

LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

19 MARCH 2019

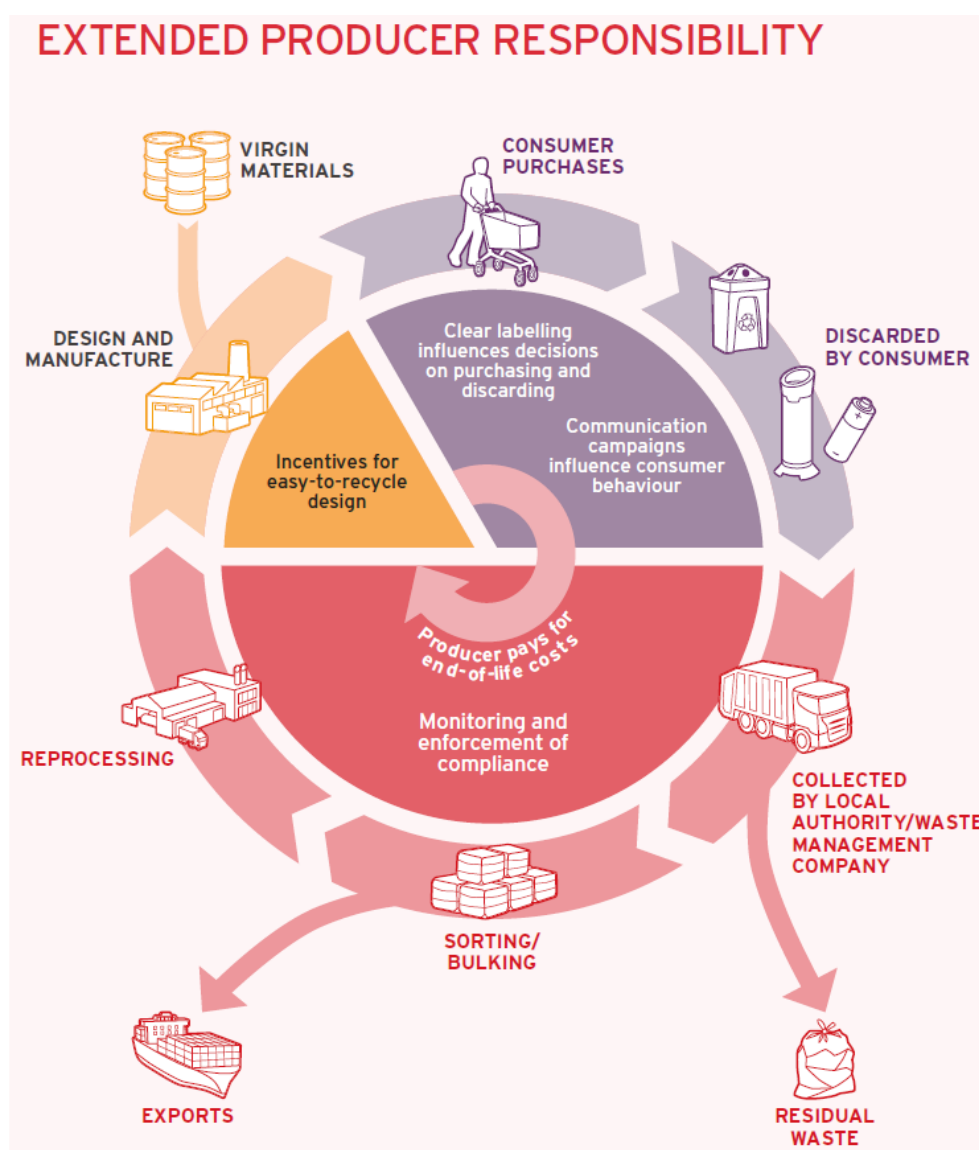
NEW NATIONAL WASTE STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the details of the government's recent release of 'Our Waste Our Resources A Strategy for England' and the potential implications for Newark and Sherwood District Council

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The newly released Our Waste Our Resources strategy builds on the back of the aspirations set out in the government's 25 year environment plan. The over-arching theme of the plan is one of minimising resource use and increasing producer responsibility for waste. Within the industry press the plan has widely been perceived as ambitious and forward thinking but there have been concerns raised about the funds available to meet the plans aspirations. The figure below highlights the key principles which form the backbone of the strategy.

