

ITEM 4**PAPER NO. WRWA 872****WESTERN RIVERSIDE WASTE AUTHORITY**

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REPORT AUTHOR/DATE	General Manager (Contact Mark Broxup - Tel. 020 8871 2788) 22 nd January 2019
SUBJECT	Report outlining details of the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy published on 18 th December 2018.
CONTENTS	Page 1 Introduction Pages 1 to 13 A summary of each Chapter in the Resources and Waste Strategy Page 13 Key Milestone Dates Page 15 Officer Comment Page 17 Industry Reaction Page 18 Conclusions Page 19 Recommendations
STATUS	Open
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

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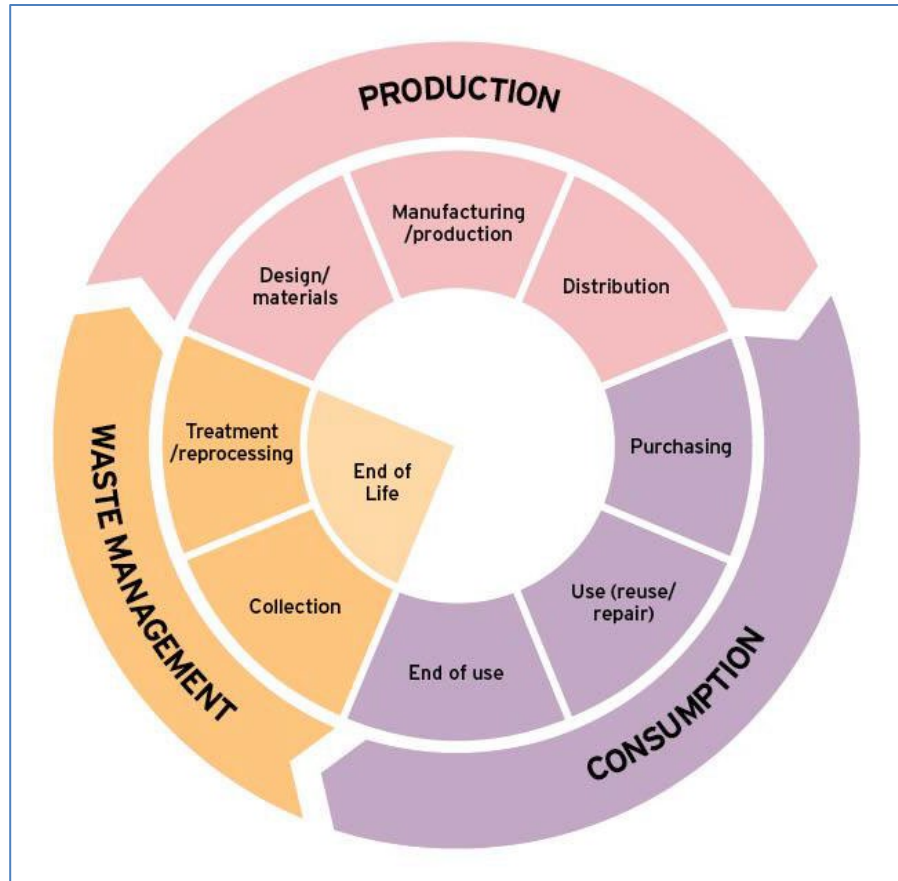
INTRODUCTION

1. On 18th December 2018 the Government published “Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England” which sets out how it wishes to:
 - preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy;
 - minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully, and by tackling waste crime.

2. The Strategy says “the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land we live on, and the stock of material resources we use in our daily lives are at the heart of our economy, our society and our way of life.” The Government wants to:
 - a) lead the world in using resources efficiently and reduce the waste we create;
 - b) keep resources in use for as long as possible;
 - c) safeguard and enhance the natural capital¹ upon which our wellbeing and prosperity depend;
 - d) unlock the value in waste and think smarter about how it is managed;
 - e) help consumers by tackling confusion over domestic recycling;
 - f) eliminate from use the most problematic plastics; and
 - g) make sure that those responsible for creating polluting products pay for the costs of that pollution: enshrining the ‘polluter pays principle’ throughout the Strategy.

