



Briefing 13/41 September 2013

Northern Ireland Waste Performance Indicator outputs 2011-12

To: Contacts in Northern Ireland

For information only: Contacts in England, Scotland and Wales

Key issues

DoE NI published BVPI tables including waste collection and disposal figures in May 2013.

The data shows a wide range of costs between local authorities providing services.

Opportunities for benchmarking by using the figures as well as outputs from APSE Performance Networks

1. Background

The Department of the Environment NI (DoE) issued the 2011/12 Performance Indicator tables in May. They included waste collection and disposal performance indicators for the Northern Ireland local authorities that responded. These performance indicators have been in use for a number of years but are an established method of benchmarking performance and are managed by the DoE.

2. Northern Ireland local authority figures

The figures in the table below reflect the diversity in the circumstances and costs of waste and recycling service delivery in the region.

There will be different factors influencing how services are delivered in each local authority area. These include historic investment in vehicles and equipment, the urban/ rural split, the location of depots, distance to landfill sites, the method and frequency of collections and the scale of the authority.

The average for WC/1, net cost of municipal waste collection per head of population, was £30.99 with 11 local authorities having a cost lower than this and 13 having a higher cost.

The average for WC/2, net cost of collection and treatment of recycled/composted household waste per head of population, was £16.91 with 14 local authorities having a lower cost and 10 having a higher cost.

The range of costs for both collection of municipal waste and collection and treatment of recycled / composted household waste is wide. In Fermanagh, the lowest cost authority for municipal waste collection, the cost in 2011-12 was £12.08. This can be considered against Newtownabbey where the cost was £50.72. As a straight comparison this means the cost in Newtownabbey was over 400% more than in Fermanagh. Clearly such a direct comparison does not take into account those differences between the local authorities noted above or any other influential factors.

The lowest cost for collection and treatment of recycled/composted household waste was in Ballymoney and was £8.38 in 2011-12. Once again the highest cost authority was significantly higher at £31.63, in this case Moyle. This authority was nearly 400% higher in terms of the cost of providing the service.

There are difficulties with making direct comparisons but it is a worthwhile exercise if the aim is to learn from others as opposed to highlighting failure or apportioning blame.

Table 1 – DoE (NI) waste and recycling/composting performance indicators

Local authority	WC/1 Net cost of municipal waste collection per head of population	WC/2 Net cost of collection and treatment of recycled/composted household waste per head of population
Antrim	£45.95	£24.27
Ards	£34.35	£17.35
Armagh	£39.94	£14.37
Ballymena	£42.16	£12.75
Ballymoney	£20.67	£8.38
Banbridge	£44.09	£29.06
Belfast	£20.61	£14.39
Carrickfergus	£19.40	£15.18
Castlereagh	No data	NA
Coleraine	£32.56	£18.86
Cookstown	£26.97	£14.33
Craigavon	£36.15	£9.33
Derry	£24.86	£22.83
Down	£33.04	£16.14
Dungannon	£27.47	£21.62
Fermanagh	£12.08	£14.98
Larne	No data	NA
Limavady	£32.68	£13.67
Lisburn	£24.63	£9.40
Magherafelt	£33.08	£27.17
Moyle	£34.28	£31.63
Newry and Mourne	£25.32	£9.45
Newtownabbey	£50.72	£10.56
North Down	£40.89	£12.84
Omagh	£21.75	£20.09
Strabane	£19.99	£17.21

3. Overall service costs

Although the two elements of the service, waste collection and recycling/composting, can be identified separately as they have in the DoE tables, it is valid to combine the two costs to form an overall cost for providing a municipal waste and recycled/composted waste collection treatment service. Many of the costs of the service overlap and they are normally managed jointly.

Once again, there is a large range in the combined cost with Fermanagh being the lowest cost in 2011-12 at £27.06. The highest cost authority was Banbridge at £73.15 which is 270% more expensive.