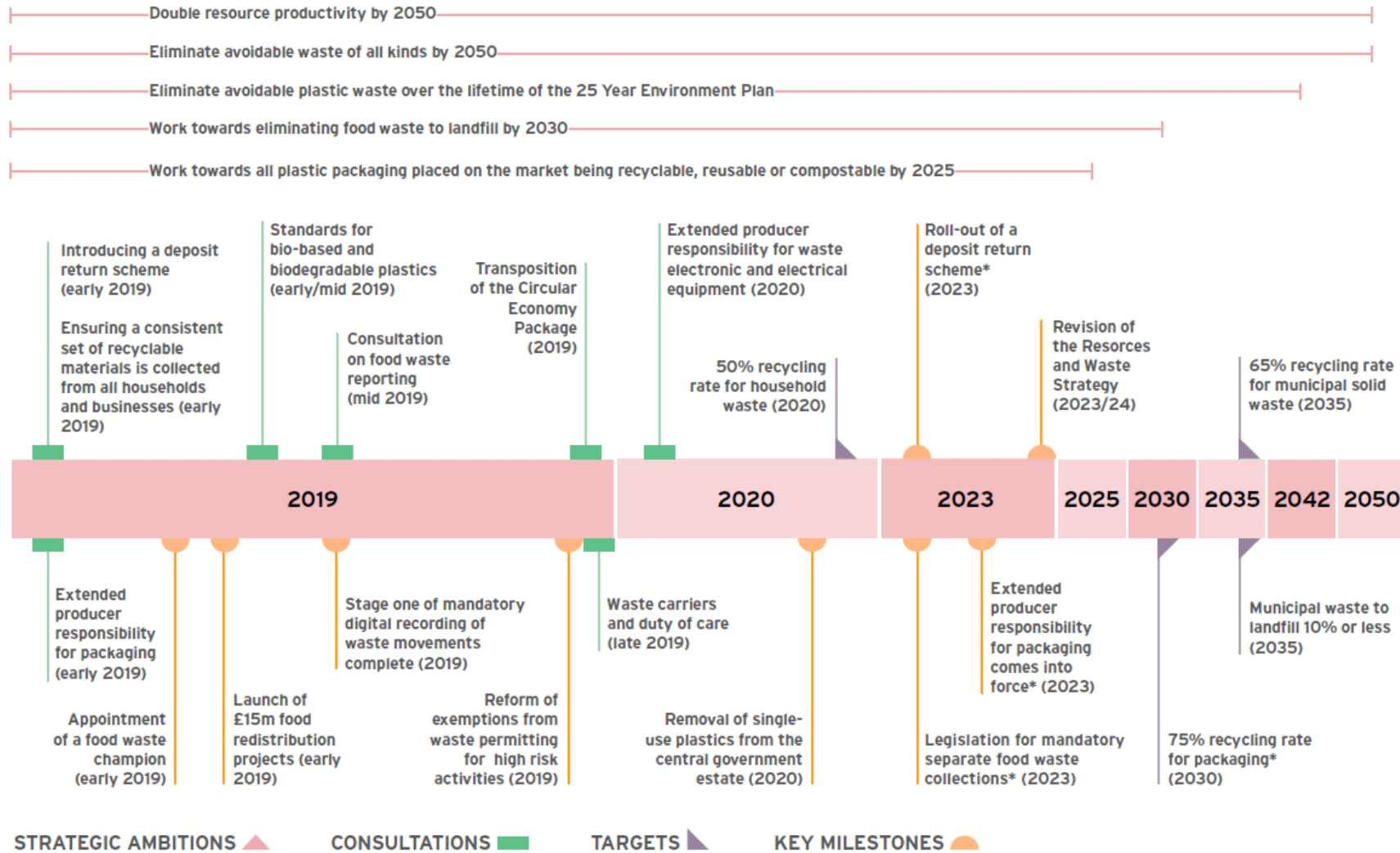


3.0 **Strategic Ambitions - Key Milestones, Targets & Consultations.**

Strategic Ambitions	Consultations	Targets
Introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme DRS	2019	2023
Ensuring consistent materials collected from all households project	2019	2023
50% recycling rate for household wastes.		2020
Legislation for mandatory separate waste food collections		2023
Extended Producer responsibility legislation comes into force		2023
75% recycling rate for packaging		2030
65% recycling rate for Municipal Solid Wastes		2035

The key changes outlined in this report all require further consultation. A timeline of targets has been provided in the report and is copied below. The government has already committed to transferring the EU waste targets of 50% recycling rate by 2020 and 65% by 2035 and has established new targets for packaging recycling and landfill diversion to complement these.

