

Welsh Government consultation: draft Statutory Guidance on Separate Collection of Waste Paper, Metal, Plastic and Glass

General Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on the above consultation.

- We understand and support the need for the new guidance to implement the requirements of the EU revised Waste Framework Directive and within the context of the Wales Waste Strategy. However, there are some issues which require consideration which we outline below.
- Natural Resources Wales is responsible for enforcing the separate collection obligations. The guidance provides some useful clarification however we suggest that there may be a need to strengthen the guidance to assist waste collection businesses providing waste collection services to commerce and industry that currently do not provide any form of separate collections for recyclable materials.
- Currently, the emphasis of the guidance appears to be largely directed towards the local authority waste collection authority audience. We agree that this is an important area as local authorities in Wales all provide a form of separate collection either through comingled collections or kerbside sort. However, there are also a large number small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who are engaged in waste collection in Wales, many of which do not currently provide separate collection for recyclable materials who perhaps will need a greater level of support and relevant guidance.
- The delay in the introduction of the Materials Facilities requirements under the Environment Permitting Regulations 2014 amendment was unfortunate and an associated impact is that data on materials quality will not be available until the end of January 2015. This may potentially affect collection organisations in their decision as to whether separate collection is necessary, for example judging whether a comingled collection followed by materials sorting in a Materials Facility would provide recycle of an equivalent quality to source segregated collections.
- Welsh Government should also be aware that there may be consequences for facilities (approximately 30 in Wales) that currently offer a waste collection service and are operating as “dirty” Material recycling facilities in Wales. Following implementation of the separate collection requirements, these facilities may need to modify the nature of their operations and potentially become subject to the Material Facility requirements.

Consultation Questions.

Q1 - Do you consider the statutory guidance sets out clearly how the Welsh Government considers establishments and undertakings that collect, transport or receive waste paper, metal, plastic and glass should comply with the legal requirements laid down in Regulations 13 and 14 of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, as amended by the Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. If you have answered no, please provide a brief explanation of what you feel is not clear or should be changed in the statutory guidance, and, where relevant, the legal basis under which you consider the change(s) should be made.

- The purpose of this guidance is to provide relevant establishments and undertakings clear guidance to support the decisions required to enable them to comply with the regulations in relation to the collection of the four waste materials; paper, metal, plastic and glass.
- The main focus of the guidance is aimed towards local authorities and to the manner of collection and whether comingled collections can provide a similar quality of materials. The implementation of the Material Facilities regulations will assist in providing evidence around quality.
- Wastes from commercial and industrial waste producers are included within the EU requirements under the revised waste framework directive where the wastes are similar to household waste in composition.
- There are large numbers of SMEs who collect waste and do not currently provide separate collection of recyclable materials as opposed to local authorities who all do provide separate collections.
- We believe the guidance therefore needs to strengthen its focus on ensuring separate collections for industrial and commercial waste producers are established through the waste industry service providers.

Q2 - We have asked one specific question. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

There is an opportunity for the quality of recyclable materials produced through Material Facilities following comingled recyclables collections to be considered in the guidance. This could provide some clear steer on which comparative standards should be used to indicate good quality recyclable materials as this will be an important part of the “technically, environmentally and economically practicable” TEEP evaluation for both local authorities and the waste industry.

You may wish to consider the comparative data published by Zero Waste Scotland information on resource industry specifications published by the Resource Association. This may aid Welsh Government in their thinking with regards providing clarity in the guidance document on the standards which could be used to indicate good quality recyclable materials.

I trust you will find these comments useful. If you have further queries relating to our comments, please contact Cathy O'Brien on cathy.o'brien@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

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