

Speech for Cylch Conference

**Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Environment,
Sustainability and Housing, Welsh Assembly
Government**

Diolch i chi am fy ngwahodd i siarad â chi heddiw.

Da calon gennyf fedru siarad yn eich degfed cynhadledd blynyddol, sydd bellach yn rhan arferol o galendr rheoli gwastraff Cymru. Y mae'n arbennig o dda gweld cymaint o grwpiau ailddefnyddio ac ailgylchu cymunedol a chyrrff cysylltiedig eraill. Yr wyf wedi cyfarfod nifer o aelodau "Cylch", a gwerthfawrogaf yn fawr yr hyn y maent yn ei gyfrannu i'r gymuned, yn ogystal â'u cyfraniad at gyflawni Strategaeth Gwastraff Cymru, "Doeth Am Wastraff".

Thank you for your invitation to speak to you today.

I am very pleased to be able to speak at your tenth annual conference. It is now a regular part of the waste management calendar in Wales. It is especially good to see so many community re-use and recycling groups and other partner organisations. I have met a number of Cylch members and very much appreciate what they contribute to the community, as well as their contribution in helping to deliver the Wales Waste Strategy, Wise About Waste.

The issue of waste management, or should I say resource management, is becoming ever more important. There is increased evidence of human impact on climate change and of the potentially very serious consequences. My speech today therefore focuses on climate change, which I believe is the biggest challenge facing the world.

Success in tackling climate change will rely on action across every sector and I know that eco design, resource

efficiency, waste minimisation, re-use of material and recycling all have an important role to play.

So what is the scale of the challenge we face?

The recent reports of the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed the very high degree of confidence that scientists now have that climate change is occurring and being caused by the sharp rise in greenhouse gas emissions, chiefly carbon dioxide, as a result of human activities.

Unless we can stabilise atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at a maximum of around 500 parts per million, there is a high risk that this will lead to more than 2°C of global warming and potentially dangerous climate change.

The Stern Review has made the economic case for early, concerted international action, led by developed nations, to tackle greenhouse gas emissions; and made clear the unacceptable costs of inaction – in terms of economic and social impacts.

None of us should underestimate the challenge we face in Wales. The latest figures, for 2005, show that greenhouse gas emissions as a whole and carbon dioxide emissions in Wales remain below the 1990 benchmark.

- In 2005 there was 9% decrease in emissions of the basket of six greenhouse gases compared with base year emissions.
- In 2005 there was a 4% decrease in emissions of CO₂ compared to base year emissions.

These figures show a reduction in emissions, which is good news, but greenhouse gas emissions are subject to annual fluctuations and we really need to see a sustained reduction over time.

The One Wales document illustrates the Assembly Government's commitment to tackling this issue, with proposals to establish a Climate Change Commission for Wales, achieving annual 3% reduction in greenhouse emissions in areas of devolved competence by 2011, committing to setting targets for the carbon neutrality of public buildings and actions in energy, public transport.

Work to tackle climate change is also already underway in all policy areas within the Assembly Government.

We have begun a communications campaign on climate change to encourage people to take action to address

climate change. Examples of action already underway includes:

- launching a Climate Change Champions competition to find four young people to act as spokespeople on climate change across Wales and in their communities
- communicating to local communities through local press and radio and developing a wider package of action to engage communities
- issuing a schools pack which included a copy of the film “An Inconvenient Truth” for all secondary schools and colleges in Wales

We want to support individuals and communities across Wales in taking personal action to address climate change.

There are great examples of communities, organisations and businesses across Wales already stepping up this challenge, but the Assembly Government can help in spreading the message and supporting others to join in.

We plan to hold two community events, in partnership with a range of other organisations, to bring together active communities to network, share expertise and to let us know what support they need to do more.

There is so much we can learn from the success of community initiatives on waste - about what it takes to mobilise a community to act and how to sustain that action.

Advice and support is available. We have recently funded the Energy Saving Trust to roll out a Sustainable Energy Network in Wales which will strengthen the

infrastructure in Wales for advice on energy efficiency, renewable energy and transport to households, communities and micro businesses.

We also sponsor the Carbon Trust activities in Wales, and for 2007-08 this amounts to over £4.4m. The Carbon Trust provides invaluable support, advice and guidance to businesses and the public sector in Wales.

We have set ambitious targets for renewable energy generation and, as part of the energy policies I will be developing, I am committed to reviewing these targets upwards.

I want to develop an approach to energy that maximises the opportunities for renewable and low carbon generation and makes the most of Wales' natural resources.

I am also determined that we should find ways to put energy back in the hands of people and communities – microgeneration and community scale generation must become an increasing part of our energy mix.

Our Microgeneration Strategy sets ambitious targets for the uptake on microgeneration and starts to map out the action we need to take to make it happen.

I am developing a renewables energy route map which will be published for consultation in the next few months and sets out how we can rapidly increase Wales' uptake of low carbon energy.

