

Local Government Association briefing Resources and Waste Strategy summary

20 December 2018



Summary

The Government published its [Resources and Waste Strategy for England](#) on 18 December 2018. The Strategy sets out how the country will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy.

This briefing provides a summary of the Strategy, with a specific focus on those elements which are most likely to directly impact upon local government. The key concepts within the strategy are subject to consultation which is likely to take place from January 2019 onwards.

The LGA will be responding to the consultations and will be engaging with local government throughout the consultation period. If you would like any further information or want to share any views with us please contact Sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk

Key Points for Local Government

*“Government recognises the financial pressures on local authorities. They will therefore receive additional resource to meet new net costs arising from the policies set out in this Strategy once implemented. This includes both net up front transition costs and net ongoing operational costs”
Resources and Waste Strategy page 18*

Chapter 3 – Recovering Resources and Managing Waste is the section which predominantly covers services provided by local government. The key issues outlined are:

- A long term ambition to move away from weight-based recycling targets
- The government is seeking comprehensive and frequent waste collection systems that capture as much material as possible and ensure high quality materials for reprocessing
- Improving recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of dry recyclable materials is collected from all households and businesses. The government will review the effectiveness of current arrangements for reporting of quality and for determining when separate collection is necessary to achieve high quality. Subject to consultation the government will specify a core set of materials to be collected by local authorities.

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- Timings for introduction will be subject to discussions at spending review. Government will also consult on which collection systems would be most effective at preserving material quality
- Consulting on whether introducing non-binding performance indicators for the quantity of materials collected for recycling and minimum service standards for recycling will support higher levels of recycling
- Ensuring businesses present recycling and food waste separately from residual waste for collection
- Consultation on weekly separate food waste collections – new statutory responsibilities for local government would be subject to an assessment of new burdens.
- Subject to consultation the government aims to have legislation in place for food waste by 2023
- The consultation will also explore whether households should have access to free garden waste collections – new duties will be assessed to account for new burdens, and funded appropriately
- Improve urban recycling rates, working with businesses and local authorities
- Looking at how to improve working arrangements and performance between local authorities, especially in two-tier areas – the government wants to look at reviewing the effectiveness of current arrangements for local authority waste management and joint working
- Investigating amending the recycling credit system used by two-tier authorities
- Reviewing the Controlled Waste Regulations and Household Waste Recycling Centres to ensure that they are delivering value for money
- Driving greater efficiency of Energy from Waste (EfW) plants by encouraging use of the heat the plants produce
- Continue to monitor England’s waste infrastructure capacity and associated infrastructure requirements, intervening where necessary
- Should wider policies not deliver the Government’s waste ambitions in the long term, the government will consider the introduction of a tax on the incineration of waste
- The government continues to welcome further market investment in residual waste treatment infrastructure
- Exploring new ways to ease the environmental impacts of legacy landfill sites
- Encouraging waste producers and managers to implement the waste hierarchy in respect to hazardous waste

Key Local Government Milestones within the strategy

	Activity
Early 2019	Consultation ensuring a consistent set of recyclable materials is collected from all households and businesses (early 2019)
	Consultation introducing DRS (early 2019)
	Consultation on extended producer responsibility for packaging (early 2019)
	Appointment of a food waste champion (early 2019)
Mid 2019	Consultation on food waste reporting (mid 2019)
	Transposition of the Circular Economy Package

2020	50% recycling rate for household waste
2021	Legislation introduced for packaging reform
2023	Roll-out of a deposit return scheme
	Extended producer responsibility for packaging comes into force
	Legislation for mandatory separate food waste collections
2030	75% recycling rate for packaging
2035	65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste
	Municipal waste to landfill 10% or less

The key messages from the other chapters are summarised below:

Strategic Framework

The strategy has two overarching objectives:

1. To maximise the value of resource use and
2. To minimise waste and its impact on the environment

The strategy will deliver five strategic ambitions:

1. All plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025
2. Eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030
3. Eliminate avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan
4. Double resource productivity by 2050
5. Eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050

Chapter 1: Sustainable Production

In the first stage of the product lifecycle products need to be designed to use less material and achieve greater circularity. This will be achieved by:

