

REPORT FROM: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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RESOURCES AND WASTE STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Committee with an overview of the contents of the DEFRA Resources and Waste Strategy that was released on the 18th December 2018 and the subsequent consultations released on 18th February 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That delegated authority for the Corporate Director in consultation with the Council's representative on the Lancashire Waste Partnership to provide responses to the consultation papers.
2. That further reports be submitted as appropriate.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that Officers and Members are fully briefed on the Resources and Waste Strategy and its potential impacts and consultation proposals on the Council.

Introduction

This report outlines the contents of the DEFRA Resources and Waste Strategy that was released on the 18th December 2018.

The Strategy contains some significant changes in waste policy across the UK that will have some fundamental impacts on waste management services here in Lancashire and more locally in Pendle. A summary of the Strategy contents is at Appendix 1.

Consultation documents covering some of the main strategy aims were released on the 18th February and run for 12 weeks (closing on the 13th May). These are: consistency of collection, deposit return schemes, producer responsibility for packaging and a plastic packaging tax.

Consultations

The consultations that were launched potentially have a major impact on the way we collect waste for recycling, and potentially we may have to make some significant service changes.

Consistent recycling collections

This consultation is concerned with having consistent collections of recycling to improve the quantity and quality of recycled municipal waste. It directly impacts on waste collections and is looking at proposals for all waste collection authorities to:

- collect the same core set of dry recyclable materials from households – basically what we collect now plus plastic pots, tubs and trays
- have separate weekly food waste collections from households

Other measures that are also contained within the consultation are:

- whether waste collection authorities should provide a free garden waste collection service
- how to achieve greater separation of dry materials in collections, especially paper and glass to improve the quality of dry recyclables collected from households
- whether statutory guidance on minimum service standards for waste and recycling services should be introduced
- how to develop non-binding performance indicators to support authorities to deliver high quality and quantity in recycling and waste management
- how to support joint working between authorities on waste; alternatives to weight-based targets; and having standardised bin colours for waste and recycling

It is hoped that the measures in this consultation and the others will help achieve a recycling rate of 65% by 2035.

Subject to the outcome of this consultation there will be a further consultation in late 2019 or early 2020 on regulatory changes to implement these measures and supporting guidance.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

This consultation seeks views on proposals to introduce a DRS for drinks containers (cans, plastic bottles and glass bottles). It refers solely to deposit return schemes (for drinks containers explicitly) and not reward and return schemes. In other words a system where you pay an upfront deposit where you must return the container to redeem the deposit.

The Government is seeking views on two options for how the DRS could work if introduced. The first option, known as the 'all-in' model, would target a large amount of drinks containers placed on the market, irrespective of size. The second option, known as the 'on-the-go' model, would cover only drinks containers less than 750ml in size and sold in single format containers i.e. those drinks usually sold for consumption outside of the home (i.e. 'on-the-go').

The consultation states that *'The UK government will ensure that local authorities in England are adequately resourced to meet new net costs arising from policies in this consultation.'*

Extended producer responsibility for packaging

New plans set out by Government will see the costs of recycling borne by those that produce packaging waste and place it on the market.

Currently, packaging producers pay only around 10 per cent of the cost of dealing with packaging waste. By increasing that to cover the full amount, government will incentivise producers to think carefully about using less packaging, and to switch to using packaging that is easier to recycle.

Following the overhaul of the packaging regulations, the government will explore extended producer responsibility schemes for items that can be harder or costly to recycle. As well as improving existing schemes for cars, electrical goods and batteries, this could include things such

as textiles, fishing gear, vehicle tyres, certain materials from construction and demolition, and bulky waste such as mattresses, furniture and carpets.

Plastic Packaging Tax Consultation

The Government is planning to tax plastic packaging that contains less than 30% recycled material to stimulate end markets for plastic and promote better design of packaging.

General comment

It will be apparent that the first two consultations are of most immediate concern to councils. All are very detailed. For example the consistency consultation has 66 questions. The consultations are accompanied by detailed impact assessment.

Lancashire Waste Partnership (LWP)

The LWP held an extra ordinary meeting on the 13th February. At the time of the meeting there was no information available on the release dates for the consultation documents and therefore only general discussion could be held in relation to the possible questions being asked and the timings for responses.

Members present at the meeting requested that Officers work through the Resources and Waste Strategy with a view to each authority identifying funding and infrastructure requirements. The information would be presented at the next LWP meeting to be held on the 14th March in order to give Members some indication of the costs involved both at County and District levels.

Key areas for the Lancashire Waste Partnership to consider:

- The introduction of separate weekly food waste collections by 2023.
- Potential changes to how recyclable material is kerbside presented/collected.
- Effect that a DRS, ban on Single Use Plastics etc. will have on material volume/income.
- Potential stipulations on charging, for garden waste, and materials at HWRCs.
- Pressure to enhance two tier working arrangements

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The Strategy and the consultations potentially have very significant policy implications for what is one of the Council's major services though these will only become clearer when Government presents its responses to the consultations. Further reports will be presented at the appropriate time.

