Supplementary Memorandum from LRL Consulting

With regards to the questions the Committee has asked I am not competent to answer the second one as this is more in the realm of Dr Cooper's expertise. However, I have investigated waste reduction for a number of years and this is where I am able to reply.

Currently waste reduction targets are set in both tonnage and /or percentage terms. They are also differentially set for different areas of focus e.g. there are reduction targets in total tonnage terms for the household waste stream but in percentages for C&I and C&D.

In order to study the potential impact of population increases a total balance of tonnages should be shown split into various categories and clearly showing potential changes as a result of activities like recycling , the economy growing and population increases. This will show the relative impact population growth has on 'waste' or rather the amount of materials to be processed for materials, energy or final disposal.

Currently for the household stream the Government is content to landfill 12.2m tonnes of residual waste after reduction, recycling and energy recovery. Whilst this is a 45% reduction from 2000 figures this still leaves substantial room for variations of outcome. A zero waste to landfill aim may take longer than 13 years to achieve but it should be possible to set clear targets in absolute terms to reach that goal. This would then direct the attention to managing material recovery only.

If the economy is to grow the agenda moves away from 'waste' reduction and transfers to sustainable consumption and production. Population growth is a factor in that debate but only one. It has already been shown in the Government's 'Changing Patterns ' report of 2003 that demand even with material and energy efficient products can still increase as a result of unit price reductions making access to goods more achievable and thus ultimately more products and materials to recover.

Other factors affect consumption; an aging population, increasing personal expenditure and reduction in numbers per household. Whilst population increase is forecast to be 1% by 2030 in EU it is not expected to have a significant effect on consumption compared to these other factors (Ref; Household consumption and the Environment. EEA 11/2005).

The current reduction targets are not set to reduce consumption but residual waste from households to landfill. This seeks to reduce the total amount but also sets a per person per year target of reduction from 450Kg to 225Kg. This is not an individual target but an average. It is dependant not just on the householder but on their local authority who determines how recycling is collected and also what happens to their residual waste.

It is relatively easy to achieve the broad reduction targets and these may be set irrespective of population increases. The area of focus should be the more moral and ethical one of meeting needs and managing wants despite requiring a growing economy. Government measures decoupling statistics via the ONS and DEFRA and these are arguably more important than those relating to domestic waste reduction.

It is confusing to the householder, decision makers and the media that we have not got a true definition and meaning of the term. At the moment the Government means it to be reduction from landfill. However, there is also a great deal of effort spent in trying to get the weekly domestic waste reduced in volume. The Defra targets of Kg reduction do not relate to this at all. The Committee may wish to consider recommending a transfer of this element of the agenda to that part of Defra and its counterpart in BERR that specialise in the SCP agenda.

It had been considered that an overall Kg per person level including all recyclable and recoverable material should be set. However, comparisons of Kg per person vary depending on household size and other demographic impacts. EU and world comparisons show wide variations and are very misleading since they do not often contain the same base information. For the UK it is more important to wait for the work being carried out by WRAP on food waste which may assist in making decisions about the opportunity to reduce volumes of discarded food as well as options to divert such food from landfill. It is this area of the dustbin where positive reductions can be made where everyone will gain. Households by cost savings (although only about £200 max per year but far more than by charging regimes), local authorities by savings in disposal/processing costs and the environment where less methane and CO_2 emissions will be produced.