3. The Strategy mirrors existing Authority policy in many areas and will hopefully see a transition away from the current linear ‘take, make, use and throw’ approach to resources and materials to a more circular model based on wasting less and reusing, recycling and repairing more. As shown in the simplified depiction overleaf:

¹ The Government defines ‘natural capital’ as the elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value for people, including resources, ecosystems and species, the land, air and oceans, as well as the natural processes and functions that link them together and sustain life.

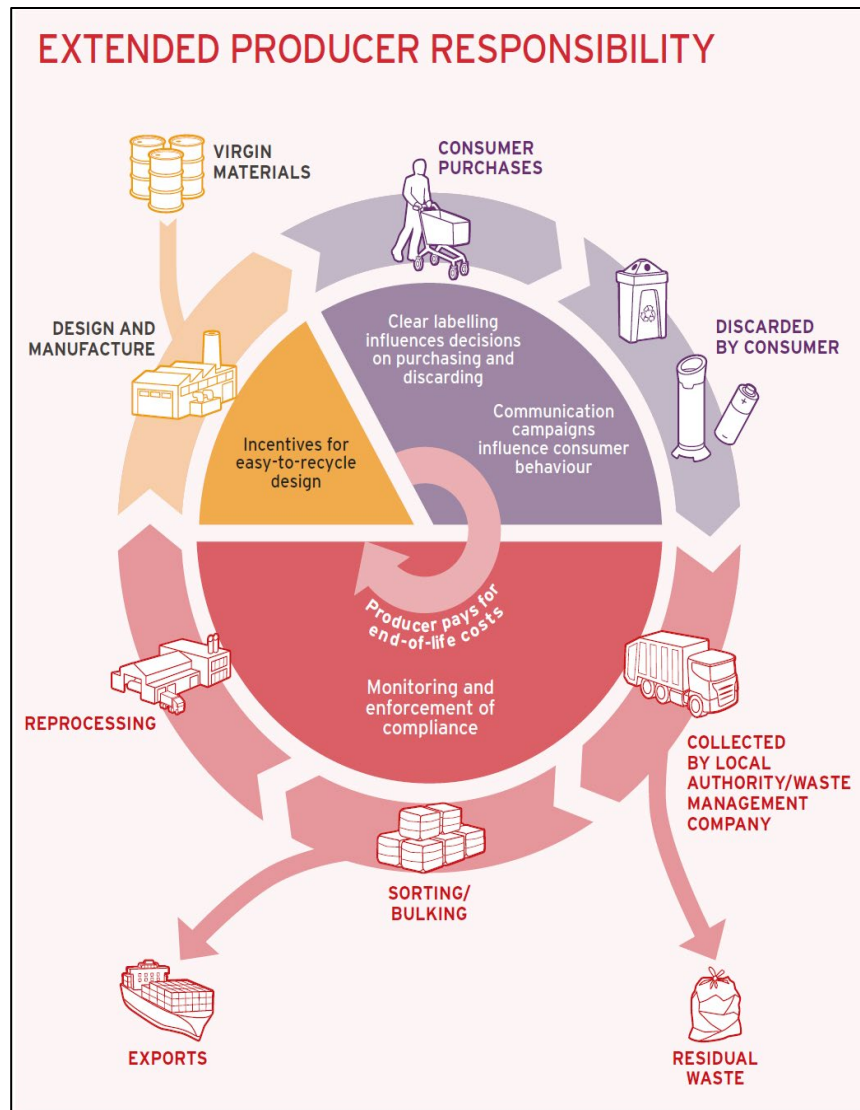


4. The following paragraphs summarise the main points from each chapter of the Strategy that officers believe may affect the Authority and/or its constituent Councils' waste management function, the Government's key milestone dates to achieve its aims are reproduced and finally there is an Authority officers' view on the Strategy.

CHAPTER 1 - SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

5. The Strategy embraces the "polluter pays principle" with an emphasis towards the top of the waste hierarchy incorporating a clear understanding for the need for good product design. The use of a 'lifecycle' approach complements the circular economy model as it requires focus not just on managing waste responsibly, but on preventing its creation in the first place. Decisions taken during the design stage – at the start of the lifecycle – affect how a product is used and then disposed of by the consumer and at every stage of a product's lifecycle there will be scope to maximise resource value and minimise waste.

