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Setting the scene - the environmental and economic challenges

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We have been doing well

- **Recycling rates have increased substantially in recent years**
 - From 12% in 2000/01 to at least 35.5% now
- **Waste volumes are now decreasing**
 - Municipal waste down around 2% in England in FY 07/08, before the recession.
- **We should congratulate ourselves**
 - Local councils, the recycling industry
 - WRAP, the Government
 - FOE local groups - and the Household Waste Recycling Act.



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But there is more to do

- **Others have shown that we can do more**
 - e.g. Flanders
- **The environmental drivers are getting more urgent**
 - With climate the clearest example.
- **The economic situation is becoming more difficult.**



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The climate challenge

- **We all agree that emissions must be cut**
 - And that rich countries such as the UK have increased responsibility for such cuts.
- **The UK's targets are now written into the Climate Change Act 2008**
 - Friends of the Earth led the campaign for this Act.
- **But it's not just about cutting emissions by 80% of 1990 levels by 2020 - it's about the pathway**
 - This is why the Climate Change Act has 5 year budgets
 - As explained by the Tyndall Centre [1]:

What are the 'correct' emission-reduction targets for 2°C?

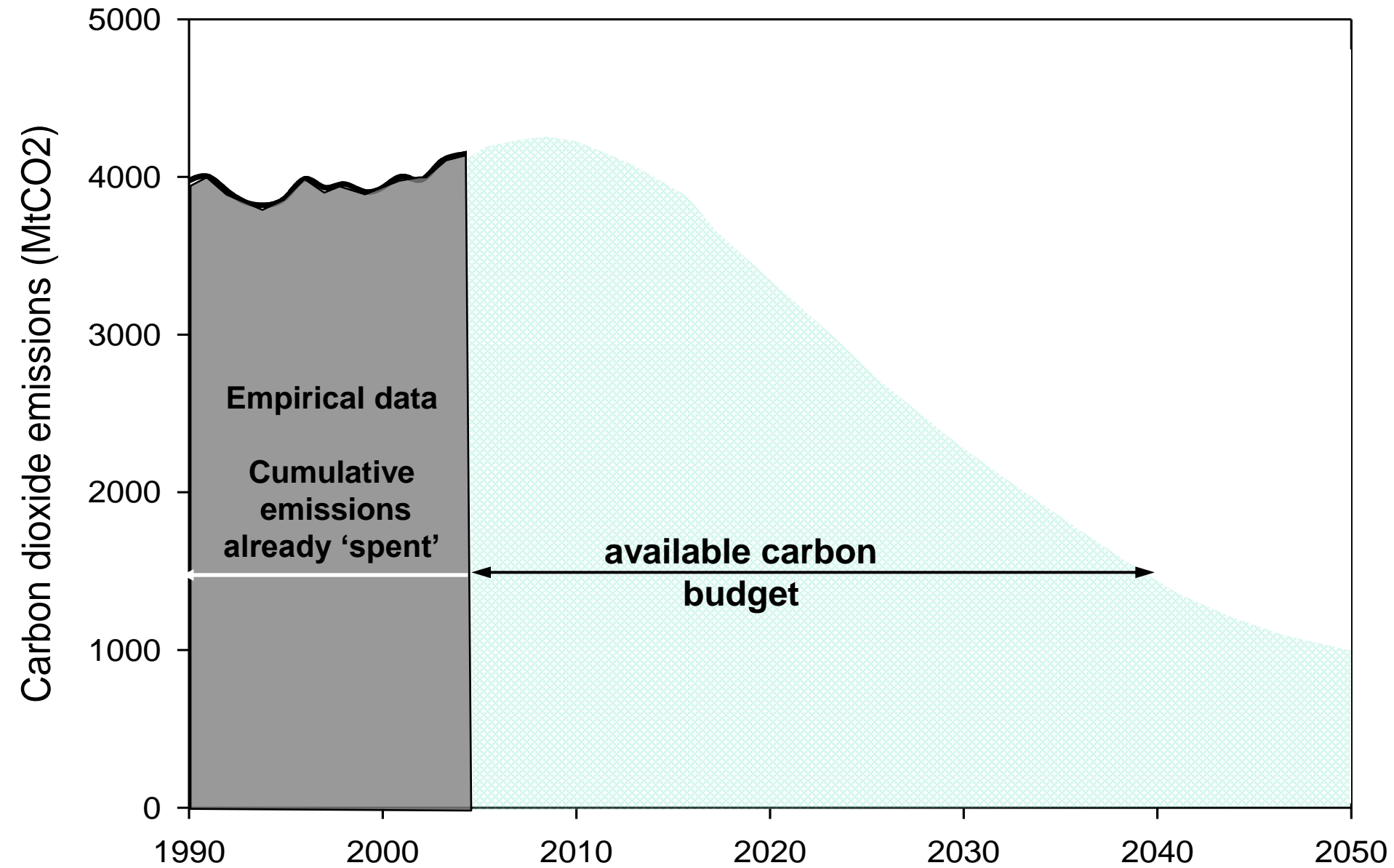
- UK, EU & Global - long term reduction targets
 - *UK's 60% reduction in CO₂ by 2050*
 - *EU 60%-80% reduction in CO₂ e by 2050*
 - *Bali 50% global reduction in CO₂e by 2050*
- But CO₂ stays in atmosphere for approx. 100years
- Hence, today's emissions add to yesterdays & will be added to by tomorrows
- So, focus on long-term targets is very misleading

