

Sarah Hodges, Waste Strategy Branch
Department for Environment and Sustainable
Development
Welsh Government
3rd Floor, South Wing
Cathays Park, Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

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Response to the Waste Prevention Programme Consultation

General Observations

From 1st April Natural Resources Wales brought together the work of the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales, as well as some functions of Welsh Government. Our purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, used and enhanced, now and in the future. Natural Resources Wales is supportive of the actions detailed in the Waste Prevention Programme.

There will be an ongoing need to monitor waste trends in Wales. We hold a number of different waste data sets which may potentially be used in a monitoring role. There may also be a need to periodically collect waste arisings data from the commercial and industrial sectors in Wales. Information on waste generation and management in Wales is beyond what we would normally collect as a waste regulator. We have previously conducted waste arisings surveys on behalf of Welsh Government and if the intension is for Natural Resources Wales to undertake future surveys, then early engagement with us would prove helpful.

Questions about Household Waste

Consultation Question HW1:

We throw away a lot of food waste each year. It accounts for around a fifth of all household waste in Wales. An average household throws out £480 worth of food each year, and it rises to £680 for households with children. Would you be interested in knowing more about reducing your food waste? We need to communicate with everyone about how they can reduce their food waste too. What do you think are the best ways for us to do that? For example, local newspapers, from a person you know in your community, through clubs such as sports clubs.

You may wish for consideration to be given for communication on food waste in a household situation to be undertaken by local authorities. This may be an option as they have the duty to collect wastes produced by households and requirements to reduce biodegradable wastes to landfill through the Landfill Allowances Scheme (Wales) Regulations 2004. They also have an additional

Ffôn/Tel 01248 484151

Ffacs/Fax 01248 670561

Ebost/Email gareth.e.lewis@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

www.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Llwyn Brain, Ffordd Penlan, Parc Menai, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4DE

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role to increase the amount of wastes recycled including food wastes through composting or anaerobic digestion under The Recycling, Preparation for Reuse and Composting Targets (Monitoring and Penalties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. Councils use local media already for their own publications to engage with their residents and also directly through their waste collection service. Consistent branding and messages such as those from the 'Love Food, Hate Waste' campaign has proven effective previously. An organisation such as WRAP or Waste Awareness Wales could play a useful role in supporting local authorities on this. Use of local champions could also reinforce the message.

Welsh Government may wish to consider encouraging this further as the Councils may benefit from financial savings if householders minimised the quantity of wastes they produce. This could also Local Authorities could also look at their waste service provision and participation uptake. by encouraging source separation of food waste and separate collection (i.e. not mixed with green waste).

Consultation Question HW2:

There are lots of ways we can reduce how much waste we all create. It isn't just about recycling, there are lots of other ways such as:

- *Thinking about the packaging we buy when we're shopping.*
- *Only buying as much food as we really need.*
- *Repairing things or getting things serviced, rather than just throwing them away.*
- *When we no longer want something, we can pass it onto someone else, or sell them.*

Would you be interested in knowing more about the ways you can reduce your waste? How can we let you and others know about the actions they can take? Can you suggest any ways we can communicate with others to make them more aware?

Targeting information at the places where people in Wales do their shopping, in particular through supermarkets and other retail outlets may promote the waste reduction and reuse message. Further promotion of opportunities for passing on goods for reuse (by local authorities as above) and by the charity sector should also increase uptake.

It is often very difficult to get electrical goods repaired due to a shortage of skilled repair workers and the high cost of repair versus buying a replacement. Electrical goods are not generally manufactured with repair or longevity in mind. Within the context of the producer responsibility regime, it may be possible to introduce changes to encourage this, especially given the relatively low proportion of electrical goods that are consumed or that are manufactured in Wales.

Consultation Question HW3:

Packaging serves an important purpose in protecting goods and ensuring that they are delivered in good condition, but sometimes consumers feel that goods are over-packaged; and packaging also

comes in a mixture of materials such as plastic, cardboard, aluminium, which can be difficult to separate and dispose of properly.

Have you got any ideas about how we can tackle this? What would help you do more to reduce this type of waste?

The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations is the legislative basis for ensuring the minimum necessary amount of packaging is used. This is enforced by local authority Trading Standards department, but is not well known by the public. Better public awareness of the requirements of these regulations may result in outcomes that can raise the profile of this issue.

One of the most difficult area of packaging to deal with is the foil lined plastic pouches used for pet food, soups, and sauces and typically replacing tins or glass jars. Whilst this results in reduced packaging waste quantities for the packers and distributors, which therefore reduces the amount of obligation under the packaging producer responsibility regulations, such waste prevention results in packaging that is not recyclable. We are not aware of life cycle assessment studies to justify this move (although it is possible that the reduced weight delivers a greater environmental outcome in terms of reduced transport emissions). Such evidence when available, could be considered to see if there is a mechanism for refining refine the producer responsibility regime and discourage the use of materials that are not recyclable. It should also be noted that whilst the use of composite packaging can create problems when trying to identify recycling options, often this packaging is designed this way to ensure that products reach market in good condition, which prevents waste from being generated. Care should be made not to discourage the use of composite packaging where it has a valid purpose.