6. Producer responsibility schemes are already in place for four waste streams, putting a level of financial responsibility on producers for their goods at end-of-life. These are:
 - Packaging waste;
 - End-of-life vehicles (ELV);
 - Batteries and accumulators; and
 - Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE).
7. To deliver the change in emphasis that the Strategy demands, the Government's intention is to introduce 'Extended Producer Responsibility' (EPR), whereby a producer's responsibility for a product will be extended to the post-use stage. This will incentivise producers to design their products to make it easier for them to be reused, dismantled and/or recycled at end of life.
8. The EPR will be developed against a set of core principles:
 - Clear outcomes, objectives, targets and responsibilities will be set;
 - Producers will bear the full net cost of managing their products at the end of their life, including impacts on the environment and society so that the objectives and targets are met;
 - Modulated fees or other measures will be used to encourage producers to make more sustainable design, production and purchasing decisions in line with the waste hierarchy and resource and waste priorities. For example, producers may pay a lower fee for products which are easy to reuse, repair or recycle and a penalty for those that are not.
 - Schemes will be designed and implemented to make it easy for consumers to play their part, whether through their choices at point of purchase, during ownership of a product, or at the end of its life.



9. Packaging Reform is the Government’s immediate priority. There will be a consultation shortly to reform the packaging waste regulations and the Government’s intention is to legislate by 2021 and to have reforms operational by 2023. The reformed system will match or exceed the revised packaging recycling targets set by the European Union (EU) for 2025 and 2030. The Government feels that the current system does not sufficiently incentivise design for greater reuse or recyclability and producers need to cover the full net costs of managing household packaging waste in the future up from a current level of less than 10%.
10. By 2025, the Government intends to have reviewed and consulted on the introduction of EPR for at least five new waste streams, including textile waste (all clothing, as well as other household and commercial textiles such as bed linen) and bulky waste (e.g. mattresses, furniture and carpets).

11. Budget 2018 announced the introduction of a new tax on plastic packaging from April 2022. Subject to consultation, this tax will apply to plastic packaging containing less than 30% recycled plastic, to encourage manufacturers to produce more sustainable packaging and, in turn, create greater demand for recycled material.

CHAPTER 2 - HELPING CONSUMERS TAKE MORE CONSIDERED ACTION

12. This chapter explores the means by which it might be possible to make it easier for people and organisations to buy products that are better designed to be re-usable or upgradable – that have longer lives and lower environmental impacts. The Government believes that producers need to help consumers by giving them better information about the long-term as they choose what to buy.

13. The main initiative in this chapter is, subject to consultation, the proposed introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for single-use drinks containers. Consumers would be charged a deposit up-front when they buy a drink in a single-use container. The charge would then be redeemable when the empty container is returned. Existing international schemes allow consumers to either return containers via a reverse vending machine or manually via a retailer/outlet.

14. The Chapter also discusses how Government feels that there is scope for Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) to promote more reuse, for instance through onsite shops. The Government intends to amend waste regulations so that HWRCs can perform a more effective role in resource efficiency.

15. Other actions in this chapter include:

- a) consultation on increasing the existing 5p plastic bag charge and extending it to all retailers on a mandatory basis;
- b) regulations or bans on certain single-use plastic products, such as plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds;
- c) better labelling on products and packaging;
- d) increasing opportunities for reuse, repair, and remanufacture;
- e) a wider use of guarantees and extended warranties to promote resource efficiency;
- f) increased collaborative working, especially with third sector organisations;
- g) consumer campaigns to promote reusable alternatives (such as water refill stations); and

- h) encouraging remanufacture or reconditioning of products to restore them to their original state or close to it, so preserving their value and extending their life.

