

What Should the Future Look Like?

What Ought this to Mean for Infrastructure?

Made Today, Gone Tomorrow Seminar

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Overview

- **Past as prologue**
- **Thinking about thinking about the future**
- **What does this mean (mainly for residuals)?**

Past

- **Mid-late 1990s**
 - Piecemeal implementation of EU Directives
 - ‘Just comply’
 - No ‘UK waste policy’ (landfill tax?)
- **Early to mid-2000s**
 - Significant progress from local authorities
 - But ad-hoc
- **Late 2000s**
 - Indigenous waste policy emerges
 - First signs of ambition
 - Climate change up the agenda
 - Moves in the merchant market

Thinking About Thinking (the Future)

- **‘Waste’...**
- **‘Management’...**
 - If this was ‘a management problem’, what would you do?
- **Sector:**
 - Poor metrics and forecasting tools
 - Changing swiftly (with capacity for further change)
 - Performance on an upward trend
 - A complex system
 - Multiple decisions
 - Many decisions preclude others
 - Path dependent
 - Significantly shaped by institutions (distinct from organisations)

Thinking About Thinking About the Future

- **So, there is potential for ...**
 - Backing the wrong horses
 - ‘Locking in’ to these
 - Ossifying the system
 - In which case
- **... the opportunity is lost**

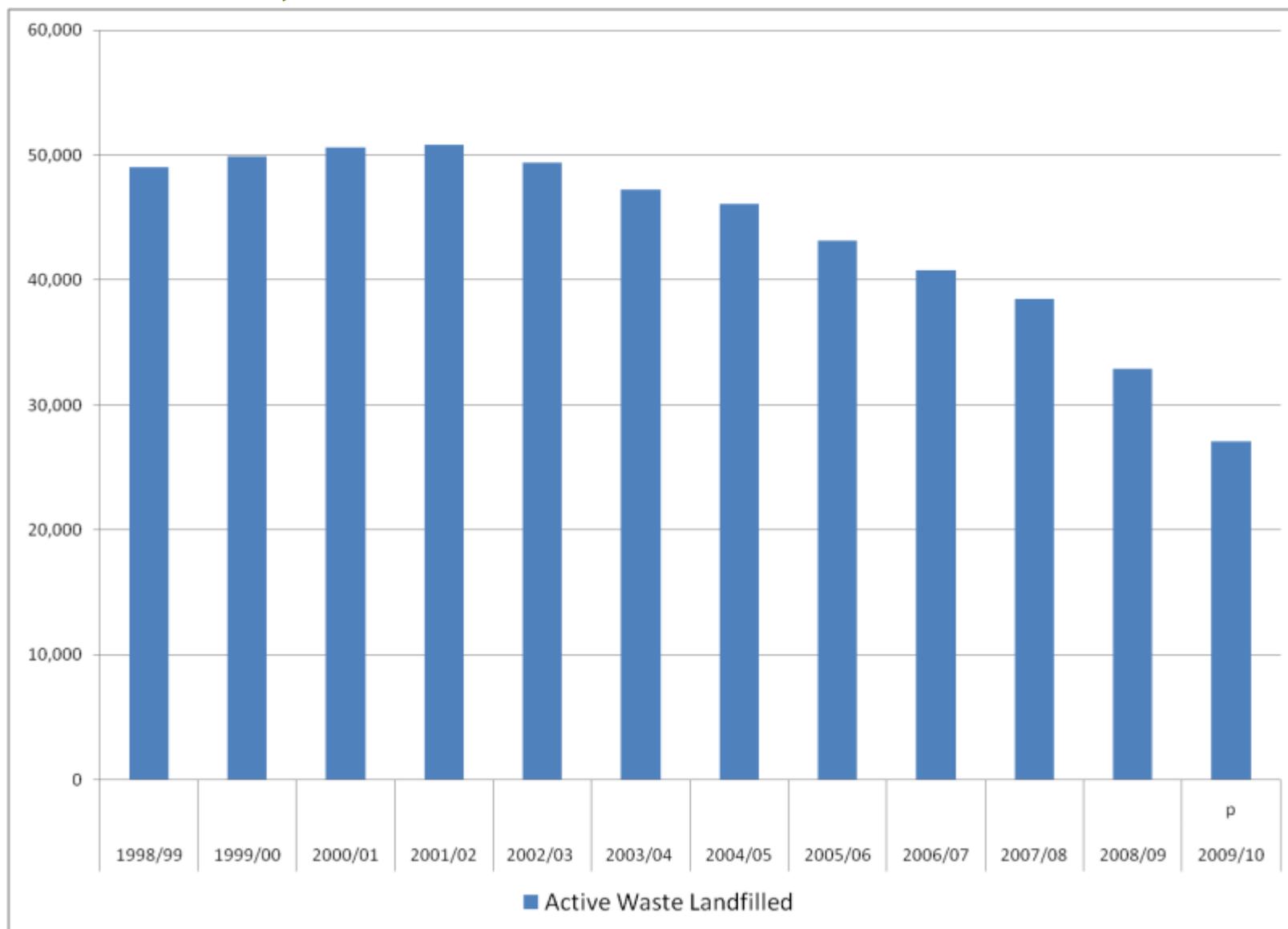
Thinking About Thinking About the Future

- ***‘You can’t manage what you can’t measure’***
 - We have to manage, independently of the data
 - What does ‘not managing’ imply?
 - LF Tax v site returns / survey data
- ***‘Waste should be seen as a resource’***
 - Just burn it?
- **Can we direct / induce innovation?**
 - We can ‘steer’ applied / near-to-market research
 - Genuine / ‘radical’ innovation is frequently serendipitous
- **Can we change performance / behaviour?**
 - Incentives are important
 - Why pay to cajole where charge structures can motivate?
 - The cultural change must be in ‘consumption ‘ ...
 - ... but the incentives must be established in the right way (cf policy gaffs in RE)