Put bluntly ...

the final % reduction in carbon has little
relevance to avoiding dangerous climate change
(*e.g.* 2°C)

What is important are the
cumulative emissions of carbon & other
greenhouse gases (*i.e. the carbon budget*)

EU pathway for 450 CO2 budget





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The emissions pathway: the implications for waste

- **We need to cut emissions fast**
 - Taking advantage of approaches that can be rapidly implemented
 - e.g. prevention, recycling, composting, stabilisation prior to landfill
- **We have to make big changes**
 - The Government will have to start focussing policies and incentives on the best approaches
 - Not just those that are slightly better than what we're doing at the moment
- **Because of the importance of cumulative emissions, sequestering carbon or delaying emissions can be beneficial**
 - e.g. if you can't recycle it, it can be better to landfill plastic than to burn it inefficiently [2]
 - (not unlike the current debate on 'biochar')



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The Recession

- **The recession is changing things**
 - and will continue to do so for years to come...
- **Four waves of waste impacts?:**
 - 1) Collapse in prices of recyclates, as demand plummets**
 - But has this bottomed out?
 - Quality is winning out?
 - 2) Problems getting finance - particularly for PFI**
 - But are these always the right projects?
 - 3) Unemployment**
 - An opportunity to create jobs in waste?
 - e.g. on-the-street in recycling, in reprocessing.
 - 4) Public spending cuts in the future**
 - How to optimise spending on waste management?
 - How to avoid expensive white elephants?
 - How will climate targets affect future incentives from government?



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The next challenge - resource use

- **Global consumption of resources has been increasing rapidly**
 - Fuelled by increasing levels of consumption per capita in rich countries, and by a rapid rise in consumption in some very large poorer countries
 - The recession is creating a temporary slow down in this growth
- **The UK and Europe use more than their fair share of the world's resources - whether biomass, minerals, land or water**
 - Our over-use adds to the massive environmental pressures that humanity is putting on the planet - and restricts availability of these resources to the poor.
 - We have no UK or EU targets on resource use, unlike on climate
 - e.g. The benefits of improved resource efficiency were counted as zero in the impact assessment for the England waste strategy
- **In the future there will be a greater focus on resource use**
 - The issue was highlighted in Nov 2008's EU '*Raw materials initiative*' [3]
 - Though this was criticised by Friends of the Earth Europe for being too focussed on exploiting the developing world rather than using resources more efficiently [4].
 - Improving resource efficiency is about benefits, not just costs - making our industry more efficient and reducing the impact of future price shocks
- **Friends of the Earth is developing new work on resource use**
 - Focussing on how the EU can measure and reduce its use of resources. [5]



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The significance of residual waste

- **Residual waste is important for all these challenges**
 - Prevention of residual waste is the best climate option
 - Residual waste has economic cost, keeping material out of the residual often has economic value.
 - Avoiding residual waste increases resource efficiency.
- **Everyone claims they want to minimise residual waste**
 - We started a project more than two years ago to research the issue
 - We commissioned research from EnviroCentre to discover:
 - What is in residual municipal waste? (phase 1)
 - http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/residual_waste.pdf
 - What policy measures could get this waste out of the residual and up the hierarchy? (phase 2)
 - http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/residual_waste_stagetwo.pdf
- **It was clear that local authorities were key, so:**
 - We wrote a briefing - available in your packs, outside and online:
 - http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/residual_waste.pdf
 - We organised this event, including speakers relevant to many key elements of residual waste:



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Residual waste - what's in it?

- **Using the ‘*Practical scenario*’, of the study, which highlights the impact of participation:**

Waste Category	Tonnes per annum in residual
Other paper and card	1,270,950
Plastic packaging (excluding dense plastic bottles)	1,215,253
Disposable nappies	922,817
Kitchen wastes	640,200
Construction and demolition waste	588,599
Other misc combustibles	568,168
Furniture	500,876
Other organic wastes	482,008
Newspapers and magazines	446,917



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The aims of this event

- **To hear about and discuss practical solutions to minimising residual municipal waste**
 - Particularly, how we can reuse, recycle and compost more waste.
- **To think about where things will be going in the future, including the impacts of:**
 - Climate targets
 - The recession
 - Increased pressure for resource efficiency
- **To ask questions**
 - And get answers....



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References

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