CHAPTER 3 – RECOVERING RESOURCES AND MANAGING WASTE

- 16. The Government recognises the roles of local authorities and the waste sector are critical at this stage of the lifecycle. Government knows it must set clear expectations, giving them the confidence to invest in infrastructure to deal with waste and to promote UK-based recycling.
- 17. The Government says it will ensure that local authorities are resourced to meet new net costs arising from the policies in this Strategy, including up-front transition costs and ongoing operational costs.
- 18. The Strategy reveals a long-term ambition to move away from weight-based recycling targets, but in the meantime the Government's goal is for at least 65% of municipal waste by weight to be recycled by 2035, with no more than 10% ending up in landfill, with an overarching commitment to work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030.
- 19. This chapter sets out how, subject to consultation, the Government will:
 - a) legislate to improve recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of dry recyclable materials are collected from all households and businesses;
 - b) reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill, subject to consultation, by ensuring that every householder and appropriate business has a weekly separate food waste collection;
 - c) improve urban recycling rates, working with businesses and local authorities;
 - d) improve working arrangements between, and better support performance of, local authorities;
 - e) drive greater efficiency of Energy from Waste (EfW) plants;
 - f) address barriers to the use of recycled materials; and
 - g) encourage waste producers and managers to implement the waste hierarchy in respect of hazardous waste.

Recycling Rates

20. The Government will consult on which materials should be specified as a core set of materials to be collected by all local authorities and waste operators and which collection systems would be most effective at preserving material quality. The consultation will be carried out in parallel with the consultation on reforms to the existing packaging waste regulations. The Government will also consult on whether introducing non-binding performance indicators for the quantity of materials collected for recycling and minimum service standards for recycling would support this outcome. Subject to consultation these performance indicators and service standards would consider the different circumstances and potential for higher recycling that local authorities experience and would be reviewed regularly to drive performance. As part of establishing a core set of materials for collection, the Government will also review the effectiveness of current arrangements for the reporting of quality and for determining when separate collection is necessary to achieve high quality. This will also take into account reforms to the packaging waste regulations and changes to provisions on Technical, Environmental and Economic Practicability (TEEP) in the new Circular Economy Package.
21. The Government also wants to widen the performance measures we use and promote waste minimisation and better quality recycling. It will work with local authorities to develop new performance metrics for waste to complement and move beyond current weight-based targets to ones which recognise environmental benefits of sound waste management.
22. The Government also wishes to have comprehensive and frequent collection services (including weekly separate food waste collections, on which they will consult). The Strategy states that any new statutory responsibilities for local government would be subject to an assessment of new burdens and, for packaging waste, reform of extended producer responsibility will ensure that the costs of collection and recycling are borne appropriately by those that produce packaging and place it on the market. Local authorities and waste operators will be able to use this support to collect all recyclable packaging waste and drive high quality recycling.
23. Recycling rates in businesses are often lower than households and the Government will take action, including, where necessary, legislating to ensure that businesses present recycling and food waste separately from residual waste for collection. There is also a recognition that recycling rates for urban authorities are often lower

than those of rural or suburban authorities and the Government intends to work with urban local authorities to improve this.

Food Waste

24. The Government wishes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill by ensuring that every householder and appropriate businesses have a weekly separate food waste collection. Subject to consultation, it will legislate to ensure that this is in place from 2023. The consultation will also explore whether households with gardens should have access to free garden waste collections. New duties will be assessed to account for new burdens and will be funded appropriately. About 50% of local authorities in England currently offer a service to collect food waste, albeit only about a third do so separately from Garden waste and the majority of food waste in England ends up in the residual waste stream. The Government believes that extending separate food waste collections to more households will increase recycling and composting rates by about five percentage points over current levels and divert waste from incineration or landfill. It also believes that separate food waste collection will lead to higher yields of food waste collected than if it is captured mixed with garden waste. The Strategy states that Anaerobic Digestion (AD) represents the best environmental outcome for food waste that cannot be prevented or be redistributed to others or, if this is not possible, used as animal feed.

Garden Waste

25. The Government intends to consult on the provision of free garden waste collections for households with gardens and seek views on the impacts and costs for local authorities so these can be taken into account in assessment of new burdens.

Local Authority Two Tier Waste Management Arrangements

26. The Government intends to review the effectiveness of current arrangements for local authority waste management and joint working and make recommendations for improvement.

Household Waste and Recycling Centres

27. The Government believes it is important that local residents are able to dispose of their rubbish in a responsible and convenient manner. It will review Household Waste and Recycling Centre services and the Controlled Waste Regulations and, subject to consultation, will amend them to ensure they remain fit for purpose, charges are applied fairly, and that services are accessible, support high levels of recycling and deliver value for money.