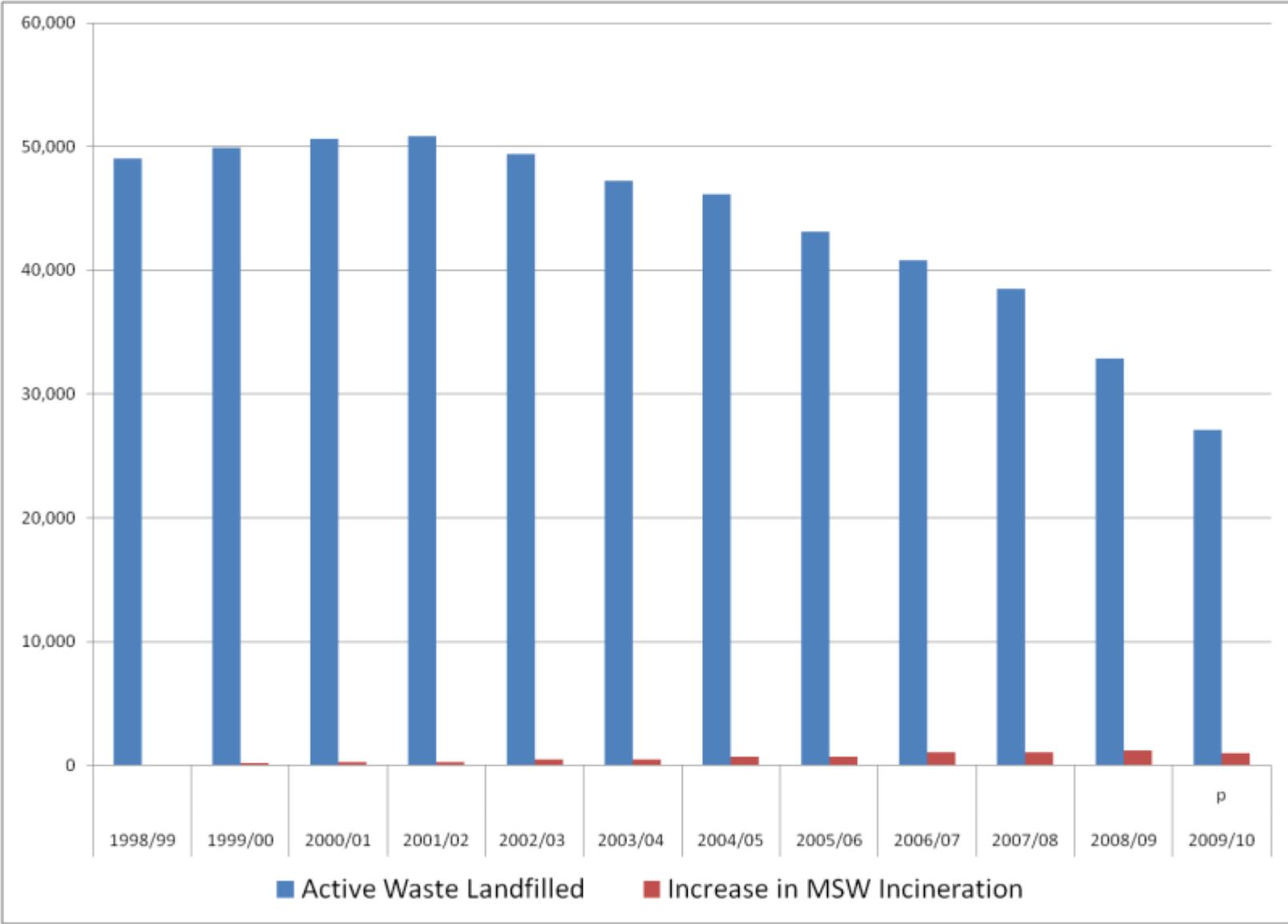
Avoiding the Lock-in

- **The ‘system’ needs to be ‘flexible’**
 - No entrenched institutions
 - No / minimal barriers to doing better
 - Minimal regret when we reduce ‘bad things’
- **What do we want more and less of?**
 - **The ‘lessening hierarchy’**
 1. Less disposal
 2. Less residual waste treatment
 3. More recycling (proportionately)
 4. More preparation for re-use
 5. More prevention (‘more is less’) ...
 6. *Less consumption???*

Landfill, Standard Rate



Landfill Standard Rate and MSW Incin



How Far Can We Go?

- How much residual waste will there be?
- Around 22 million tonnes (at most)
- Possibly as low as 16 million tonnes
 - Around 5 million already installed
 - Thermal treatment
 - 1.5 mt in construction, 6 mt with planning
 - Pre-treatment
 - 1.7 mt in cons, 2.6 mt with planning
- How much will translate into capacity?
- When will we have too much?
- Is it true that planning is a barrier?

Future Infrastructure

- Improvements in collection systems
- Innovation in vehicle design
 - Naked food, Packaged food
- Design for re-use / recycling (Eco-design Directive)
- Improved sorting / disassembly
- Globalisation of re-use (and take back)

Future Infrastructure

- **Residual waste treatment capacity**
 - High capex facilities for ‘certain’ residual waste only
 - Flexible otherwise
 - Landfill
 - Stabilised waste to landfill
 - SRF to decentralised boilers (with multi-fuel capability)

