

End of Life Vehicles (ELV) Directive (2000)

Almost two million tonnes of waste material arises each year in the UK from motor vehicles that have come to the end of their useful lives. To cope with the environmental effects of this, the End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) Directive was adopted in September 2000. The Directive requires producers to recover 85% of all ELVs by weight by January 2006 (minimum 80% recycling) and 95% by January 2015 (minimum 85% recycling). Green Party MEPs successfully fought for the early establishment of producer responsibility for ELVs (which will be from 2007 onwards), defeating amendments put forward by the Conservatives and Socialists to postpone this to 2011.

As of November 2003, the UK Government's ELV consultation group is currently considering how the UK will implement the ELV Directive.

Batteries Directive (1991)

Battery recycling is a relatively new field for the UK. While we recycle more than 90% of our lead acid batteries – those used in vehicles – just 4% of the waste non-lead acid batteries produced each year in the UK are recycled. About 25,000 tonnes of waste household and industrial batteries are generated each year, but only 1,000 tonnes are recycled.

To encouraging higher recycling of household batteries, the European Commission is reviewing its existing Battery Directive (1991). Proposals for the new Batteries Directive include introducing 'producer responsibility', which Greens are lobbying to include in the revised Battery Directive. The Directive is expected to be agreed in 2003, with adoption by Member States in 2004.

What is the Government doing?

The UK Parliament has criticised the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), claiming it 'lacked the capacity, vision, the sense of urgency, and the political will to bring about truly sustainable waste management in this country'.

Local Councils have received a decade of mixed signals from the Government concerning waste reduction. Thanks to EU initiatives, spearheaded by the Greens, legally binding targets are now in place. The Government's *National Waste Strategy* in 2000, which established its view on waste management, was based primarily on voluntary targets. Since then, they have passed the *Household Waste Recycling Bill* (2003), requiring that by 2010, every household in England must have at least two types of recyclable waste collected from their home.

In response to this, the London Mayor has published a *Municipal Waste Management Strategy 'Rethinking Rubbish in London'* pledging to help London to meet its targets under new Government legislation.

But this piecemeal approach has meant that Local Councils, business, industry and households remain confused, frustrated and under resourced. Although street collection may improve, little strategy is in place to encourage the development of markets that would make use of recycled waste material.

There are good initiatives out there, yet we are missing opportunities for development and the jobs that go with it. Until our Government actively promotes a holistic approach to a zero waste policy the UK will continue to drown in a rising tide of packaging, toxic pollutants and litter.

The Green Party solution

Given that more than 80% of our waste has the potential to be recycled or re-used, Greens believe London needs a more ambitious recycling plan – one that makes better use of our natural resources and reduces the need for harmful landfilling and incineration.

London must adopt a *Zero Waste* policy – that means recycling or reusing everything, and incinerating or landfilling nothing. The strategy is already being implemented in countries around the world. New Zealand, Western Australia and California are all aiming for *Zero Waste* status by 2020.

A *Zero Waste* policy would mean many of the health problems associated with landfill sites and incinerators will soon become a thing of the past. At the same time it would create thousands of sustainable jobs, reducing CO2 emissions and conserving finite resources.

Zero Waste can only be achieved by cutting down the amount of waste we produce in the first place. The UK Government has targets for recycling, for composting and for 'recovering value' from waste, but no targets for waste minimisation. *They must encourage manufacturers to reduce their amounts of packaging.* Jean, along with her fellow Green Party MEPs, will continue to fight for legislation to limit the damaging effects waste is having on our city, while also working locally to reduce the city's dependence on landfill and incineration by encouraging recycling and waste minimisation.

LONDON – WASTE IN CRISIS

“ Waste is a highly political issue. Waste disposal directly contributes to climate change and adversely affects the health of those unfortunate enough to live near disposal sites. As London’s Green Party MEP, I have campaigned for legislation that will not only improve our waste management practices, but also work towards the Green Party aim of eliminating waste from our society. London must move away from the old mentality of ‘produce and disregard’ to a new philosophy of ‘reduce, reuse, repair, recycle’. ”

JEAN LAMBERT MEP

Green Party Member of the European Parliament for London

The waste problem

London produces 17 million tonnes of waste each year. Households alone produce enough waste to fill the Royal Albert Hall every day – 3.4 million tonnes. The city is already struggling to deal with current waste levels, and with household waste on track to double by 2020, London simply will not cope. Our waste management practices must change.

