

# Agenda Item 10



LINCOLNSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

8 JULY 2021

SUBJECT :	Defra consultations and their potential impacts on LWP partners
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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This paper sets out the waste policies which Defra have proposed through their Resources and Waste Strategy and subsequent consultations. In addition to specific duties imposed by these policies, they also result in a number of decisions which need to be taken by Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) partners.

## DISCUSSIONS

### Waste Strategy for Lincolnshire

During 2018 the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) developed a joint waste strategy (formally adopted in 2019) which set out 10 key objectives including:

- To improve the quality and therefore commercial value of our recycling stream,
- To consider the introduction of separate food waste collections where technically, environmentally and economically practicable, and
- To make an objective assessment of what further waste processing/disposal capacity is required and, as necessary, secure appropriate capacity.

These objectives have since been transposed into an ever-evolving Action Plan of ongoing projects.

### Resources and Waste Strategy for England (RAWS)

In December 2018, the UK Government published their national strategy, and those RAWS proposals have since given rise to the following five policy themes:

- Consistency of collections – Standardising collections from households and businesses, including dry recyclables, food waste, and garden waste.

- Enhanced Producer Responsibility (EPR) – Packaging producers to fund collection and recycling of certain items, resulting in significant funding for local authorities.
- Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) – Charging a deposit on drinks containers which can be reclaimed on returning the container (e.g. bottle) for recycling.
- Plastic packaging tax – Producers pay a tax on any packaging containing less than 30% recycled plastic.
- Waste prevention – Various proposals to promote this.

Government have since undertaken consultations (in some cases multiple rounds) on each of these themes, and LWP partners have worked together to respond to them, generally supporting the concepts but, where necessary, expressing concerns over some of the details.

We have been encouraged, though not surprised, to see many synergies between the national proposals and the LWP's Strategy and Action Plan, in particular:

- Consistency of collections
  - Food waste – It is proposed that it becomes mandatory to provide separate collections. The LWP have already been trialling this and are assessing how best to rollout the necessary collections and recycling.
  - Standard list of recyclables – Most materials on the list are already collected by the LWP.
  - Separate collections of each material – It may still be possible to collect some recyclables together and our twin-stream collections are a move in the right direction.
- Waste prevention
  - Reuse – The proposed Waste Prevention Programme for England seeks to promote this. LCC are aiming to support more reuse through their HWRC network.

The proposals from the other themes will have major impacts on the quantity and mix of wastes which we receive, and on our budgets – Income and expenditure.

### **Impacts on LWP partners**

The combined impacts of UK Government proposals and ongoing/proposed LWP projects are set out in each of the following sections.

### **Food Waste**

Defra are proposing to make it mandatory for all households and businesses to receive a weekly separate collection of food waste from 2024. The LWP supports this in theory because it would divert a significant tonnage (possibly up to 30kTe per annum) away from residual waste to recycling. However, trial collections and modelled calculations have demonstrated that there would be significant financial implications:

- Collections – Our Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) would face a huge additional cost – e.g. new vehicles and extra crews. Defra have indicated they will fund the costs of "new burdens" but it is not yet clear how those payments will be calculated, particularly in two-tier areas.
- Disposal – LCC have begun a project to provide the necessary recycling capacity for this food waste.

Since the proposals now seem almost certain to become law, LWP partners have already begun to consider how best to comply. It is essential that WCAs and WDA coordinate their efforts to ensure that their plans dovetail effectively.

### **Dry Recycling**

A number of the current proposals will impact us in terms of materials and/or costs:

- Consistency of collections – For the time being, our WCAs current collections, particularly moving to twin-stream collections, are in line with the proposals. However, we need to be aware that future legislation may require them to go even further – e.g. separate collection of all materials. That would totally transform the materials which LCC has to handle, and thus the infrastructure required.
- EPR – This looks set to provide a useful income stream both to WDAs and to WCAs as packaging producers fund the collection and disposal of their packaging. However, it should be noted that this funding may be subject to achieving targets and providing an "efficient and effective" service, meaning that collection and disposal practices may have to change to be eligible for the funding.
- DRS – As well as putting additional burdens on local businesses to provide takeback, this will divert a large quantity of recyclables away the local authority system.
- Plastic packaging tax – We may see a change in the quantity and type of packaging material which comes to us for recycling.
- Waste prevention – If the proposals are successful, this may reduce the quantity of material which we have to recycle.

Given the interactions between these various changes, and the details which are yet to be finalised, it is difficult to forecast the overall impacts. However, the main impacts would appear to be:

- Material quantity – Less recycling due to diversion by DRS.
- Material mix – Loss of drinks containers.
- Income – Additional funding through EPR, although other funding streams may reduce by an equivalent amount.
- Costs – Likely to change, both for collections and for recycling/disposal. However, the multiple interations between various elements make this difficult to quantify at present.

### **Garden Waste**

Defra are proposing to remove the ability of WCAs to charge for collection of garden waste. The LWP have objected to this on the basis that charges reflect the "producer pays" principle of waste management and, far from being "free" as described in Defra's consultation on "consistency", the collections would then be funded through taxation of all residents, including those who have no garden.

If this proposal comes into force, the largest impact will clearly be on WCAs who will lose a significant income stream. However, there may also be a significant impact on WDAs. Whilst Defra are convinced that "free" collections will divert garden waste which is being lost to residual collections, and thus that composting would provide a disposal saving, sampling shows that very little garden waste is currently in our residual waste. Thus, the majority of any increase in composting may be new waste, possibly diverting from home composting.

### **Waste Prevention**

Whilst, technically, reuse is lower down the waste hierarchy (i.e. less preferable) than prevention, Defra's draft Waste Prevention Programme includes proposals to promote reuse. LCC's HWRCs are an ideal place to support reuse, and it is intended that this is incorporated alongside other proposals to improve the performance and reduce costs of this service.

It is, however, too early to quantify the capital costs or any possible savings/income from an extended reuse offering.

## **OPTIONS**

Defra will, at some point, publish the results of their consultations, and these may change the final details of the policies. However, in the meantime, the LWP need to prepare on the basis of the proposals as they stand. In some cases, there will be a number of options which fulfil the requirements, and these options will be proposed and assessed when appropriate.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Initially LWP partners need to continue, both jointly and individually, to respond to government consultations and thus seek to influence policy decisions in the best interests of the people of Lincolnshire. Beyond that, in order of priority:

1. Food Waste – Prioritise preparing for collections and processing capacity by 2024 in line with emerging legislation.
2. Dry Recycling –
  - a) Continue with rollout of twin-stream collections to align with national policy and achieve cost savings.
  - b) Assess and respond to changes in collections and waste composition arising from national policies including Consistency, EPR and DRS.
3. Garden Waste – Prepare for the possibility of additional collections and increased tonnage from "free" collections.
4. Waste Prevention – LCC to assess options for increasing reuse at HWRCs in line with the Waste Hierarchy and to achieve savings.