Energy from Waste

28. The proportion of local authority collected waste going to Energy from Waste (EfW) plants increased from 9% in 2000/01 to 41% in 2017/18 and, in 2017, incineration of biodegradable waste produced about 3.4% of the UK's renewable energy, offsetting the use of virgin resources.

29. Only 32 out of the 40 EfW plants in England just produce electricity and the Government wants to help the companies that run EfW plants also to use the heat produced to improve their efficiency, and to help industry make the right decisions over infrastructure investment. Government will also work with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government over planning policies to support the potential for the heat from the plants to be used locally to them.

30. 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. Incineration currently plays a significant role in waste management in the UK, and the Government expects this to continue. However, Budget 2018 set out the Government's long term ambition to maximise the amount of waste sent to recycling instead of incineration and landfill. Any consideration would take into account how such a tax would work alongside Landfill Tax and the possible impacts on local authorities.

31. Currently England generates around 29 million tonnes of residual waste per annum, around 10.5 million tonnes of which is treated by EfW in the UK. The Government expects that, after allowing for EfW plants which are currently in construction and the greater waste prevention, reuse and a 65% municipal waste recycling rate, delivered through policies in their Strategy, England will still be producing around 20

million tonnes per annum of residual waste by 2035 and it therefore continues to welcome further market investment in residual waste treatment infrastructure.

CHAPTER 4 – TACKLING WASTE CRIME

32. The Strategy recognises that waste crime and poor performance damages the natural environment, causes harm to local people and costs the taxpayer money. Fly-tipping is one example, but the low barriers to enter the waste sector and the involvement of organised criminal gangs have recently escalated a rise in waste crime.

33. The Strategy sets out a new strategic approach to tackling crime and low levels of performance in the waste industry based on preventing it from happening in the first place, detecting it when it does occur and deterring would-be criminals and poor performers from engaging again. Criminal activity across the whole resource chain will be targeted to tackle all forms and drivers of waste crime and poor performance.

CHAPTER 5 – ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: CUTTING DOWN ON FOOD WASTE

34. The Government believes that, ideally, surplus food should be redistributed for people to eat. The next best outcome is that it is used in the production of animal feed or for bio-material processing. In both these managed scenarios, the food surplus is not food waste. This chapter sets out how the Government will:

- 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; and
- support cross sector collaboration through the Courtauld 2025 agreement.

35. If neither of these scenarios are possible, the Government believes that food waste should be treated through recycling by anaerobic digestion, or through composting when it is mixed with other bio-waste (such as garden waste). If anaerobic

digestion or composting are not possible, it should be treated via energy from waste in preference to landfill.

CHAPTER 6 - GLOBAL BRITAIN: INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

36. This chapter sets out how the Government will:

- promote the goals of our Resources and Waste Strategy internationally;
- drive international political commitments through the ground-breaking Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance;
- support developing nations to tackle pollution and reduce plastic waste, including through UK aid, private/public partnerships and sharing of expertise;
- improve the quality of plastics exported for recycling through the Basel and Stockholm Conventions;
- tackle international barriers to a circular economy; and
- establish cross-government oversight of the UK's natural resource security.

CHAPTER 7 - RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

37. This chapter sets out how the Government will:

- a) support further investment and innovation in resource efficiency, working with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) on our Areas of Research Interest;
- b) launch a call for evidence on the development of standards for bio-based and biodegradable plastics;
- c) provide Government funding for innovation and seek ways to support further investment in resource efficient technologies, including through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund;
- d) support the Waste and Resources Action Programme; and
- e) encourage innovative waste treatment technologies that create transport fuels through the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO).

CHAPTER 8 – MEASURING PROGRESS: DATA, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

38. This chapter sets out the Government’s approach to:

- strategically transforming the gathering and reporting of data;
- monitoring progress; and
- evaluating the success of policy interventions and feeding back learning into future policy development.

