



MERSEYSIDE WASTE DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

# A NEED FOR CHANGE



## What happens when your waste has nowhere left to go?

- 95% of our domestic waste is tipped at landfill sites, but available local landfill space will run out in the very near future.
- The Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) is currently looking at a range of options for getting rid of Merseyside's waste over the next 25 years.
- The ways in which we get rid of our waste affects us all. We have recently undertaken a public consultation exercise to involve the public in decisions that will be made on a long term waste management strategy for Merseyside.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NOW?**

Every year the people of Merseyside throw away over 800,000 tonnes of waste either in their bins, or at the area's Waste Reception Centres. This mountain of waste is enough to fill the three local football stadiums to the brim twice a year. At the moment we send over 90% of this waste to landfill sites at ever increasing distances from Merseyside.

We are the organisation charged with the responsibility of arranging facilities for getting rid of waste collected by your local council.

Recently, several factors have caused us to reconsider the way we deal with your waste. These factors include:

- Increases in tipping charges;
- A reduction of suitable landfill sites and so more pressure on transport;
- The introduction of a new landfill tax and the potential for its increase;
- The introduction of laws designed to limit how much waste we can put in landfill;
- The government's targets for recycling and recovery;
- The public's view of landfill as one of society's dirty habits; and
- Government publications such as 'Less Waste - More Value' and 'Making Waste Work', etc., which promote changes in the present methods of getting rid of rubbish.

### **Why Change?**

Any one of these factors would provide a considerable argument for change. When we consider them together, the logic for change seems obvious.

### **Change to what?**

We are working very closely with our colleagues in the five Merseyside local councils, and have recently employed environmental consultants to review present methods and consider possible options for change. The technologies which can bring about large-scale landfill change are shown below.

#### **Waste minimisation**

This involves plans to reduce the amount of waste created by society, and includes re-use, repair, home-composting and so on.

#### **Recycling**

This option would involve increasing the present levels of recycling 'bring' schemes and kerbside collections, and introducing Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF's) to make sure that we recycle as much material as possible.

## Composting

This process has two parts.

**Home composting** - This is where you keep food-scrap and garden waste for example, and compost them in a bin which we either supply or help pay for.

**Municipal composting** - This is where waste is collected or brought to a central depot for large-scale composting.

A typical scheme would probably include both of these options.

## Energy from waste

This involves creating heat and electricity by burning household waste.

## Landfill

Continuing to use landfill as an optional method of getting rid of waste is seen to be necessary in both the short- and long-term. However, successfully introducing other ways of treating waste will result in a reduction in our dependency on landfill.

## Summary

I am sure you will realise that, unlike landfill, none of the options we have mentioned can deal with all our waste. The most likely scenario for the future will be a mix of some of these options including landfilling.

A mixed system will have many long-term effects, such as cost, environmental considerations and so on, which we will have to face.

A public consultation exercise aimed at residents in the Merseyside and neighbouring areas, as well as interested bodies, has been conducted, which was concluded on 31st March 1999. The results of this consultation exercise have been published in a document named "**SORTED**". You can browse the document on-line by clicking on the document name, or obtain a copy from the address shown on the our home page.

## In the meantime

The strategy will take several years to put in place. Whilst we are developing a strategy you can also make a difference, helping to reduce the waste you create by becoming more active in the following ways:

- Avoid excess packaging.
- Re-use bags and boxes.
- Recycle your paper, glass, metal, textiles and so on.
- Start a home compost bin
- Encourage others to do the same.

## **CITIZENS JURIES**

The Authority undertook a second phase of the Public Consultation with the formation of three Citizen Juries.