

Resource and Waste Strategy (Published in December 2018)

Key Strategic Aims:

- To work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025
- To work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030
- To eliminate avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan
- To double resource productivity by 2050
- To eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050

Main Policy Areas:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging, ensuring that producers pay the full net costs
- Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for single-use drinks containers
- Core set of consistent materials to be collected by all local authorities and waste operators and which collection systems would be most effective at preserving material quality
- Weekly separate food waste collections for all householders and appropriate businesses
- Consider whether householders with gardens should have access to free garden waste collections.
- 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.
- Two-tier working - review the effectiveness of current arrangements for local authority waste management.
- Recycling Credits - two tier cost sharing will be reviewed subject to packaging reform.

Environment Bill

This is the primary “over-arching” legislation needed for the Strategy proposals. There will be secondary legislation affecting councils approximately one year after this becomes law. There will be consultations on the secondary legislation next year (delayed from 2020).

The Bill sets out four priority areas: Air quality, Water, Biodiversity and Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction.

Chapter three, part three, sections 47 to 68 contain the parts of the Bill covering Waste and Resource Efficiency. The Bill is currently in the Committee stage in the house of Commons. The Committee are meeting every Tuesday and Thursday to debate the Bill and are currently debating the waste sections of the Bill at the moment.

The indications are that the Bill will complete the Committee stage by Christmas and be passed by the House of Commons and then be debated in the House of Lords in the New Year.

We are not expecting the Government to accept any amendments tabled during this stage of the Bills progress.

Consultations 2019

Following the publication of the Resource and Waste Strategy in December 2018 the Government ran three consultations between February and May 2019 on three key policy areas within the Strategy:

- Consistent Collections
- Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)
- Extended Producer Responsibility on Packaging (EPR)

LARAC, individual local authorities and other industry organisations put in extensive responses to these consultations.

Based on the consultation responses received, the Government outlined their thinking going forward in Autumn 2019:

For consistent collections:

Given the strong support for greater consistency, the government will seek to amend legislation to require all English local authorities to collect at least the following dry materials from 2023:

- *glass bottles and containers – including drinks bottles, condiment bottles, jars*
- *paper and card – including newspaper, cardboard packaging, writing paper*
- *plastic bottles – including clear drinks containers, HDPE (milk containers), detergent, shampoo and cleaning products*
- *plastic pots tubs and trays*
- *steel and aluminium tins and cans*

Given the support for separate food waste collection government will legislate to ensure that every local authority provides householders with a separate food waste collection.

We will give further consideration to the costs and benefits of this measures before making a final decision on whether garden waste collections should be free of charge, or whether charging should be a matter for local decision making.

We will work with the sector to ensure suitable guidance is provided on the application of separate collection provisions to achieve high quality recycling.

Whilst there are clear benefits to having standardised bin colours and there is support for this, it is also clear that there are practical concerns about implementation and whether this should be mandated or not. We will give this further consideration as we develop the next steps on consistency.

Government will work with local authorities and other stakeholders to prepare statutory guidance on minimum service standards for waste and recycling. We will use comments made during this consultation to inform the content of the guidance, as well as discussions with the sector

Given the strong support in the consultation for having businesses segregate dry materials to be recycled we will seek to amend legislation so that businesses must make arrangements to separate recyclable waste from residual waste.

For DRS:

Given both the requirement to meet higher collection targets and the analysis of consultation responses, we are minded to introduce a DRS for drinks containers in England and Wales from 2023.

The introduction of a DRS is subject to receiving additional evidence and carrying out further analysis on the costs and benefits of such a scheme.

Following the second consultation, we would introduce a DRS from 2023.

For EPR:

We intend to progress our policy proposals and introduce an extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging in 2023.

We will take primary powers in the Environment Bill to enable us to implement new extended producer responsibility (EPR) systems. We will then bring forward our detailed proposals on the specific nature of an EPR system for packaging and associated secondary legislation for consultation in 2020.

Work in 2020

In January 2020 DEFRA started to engage industry ahead of a second round of consultations on the three key policy areas. The Covid-19 outbreak meant these meetings were put on hold, then they restarted as video meetings in the summer. Originally Defra had planned to issue the second round of consultations in the summer or autumn of 2020.

LARAC has had strong representation at these meetings. LARAC is one of only two local authority organisations on a cross cutting group set up by DEFRA (the other is the LGA). LARAC has also been involved in numerous meetings on each individual policy area. So far LARAC has attended 48 stakeholder meetings related to the consultations.

The meetings will help inform DEFRA views on the content of the second round of consultations. The consultations are in the process of being drafted and will then need to go through the sign off process within Government – this can often be a time-consuming process.

Latest indications are that the consultations will be released in spring next year, possibly early March 2021. Despite the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, DEFRA are still indicating that any new regulations would take effect from 2023.

Update provided to LWP by LARAC, Nov 2020. If this paper is circulated further, please state it originated from LARAC.