

**ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
17 JUNE 2021**

**PORTFOLIO – ENVIRONMENT & COASTAL SERVICES**

**WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE - DEFRA WASTE CONSULTATIONS**

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Panel note the programme of Defra waste consultations.
- 1.2 That the Panel comment upon the key elements of the “Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England” consultation response, which is due for submission by 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In response to national and regional changes in waste management strategy and approach, as well as a desire to ensure that local goals are met, the Council is developing a new Waste Strategy.
- 2.2 A Draft Waste Strategy was published in November 2020, with a period of engagement with residents and other stakeholders following on. Since then, the Government has released four new waste consultations.
- 2.3 This report provides an update on the key issues affecting development of a new Waste Strategy for the New Forest.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Government's National Waste Strategy (NWS), "Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England" was published in December 2018. It contained new objectives for dealing with the nation's waste and suggested 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 key measures within the NWS were subject to consultation, and the council responded to the four 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.
- 2.3 Shortly after this original consultation period, NFDC convened a Member Working Group to consider the national, regional, and local factors that were likely to shape the development of a new Waste Strategy for the New Forest. This group has carried out research, reviewed case studies and worked with partners to assess options for the future frontline service.
- 2.4 The Council released a Draft Waste Strategy in November 2020. There followed a period of engagement, where residents and other stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on how some of the changes in the Council's “preferred option” would affect them. The “preferred option” consists of:
  - A weekly separate collection of food waste
  - Dry recycling collected in a reusable bag (paper and card) and a wheeled bin (glass, plastic, metal), both of which are collected on the alternate week to general waste

- General waste collected in a wheeled bin on the alternate week to dry recycling
  - Collection of garden waste every two weeks in a reusable bag or wheeled bin
- 2.5 Under the sponsorship of the Hampshire and IOW Local Authorities (HLOWLA) group, all Council partners in Hampshire have been considering:
- The future of collections, recycling, and disposal infrastructure in the County; and
  - How the District Councils (as Waste Collection Authorities) will work with the County Council (as Waste Disposal Authority) in the future, in an operational and financial sense.
- 2.6 Central Government are now consulting again, on the following initiatives:
- Deposit Return Schemes
  - Extended Producer Responsibility
  - Waste Prevention
  - Consistency in collections
- 2.7 To take these and other issues forward, a new “Sustainable Waste Management Member Task and Finish Group” has been set up.

### **3. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS**

#### *3.1 Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland*

3.1.1 A DRS applies a surcharge to a drinks container (glass, metal, plastic) when it is purchased by a consumer. The surcharge is returned to the consumer if the packaging is then returned to a designated point for recycling. The aim of a DRS is to reduce littering, boost recycling levels for relevant material, and to collect high quality materials in greater quantities.

3.1.2 The Government sought views on two options for how the DRS could work if introduced. The first option, known as the ‘all-in’ model, would target a large amount of drinks beverages placed on the market, irrespective of size. The second option, known as the ‘on-the-go’ model, would restrict the drinks containers in-scope to those less than 750ml in size and sold in single format containers. This model would target drinks most often sold for consumption outside of the home (while ‘on-the-go’).

3.1.3 NFDC Officers have worked with the Member Task and Finish Group and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services to draft and submit a response to this consultation. A summary of the key elements of NFDC’s response is as follows:

- NFDC believe that a DRS has an important role in reducing litter, and lack of on-street recycling, and therefore supports the option to introduce ‘on-the-go’ model of a DRS.
- However, the Government should consider whether there is a case to delay DRS until the key elements of EPR and Consistency in Collections have been implemented, to better inform design and implementation of a DRS, if the aforementioned measures do not deliver the required performance improvements by themselves.
- NFDC note that a DRS scheme will significantly impact the infrastructure required to collect, transfer, sort, and dispose/reprocess materials. With less high-quality material flowing through this system, the Government should consider this further and allow time for Local Authorities to adapt.
- Covid-19 has greatly impacted consumer shopping habits with many now shopping online for groceries. For those that live in rural communities or have

mobility issues, returning containers to redeem the deposits may be more difficult.

- NFDC note that an 'all-in' DRS has the potential to create a complicated, more difficult to manage dual recycling system for householders. Householders would have to separate recyclable material which is "in-scope" for DRS, from recyclable material which is not in-scope, but which could be recycled at the kerbside.
- NFDC believe that if material in-scope of a DRS is collected by the Council at the kerbside, payments for unredeemed deposits should be paid to local authorities based on data from a sampling programme.