Table 2 - Combined service costs

Local authority	Combined net cost of municipal waste collection per head of pop'n & collection/treatment of recycled /composted household waste per head of pop'n	Ranking based on combined costs – lowest cost first
Antrim	£70.22	23 rd
Ards	£51.70	16 th
Armagh	£54.31	18 th
Ballymena	£54.91	19 th
Ballymoney	£29.05	2 nd
Banbridge	£73.15	24 th
Belfast	£35.00	6 th
Carrickfergus	£34.58	4 th
Castlereagh	No data	NA
Coleraine	£51.42	15 th

Local authority	Combined net cost of municipal waste collection per head of pop'n & collection/treatment of recycled /composted household waste per head of pop'n	Ranking based on combined costs – lowest cost first
Cookstown	£41.30	8 th
Craigavon	£45.48	10 th
Derry	£47.69	12 th
Down	£49.18	14 th
Dungannon	£49.09	13 th
Fermanagh	£27.06	1 st
Larne	No data	NA
Limavady	£46.35	11 th
Lisburn	£34.03	3 rd
Magherafelt	£60.25	20 th
Moyle	£65.91	22 nd
Newry and Mourne	£34.77	5 th
Newtownabbey	£61.28	21 st
North Down	£53.73	17 th
Omagh	£41.84	9 th
Strabane	£37.20	7 th

The range within the combined cost figures again highlights the benefits of benchmarking. The operational arrangements which are undertaken to provide the service and so result in the costs noted above, give an opportunity for learning between authorities.

A ranking is listed above based on the lowest cost first. This of course is only one way of presenting the data and as cost reduction is such a high priority in local government currently the ranking reflects this. Alternatively, if the service is a local priority then higher spending will be a policy choice.

4. New local authority clusters

The table below combines the costs of services by new local authority cluster. This is not an attempt to accurately predict the cost of future services. However, once again it does highlight the range of cost between clusters. The Fermanagh / Omagh cluster is low cost in this scenario along with Belfast who will not have the work of combining services to go through. At the other end of the scale, the Antrim / Newtownabbey cluster has a high cost service in this exercise.

Table 3 - Combined cost per local authority cluster

Local authority cluster	Combined cost	Average cost per authority	Ranking - average cost
Antrim / Newtown abbey	£131.50	£65.75	9 th
Ards / North Down	£105.43	£52.72	7 th
Armagh / Banbridge / Craigavon	£172.94	£57.65	8 th
Ballymena / Carrickfergus / Larne	£89.49 (no data - Larne)	£44.75	NA
Ballymoney / Coleraine / Limavady / Moyle	£192.73	£48.18	5 th
Castlereagh / Lisburn	£34.03 (no data - Lisburn)	£34.03	NA
Cookstown / Dungannon / Magherafelt	£109.34	£36.45	6 th
Derry / Strabane	£84.89	£42.45	4 th
Down / Newry and Mourne	£83.95	£41.98	3 rd
Fermanagh / Omagh	£68.90	£34.35	1 st
Belfast	£35.00	£35.00	2 nd

5. Performance Management Framework

As part of the re-organisation of local government in the region, both the DoE and ICE programme have called for the introduction of a performance management and benchmarking service which works across the new local authorities when they are established. The range of figures in the tables above reflect the fact that different circumstances exist in the local authorities and have an impact on service delivery. It also highlights the fact that the operational arrangements that are in place result in lower costs as well as other differences in, for example, quality or productivity.

The benefits of using performance management data and of benchmarking are well understood and lead to the sharing of experience and expertise across the sector – something which is vital in times of austerity. It is also a good habit to get into when new local authorities are being established.

6. APSE Performance Networks

APSE provides the largest public sector performance management and benchmarking service in Europe. It covers 14 service areas including waste collection and disposal with nearly 200 local authorities submitting data each year. It is well established and is now in its 15th year, is robust, accurate and a respected model across the local government sector.

Although the Best Value Performance Indicators in use by DoE are not directly comparable with Performance Networks measures there is enough overlap to learn some lessons from considering the 2 sets of measures side by side.

The average cost of providing a refuse collection service per household (exc landfill & waste disposal costs but including Central Establishment Charges) was £59.94 in 2011-12, as measured by Performance Networks.

The average cost of providing a refuse collection service per household (exc landfill & waste disposal costs as well as Central Establishment Charges) was £55.17 in 2011-12, as measured by Performance Networks.

The two figures provide for comparison depending upon the figures including in the local authority returns made to the DoE.

Although the Performance Networks figures are per household they can be compared with the figures from Northern Ireland local authorities noted above. This can be done by multiplying the Northern Ireland figures by 2.54, the average number of people per household in Northern Ireland. (See Population note below).

There are 5 local authorities whose costs are below the average refuse collection costs from Performance Networks – Fermanagh, Carrickfergus, Strabane, Belfast and Ballymoney with Omagh close to the average.

In terms of recycling, the average figure from Performance Networks was £24.21 and Ballymoney, Craigavon, Lisburn and Newry and Mourne all had lower costs.

As noted above this is not an attempt to make a definitive comparison between performance measures. However it does show that there are substantial differences between individual councils and that using performance data in a positive way can help to unearth how improvements can be made by noting the levels of performance of other providers.