Questions about Industrial and Commercial Waste

Consultation Question IC1:

The proposed waste prevention targets for the industrial and commercial waste streams are:

A general reduction of 1.4% every year to 2050 based on 2006/7 baseline for industrial waste, with specific targets for the individual priority sectors

- *Manufacture of basic metal and metal products*
- *Manufacture of paper and paper products*
- *Manufacture of chemicals, chemical products, pharmaceuticals.*
- *Food manufacture.*

A reduction of 1.2% every year to 2050 based on 2006/7 baseline for commercial waste.

An implementation plan will be developed to delivery against these targets.

Do you agree with the targets that are proposed? Please give your reasons.

What targets should be proposed for the priority industry sectors? Please give your reasons.

We agree with the proposals to implement waste reduction targets across all industrial and commercial wastes. It is difficult to provide specific targets for sectors without a detailed

Ffôn/Tel 01248 484151

Ffacs/Fax 01248 670561

Ebost/Email gareth.e.lewis@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

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understanding of the potential for the individual industrial plants. This level of detail is not presented in the sector plan, so we feel general targets are adequate for the purpose of the plan. However the achievability of these targets is an area that requires further examination.

The priority sectors you have identified all have sites within them which are regulated by Natural Resources Wales, under the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR). The EPR transpose the requirements of the Industrial Emissions Directive into UK law. The Industrial Emissions Directive requires all listed activities to take steps to prevent the generation of waste in accordance with Directive 2008/98/EC (revised Waste Framework Directive). This requirement has been introduced via an EPR permit condition for those sites within scope.

Environment Agency Wales have undertaken some Resource Efficiency work with the permitted sector previously in 2008-2010. Whilst there were clear opportunities for preventing waste in certain sectors, some industries reported back that many of the opportunities for reducing waste had been addressed, and that their processes were as efficient as current technology allowed. It may therefore be prudent for Welsh Government to engage with the priority industries to ensure that any targets set are achievable.

We have been working with your officers to review how compliance with that permit condition is delivered. Where potential improvements have been identified, we will look to implement them as soon as possible. However, the requirements of the IED do not apply to all businesses across the priority sectors. Natural Resources Wales has limited influence on those sites operating below the IED thresholds. These may be subject to regulation by local authorities or out of scope of regulation altogether.

The focus on eco-design, resource efficient business models and green procurement and supply chains appear to be the appropriate areas, but there is no indication of how getting general take up of these principles by industry and commerce will be achieved.

Consultation Question IC2:

We have described the priority business sectors and areas for action.

(a) Do you agree with these priorities? Please give your reasons.

(b) Is there anything else that we should consider a priority? Why is it important?

(c) Do you agree with our proposed approach of voluntary action in the first instance, with mandatory measures under review in the longer term? Please give your reasons.

There are clearly potential benefits to be made with SME's in Wales. The 2007 Commercial and Industrial waste arisings survey in Wales, managed by Environment Agency Wales reported that 57% of industrial waste and 51% commercial waste produced by companies employing up to 20 people, was managed via landfill.

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Natural Resources Wales are managing the latest arising survey for waste arisings in 2012. This is due to report in April 2014 and will provide a more up to date picture. Consideration should be given to putting waste surveys of industry and commerce on a statutory basis. This is the case in Scotland where a mandatory annual survey is undertaken through a postal survey. Currently waste arisings surveys in Wales are undertaken on a voluntary basis and are carried out using telephone surveys and site visits to ensure a representative sample is achieved. A statutory basis for these surveys would facilitate a more efficient data collection e.g. via postal survey or electronic return. Legacy bodies of NRW have had interaction with SME's on waste issues and the accommodation and food sector but only if they fall within scope of EPR. We may be able to assist Welsh Government in delivery with the sectors we regulate.

Consultation Question IC3:

It is proposed that the Welsh Government and retailers will build on the success of the introduction of carrier bag charge and UK wide action through the Courtauld Commitment and other initiatives, leading to retailers taking forward actions on:

- *Improving the environmental impact of their product portfolio by influencing growers, processors, manufacturers and distributors within Wales and internationally.*
- *Reducing the waste generated through its own activities.*
- *Supporting national and local initiatives such as food redistribution schemes.*
- *Providing clear information to consumers about the environmental performance of their products.*
- *Providing information and guidance on practical steps that consumers can take to reduce the impact of their products during use and at end of life.*

What further actions and initiatives can be taken to enhance our current programme of work, and to support the actions above?

We fully support these and any other measures which prevent waste at the point of production.

Consultation Question IC4:

How can the Welsh Government encourage business engagement in eco-innovation?

