

LEDNet briefing: Resources and Waste Strategy

Summary

The [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) (the Strategy) was published by Defra on Tuesday 18th December. It is structured around three key areas: the product lifecycle – production, consumption and end of life; topical areas – waste crime and food waste; and bigger picture issues – international leadership, research and innovation, and data, monitoring and evaluation.

The Strategy sets out the Government's wide-ranging ambitions in this area, based on two overarching principles: maximising the value of resource use; and minimising waste and its impacts on the environment. It aims to move away from managing waste, to managing resources (section 8.1.3), and references the use of behavioural insights.

Broadly, the Strategy is ambitious and looks to the long-term, but it is more thorough in some areas than others. Much of its implementation will depend on funding derived from EPR schemes that are to be developed, and on further consultations and legislation to be tabled during this parliament and the next.

The Strategy aligns with a number of LEDNet's broad asks and concerns around waste and resources¹, albeit much of the detail is still to be developed. Perhaps most importantly, the Strategy has the potential to radically rebalance the funding of the waste and resources system away from taxpayers and towards producers, and it recognises the need to carefully consider any additional burdens on local government. It also moves to place the responsibility for minimising waste and increasing recyclability further up the supply chain, where regulatory and economic incentives can be most effective, and to build a strong market for secondary materials.

The rest of this briefing picks out policies of particular interest to London boroughs, but is not an exhaustive survey of everything it contains.

Key policies in the Resources and Waste Strategy

Funding: Extended Producer Responsibility schemes

- The Strategy commits to introducing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging, as required by the EU's Circular Economy Package, which will fund the 'full net cost' of packaging at end of life, including transitional and ongoing operational costs, based on the polluter pays principle. Defra has indicated that this could cover collection, recycling, disposal, reduction of littering and fly-tipping, communications, data collection and reporting, compliance monitoring and enforcement, which is positive.

¹ You can find a copy of LEDNet's position on Resources and Waste on our [webpages](#)

- In addition to an EPR scheme for packaging, the Government aims to consult on two further EPR schemes by the end of this parliament, with likely candidates being textiles, bulky waste, construction and demolition materials, vehicles tyres or fishing gear.
- The Government will also review the existing producer responsibility for waste electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE), end-of-life vehicles and batteries, and may subsequently amend the regulations in these areas to better align them with the wider EPR framework.
- The Strategy sets out principles for how all EPR schemes should operate (section 1.1.1), including that producers should 'bear the full net cost of managing their products at the end of their life', and that 'costs to local authorities are met where appropriate' (our emphasis).
- EPR schemes will provide the majority of the new funding for the waste and resources system, and we will need to ensure that the EPR model adopted works for local government, and aligns with any new obligations placed on boroughs.

Reuse: Household Waste and Recycling Centres and planning

- The Strategy gives considerable attention to Household Waste and Recycling Centres, and considering how they could support reuse and recycling efforts. For example, reuse performance indicators are suggested for Councils.
- The Strategy references the need to use the planning system to support reuse and also recycling, but it is weak on detail.
- The Strategy also suggests mandating spare parts be made available for repair, which could significantly boost local and individual repair efforts.

Recycling: consistency and performance indicators

- A suite of actions come alongside the EPR for packaging, designed to secure the recyclate to drive secondary markets. This includes the following, all of which are to be consulted on:
 - Collection of a specified core set of materials to be collected by local authorities and waste operators from all households and businesses, and potentially specification of 'which collection systems would be most effective at preserving material quality'; the LES already sets out a core set of six dry recycling materials to be collected. (glass, cans, paper, card, plastic bottles and mixed plastics (tubs, pots and trays))
 - Non-binding performance indicators for the quantity of materials collected for recycling and minimum service standards for recycling, for local authorities
 - A mandatory requirement for separate weekly food waste collection for householders and appropriate businesses
 - A possible requirement for free garden waste collection; the LES already calls for food waste at kerbside and in flats where possible.
- We will need to push Government to set out how more segregated services (e.g. for glass and food waste) and the proposal for free garden waste would be funded, and how planning policy will support the in-home and local recycling facilities that would be required.
- The Strategy notes that 'new statutory responsibilities for local government would be subject to an assessment of new burdens.'
- A review will be undertaken to identify when segregation is necessary to achieve high quality recyclate, in particular in relation to glass.
- The Strategy introduces a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), subject to consultation.
- In relation to urban recycling (section 3.1.3), the strategy proposes to:
 - 'Review collection models for densely populated commercial and residential districts to improve recycling and reduce costs whilst maintaining frequency of collections needed to protect local amenity', which could include 'piloting shared domestic and business collection