KEY MILESTONES



*subject to consultation

4.0 Report Summary

The executive summary of the strategy provides bulleted summaries of the key point raised in each section. These summaries have been replicated below with additional commentary as to what the potential impact may be for Newark and Sherwood District Council and its partners.

4.1 Chapter One – Sustainable Productions

- Invoke the ‘polluter pays’ principle and extend producer responsibility for packaging, ensuring that producers pay the full costs of disposal for packaging they place on the market
- Stimulate demand for recycled plastic by introducing a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled plastic
- Harness the potential of extended producer responsibility for other product types
- Set minimum requirements through ecodesign to encourage resource efficient product design
- Manage chemicals sustainably and address barriers to reuse and recycling posed by their use, through a Chemicals Strategy
- Develop a model for realising resource efficiency savings, working with businesses through ‘resource efficiency clusters’

It is difficult to see how much of this will have a direct impact on NSDC. Increased taxation may drive demand for recycled plastics but this will not facilitate the collection of new plastic streams in the recycling bin without additional infrastructure at the Mansfield MRF. The strategy indicates that the expectation is that Extended Producer Responsibility will provide this investment but until the consultation has been completed this remains as conjecture.

Producer responsibility schemes are already in place for some products (e.g. WEEE) and the funding from the producer has never filtered down to the level of the collection authority. It will take a real shift in attitudes and policy to move the cost burden of collection and disposal away from local government and onto producers. Ultimately the consumer will pay for collection and disposal either through the initial purchase cost or via taxation. The argument for shifting the emphasis to the producer is that this will encourage waste reduction and sustainable design to make material easier to recover.

4.2 Chapter Two - Helping consumers take more considered actions

- Incentivise consumers to purchase sustainably
- Provide consumers with better information on the sustainability of their purchases
- Ban plastic products where there is a clear case for it and alternatives exist
- Address barriers to reuse
- Support the market for remanufactured goods
- Encourage appropriate disposal of used products
- Lead by example through procurement and the Greening Government Commitments

Increased reuse and waste reduction may have a tonnage implication on our collection rates as we would expect a decrease in the amount of material collected. Deposit and return schemes are interesting they may encourage responsible disposal which could lead to a decrease in littering but they may again result in a drop in the amount of recyclable materials collected by the council. This is by no means a bad thing, if the existing indicators are modified to ensure that this new material is accounted for it would create greater transparency as to the life cycle of materials.

Any tonnage losses may be offset by an increase in materials collected driven by the better communication and labelling methods proposed in the strategy as well as the consistent material sets detailed in Chapter 3.

4.3 Chapter Three – Recovering Resources and Managing Wastes

- Improve recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of dry recyclable materials is collected from all households and businesses.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill by ensuring that every householder and appropriate businesses have a weekly separate food waste collection, subject to consultation
- Improve urban recycling rates, working with business and local authorities
- Improve working arrangements and performance between local authorities
- Drive greater efficiency of Energy from Waste (EfW) plants
- Address information barriers to the use of secondary materials
- Encourage waste producers and managers to implement the waste hierarchy in respect to hazardous waste

This is the chapter of the strategy which appears to have the greatest potential impact for local authorities. The call to create a consistent set of dry recyclable materials is one that has been made many times; however this is not an easy task. Every authority around the UK has a differing set of collection criteria mainly based on the input specification of the recovery facilities available to them. Moving to a single set of materials will either see the criteria set to a very basic level which fails to address the issue or it will require a significant level of investment to ensure all authorities have access to recovery facilities with suitable equipment to collect a wide range of materials.

Food waste collections have been established in many local authorities and are often seen as a driver to waste reduction as once households start separating food waste they realise how much food is being wasted and this leads to smarter purchasing and use. It may be that the government shies away from this though and instead opts for a ban on food waste going to landfill. Nottinghamshire authorities already divert all their waste from landfill as it is all sent for energy recovery via incineration. If the option for kerbside collection of food waste is selected then additional processing facilities are going to be necessary. Given the historic resistance to the location of waste processing facilities it is likely that changes to planning guidance or legislation will be required to deliver new infrastructure.