Invoking 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

- Subject to consultation end of life may include-collection, recycling, disposal, reduction of littering and fly-tipping, communications, data collection and reporting, compliance monitoring and enforcement
- Collection of a nationally agreed set of packaging materials for recycling, adoption of minimum service standards and delivery of good quality recycle
- Reviewing the effectiveness of legislation designed to minimise packaging and encourage design for greater reuse and recycling
- EPR will potentially be harnessed for other waste streams such as textiles, bulky waste, construction/demolition materials, vehicle tyres and fishing gear
- Stimulating demand for recycled plastic by introducing a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled plastic

- Resource efficient distribution including incentivising reverse logistics and back-hauling of packaging waste

Chapter 2: Helping Consumers Take More Considered Action

A range of policies to help consumers identify and access more sustainable products, and extend the lives of them when they do:

- Incentivise consumers to purchase sustainably
- Provide consumers with better information on the sustainability of their purchases
- Ban plastic products where there is a clear case for it and alternatives exist
- Address barriers to reuse
- Amend waste regulations so that Household Waste Recycling Centres perform a more effective role in resource efficiency, for example by clarifying the duty as to re-use. We will explore further measures such as setting reuse targets for local authorities or requiring reporting to encourage provision of reuse facilities.
- Support the market for remanufactured goods
- Supporting large-scale reuse and repair through national planning policy
- Encourage appropriate disposal of used products
- Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for single use drinks containers, subject to consultation
- Developing measures to reduce the environmental impacts of disposable cups
- More sustainable government procurement – promotion of ‘Balanced Scorecard’ across the public sector

Chapter 3: Recovering Resources and Managing Waste

(see above)

Chapter 4: Tackling Waste Crime

There has been an increase in waste crime. The government’s ambition is to eliminate crime and poor performance in the waste sector:

- Improve the transportation, management and description of waste by reforming existing regulations
- Strengthen intelligence sharing and engagement to tackle illegal activity –including create a fly tipping tool kit and encouraging local authorities to set up and run effective fly tipping partnerships
- Prevent illegal activity being hidden through waste exemptions by reforming the existing regime
- Mandate the digital recording of waste movements, subject to consultation
- Create a Joint Unit for Waste Crime
- Toughen penalties for waste criminals – helping local authorities improve the quality of cases
- Increase awareness of waste regulations and publicise positive work of enforcement bodies as they tackle waste crime – supporting local authorities to increase householders awareness of their duty of care

Chapter 5: Enough is Enough – Cutting Down on Food Waste

This chapter focuses on working with businesses, charities and citizens to focus on how we create less food waste:

- Reduce food waste through a £15 million pilot fund
- Consult on annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses
- Consult on legal powers to introduce mandatory targets for food waste prevention
- Publish a new food surplus and waste hierarchy
- Promote awareness of the issue by appointing a new Food Surplus and Waste Champion
- Support cross sector collaboration through the Courtauld 2025 agreement

Chapter 6: Global Britain – International Leadership

The UK recognises the importance of international coordinated action to address environmental issues:

- The government aims to promote the goals of the Resources and Waste Strategy internationally
- Collaborate to solve global waste issues, beginning with a focus on marine plastics and waste management in developing countries
- Improve the quality of plastics exported for recycling through the Basel and Stockholm Conventions
- Address international barriers to the circular economy
- Improving UK and global resource security

Chapter 7: Research and Innovation

Innovation will help deliver new, cleaner technologies at lower cost, create jobs and increase the competitiveness of UK companies. The government wants to create the right policy environment for innovation to flourish:

- Support further investment and innovation in resource efficiency, working with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) on Areas of Research Interest
- Launch a call for evidence on the development of standards for bio-based and biodegradable plastics. Need to ensure these are fully recyclable
- Provide Government funding for innovation and seek ways to support further investment in resource efficient technologies, including through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund
- Support the Waste and Resources Action Programme
- Encourage innovative waste treatment technologies that create transport fuels through the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO)

Chapter 8: Measuring progress – data, monitoring and evaluation

The government wants robust, effective and transparent systems to collect and report data, to enable everyone to reap the benefits of a move to a more circular economy:

- The government will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to develop a shared vision and bold new approach to data on resources and waste
- Move away from weight-based targets and reporting towards impact-based targets and reporting focusing initially on carbon and natural capital accounting
- Moving away from a focus on waste towards a focus on resources
- Maintaining coverage and quality of data on local authority collected waste and improving data collection to meet future needs
- Monitoring progress against the Strategy's objectives using a suite of indicators