

Manifesto for Stronger Places: our offer on resources and waste Summer 2024

Who we are

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport ([ADEPT](#)) is the voice of place directors who are responsible for providing day to day services including local highways, recycling, waste and planning, whilst preparing for the longer term.

ADEPT is a membership based, voluntary organisation with members across England. We bring together directors from county, unitary, metropolitan and combined authorities, along with sub-national transport bodies and corporate partners drawn from key service sectors.

ADEPT members develop long term strategies, investment and infrastructure needed to make their places resilient, inclusive and prosperous. They drive clean, sustainable growth, delivering the projects that are fundamental to creating more resilient communities, economies and infrastructure. These services include housing, environmental and regulatory services, planning, economic development, culture and highways and transport.

Background

Now is the time to set out how we can work differently with government to empower local authorities to deliver more effectively and efficiently on the critical issues of the day. When local authorities are properly empowered and resourced, they will be in a position to take forward government's key objectives of strong economic areas founded on green growth, sustainable and resilient places and inclusive, connected communities.

Making the case for place has never been more vital. In our [Manifesto for Stronger Places](#), we call on the new government to commit to these strategic objectives:

- Deliver ambitious devolution deals for councils in every area.
- Move away from short-term competitive funding pots to a multi-year, simplified funding framework.
- Tackle geographical inequalities to promote prosperity, inclusion, and better health and wellbeing for all.
- Pursue sustainable growth that delivers green jobs and skills and protects the environment.
- Take a place based approach to the challenges of net zero, adaptation, nature protection and recovery.

Our vision for the future of resources and waste

ADEPT is ready to work with the new government to bring forward a more circular economy, improve incentives for creating more circular products and services, and secure greater protection for the environment when dealing with waste and resources.

There are three key priorities for the new government:

1. Drive sustainable production.
2. Tackle consumption, helping consumers make more sustainable choices.
3. Improve resource recovery and reduce impacts of waste on the environment.

Our resources and waste priorities for the new government

We urge the new government to commit to rapid implementation of the existing Resources & Waste Strategy policies in a way that supports their commitments to green growth and jobs and a zero waste circular economy.

1. Drive sustainable production

- Through the rapid rollout of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging as well as textiles, absorbent hygiene products, Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) batteries and bulky waste, to directly incentivise resource efficiency, circularity and waste and carbon reduction.
- Stimulate eco-design through key waste sector plans and adoption of a resource productivity target and encourage greater resource security by requiring greater recycled content and facilitating investment in UK reprocessing capacity.

2. Tackle consumption, helping consumers make more sustainable choices

- By adopting waste reduction, repair and re-use targets which will deliver green jobs and improved resource productivity.
- Regulate for a 'right to repair' and introduce fiscal measures to price raw materials to include the environmental costs of production, to make it easier and cheaper for consumers to choose to do the right thing.
- Invest in a long term national communication campaign to influence consumer behaviour, without which the government's green economy and resource productivity ambitions will fail.

3. Improve resource recovery and reduce impacts of waste on the environment

- By giving councils the funding clarity, time for service transition and flexibility on refuse service frequency to ensure the success of Simpler Recycling in driving a step change in recycling performance.
- Decarbonise the waste stream and wider economy by directly passing costs from the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to producers, in line with the 'polluter pays principle', incentivising them to develop decarbonisation pathways for their product streams.
- Work with councils to develop cost-effective, funded solutions for managing hazardous materials including Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), to reduce environmental harm.

Funding

Local government has an excellent track record of delivering high quality, cost-effective local waste services, in the face of real **financial challenges**. Since the 2010s, local government's overall core funding per person has fallen dramatically, with the reduced funding from central government only partially offset by local tax increases.

Spending per person on environment services has dropped by over 20 per cent and spending on key services like transport and housing have fallen by over 45 per cent.

Local authorities, as waste collection and waste disposal authorities, are expected to play a pivotal role in delivering the government's Resource and Waste Strategy. Its waste policies will have a multibillion-pound impact on local authority finances. In order to ensure they are successful, ADEPT has identified the following requirements:

- **Retain the 'polluter pays' principle** at the heart of waste policy.
- **Implement packaging EPR** to the planned schedule, ensuring **full net cost recovery** from producers.
- **Provide clarity to local authorities on EPR payments and new burdens funding immediately**, to enable investment decisions and delivery of Simpler Recycling requirements.
- **Directly pass ETS costs to producers** to incentivise decarbonisation, support sustainable consumption choices and avoid exposing councils to unnecessary financial risk.
- **Develop a funded plan for the safe management of hazardous wastes** recognising that the recent trend of imposing unfunded new requirements on councils (e.g. for POPs in soft furnishings) is not a sustainable approach to managing environmental hazard.

ADEPT welcomes the overall **Simpler Recycling** approach but notes essential implementation and funding actions that are detailed in the full version of our policy asks for resources and waste, which is available [here](#).

ADEPT fully supports the need to **decarbonise** waste and recognises that inclusion of Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities into the **UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)** can play a key role. However, ETS can only properly achieve its objectives by putting cost incentives in the right place with a priority focus on **reducing** the production of fossil-based waste in the first place. Full details of our proposals are available in the [full version](#) of our policy asks.