- rounds or zoned collection services' (Hackney and Westminster are already engaged in a zoning pilot, led by WRAP);
- 'Engage with landlords and estate managers to promote recycling in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and other properties where they have responsibility for waste management arrangements;
- 'Work to align the National Planning Policy for Waste and planning practice guidance with the Resources and Waste Strategy and continue to maintain building regulations guidance to support its objectives; and
- 'Work with transport hubs and other destinations such as hospitals and universities to promote effective and high quality recycling (including on-the-go).'
- Finally, the Strategy says that Government will consider banning problematic plastic products, and notes the consultation – recently closed – on proposals to ban plastic stirrers, straws and cotton buds. The LEDNet response was circulated by email.

Waste disposal and waste infrastructure: supporting efficiency and domestic capacity

- The Strategy commits to bringing the amount of municipal solid waste sent to landfill down to no more than 10% of the total by 2035. In the latest 2017/18 figures, London's percentage of waste to landfill is down to 9.7%.
- The Strategy supports greater use of heat offtake from Energy from Waste facilities, and to ensuring that all new facilities achieve 'recovery status'.
- The Strategy is supportive of new domestic reprocessing capacity, mainly through using other policies in the Strategy to secure high quality recyclate and create demand for it; no new money has been announced beyond the existing £3bn in the Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme, to be spent by 2042.
- The Strategy repeats the announcement from Budget 2018 that, if measures outlined in the Strategy do not deliver increases in recycling, Government will consider introducing a tax on incineration.

Waste crime: ramping up collaboration

- The Strategy aims to improve the transport, management and description of waste by reforming regulations for duty of care, carrier/broker/dealers, hazardous waste, and international waste shipments – this includes the new power local authorities have to issue FPNs to householders who breach their duty of care, which comes into force on 7th January 2019.
- Actions are outlined to increase intelligence sharing between agencies, and cooperation with the waste industry.
- The National Fly-tipping Prevention Group will publish and host a new 'fly-tipping toolkit', probably building in the Hertfordshire approach; there may be opportunities here to use our behavioural insights research to support the toolkit, and to profile our forthcoming trials.
- The Strategy commits to support for local authorities to increase householders' awareness of their duty of care.
- The Strategy also notes that it will look at 'committing a proportion of Landfill Tax receipts to Environment Agency waste crime efforts.'

Exports: reducing illegal activity

- Policies are outlined to tighten controls on waste exports, to ensure that illegal exports do not undermine the aims of the Strategy.

Targets and timelines: moving to carbon and natural capital-based measures

- The Strategy announces an intention to move away from weight-based targets towards those based on carbon and on natural capital, though existing targets will continue to be measured by weight.
- Defra announce that they have funding to work with tech companies on digital solutions for tracking individual movements of waste.
- In line with the longer-term approach of the 25 year plan, the strategy will be reviewed every three years, and refreshed every five years.
- It is worth noting the lengthy timeframe for the Strategy, and that EPR for packaging is not scheduled to come into force until 2023. We should be wary of any move to require councils to deliver new or different services until the funding is in place to support this.

Key dates

- Early 2019: consultations on EPR for packaging, a DRS, and a 'consistent set of recyclable materials collected from all households and businesses'
- April 2019: Environment Bill published
- Early-Mid 2019: Standards for biodegradable and bio-based plastics
- Mid 2019: Consultation on food waste reporting
- Mid-2019: Review of the Waste Management Plan for England
- 2020: Review of the waste electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE) regulations
- 2020: Review of batteries regulations
- 2021: Review of end-of-life vehicles regulations
- 2021: Legislation tabled to bring EPR for packaging into force (via amendment of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations)
- 2022: Introduction of the tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content
- 2022: Consultations on EPR schemes for two areas out of the following non-exhaustive list: textiles, bulky waste, construction and demolition-related materials, vehicles tyres and fishing gear
- 2023: Implementation of a DRS (subject to consultation)

Next steps for LEDNet

1. We have fed into the London Councils response, which will be published on the London Councils website before or just after Christmas
2. The LEDNet Waste Cluster Group is meeting on Friday 25th January, where will discuss the Strategy and consultations, and how LEDNet should respond
3. The LEDNet 4th March meeting will be themed on waste and resources, with WDAs and SLWP also attending
4. We will develop responses to all the consultations coming up, with EPR, DRS and consistency being the first up in January/ February 2019
5. We will continue to work through our local government waste groupings, including Waste Network Chairs, ADEPT Waste Group and the Resource London Partnership Board to develop aligned responses to the consultations and further waste policy development