We believe that a number of measures which can be introduced to drive eco-innovation. Welsh Government could introduce mandatory requirements to drive eco innovation and waste prevention. Article 8 of the revised Waste Framework Directive allows member states to introduce extended producer responsibility requirements, either through legislative or non-legislative routes. Other producer responsibility schemes in the UK (for Packaging, End of Life Vehicles, Waste Electronics and Electrical Equipment and Batteries) have resulted in greater recycling rates and have also driven better design to reduce waste.

The requirements of the Eco Design Directives can also be considered. Adopting eco-innovation principles as a prerequisite for any government financial support should be considered.

Consultation Question IC5:

A review of the UK wide and international evidence on the waste prevention barriers and measures specific to your sector can be found at:

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=17499>

Do you agree with this evidence for your sector in Wales? If not, why not?

We agree that the range of evidence available does provide information for most sectors.

Consultation question IC6:

The Welsh Government is looking at how business attitudes and behaviours can be influenced so that businesses can become more resource efficient. We are using a competency framework approach to do this.

Do you agree that a competency approach is useful to benchmark performance and underpin any interventions? If not, why not?

Do you agree that a competency framework is a useful approach to underpin and target a potential future business support programme for SMEs in Wales? If not, why not?

Some further detail on how the competency framework will be used to help drive waste prevention across all business spectrums would be helpful. It will provide a useful tool for those companies prepared to invest time in waste prevention, but it may not reach those companies who are harder to engage with. In our experience, the initiatives which result in resource efficiency in businesses in Wales are those where a financial saving was anticipated and achieved. Often there are occasions where an associated financial saving is not realised, so in these cases a regulatory requirement may be needed.

The Environment Agency developed a competency based assessment tool for resource efficiency. This system was trialled in 2012 to complement the metric based Resource Efficiency Physical Index (REPI) reporting. Natural Resources Wales would be happy to share the results of this trial with Welsh Government. It should be noted however that this system was developed for use in the permitted sector to help fulfil regulatory requirements. The majority of companies within the permitted sector are bigger than SMEs, and we would expect them to have systems in place to manage waste and resources.

Ffôn/Tel 01248 484151

Ffacs/Fax 01248 670561

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Questions about Construction and Demolition Waste

Consultation Question CD1:

(a) Do you agree with the outline programme on construction and demolition waste? Please give your reasons.

(b) Should anything else be included in the programme? Please explain what, and the benefits it would bring.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the outline programme for the Construction and Demolition sector as the information on the proposals included is limited. However, we agree with the outline actions identified in the consultation, although they represent areas for further work rather than actions to be taken. These areas were all identified in 'Building the Future', the Construction Demolition waste arisings survey 2004-05. These actions should be reassessed using the outcomes of the 2012 waste arisings survey.

The introduction of Site Waste Management Plans in Wales may help encourage waste prevention in the construction sector in Wales, but it will be difficult to assess the potential impacts until the details of the regulations are finalised.

Other general and technical questions

Consultation Question G1: *A Sustainability Appraisal was conducted on this programme, and is published alongside this document as part of the consultation. Do you agree with its findings and conclusions? Please give your reasons.*

Our comments on the sustainability appraisal have been supplied separately.

Consultation Question G2:

(a) Do you agree with the Welsh Government's approach to breaking the link between waste generation and economic growth, recognising the opportunities for reducing business and household costs in doing so?

(b) If not, what alternative(s) do you propose? Please give your reasons, and describe how you would propose to measure success.

The approach taken by Welsh Government to try and break the links between economic growth and waste generation is generally sound. Welsh Government should seek to ensure wherever possible, that the proposed absolute reduction targets are both achievable and deliver the resource use reduction required.

Although there are economic policies in place to try to avoid economic contraction, it is clear that a certain amount of contraction is underway (industrial sector reductions of activity coupled with increased activity in commercial sectors). There is a potential risk of achievement of the industrial

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Ffacs/Fax 01248 670561

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waste production reductions as a result of the changes in industrial activity levels and it is worth be aware that this would not be sustainable without a complementary and permanent behaviour or process change.

Commercial waste production is less easy to target due to the relative size of individual waste production from the smaller companies and as a result, the financial savings for each company are small potentially. The exceptions to this have been through the food retail sector as a result of the packaging producer responsibility legislation. There are approaches that have been taken in relation to reuse of transit packaging that could be rolled out to other commercial sectors and other retail sectors.

In terms of measurement of success generally, the focus could be on improved data. It may be helpful to explore the option of annual surveys of waste production on a statutory basis as is currently undertaken in Scotland than to persist with the voluntary surveys that can be resource intensive.

Yours Sincerely

Gareth Lewis
Waste Advisor
Knowledge Strategy & Planning

Ffôn/Tel 01248 484151
Ffacs/Fax 01248 670561
Ebost/Email gareth.e.lewis@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
www.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

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