What happens to this 17 million tonnes of waste?

The collection of household waste is under Local Council control. London has a poor record of addressing household waste and although the business, industry and construction sectors produce more waste (nearly 14 million tons), they are more efficient at reusing and recycling it.

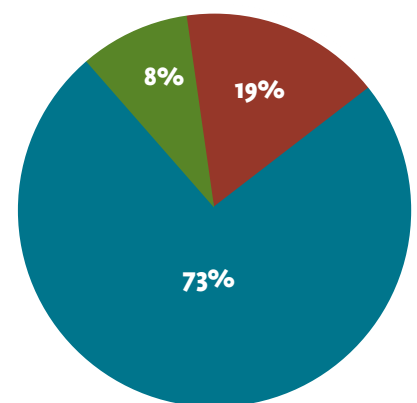
The majority of London’s household waste is disposed of in landfill: last year, 73% was dumped in landfill, with most of this going to sites outside Greater London: 19% was burnt at two waste incineration plants within London, at Edmonton and Lewisham. These two plants alone provide one third of England’s incineration capacity. A proposed new plant at Belvedere in South East London is currently subject to a public enquiry, which the Green Party and local residents continue to oppose fiercely. This leaves only 8% of London’s municipal waste that is recycled – one of the worst recycling rates in Western Europe. Switzerland, The Netherlands and Germany, for example, all recycle more than half their waste – so why is it a problem for us?

At the moment, just over half of London households are provided with kerbside recycling collections. Nine out of 10 people in London say they would recycle more waste if it was easier, but for many there are few facilities and little information, and for some items no opportunity to do so at all.

WHERE DOES OUR WASTE GO?

MANAGEMENT OF LONDON’S MUNICIPAL WASTE IN 2001/02

Recycling – 0.351 million tonnes Incineration – 0.868 million tonnes




Landfill – 3.228 million tonnes

Source: London Municipal Waste Strategy
– Management of London’s waste
2001/2002



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament



The threats posed by incineration and landfill

Incineration

- **Causes pollution:** Smoke, gases and ash from incinerators can contain harmful dioxins which are a cause of cancer.
- **Uses up energy:** Even incinerators that generate electricity ('Energy-from-waste' incineration) are not an energy saving option. Recycling saves far more energy because it means making less new things from raw materials.
- **Encourages more waste:** Incinerators need a minimum amount of rubbish to operate. To meet demand, local authorities are abandoning recycling and waste reduction plans.

Landfill

- **Releases toxins:** Rotting rubbish emits explosive gases and polluting liquids. Methane emissions contribute to climate change.
- **Threatens our quality of life:** Landfill creates problems for local communities. Threats include more traffic, noise, odours, smoke, dust, litter and pests.

Source: Friends of the Earth

Green MEPs fight for effective legislation

In an effort to limit the impact waste has on our health, environment and resource base, Greens in the European Parliament have fought for the development of a significant body of waste legislation affecting a diverse range of products: from fridges, cars and electrical goods to packaging. The UK Government is required to incorporate these European Directives into national legislation.

A critical achievement has been the shifting of responsibility for disposal towards manufacturers. Under the 'Polluter Pays' principle they are obliged to design-in solutions, and provide the facilities, for the disposal of certain consumer items.

If you want to engage in discussions with your Councillors or MPs on these issues, these European Directives will give you your starting points:

European Framework Directive on Waste (1975)

This Directive established the regulation of the disposal and recovery of waste. The UK Government has dragged its heels, and it was not until 1990 that the Directive was transposed (at least partly) into national legislation in the UK, by way of the *Environmental Protection Act (EPA)*.

After the European Court found that the UK had still failed to implement parts of the Framework Directive the Government drafted a *National Waste Strategy (2000)*.

