much as possible is undeniable. Indeed, the 'Blue Planet Effect' has pushed the public and businesses into action and well-intended commitments from governments around the world have followed. The Scottish Government is set to make all plastic packaging recyclable or reusable by 2030, in line with the EU requirements.

Plastics are a huge concern in Scotland, especially for local authorities facing huge challenges in the wake of the China ban on imported waste. As more international markets plan on shutting their doors, the focus must be on maximising the quality of materials by improving collections and sorting. The materials that are separated to a high degree of purity will continue to find sustainable end markets.

Contributing to the quality problem is that many people are confused

about what items they can put in their recycling bin. That's why we're proud to be supporting Project Beacon, which combines existing and innovative mechanical and chemical recycling to create a world-first Advanced Plastics Reprocessing facility at Binn Eco Park in Perthshire. This system has the potential to process end-of-life plastic waste that typically cannot be recycled using mechanical methods – for example, mixed, laminated, black, film and even contaminated plastic waste.

Improved recycling collection and processing facilities are fundamental parts of our pursuit of a circular economy for Scotland, and we have a national target to recycle 70 per cent of all waste with a maximum of five per cent sent to landfill by 2025.

And yet, the circular economy is not just about recycling. It's about keeping products and raw materials in use for as long as possible, rather than using them once and discarding them. Unlike our current linear model of consumption, this approach is sustainable and eliminates as much waste as possible.

There are plenty of opportunities for organisations to get ahead of the curve by developing new business models, designing products more smartly, remanufacturing and reprocessing to create new products from old and repairing what we can. This approach keeps products and materials within the economy that could have economic and environmental benefits. Across Europe, shifting towards a more circular economy could generate £1.4 trillion of annual benefits by 2030.

Scotland is at the cutting edge of developing a more circular economy and we already have the businesses to prove it. Thorough Bread, for example, is a beer made from bread donated by the

local Co-operative store on the Isle of Bute. Backed by Scottish Government and European funding, Bute Brew Co is a community effort using the principles of sharing to cut down on food waste, of which Scotland currently generates 1.4 million tonnes every year.

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The public are keen to make sustainable choices to benefit the environment

At the moment, we consume huge quantities of metals, minerals, plants and other raw materials to make goods and produce food. These raw materials do not exist in limitless supplies, so we need to be careful about how we use them. The Scottish Government has placed the circular economy at the core of Scotland's Economic Strategy and Manufacturing Action Plan, and its Making Things Last strategy highlights priority areas with the greatest opportunity to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits.

The current interest in plastics opens a door for an improved way of living that places value on the materials we use to avoid waste. Last year, Scottish households recycled more than they sent to landfill, which shows that the public are keen to make sustainable choices in their everyday lives to benefit the environment. How can we keep this momentum while facing challenges in the recycling and waste sector? The key is to develop alternatives to the 'make, take, dispose' approach and keep products and materials in a high-value state for as long as possible – the very definition of the circular economy.

Pushing Wales forward

The recycling of waste is a Welsh success story and something everyone in Wales should feel proud of.

The recently published recycling figures for 2017/18 showed our municipal recycling rate is now 63 per cent, against a national target of 58 per cent. However, this was a small drop in our recycling rate nationally from the previous year.

Most of the fall is a result of us making the monitoring and reporting of wood waste recycling stricter. There has also been an issue with the functioning of a fuel-from-waste plant, meaning some local authorities lost the opportunity to recycle incinerator bottom ash.

But to put this into perspective, when devolution began in 1999, our municipal recycling rate was five per cent. According to Eunomia, Wales is first in the UK, second in Europe and third in the world for household recycling. Anglesey Council has achieved a recycling rate of over 70 per cent and seven local authorities have exceeded next year's ambitious 64 per cent recycling target.

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We lead the way on recycling
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We've achieved this through working in partnership with local authorities and their communities to deliver a high recycling society. Nearly every household has a kerbside recycling collection, which includes the separate collection of food waste.

We've come a long way on waste in Wales in what is a relatively short period of time, but improving recycling rates from here will require even more concerted, intensive and demanding interventions.

We're providing more than £50 million of capital over three years to help realise our ambition. We're also working with local authorities to increase their ability to recycle items like mattresses, nappies, wood and textiles.

We are spending half a million pounds this year working in partnership with local authorities and WRAP on a behaviour change campaign, as we know that more than half of the waste in black bins is recyclable. We need to persuade the Welsh public not to put these materials in their residual bins, but to recycle them.

I will also consult on the route map for a circular economy and guidance to local authorities, including a revised Collections Blueprint. New best practice guidance will be shared to help every local authority reach recycling targets. We expect these actions to help Wales exceed 70 per cent recycling by 2025.

But we will not stop there. Actions are already in place to continue to improve recycling long after existing targets have been reached.

In 2019 we will consult on a revised strategy, 'Towards Zero Waste', which will include consideration of future recycling targets. Also next year we will consult on regulations under Part Four of the Environment (Wales) Act, which will require businesses to separate their waste in a similar way to how households already do.

I intend to work with partners on potential new statutory guidance to local authorities and will consult next year on our long term approach to recycling



Minister for Environment Hannah Blythyn

targets, including looking at options around the penalties for failing to meet recycling targets. New best practice guidance will be shared to help every authority reach recycling targets.

The Welsh and UK Governments will consult on a deposit return scheme and extended producer responsibility before Christmas. Welsh Ministers are also in continuing discussions with the UK Government on taxation measures to tackle plastic waste.

People in Wales have embraced the need to recycle and the Welsh Government and our partners have supported this through innovative policies, financial support and education campaigns.

We lead the way on recycling in the UK, but we are not complacent. We want to continue working with our partners, and the people of Wales, to go from first in the United Kingdom, to first in the world.



Your trusted partner in a changing skills landscape

Maximising the Apprenticeship Levy is a key issue for all Local Authorities to support skills development for front line operatives and team leaders/managers and a range of Apprenticeship Frameworks are still available.

Sustainable Resource Operations

✔ Levy Funding Available at £1500 and £2000

Sustainable Resource Operations & Management

✔ Levy Funding Available at £3500

Local Environmental Services

✔ Levy Funding Available at £1500

Cleaning and Support Services

✔ Levy Funding Available at £1500

NEW STANDARDS ON THE WAY...

WAMITAB have been supporting the Trailblazer Group to develop the new Waste Resource Operative Standard which is going through its final stages. WAMITAB intends to continue to support this standard as the End-point Assessment Organisation.

To find out more and to arrange an informal discussion on how you can maximise the levy and ongoing support

Contact Mark Hyde, Commercial Director, WAMITAB
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