39. This chapter re-emphasises the point that just using weight data as the basis for making policy, setting targets and monitoring progress can lead us in inappropriate directions. Some lightweight materials have large environmental footprints, like plastics, whilst some heavy materials have small footprints, like aggregates. The Government will therefore develop new indicators and metrics that are more in line with their strategic aims, focusing particularly on greenhouse gas emissions and natural capital (i.e. the elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value for people, including resources, ecosystems and species, the land, air and oceans, as well as the natural processes and functions that link them together and sustain life).

40. The Table below and opposite shows the main waste related indicators that will be relevant to the Authority and its constituent councils. There are also indicators on reducing landfill, but the Authority currently sends no waste direct to landfill.

Strategic indicator	Tells us ...	Why we need to know	Metrics	Desired direction of travel
Total waste generated	How much waste we are generating	We want to minimise the amount of waste we create because a portion of it will be lost to the circular economy and so will have to be replaced by using virgin materials with associated carbon emissions. Or, where it is recycled, it will entail emissions that could have been avoided if the waste had not been generated in the first place.	Tonnes per capita	↓

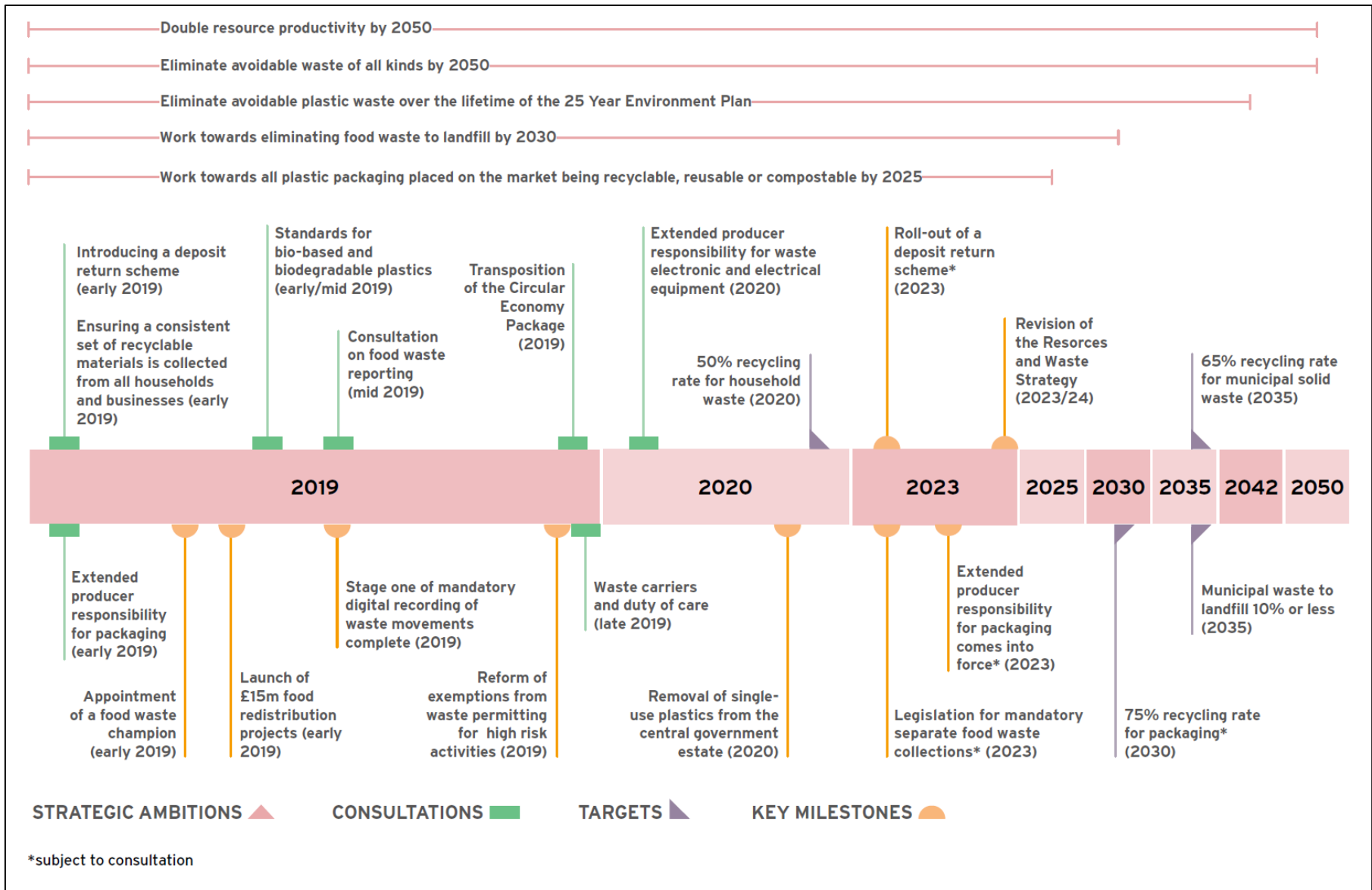
Strategic indicator	Tells us ...	Why we need to know	Metrics	Desired direction of travel
Total residual waste generated per capita	How much waste we are generating that is treated as residual waste	We want to minimise the amount of residual waste that we create because it is a loss to the circular economy and so will have to be replaced by using virgin materials with associated carbon emissions. Residual waste is also an indicator of avoidable waste in that residual waste will include material that could have been recycled.	Tonnes per capita	↓
Household waste recycling	How well we are doing at increasing recycling from households	Successful recycling results in fewer raw materials being used and with fewer carbon emissions.	Recycling rate (tonnes recycled as a proportion of all waste)	↑
Municipal waste recycling	How well we are doing at increasing municipal waste recycling	Successful recycling results in fewer raw materials being used and with fewer carbon emissions.	Recycling rate (tonnes recycled as a proportion of all waste)	↑

