
12. WISER WAYS' PUBLIC AWARENESS & INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

12.1. Introduction

All key stakeholders must be made aware of the Plans objectives. Awareness is created by establishing a strong identity for the Plan and communicating this consistency and uniformly. Public sector buy-in is essential for individuals to identify why a change in their behaviour towards waste management is necessary and to develop an acceptance for the need for waste recovery and disposal facilities.

This section outlines the public awareness/education strategy that is proposed for the implementation of the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region (JWMPSE).

12.2. Public Awareness and Information Strategy

The awareness strategy will continue the "W.I.S.E.R WAYS" - Waste Initiative for the South East Region theme and will complement the national "Race Against Waste" and "Waste Prevention Minimisation" campaigns. The Public Awareness and Information Strategy can be set out under four headings:

- targets –key objectives/targets set by European and National legislation and policy
- key Issues – focusing on local and regional issues
- strategy and implementation – the broad messages, communications routes and techniques to be used to meet these objectives
- delivery – this will involve the development of the key messages, raising awareness and educating key stakeholders

The public awareness/campaign will lay the communications foundations for important events around which the plan will be delivered. These include:

- roll-out of new collection schemes and methods
- increasing and maintaining public participation in recycling initiatives
- establishment of the necessary waste management infrastructure

12.2.1. Targets

The context for this communications strategy will be set at a number of inter-locking levels. Among the most important of these are:

- **European policy drivers**

EU Directives for waste management set mandatory targets to be achieved by Member States. These include the Landfill and Packaging Directives, as well as measures relating to end of life vehicles and waste electrical and electronic equipment. The targets outlined in the Directives are challenging and meeting them will require a step-change in public, business and public sector attitudes and behaviour.

- **National policy drivers**

There are three national policy documents relevant to waste management in Ireland, with the most recent "*Waste Management - Taking Stock and Moving Forward*" (2004) joining the earlier publications "*Waste Management – Changing Our Ways*" (1998) and "*Preventing and Recycling Waste – Delivering Change*" (2002). In this respect the key policy statement is "*Changing our Ways*" which sets targets that must be met by the local authorities in the South East region by 2013. Achieving these targets will require the active collaboration of all stakeholders across the region. All stakeholders will need to be able to identify why a change in their behaviour towards waste management is necessary to achieve these targets.

- **Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region**

The Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region identifies the need for the establishment of an integrated waste management strategy in order for the local authorities within the region to meet statutory obligations. The plan emphasises the importance of waste reduction and sets out detailed measures to substantially raise recycling and recovery rates in line with national targets. It identifies the broad infrastructure requirements in the longer-term to meet landfill diversion and reduction targets. The plan incorporates provision for public awareness and information to help meet the targets.

There are already a number of local initiatives being implemented throughout the region by the Environmental Education/Awareness Officers in each local authority. These include:

- Annual Environmental Awards
- Environmental Partnership Awards
- Schools Environmental Education Program
- Green Schools
- home composting
- increased provision of bring banks and recycling centres
- roll out of 2 and 3-bin collection systems

- **Race Against Waste**

The national awareness campaign, launched in October 2003, deliberately uses "shock" imagery to bring home to people the scale and urgency of the task involved in reducing waste arisings and dealing more sustainably with unavoidable wastes. The campaigns strategy for dealing with waste in Ireland is to:

- reduce the amount of waste we produce
- maximise the amount of waste we recycle
- minimise the amount of waste going to landfill
- convert the remainder to energy in properly managed and monitored facilities

The campaign is both a stylistic and practical context within which local initiatives in the South East Region will operate, reflecting at a local level the national message.

12.2.2. Key Issues

There will be four key areas central to the initial public information and awareness strategy for the region. These are:

The task is urgent - The campaign will quantify the scale of the task locally and make the link between this and the need for everyone to participate in local and regional initiatives as they are rolled-out.

The region is ready - The campaign will clearly illustrate that the authorities in the region are ready to meet the challenge. The JWMPSE is in place and a raft of practical initiatives will be instigated.

This is what you need to/can do - Clear and simple messages will be delivered to key stakeholders (householders, schools, business and agriculture, community leaders etc.) about the simple day-to day tasks they can perform to help reach the targets. This will include clear messages on waste prevention and minimisation which will tie in with the "Race Against Waste Campaign"

12.2.3. Strategy and Implementation

The strategy will comprise a number of inter-linked elements, some 'temporary' and some 'permanent'. The temporary aspects will be related primarily to awareness raising and the more permanent aspects to education.

12.2.4. Delivery

The primary campaign will involve four broad phases:

- development - Identifying key messages and imagery and developing communications tools and materials. A flexible approach towards the implementation of the education and communications campaign is essential as situations change and issues arise.
- raising awareness; high profile and high impact activity to engage key stakeholders and enthuse them to act
- education - a rolling programme of initiatives to keep the issues in peoples' minds and provide timely advice and information on how to participate; a constant drip feed will also help maintain awareness levels
- evaluation - as the programme is implemented its effectiveness must be measured so that where necessary messages can be re-targeted and also so that success can be noted and recorded to help maintain motivation.