

Terms of Reference for a Review of Waste Policies

Why?

- The Government is committed to working towards a 'zero waste' economy.
- Ensuring value for money is essential across everything that we do in order to enable central and local government need to tackle the fiscal deficit.
- Sustainable waste management, including waste prevention, is a necessity in order to protect the environment including due to climate change and to preserve natural resources.
- One of the Government's key priorities is to decentralise decision-making powers on matters that affect local communities to local authorities and to communities themselves, and for them to be accountable for those decisions.
- Resource efficiency and management, including the reduction and more sustainable management of waste, as well as contributing to the green economy, provides valuable bottom-line savings to hard-pressed businesses and households.
- Energy recovered from biodegradable wastes contributes to the UK's renewable energy targets and wider climate change goals.

What?

To ensure that policies and interventions are best placed to meet these challenges, the Government is undertaking a fundamental Review of Waste Policies. This will look at all aspects of waste policy and delivery in England including household and business waste and recycling collection arrangements. Its overarching aim will be to ensure that we are taking the right steps towards a 'zero waste' economy, setting new goals for 2014, 2020 and beyond.

As part of this review, the Government will consider:

- How best Government, informed by whole life-cycle thinking, can incentivise the delivery of the waste hierarchy (prevention > preparing for re-use > recycling > recovery > disposal), in particular in the light of the current fiscal constraints, so that we:
 1. do more on waste prevention and reuse – stopping waste at its source;
 2. continue to increase recycling rates, when it's the best option, through incentivising and making it easier for both households and businesses to take action;
 3. maximize the cost-effective generation of renewable energy from residual waste; and
 4. move towards zero waste to landfill.

In considering these outcomes, learning from international and domestic best practice, the review will look at all waste related policies including, but not limited to:

1. How better waste management can help to preserve natural resources and protect the environment at home and abroad.
2. How to maximise the contribution that waste management in England can make to UK energy and climate change goals, both renewable energy targets and the long term goals for greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2050.
3. The need for waste evidence, including the necessary data to consider likely waste volumes and characteristics in the future.
4. Actions to ensure the cost-effective contribution waste management in England can make to the green economy is maximised, including the impact on the finances of both households and businesses, on job creation and on green industries themselves.
5. Our future infrastructure needs, including energy from waste and anaerobic digestion capacity and the role of planning including to enable community ownership of waste infrastructure.
6. How potential benefits can be gained from better alignment of policies dealing with business and household waste.
7. The role of the public sector leadership in terms of waste management, including procurement.
8. The role of product policy in waste prevention.
9. How voluntary Responsibility Deals with businesses can play a role in waste reduction and more efficient use of resources.
10. The role of regulation and enforcement in waste management, including the role of standards, ensuring we continue to protect the environment and human health whilst reducing burdens on business, in particular small businesses, where possible.
11. How best to reduce fly tipping and other forms of illegal waste disposal.
12. How best to understand and encourage or incentivise individuals, businesses and communities to produce less waste and recycle more.
13. How to make the best use of the skills and knowledge of private sector, the third sector and civil society and local communities.
14. Whether greater emphasis should be placed by Government on using recyclable/recycled materials in manufacturing, construction and production.
15. How government can work with local councils to increase the frequency and quality of rubbish collections and make it easier to recycle, to tackle measures which encourage councils specifically to cut the scope of collections; and to address public concerns over the civil liberty aspects of inappropriate enforcement practices associated with household collections.
16. The means of decentralising power and responsibility for some services to local communities.
17. How to ensure the right contribution of energy from waste, including delivery of a step change in generation from anaerobic digestion.
18. How best to further reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, so that in future landfill is used only for those wastes for which no better use is practicable.

This is a review of waste policies in England. Some of these policies originate from, or are influenced by relevant EU or international legislation, for example the Landfill

Directive or the revised Waste Framework Directive. This review will work within the context of the current state of EU and international law. However, the review may influence the Government's approach to implementation of our legal obligations and future negotiations.

Waste is a devolved matter, and in other parts of the United Kingdom is the responsibility of the devolved administrations. Defra keeps in close touch with the devolved administrations on matters of mutual interest, including EU negotiation and transposition. The review will consider whether lessons can be learned from experience in other parts of the UK.

Waste and related fiscal interventions are a separate matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but Treasury will be closely associated with the Review to ensure coherence.

How?

Defra as the Department responsible for waste policy will lead the review, working closely with other Departments, including DECC which leads on energy and climate change policy, CLG which leads on local government, communities and planning and BIS which leads on low carbon business opportunities, as well as the devolved administrations who lead on waste policy in their countries.

Defra will also be seeking the widest possible input into this review from interested parties starting with businesses, householders and local communities and also including:

- public bodies, including the Environment Agency, LGA, Local Authorities, Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPS), WRAP;
- private suppliers and funders of waste services and waste infrastructure;
- representatives from business and commerce;
- representatives of consumers, environmental NGOS and the voluntary and community sector, and academic and professional bodies; and

When?

The Government intends to start the review immediately and is issuing a call for evidence in July 2010. The intention is to produce preliminary findings by Spring 2011.