KEY MILESTONE DATES

41. Many of the proposals within the document will be the subject of future consultations (there was one launched on 27th December 2018 on extending and increasing the charges on single-use carrier bags).

42. The major consultations are shown on the graphic overleaf and a number of the key ones, which the Authority will wish to respond to, are due to open in early 2019. Given that the next normal meeting of the Authority is not until July 2019 the

Authority is asked to recommend the granting of specific delegated authority to the General Manager, Treasurer and Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to respond to any consultations that close before the next ordinary meeting of the Authority and subsequently report to that meeting.



OFFICER COMMENT

43. Overall, the Strategy has a lot to commend it – its aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our ‘natural capital’ with a focus on waste minimisation and the ‘producer pays’ principle, and its recognition that weight-based targets are often not the best way to measure success against those aims are all matters that reflect existing Authority policy.

44. The Authority would fully support Government core principles for Extended Producer Responsibility. The Strategy states that less than a tenth of the costs of managing household packaging waste is covered by producers, but in future the Government intends that:

“Producers bear the full net cost of managing their products at the end of their life, including impacts on the environment and society, so that objectives and targets are met.”

45. The Strategy also states that:

“We will ensure that local authorities are resourced to meet new net costs arising from the policies in this Strategy, including upfront transition costs and ongoing operational costs.”

46. The obvious questions arising from this are:

- a) how exactly will local authorities be resourced to meet these new net costs; and
- b) if producers are to bear the full costs of managing their products, why are local authorities only being resourced for “new net costs” and not “all net costs”?

Governments, of whatever political persuasion, have a track record of not meeting both actual upfront transition costs or ongoing additional operational costs arising from new government policies or stratagem delivered by local authorities. Despite the rhetoric in the Strategy it is likely therefore that both collection and disposal authorities are going to have to meet additional costs arising from this Strategy and will need to budget accordingly.

47. The Strategy places a great focus on minimising food waste which mirrors the Authority's own focus in this area. The annex to the Strategy also recognises a growing recognition that people do not always assess the costs and benefits of their actions rationally, particularly in relation to consumption. As a result, the Government will increasingly turn to behavioural insights to complement conventional environmental policy.
48. The Authority should endorse the Strategy's intention to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating food waste to landfill, but officers are concerned that this may not be best achieved by requiring that every householder and appropriate business has a weekly separate food waste collection, or that Anaerobic Digestion (AD) necessarily represents the best environmental outcome for food waste in all instances, especially where residual waste is already going to other forms of energy recovery.
49. Previous lifecycle analysis carried out by the Authority using the 'Waste and Resources Assessment Tool for the Environment' (WRATE), developed by the Environment Agency, showed that, after accounting for additional collection impacts (caddies, liners, vehicles and so forth), there was little or no environmental benefit in terms of greenhouse gas production in separately collecting food waste and sending it to Anaerobic Digestion over sending it, as part of the residual waste stream, to Cory's Energy from Waste facility at Belvedere. This analysis was with the EfW Facility at Belvedere producing electricity only (as it does currently), but if the waste heat could also be put to good use (a process the Strategy says it wants to encourage) then it is expected that Belvedere would show a substantially greater benefit.
50. A major reason why only a third of local authorities in England offer a separate food waste collection service is the additional cost. The Strategy says:

