

## Report for Information

**Report to** Sustainable Development Panel  
28 September 2011  
**Report of** Head of Citywide Services  
**Subject** Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011

---

**Item**  
**10**

### Purpose

The report provides an update on the Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011.

### Recommendations

That members note the report.

### Financial Consequences

None

### Risk Assessment

None

### Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Safe and healthy neighbourhoods – working in partnership with residents to create neighbourhoods where people feel secure, where the streets are clean and well maintained, where there is good quality housing and local amenities and where there are active local communities”. Within the Integrated Waste Strategy for Norwich 2007-2012, the Council has a clear strategic objective *“To be amongst the best recycling authorities in the Country by March 2012 and longer term to be one of the top ten recycling authorities in the Country”*.

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Westmacott

**Ward:** All

### Contact Officers

Adrian Akester

01603 212331

### Background Documents

Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011

## Report

### General

The government published its review of waste policy in England on the 14 June 2011. A link to the web pages of the full review is as follows: -

[Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011 « Defra publications](#)

The waste review includes a range of commitments and proposals aimed at making waste prevention a priority. It also outlines steps towards a “zero waste” economy, which the government defines as the outcome of a process for deriving maximum value from resources – i.e. re-use, recycling and energy recovery - “one person’s waste is another’s resource; over time we get as close as we possibly can to zero landfill”.

Much of the review is focussed on waste disposal, waste treatment and business waste issues, which impact more directly on the County Council, as waste disposal authority.

The review is predominantly concerned with proposals, commitments and voluntary agreements. There is no financial investment and no additional funds to develop new services or support existing ones.

### Collections

- The review notes that many Local Authorities have moved to alternate weekly collection services (AWC) for waste and recycling both to increase recycling rates and reduce costs. It is the government’s view that the public have a “reasonable expectation” that household waste collections should be weekly, especially for what it terms “smelly” waste. However, there is no funding provided to enable Councils on AWC services to return to weekly waste collections (if they were minded to do so) and no funding to encourage or support dedicated food waste collections.

In effect, the review has adopted a pragmatic approach to collection services and recognised that these are a matter for local authorities to develop fit-for-purpose and cost effective local solutions.

*Norwich has the only district-wide weekly foodwaste collection service in Norfolk and this, combined with an effective AWC service means that the Council already meets the government’s view of householder collection expectations and minimum requirements.*

### Waste prevention

- A comprehensive waste prevention programme is to be developed by the end of 2013 with a commitment to work with and support businesses, local authorities and the third sector, in particular to help reduce avoidable food waste.

- Alongside this there will be a Waste Prevention Fund, a small fund to support organisations including businesses, social enterprises and LA's to undertake waste prevention activities. This fund will be administered by the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

*At present we do not know the size of the fund or the activities that would qualify for support, but it should be noted that WRAP do not currently allocate financial support to individual LA's. The existing policy is to provide support and expertise 'in kind' and only to LA's that are working in partnership with others.*

## **Waste enforcement**

- The government is also intent on de-criminalising what are referred to as "trivial" household waste offences ('bin crimes'). Under the banner of making enforcement action "proportionate, necessary and fair" the government aims to ensure that leaving a bin lid open does not attract the same level of fine as (for example) a shoplifting offence. It also proposes to replace criminal sanctions with civil sanctions around issues such as incorrectly presented waste and recycling. This is intended to target householders who repeatedly offend under a "harm to local amenity" rule. The repeal of Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 will replace the option of criminal conviction and fines of up to £1,000 with fixed penalty notices of £75 - £110.
- Whilst the review seeks to lessen the enforcement of domestic waste offences it also commits to ensuring that LA's have sufficient powers to tackle illegal waste sites and fly-tipping and will introduce stronger powers to seize vehicles suspected of involvement in waste crimes.

*Norwich has used existing powers to specifically target residents who have repeatedly left their bins out on the pavement causing obstructions to pedestrians – particularly those with mobility issues and parents with prams and pushchairs. The Council has an agreed and effective procedure using officers in the neighbourhood teams and public protection to help inform and educate residents to store their receptacles safely and without causing a nuisance to others. Bins-on-streets are a common complaint from both residents and councillors and our existing response to this issue fits well with the "harm to local amenity" rule.*

*On the matter of waste and recycling presentation, the Council has a yellow and red card system which provides residents with clear guidance on collection procedures and this is supported by waste and recycling specialists within our customer contact team and home visits from neighbourhood officers or waste and recycling specialists as and when required.*

## **Targets**

- The review includes commitments to support incentive schemes which "reward and recognise people, who do the right thing to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste" and to support "councils and waste companies to improve the quality of waste collection from small businesses".

- The review also outlines plans to take a voluntary approach to cutting waste and increasing recycling; including developing voluntary responsibility deals in a range of sectors, including hospitality, retail, direct mail and the waste industry". It says the government "will work with and support" businesses, councils and third sector organisations to help reduce avoidable food waste.
- There are no specific targets for business or household waste and recycling. The review states that England should aim "at the very least" to meet the Waste Framework Directive of 50% recycling by 2020. (Scotland and Wales both have specific targets for 70% recycling by 2025).

*Norwich is currently recycling around 42% of waste and has a corporate target of 55% recycling in 2012 – this is well above and ahead of the aims of the review. An action plan to ensure this target is reached (and exceeded) has been approved and will be implemented during financial year 2011/12.*

### **Waste disposal and waste treatment**

- The review considers some new restrictions aimed at waste prevention, including a plan to consult on banning wood waste from landfill and to review the case for restrictions on sending other waste types of waste to landfill. It is likely that biodegradable waste and textiles will also be candidates for landfill bans. These proposals will be considered over the course of the current Parliament.
- The review promotes the benefits of Anaerobic Digestion (AD) but also recognises that there are "many different technologies" available to process waste and each might have a role to play depending on the type of waste and local issues.
- An AD strategy and action plan was published at the same time as the review providing guidance on costs and benefits and best practice examples. There is a commitment to publish a guide to energy from waste and to provide the necessary framework to address market failures, ensuring that incentives are in place to support the development of waste recovery infrastructure as a renewable energy source.
- There is a further commitment to provide advice and support for LA's on science and technology as well as effective contract management in order to generate efficiencies in waste collection, reprocessing and treatment. There is also an intention to "seek" to reduce the commercial barriers to the effective financing of infrastructure projects.
- There is a commitment to reduce legislative burdens on Local Authorities, primarily the abolition of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS).

### **Packaging**

- The government intends to review the current regime of producer responsibility in time for the revised EU packaging directive (expected from 2014.)

- There will be a consultation on increased recycling targets on packaging producers for the period 2013-2017 and a decision will be included in the 2012 budget.
- There is a commitment to work closely with businesses to develop new voluntary responsibility deals in a range of sectors including hospitality, retail, direct mail, waste management, paper, construction waste and textiles.
- There is also a proposal for 'responsibility deals' to raise recycling rates for metal and plastic packaging.

### **Business waste**

- There is a commitment to develop a voluntary responsibility deal under which the waste management industry will work to improve the experience and access of small and medium enterprises (SME's) to cost-effective recycling services.
- The government will work with LA's on a Business waste Commitment to develop the recycling services offered to SME's.
- Some requirements for LA's to provide data to government will be abolished in order to reduce workload and costs.
- There is a commitment to consult on the desirability of maintaining the statutory requirement for Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategies.
- A commitment to change to carbon metric reporting rather than reporting tonnages for waste and recycling.
- Encourage LA's to sign up to the Recycling and Waste Services Commitment , which is intended to be a stronger statement than the existing waste Collection Commitment