Table 4 -Comparison with UK average APSE Performance Network figures)

Local authority	WC/1 Net cost of municipal waste collection per head of population	WC/1 multiplied by 2.54 (i.e. estimated average number of people per household in NI)	WC/2 Net cost of collection and treatment of recycled/composted household waste per head of pop'n	WC/2 multiplied by 2.54 (i.e. estimated average number of people per household in NI)
Antrim	£45.95	£116.71	£24.27	£61.65
Ards	£34.35	£87.25	£17.35	£44.07
Armagh	£39.94	£101.45	£14.37	£36.50
Ballymena	£42.16	£107.09	£12.75	£32.39
Ballymoney	£20.67	£52.50	£8.38	£21.29
Banbridge	£44.09	£111.99	£29.06	£73.81
Belfast	£20.61	£52.35	£14.39	£36.55
Carrickfergus	£19.40	£49.28	£15.18	£38.56
Castlereagh	No data	NA	No data	NA
Coleraine	£32.56	£82.70	£18.86	£47.90
Cookstown	£26.97	£68.50	£14.33	£36.40
Craigavon	£36.15	£91.82	£9.33	£23.70
Derry	£24.86	£63.14	£22.83	£57.99
Down	£33.04	£83.92	£16.14	£41.00
Dungannon	£27.47	£69.77	£21.62	£54.91
Fermanagh	£12.08	£30.68	£14.98	£38.05
Larne	No data	NA	No data	NA
Limavady	£32.68	£83.01	£13.67	£34.72
Lisburn	£24.63	£62.56	£9.40	£23.88
Magherafelt	£33.08	£84.02	£27.17	£69.01
Moyle	£34.28	£87.07	£31.63	£80.34
Newry and Mourne	£25.32	£64.31	£9.45	£24.00
Newtownabbey	£50.72	£128.83	£10.56	£26.82
North Down	£40.89	103.86	£12.84	32.61
Omagh	£21.75	55.25	£20.09	51.03
Strabane	£19.99	50.77	£17.21	43.71
	01C Cost of refuse collection service per h'hold (exc landfill & waste disposal costs)		03A Net cost of recycling per household	
Average PN		£59.94		£24.21
	01C Cost of refuse collection service per household (exc landfill, waste disposal costs & Central Establishment Charges)			
Average PN		£55.17		

Population Note - The estimated population of NI was 1,788,339 and estimated 703,275 households in Northern Ireland which means there were approximately 2.54 people per household. (Source - 2011 Census: Population and Household Estimates for the United Kingdom, March 2011 – Office for National Statistics, published - 21 March 2013).

7. Future developments

The 2011 Census of Population has identified that between 2001 and 2011 there was an increase of 12.2% in the number of households in Northern Ireland. It is impossible to accurately project future population or household growth. As such it is impossible to know whether such a level of growth will occur again over the 10 years to 2021. If it were to do so, there would clearly be an impact on waste and recycling services and this is a factor which must be considered when planning services.

The coming together of existing local authorities to form the new councils will introduce an element of work over and above the existing day job. Some councils have started coming together at a strategic and councillor level to address issues whilst others have not been so quick off the mark. It is vital that managers working at the operational level from cluster local authorities also start coming together to consider the problems which are likely to arise once the new clusters come into being.

Managing and providing services under new arrangements will be difficult enough but the fact that there is very likely to be an increasing number of households adds a further dimension.

A further factor to consider is the outline proposal for consultation issued by the Department in March 2011 about recycling levels and in June 2012 the Minister announced his intention to introduce a statutory 60% recycling target for local authority collected municipal waste (LACMW) to be achieved by 2020.

8. APSE Comment

APSE have long promoted the use of performance management data and benchmarking within internal service and business planning processes and financial and budgetary cycles. Performance Networks is an established model with 15 service areas. It exactly fits the needs of local government in Northern Ireland, having been developed and used by nearly 200 local authorities in the rest of the UK including some in Northern Ireland already.

It can also be adapted to accommodate new service areas for example a cemeteries and crematoria template was added last year.

Waste collection and disposal is one of the most fundamental services for local government addressing many wider aims and objectives. It is an area where benchmarking can provide real benefits especially when the range of costs noted in the tables above s taken into account.

APSE completely understands the complexities of the re-organisation of local government in NI by April 2015 and the amount of work involved. Nevertheless, throughout any period of reform, services must be delivered, waste still needs to be collected and disposed of and topics such as recycling cannot afford to be forgotten.

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