“Government recognises the financial pressures on local authorities. They will therefore receive additional resources 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.”

Whilst the additional costs associated with packaging are to come from 'Extended Producer Responsibility', it is less clear where the Government will source the money to reimburse local authorities for the additional cost of separate food collections and extra Garden waste collections (see paragraphs 51 below).

51. Officers have similar concerns around the Government's proposal that consideration be given to requiring free garden waste collections for households with gardens. Such a measure could result in a reduction in the level of home composting which is the best environmental solution for this waste stream.
52. Additional collection vehicles will also result in additional congestion and the potential detrimental impact on air quality, particularly around the Authority's transfer stations, is another factor that needs to be considered.
53. The document is silent on the mechanisms by which local authorities will be reimbursed for the costs they incur but, as a matter of principle, officers believe that monies should be reimbursed directly to waste collection and disposal authorities in relation to the costs that they incur and not through intermediate bodies. The risk with intermediate bodies, such as the Mayor of London or the London Waste and Recycling Board, is that they will create additional levels of bureaucracy, the potential for local authority winners and losers and even divert monies away from the waste collection and disposal authorities that are incurring the additional costs.
54. Officers would support the Government's wish to promote the greater reuse of materials from HWRCs, but the introduction of an onsite shop at Smugglers Way would inevitably lead to an increase in queuing time and traffic congestion. Officers believe that the Authority's current waste acceptance rules at the HWRC are consistent with the Government's wish that local residents are able to dispose of their rubbish in a responsible and convenient manner.
55. The General Manager has met with his counterparts in the other three London statutory joint waste disposal authorities and the South London Waste Partnership and it is possible that there will be a consensus view on a large number of these issues. Therefore, as the consultation documents become available, officers will fully explore the potential to prepare the joint responses on some of the key issues.

INDUSTRY REACTION

56. Overall, initial waste industry reaction to the Strategy has been positive, but there has been some concern expressed over some points:

- a) Timescales - e.g. plans for a deposit return scheme (DRS) for single-use beverage containers are not expected to be implemented before 2023.
- b) Funding - producers are concerned about the extra cost to them of Extended Producer Responsibility and local authorities are concerned that there is no clarity as yet on how the Government proposes to deliver the financial support necessary for them to deliver the Strategy.
- c) Food Waste - the Renewable Energy Association has said that
“the focus on Anaerobic Digestion within the Strategy is welcome; however, Government should ensure there is sufficient flexibility for local authorities to decide on the most appropriate treatment option. Market forces and local infrastructure should determine what the most cost-effective solution is for particular local authorities and they need to be given the freedom to adopt whatever suits them best rather than mandating a specific treatment option.” The Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) has also commented it also has “reservations about the prospect of mandated weekly food waste collections contained within the Strategy given there are “no concrete proposals” on how these will be funded. LARAC points out that “numerous studies” show introducing food waste collections results in increased costs to local authorities.”

CONCLUSIONS

- 57. The Strategy generally mirrors existing Authority policy with the proposal for the mandatory, rather than voluntary, separate collection of Food Waste and the proposal that all households with gardens receive a free garden waste collection service being the main areas of operational concern.
- 58. Exactly how local authorities will receive the financial benefits of Extended Producer Responsibility and be reimbursed for other costs they incur as a result of the Strategy is not set out and that is therefore another area of obvious concern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

59. The Authority is recommended to:

- a) grant specific delegated authority to the to the General Manager, Treasurer and Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to respond to any consultations that close before the next ordinary meeting of the Authority and subsequently report to that meeting (see paragraphs 41 and 42 above); and
- b) otherwise receive this report for information.

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22nd January 2019