In all new buildings in Wales we have set an ambitious aspiration that they should be zero carbon from 2011 and are putting in place actions to move us towards achieving this ambition. For example:

- We now stipulate that where we provide funding or dispose of land for new buildings, it is conditional on the buildings being constructed to BREEAM excellence or equivalent standard.
- We are looking at the feasibility of devolving the Building Regulations to enable us to deliver on our 2011 aspiration.

These standards also provide an opportunity to drive up the use of recycled materials in buildings.

Our Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES) has helped over 72,000 households with energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing.

The scheme's primary purpose is to tackle fuel poverty, but it is also improving the energy performance of domestic properties across Wales.

Energy and buildings are one part of agenda on climate change, but transport is also vitally important.

Achieving greater use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel will reduce CO2 emissions from transport and we are working to reduce the increasing trend of single occupancy car and place more emphasis on all forms of public transport.

We published our *Smarter Choices: Wales Best Practice Guide* earlier this year which provided examples of various initiatives that can be adopted by local authorities in support of sustainable transport.

Smarter Choices include imaginative ways of encouraging efficient and sustainable ways of travel – measures such as planning of transport for getting to school, work and other destinations, improving travel information and communications; and using the Internet in more effective ways, such as car share schemes and teleconferencing.

In 2007-08, we have made available £2 million to support a range of local authority projects that will secure much needed investment to improve the cycling infrastructure in Wales.

We have also made a £10 million commitment under the Safe Routes to Communities programme (this replaces the Safe Routes to Schools scheme).

The main focus of the new programme would continue to be on schools, given that in most cases they are located at the heart of communities.

Local authorities would however also be able to develop safe routes for walking and cycling which were not focused exclusively on schools, for example, to provide links to leisure centres, parks, hospitals or care centres for the elderly.

This gives a major boost to walking and cycling by allowing new schemes to come forward.

Assembly Government is committed to setting an example through the management of its own estate.

A comprehensive review of the administrative estate has been commissioned which will make recommendations on options for driving down the carbon footprint of our buildings and official travel.

The Community Sector also has an important part to play in addressing climate change. Studies have shown that most types of recycling have significant climate change benefits over energy from waste and landfill. Better still, the re-use of items prevents the need for disposal.

From a climate change perspective, studies have also shown that the anaerobic digestion of source separated food wastes is more beneficial than incineration with energy recovery or landfill.

Local Authority representatives among you will know and many of the community sector representatives will also know that with this in mind last week I proposed new ambitious recycling targets which included a food waste element. Climate change was central to our thinking when considering new targets.

I have put forward proposals to Local Authorities that the overall recycling/composting rates to be met by each local authority should be: 40% in 2009/10 - this is unchanged from now; 52% in 2012/13; 58% in 2015/16; 64% in 2019/20; and 70% in 2024/25

In addition I have proposed that a target should be set for the composting or anaerobic digestion of source separated food waste. My proposal is that from 2012/13 this target is set at a minimum of 15%.

I have proposed that from 2009/10 no local authority should be allowed to send more than 30% of its municipal waste to energy from waste facilities. I have also proposed that local authorities will not be allowed to landfill more than 10% of their municipal waste by 2019/20 and 5% by 2024/25 and thereafter.

In order to remove some of the anomalies that some Local Authorities tell us have arisen with current targets, for example around the collection of green waste in rural areas, I am proposing the Assembly Government sets a maximum residual household waste target for each local authority of 150kg per household per annum by 2024/25.

I have proposed that the Assembly Government will consult on a ban on the land-spreading of non-source separated treated municipal waste from 1 April 2016.

Also, I have said to Local Authorities that in the strategy review I should like to see a discussion about the possibility of a materials reuse target. A detailed examination will be made of the potential of reuse to contribute to the overall targets and we will consult on possible statutory reuse targets. This will ensure that our targets better reflect the waste hierarchy and will also lead to a greater degree of security for community furniture

reuse schemes and others who will be reassured that their activities are reflected in Assembly Government targets and policy priorities. Where community schemes are carried out on behalf of Local Authorities they should be measured as part of Local Authority activity.

Our long term goal is to place Wales among the best performing countries in Europe. The Flanders region of Belgium, for example, leads the way with a 70% recycling rate for its municipal waste. These proposed targets will now be discussed further and in detail with Local Authorities. They will form the framework for sustainable municipal waste management for the future and will be put out for public consultation as part of the planned review of *Wise About Waste*.

Climate change poses a huge challenge for Wales and the world. An effective response will require concerted action by government, the private and voluntary sectors and

active participation from communities and individual citizens.

Thank You

Y mae newid yn yr hinsawdd yn her enfawr ar gyfer Cymru a'r byd. Er mwyn ymateb yn effeithiol, bydd angen i lywodraeth a'r sectorau preifat a gwirfoddol gydweithio â'u gilydd, a rhaid i gymunedau a dinasyddion unigol dorchi llawes hefyd.

Diolch