Packaging Directive and Packaging Waste Regulations (1994)

This Directive aims to reduce the amount of waste packaging by setting targets for the recovery and recycling of packaging and packaging waste. The overall recycling target for 2006 is 55%-70%, with different recycling minimums set for each packaging material: 60%



Community Furniture Recycling

Jean visited the Shaftesbury Resources Centre, a furniture recycling service based in Southwark, as part of a week-long tour of community recycling projects in London in July 2003.

The Shaftesbury Resources Centre collects disused furniture and household items from the London area and distributes them to low-income families. This service not only provides vital assistance to families in need, but also finds a use for 'waste' furniture that would otherwise be dumped in landfill.

Community recycling projects, such as Shaftesbury, are preventing thousands of tonnes of waste ending up in landfill every year.

For more information on Shaftesbury Resources Centre, visit:
www.shaftesburysoc.org.uk

Photo: Jean Lambert with Chris Price, Development Manager,
Shaftesbury Resources Centre

for glass, 55% for paper, 50% for metals and 20% for plastics. The Directive is transposed into the UK law in the *Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations*. The regulations affect all companies with a turnover above £2m/annum who handle more than 50 tonnes of packaging per year.

Landfill Directive (1999)

This Directive was agreed in Europe in July 1999. It aims to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and to improve standards of landfilling by setting specific requirements for the design, operation and aftercare of landfills, and for the types of waste that can be accepted. It was transposed into UK law in 2001 and is being implemented largely through the *Pollution and Prevention Control Act (1999)* and the *Landfill Regulations (England & Wales) 2002*.

Waste Incineration Directive (2000)

This Directive was adopted in an effort to limit the environmental damage caused by the incineration of waste. It includes stringent operational conditions and establishes emission caps for incineration plants. The Directive was brought into force in England and Wales through the *Waste Incineration (England and Wales) Regulations 2002*.

Locally, Jean has joined forces with Greens in the London Assembly and local residents to fight a proposed 'energy-from-waste' incinerator at Belvedere that threatens to undermine London's efforts to recycle more and throw away less. The plan would tie the local council into a contract to supply waste for incineration – creating a legally binding disincentive to improving recycling – and discourage further investment in genuinely renewable energy production.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE) and the Directive on the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) (2003)

The European Parliament passed these two Directives on the management of electrical and electronic waste in February 2003. The UK will need to incorporate the Directives into law by August 2004. Their purpose is to tackle the growing amount of electrical and electronic waste and reduce the level of toxic pollutants released when electrical goods are thrown away.

Producers will be responsible for taking back and recycling electrical and electronic equipment. This provides incentives to design equipment in a more environmentally efficient way. The use of heavy metals and toxic flame retardants in goods will be banned by July 2006.

Lobbying by Green MEPs improved these Directives considerably. The most important victory was the introduction of 'individual producer responsibility' for future electronic waste: it means manufacturers now have to pay for the waste treatment of their own products.

A specific request from Green MEPs, which was included in the final agreement, was to introduce a 'system of financial guarantees' from companies before they release new equipment onto the market to ensure it will be able to pay for its recovery.

In the UK, Jean Lambert has joined with the *UK Cartridge Recycling Association (UKCRA)* to fight for printer cartridges to be included in the Government's definition of electronic and electrical waste. If printer cartridges are not included in the UK legislation, it could spell the end for London's extensive printer cartridge reuse industry.

Computer refurbishment helps students in developing countries



Photo: Jean with Jaf Shar, Computer Aid Operations Manager

Every year in the UK, around 2.5 million computers are dumped in landfill sites and a further 1.5 million are kept in storage and not put to use. But community organisations, such as Computer Aid International based in Holloway, are finding innovative ways to put these computers to good use.

Jean visited Computer Aid International in July 2003 to learn more about the project and to discuss the impact of waste legislation at a community level.

Computer Aid International distributes second hand Pentium class PCs from the UK to developing countries. In doing this, it provides training to people from socially excluded groups in the UK.

In the developing world, 99% of school children graduate from high school not having seen or touched a computer in the classroom, while millions of London computers go to waste. Computer Aid International is helping to bridge this digital gap through its refurbishing and redistribution programme.

For more information, visit:
www.computeraid.org

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ALL OF THESE DIRECTIVES SEE:
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/index.htm**