### 3.2 *Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging*

3.2.1 EPR is a way of passing the cost of dealing with packaging waste back to the producers. This encourages producers to reduce the amount of packaging they put on the market and to improve recyclability of packaging. Payments from packaging producers will be passed to the EPR scheme administrator. LAs will receive payments from the EPR administrator to help cover the costs of collecting and disposing of packaging. However, funding levels for LAs are likely to be closely linked to the efficiency and effectiveness of their services, and therefore there will also be a requirement for local authorities to ensure their waste and recycling service design encourages maximum material recovery and waste minimisation.

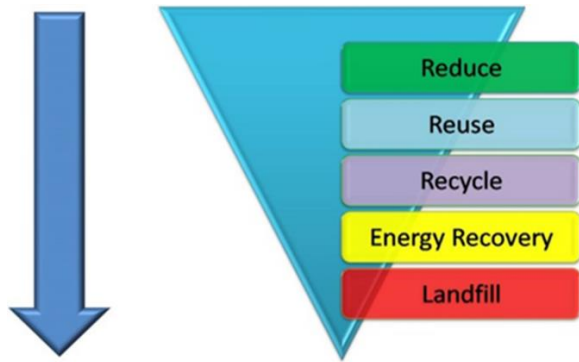
3.2.2 The Government are seeking views on how the scheme will function to ensure it achieves the desired outcomes, and to help inform final policy decisions on key aspects of the scheme, such as governance, recycling targets and implementation timelines.

3.2.3 NFDC Officers have worked with the Member Task and Finish Group and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services to draft and submit a response to this consultation. A summary of the key elements of NFDC's response is as follows:

- Agreement with Government's definition of the "necessary costs" for LAs when dealing with packaging waste – encompassing collection, transport, sorting, treatment/disposal and education and communications.
- NFDC agrees that payments to local authorities should be based on good practice, and "efficient and effective" system costs. However, more information is needed so that Local Authorities can understand how payments will be calculated and allocated. In addition, the payment calculation methodology must be able to reflect local circumstances, for example where collection costs increase due to rurality and distance between properties.
- The cost of dealing with litter, including prevention activity, provision of litter bins and clearance from the ground, should be included in EPR. Payments should be established through compositional analysis of littered waste, and costs allocated proportionally based on prevalence in the waste stream.

### 3.3 *Consultation on the Waste Prevention Programme for England: Towards a Resource-Efficient Economy*

3.3.1 Growing populations and greater demand for products globally are putting increasing pressure on our natural resources and contributing to climate change. 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.



3.3.2 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.

3.3.3 NFDC Officers have worked with the Member Task and Finish Group and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services to draft and submit a response to this consultation. Our response is closely aligned to that of Project Integra, Hampshire's waste partnership. A summary of the key elements of NFDC's response is as follows:

- Reduction or prevention is not as prevalent in Government's plans as reuse and repair, despite being higher in the waste hierarchy.
- 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, to allow for more education and behaviour change projects
- NFDC note that local authorities could do more to encourage reuse and repair with more resource from Government.
- 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.

#### 3.4 *Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England*

3.4.1 Creating more consistency in how waste and recycling is dealt with across English local authorities and businesses is a key aim within the National Waste Strategy.

3.4.2 The Government have made proposals for, among other things:

- What materials should be collected for recycling
- How they should be collected
- How often they should be collected
- How charges should or shouldn't be applied

3.4.3 NFDC Officers have discussed this consultation with the Member Task and Finish Group and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services. The response is to be submitted by 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021. A summary of the key considerations is as follows:

Area	Govt. Proposal	NFDC comment
<b>Collection of dry recyclables</b>	<p>That the following should be collected for recycling from the kerbside (by March 2024 at the latest, except for plastic film which is 2027):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glass bottles and jars</li> <li>• Paper and Card</li> <li>• Steel and aluminium cans and aerosols</li> <li>• Foil and aluminium tubes*</li> <li>• Plastic bottles</li> <li>• Plastic pots, tubs, and trays*</li> <li>• Plastic films*</li> <li>• Food and drinks cartons*</li> </ul> <p>*denotes materials not currently collected at kerbside by NFDC</p>	<p>From a collection perspective, the collection of these materials would be relatively straightforward as part of the “preferred option” detailed earlier in this report. The additional materials listed are those which residents want to be able to recycle.</p> <p>However, NFDC does need to consider the implications on the sorting of these materials, and will liaise with PI partners on this part of our response. Timescales for implementation may need to be flexible to take account of changes in contracts and infrastructure.</p>
<b>Collection of dry recyclables</b>	<p>That the recycling listed above should largely be collected as separate streams, with the mixing of different materials minimised. This is to maintain the quality of materials collected. There may be some exceptions to this, with the mixing of glass with metal and/or plastic with metal permitted. Authorities wishing to mix together other materials may be required to demonstrate their rationale for doing so in order to be compliant.</p>	<p>Overall, it is felt that the Council should support the proposal regarding plastic/metal and glass/metal, whilst also proposing that glass/metal/plastic is added as a further exemption, because it is felt that mixing glass/metal/plastic (see the “preferred option”) can deliver the same benefits as collecting them separately.</p>
<b>Collection of food waste</b>	<p>Food waste should be collected weekly, and separately from other materials, so that it can be recycled, by 2024-25. This would be classed by Government as a “new burden”, and it is proposed that capital, transitional and ongoing operational costs would be funded by Government.</p>	<p>Overall, it is felt that the Council should support this proposal but take the opportunity to highlight some of the challenges and suggest flexibility in the target dates. In addition, the Council should suggest that further clarity is needed on the extent and longevity of new burdens funding. Separate food waste collection is included within the “preferred option”.</p>
<b>Collection of garden waste</b>	<p>That local authorities should be required to introduce a free minimum standard garden waste collection (240 litre containers, fortnightly collection frequency and throughout the growing season). This would be fully funded by Government and would cover both reduced income and increased operational costs.</p>	<p>Overall, it is felt that the Council should oppose the proposal, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It doesn’t encourage home composting of garden waste</li> <li>• It would lead to increased vehicle movements</li> <li>• Overall increased burden on all taxpayers, not just those with gardens</li> <li>• Questionable benefit when garden waste only makes up 3.6% of Hampshire’s residual waste stream</li> </ul>

#### 4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

4.1 In November and December 2020, NFDC undertook an engagement exercise, whereby residents and other stakeholders were asked to comment upon how the preferred option would affect them. There were responses from the following:

- 3,863 residents survey responses
- 125 resident letters and emails
- 20 Parish and Town Councils

- Other organisations – e.g. HCC and the Verderers
- Waste and transport service staff

4.2 The resident engagement gave the following headline results:

- 74% thought food waste collection was a good idea
- 65% thought that it was a good thing that recycling is improving
- 50% expressed support for wheeled bins
- 27% expressed support for alternate week collections, an additional 44% were supportive but noted concerns about storage, of which 26% would need a bin/container if frequency reduced
- 59% of garden waste customers would prefer a bag to a bin
- 62% thought that removing bring sites was a good idea

4.3 Of additional comments received, top comment themes were:

- Aesthetic impact of wheeled bins and the impact on streetscene
- Size and storage of containers
- Support for proposals

4.4 The results of the engagement exercise will be a key consideration for the Member Task and Finish group when proposing a final Waste Strategy.

## **5. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

5.1 Under the sponsorship of the Hampshire and IOW Local Authorities (HLOWLA) group, all Councils in the Project Integra (PI) partnership (including NFDC) have been working together to consider the future of collections, recycling, and disposal infrastructure in the County. This is in the context of the National developments described earlier in this report, and desires within all partners to increase recycling and reduce overall waste generation.

5.2 Hampshire authorities commissioned a waste industry consultant to carry out modelling of different waste and recycling collection systems. The modelling indicated that a collection system that aligns with NFDC's preferred option would deliver the best economic and environmental results, if it were to be implemented.

5.3 Hampshire County Council (HCC) are now working with their long term waste disposal contractor, Veolia, on the impacts of changes to collections on current and future infrastructure, including a new Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) which would be capable of sorting the expanded range of dry recyclables described earlier. These changes will have both operational and financial implications on all PI partners. To facilitate the transition, two of the key PI documents – the "Memorandum of Understanding" and "Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy" - are being revised. It is hope that these revised documents can be adopted by all partners in the autumn of 2021.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The four Defra consultations will have significant impact on the Council's waste service, and as such the Council has or will be submitting responses to all of them.

6.2 The Council will work with Hampshire partners to understand the implications on waste infrastructure and cost.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct implications resulting from submission of consultation responses. However, in future there will be changes in expenditure and income resulting from necessary service changes, and these will be further detailed in a final waste strategy.

## 8. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none.

## 9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct implications resulting from submission of consultation responses. The Council's final waste strategy will be aiming to increase recycling levels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## 10. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct implications resulting from submission of consultation responses. However, the Council's final waste strategy will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

### For further information contact: Background Papers:

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NFDC's Draft Waste Strategy can be found here:  
<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk/documents/s16332/Draft%20Waste%20Strategy%20-%20Appendix%201.pdf>

The Government's consultation pages for EPR and DRS, which include full supporting information, can be found via these links:

DRS:  
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environment/consultation-on-introducing-a-drs/>

EPR:  
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environment/consultation-on-introducing-a-drs/>

Waste Prevention:  
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/waste-prevention-programme-for-england-2021/>

Consistency:  
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/>