Financial: There are potentially significant costs involved in changing our collection service to the consistency models proposed, removing charges for garden waste and the establishment of a deposit return scheme. Initial work on these will be done via the LWP exercise referred to above.

Legal: None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management: None arising directly from the report.

Health and Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Sustainability: None arising directly from the report

Community Safety: None arising directly from the report

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from the report

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 –Resources and Waste Strategy Briefing Note

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS –

Strategy and Consultations – www.gov.uk

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/resource-and-waste-and-plastic-packaging-tax-consu-1>

Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections in England:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/consultation-on-consistency-in-household-and-busin>

Reforming the Packaging Producer Responsibility System:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/consultation-on-reforming-the-uk-packaging-produce>

Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environment/introducing-a-deposit-return-scheme>

Appendix 1 – Resources and Waste Strategy Briefing Note

The Strategy contains some significant changes in waste policy across the UK that will have some fundamental impacts on local authority operations. It also looks to enact some of the requirements of the EU Circular Economy Package that the UK has signed up to and agreed to implement in full.

Summary of Main Points

Extended Producer Responsibility - EPR (Chapter One)

- Invoke the ‘polluter pays’ principle and extending producer responsibility for packaging, ensuring that producers pay the full net costs of managing packaging waste at end of life.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of legislation designed to minimise packaging and encourage design for greater reuse and recycling.
- Consult on introducing EPR for packaging based around certain principles.
- Review of Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations to drive minimisation of packaging.
- Consult (by 2021) on EPR for WEEE, Batteries and ELV.
- Consult on EPR (by 2025) for 5 waste streams including: textiles, bulky waste, tyres

Deposit Return Schemes - DRS (Chapter Two)

- Consult on introducing a DRS scheme for single-use drinks containers.
- Consider how to reduce the environmental impacts of disposable cups

Consistent Collections (Chapter Three)

- Consult on legislation to allow Government to specify a core set of materials to be collected by all local authorities and waste operators. Timings for introduction will be subject to discussions at spending review.
- Consult on which materials should comprise this core set, and which collection systems would be most effective at preserving material quality. The consultation will be carried out in parallel with the consultation on reforms to the existing packaging waste regulations
- Consult on introducing non-binding performance indicators for the quantity of materials collected for recycling and minimum service standards for recycling
- Potentially legislate for mandatory separate collections for business.
- Consult on legislation to require weekly separate food waste collections for all householders and appropriate businesses (from 2023).
- Consider whether householders with gardens should have access to free garden waste collections.
- Possible amendment of waste regulations so that HWRCs perform a more effective role in resource efficiency and explore further measures, such as setting reuse targets for local authorities, requiring them to set their own targets, or requiring reporting to encourage provision of reuse facilities. (contained in chapter two)

- Review Controlled Waste Regulations and consult on amending them in relation to HWRC regarding charging and opening hours, with possible minimum service standards for HWRCs being set.

The strategy states that any new statutory responsibilities for local government would be subject to an assessment of new burdens

Waste Crime (Chapter Four)

- Consult on reform of regulations for duty of care, carrier/broker/dealers, hazardous waste, and international waste shipments.
- Guidance on use of FPNs that come into force on 7 January for household duty of care.
- Launch of a web-based fly-tipping toolkit hosted by the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group.
- Consult on mandatory use of electronic waste transfer details.

Food Waste (Chapter Five)

- Consult on mandatory food waste reporting, targets and distribution by food businesses.
- Publish a new food surplus and waste hierarchy as statutory guidance.
- Hospitality and public sectors need to produce food waste strategies.
- A of review current recommendations on date labelling in 2019.
- Production of guidance for retailers on whether to sell fresh produce loose or packaged.

Plastics

- HMT to consult on a tax on plastic packaging not containing at least 30% recycled content and increasing the plastic carrier bag charge to 10p and extending it to small shops.
- Consult on banning the most problematic plastic products (e.g. straws, cotton buds, stirrers).
- Improve the regulation of waste movements, both domestic and for exports, including plastics.
- Launch a call for evidence on standards for bio-based and biodegradable plastics.
- Investing in R&D to tackle plastics.

Other proposals relevant to local authorities:

- Two-tier working - review the effectiveness of current arrangements for local authority waste management. (this is not reorganisation or a move to unitaries)
- Recycling Credits - two tier cost sharing will be reviewed subject to how packaging reform unfolds.
- Consideration of a UK eco-design mechanism to drive up product standards for the most resource intensive product groups.
- Possibility of a UK Ecolabel post EU exit.
- Promote longer lifetime products through guarantees, extended warranties, and better disclosure.
- Produce guidance on what to do with data-rich SMART devices at end-of-life.
- Drive progress in local authorities (esp. urban ones), through joint working and reviews of HWRCs and the regulatory system.
- Improve waste infrastructure.
- Make it easier to achieve 'end of waste' status.
- Periodic reviews of Waste Data Flow so it continues to be user friendly.

Information courtesy of LARAC