

## **DEFRA WASTE CONSULTATIONS: WASTE PREVENTION**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In March 2021, Government released a key waste consultation:
- Waste Prevention Programme for England: Towards a resource efficient economy (WPP)
- The consultation sets out actions to manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy, focusing on prevention or reduction of waste; and reuse, repair and remanufacture.
- 1.2 Officers and members of the Sustainable Waste Management Task and Finish Group have read the consultation documents and proposed answers to relevant questions within the consultation. This report will provide some background to the proposed actions set out by central Government and explain the rationale behind the answers provided by the working group.

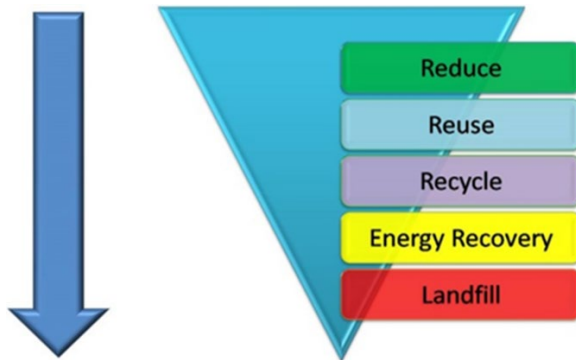
### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Government's National Waste Strategy (NWS), "Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England" was published in December 2018. It contains new objectives for dealing with the nation's waste and suggests how these objectives can be achieved. In the future, the waste streams that the Council collects and the way they are collected will be heavily influenced by the NWS.
- 2.2 The NWS was subject to consultation, and the council responded to the four key consultations between February and May 2019. The results of the consultation indicated strong support for many of the objectives suggested in the NWS and this informed the content of the draft Environment Bill 2020, as well as NFDC's own draft Waste Strategy, released in November 2020.
- 2.3 The Government is now consulting again, to gather more detailed understanding of stakeholder preferences. Part of this process is to look at what can be done to prevent waste being created; or keep used products out of the waste chain by creating reuse opportunities. It is within the Council's interest to reduce the amount of waste we collect, from both an environmental and financial perspective, and therefore it is important that a considered response is submitted.
- 2.4 Three further consultations, on the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England, have also been released but have differing deadlines to the WPP, and therefore will be the subject of separate Portfolio Holder Decision Reports.

### **3. WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME (WPP)**

- 3.1 Growing populations and greater demand for products globally are putting increasing pressure on our natural resources and contributing to accelerating climate change. As a result, growing quantities of waste are becoming an increasing problem, with many

countries being reluctant to import waste. Waste prevention is often the most efficient way of addressing these pressures, as it reduces unnecessary production and processing, and therefore costs, as well as carbon emissions associated with those steps. For this reason, it is at the top of the waste hierarchy shown below.



3.2 The Waste Prevention Programme for England was published in December 2013. This updated 2021 document focuses on preventing waste by reuse, repair and remanufacture of products.

3.3 NFDC officers and members have worked to propose a response to the WPP consultation. As a Waste Collection Authority, serving and collecting waste and recycling from 80,000 households every week, NFDC work alongside our partners in the Project Integra (PI) partnership including Hampshire County Council (our Waste Disposal Authority) to encourage waste prevention initiatives and raise awareness of the environmental benefits of waste minimisation. As such, our response is supportive of the views of PI. There are some questions that are not relevant to NFDC, or on which the Council does not have a view. The full response is available in **appendix 1**.

In summary:

- NFDC believe that the intended WPP impacts and outcomes outlined in the document focus heavily on reuse and repair. Reduction or prevention which sits above reuse and repair in the waste hierarchy is missing from the model.
- There is a heavy focus on accessibility to reuse and repair services, and proposals to measure/label the 'eco' credentials of products. However more should be done to ensure that products that carry good eco credentials are not only accessible but also affordable.
- NFDC agree that more should be done to improve the design of products to prevent waste, but also note that there is a need to expand and increase financial resources, so that extensive behaviour change research can take place, and this can be followed up by education and national campaigns to ensure the general public are aware of the impact of their consumption.
- NFDC note that local authorities could do more to encourage reuse and repair with more funding. There is often no specific resource at district level. With more resource there would be a more joined up approach between WCA's and the WDA's, leading to greater impact.
- Extended Producer Responsibility for additional materials such as textiles and furniture would be welcomed. The resultant funding could be used within local authorities and the charity sector to improve the collection process for these types of materials. However, NFDC note that this would need to be supported by improved reprocessing within the UK to ensure this is a sustainable practice.

- Food is the single biggest contributor to our general waste, so it is important that we continue to work to prevent this waste. With the likely introduction of a mandatory food waste collection service, it is important that the focus should remain on the prevention of avoidable food waste. More funding may be needed so we don't end up wasting more food due to complacency created by the food recycling system. NFDC agree that there should also be a focus on the link to between suppliers and retailers, further help for charity redistribution, and more focus on education especially with young people.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 NFDC welcomes the aims and outcomes of the WPP, however the language used for the proposals throughout the document does not seem robust enough to match up with the importance of moving waste up the hierarchy as outlined. Language like 'explore', 'encourage', 'information notes' and 'voluntary guidance' does not show a huge commitment in this area to make real change. Local authorities have regular contact with residents and the ability to make real change at local level, but only if resource is made available and waste prevention is considered through all associated waste policy.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications through the submission of these consultation returns. However, consultation outcomes such as EPR for textiles and furniture may in the future change financial flow and funding streams available to NFDC.

## **7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are none

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental implications through the submission of these consultations. However, the objective of the NWS is to increase national recycling targets to 65% by 2035. Although we cannot be clear on the individual impact of WPP, it is part of a bigger picture that could be influential in moving the UK towards a more circular economy.

## **9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications through the submission of these consultations. However, as stated in 3.3 document we would like the Government to consider how they will ensure reuse services and 'eco' products not only accessible but also affordable for all social groups.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 That the consultation responses detailed in appendix 1 to this report are submitted to DEFRA.

## 11. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

**Sign:** CLLR STEVE DAVIES      **Date:** 2 June 2021

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### **Background Papers:**

The Government's consultation page for WPP, which include full supporting information, can be found via this link:

[Waste Prevention Programme for England consultation document.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk/waste-prevention-programme-for-england-consultation-document.pdf)