

ADEPT Waste working group update September 2020

The ADEPT waste group last met on 9 September. There was a full agenda with good attendance, including the usual representation from Defra, CIWM and LGA. Unfortunately the planned presentation from Crown Commercial Services on proposed framework contracts was postponed to a future meeting for technical reasons.

The meeting began with a reflection on operating for 6 months under Covid-19, and a discussion on the main issues and impacts for waste services. There was recognition that things have settled into the new normal, with few further planned changes unless and until social distancing no longer applies. Impacts on HWRC operation are ongoing in many areas with those operating booking systems highlighting their benefits and success in controlling congestion and reducing abuse of sites. It was especially interesting to note that some operating booking systems are likely to continue to do so post-Covid.

With Brexit appearing back on the national agenda there is some uncertainty on the potential impacts on the waste sector. Issues identified pre-Covid remain (e.g. tariffs and trans-frontier shipments) and it was noted that LGA and ADEPT will seek clarification from Defra as to how they propose to re-engage with the networks.

The main focus of the meeting was the update from Defra on a range of matters around the Environment Bill and Resources and Waste Strategy, and feedback from ADEPT representatives on various engagement sessions over the summer. Discussion was aided by a mixture of papers circulated prior to the meeting, and verbal updates/commentary from ADEPT representatives involved in the discussions.

The highlights of feedback on the events are given below:

1. two-tier working/recycling credits under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR),
 - o Two events in July
 - o Detailed confidential note refers
 - o Key issues:
 - Defra recognising complexity of two-tier issues to EPR
 - Consensus emerging is that credits are not necessary with EPR
 - Provides the opportunity to remove a longstanding sore
 - Important not to replace it with another - e.g. where EPR payment goes
 - o Further work needed
 - Presumption that payment to WCA
 - Equity/incentive for disposal payment?
2. waste reduction and resource efficiency targets:
 - o Identified 4 stages in process of setting targets:
 1. Setting scope
 2. Developing targets
 3. Public consultation
 4. Drafting legislation
 - o First stage of process is now.
 - o Consultation expected February 2021
 - o Proposals for two targets
 - Resource productivity - as ratio of GDP to raw material consumption
 - Residual waste to landfill/incineration

- o Interesting debate/questions on matters of principle such as whether fossil fuels should be included in measuring resource efficiency?
3. consistency and food waste collections
- o Detailed confidential notes circulated
 - o Issues highlighted are:
 - Space within some properties
 - Requirement for constant engagement with householders
 - One size doesn't fit all
 - Role for incentives
 - Greater enforcement powers?
 - Improved design for new housing stock
 - Improvements needed in labelling, i.e. compostable
 - Clarity on new burdens funding
4. EPR payment model/systems approach
- o ADEPT pleased to be invited to Defra workshop on EPR - 18 August
 - o led by operational researcher - carrying out systems analysis on EPR
 - o Really interesting and very useful at highlighting confusions/need for further clarity
 - o From ADEPT's view, especially:
 - Role of MRFs in EPR
 - o Question as to whether payments go to operators or to LAs only?
 - o Role of modelled v. actual costs
 - o How to incentivise performance effectively?
 - o Clearly work in progress - encouraged by invitation
5. Waste prevention
- o Note previously circulated

It was noted that ADEPT has taken full advantage of the opportunities for engagement and has made a strong contribution to the debate. Thanks was given to the members that had helped share representation on the various groups, and further volunteers were welcome.