Not listed here but tucked away in the main text is the commitment to consult on the provision of free garden waste collection for all properties requiring one in England. It is difficult to see how this would work in reality. In some local authority areas garden waste is collected by third party providers which may have no interaction with the authority at all (e.g. Melton's service is conducted entirely by Biffa with no involvement from the authority). It's hard to envisage how the government would insist that these collections were made free. Although free collections might reduce greenhouse emissions the funding for such collections would have to come from a new source as the producer pays principle would not be applicable in fact removing charges would be contrary to Extended Producer Responsibility as the householder is the producer of the waste.

There is also a commitment to reform the working relationships between two-tier authorities although again it is extremely vague how this will happen and what will be involved. There is discussion about reviewing the recycling credit scheme but again there's no detail on what would replace it.

4.4 Chapter Four – Tackling Waste Crime

- Improve the transport, management and description of waste by reforming existing regulations
- Strengthen intelligence sharing and engagement to tackle illegal activity
- Prevent illegal activity being hidden through waste exemptions by reforming the existing regime
- Mandate the digital recording of waste movements, subject to consultation
- Create a Joint Unit for Waste Crime
- Toughen penalties for waste criminals
- Increase awareness of waste regulations and publicise positive work of enforcement bodies as they tackle waste crime

Regulation reform and an increase in joint information sharing can only be a good thing when it comes to tackling waste crime. However real change will require considerable investment and commitment from multiple agencies. We will watch developments in this area with interest.

4.5 Chapter 5 – Enough is Enough: Cutting Down on Food Waste

- More effectively redistribute food to those who need it most before it can go to waste
- Consult on annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses
- Consult on legal powers to introduce food waste targets and surplus food redistribution obligations
- Publish a new food surplus and waste hierarchy
- Promote awareness of the issue by appointing a new food waste champion
- Support cross sector collaboration through the Courtauld 2025 agreement

This chapter focuses on food waste and is unlikely to have direct effects on NSDC but it does highlight that food waste is a clear priority for the government.

4.6 Chapter 6 – Global Britain: International Leadership

- Promote the goals of our Resources and Waste Strategy internationally
- Drive international political commitments through the ground-breaking Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance
- Support developing nations to tackle pollution and reduce plastic waste, including through UK aid
- Improve the quality of plastics exported for recycling through the Basel and Stockholm Conventions
- Establish cross-government oversight of the UK's natural resource security

4.7 Chapter 7: Research and Innovation

- Support further investment and innovation in resource efficiency, working with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) on our Areas of Research Interest
- Launch a call for evidence on the development of standards for bio-based and biodegradable plastics
- Support further investment in resource efficient technologies, including through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund
- Support the Waste and Resources Action Programme
- Encourage innovative waste treatment technologies that create transport fuels through the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO)

4.8 Chapter Eight - Measuring Progress: Data Monitoring and Evaluation

- Work with our partners and stakeholders to develop a shared vision and bold new approach to data on resources and waste
- Move away from weight-based towards impact-based targets and reporting, focusing initially on carbon and natural capital accounting
- Maintain the coverage and quality of local authority-collected waste and improve data collection to meet future needs
- Work with tech firms to develop innovative digital solutions for tracking waste, and consult on options to mandate the digital recording and sharing of waste movement data

This is the first sign we have seen that the government is considering moving away from weight based targets and reporting. A shift to impact based reporting is an interesting concept but it's hard to conduct without far more detailed data collection from the management stages and production of materials throughout the entire chain. From the perspective of NSDC it is likely that the existing national reporting system (Waste Data Flow) will be updated to account for any alteration in measurement technique.

5.0 Summary

As noted in in section 2.0 the strategy has been well received by the industry but there are concerns about how the ambitions held within it are to be financed. There is an emphasis on the producer pays principle but there is a degree of scepticism about the government's commitment to place a considerable financial burden onto waste producers.

Until the numerous consultation exercises have been completed it is difficult to state the impact of the strategy with any certainty. What can be gleaned is that waste management is back on the radar of central government following almost a decade of dismissal.

There are opportunities here for revolutionary change to the way the nation manages its resources, it remains to be seen if these will be taken.

6.0 Equalities Implications

6.1 None at this stage any future alterations to services may have Equalities implications.

7.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

7.1 None at this stage but future budget implications could be considerable.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the information contained in the report.

Reason for Recommendation

To provide updated information to Members with regards to the national policy on recycling.

Background Papers

National Waste Strategy

For further information please contact Matt Adey on Ext 5253

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