



Department of the
Environment

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DIVISION

A New Recycling Policy Consultation Document

Department of the Environment

March 2011

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MINISTERIAL PREFACE

In Northern Ireland we produce an estimated 6 million tonnes of waste from the municipal, construction, commercial and industrial sectors each year. We have made excellent progress in reducing the amount of this waste which is sent to landfill but much more remains to be achieved.

The context in which we manage our waste is changing. There is an increasing recognition that waste is a resource with an intrinsic value. How we manage this resource is key to releasing and realising that value.

The benefits of managing waste as a resource go beyond the immediate environmental impacts and extend to supporting sustainable economic growth and to promoting the health and well being of all in Northern Ireland – key priorities of the Programme for Government.

Recycling more of the waste we produce is central to this “resource efficiency” approach. By recycling more waste we reduce waste to landfill, harmful greenhouse gas emissions and prevent pollution of land, air, waterways and ecosystems.

Local councils have been proactive in boosting recycling performance and some are now achieving recycling rates of 50% demonstrating what can be achieved through concerted action. However, there is wide variation in recycling rates across councils reflecting various factors, such as demographics and socio economic characteristics as well as differences in the approach taken by different councils. It is however clear that there is potential to improve recycling activity from the current performance and in turn to unlock the value of key waste streams.

I am committed to helping local councils improve their recycling performance and have allocated over £5m funding in this financial year through the Rethink Waste Fund for initiatives which will enable councils to boost their recycling rates.

I also want to see further improvements in recycling in the construction and demolition and commercial and industrial sectors. These are key sectors of our economy which by adopting a resource efficient waste management approach have the potential to generate significant benefits to Northern Ireland.

Our recycling and reprocessing sector is an important part of the economy which sustains many local jobs providing income and investment both directly and through multiplier effects. The sector is highly innovative finding new ways to recycle more of the waste we produce and often being an early adopter of new technologies. These are key aspects of a productive economy.

I want to ensure that we fully exploit the environmental, economic and social opportunities and benefits which recycling more of the waste we produce – from all sectors - will generate.

This policy paper sets out our proposals for more ambitious targets for recycling and seeks views on these targets and any practical and sustainable measures which can be taken to achieve this.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This consultation document sets out a new recycling policy and includes new, more ambitious targets for the recycling of municipal waste. It also describes some of the work which will be necessary to meet targets for commercial and industrial (C&I) and construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) waste. The consultation argues that there is a potential for Northern Ireland to achieve municipal recycling rates in the region of 60% over the next 10 years – assuming that the 50% household recycling target for 2020 set in the Waste Framework Directive will be achieved as a key element of the progress towards the municipal targets.

The Department therefore intends to set targets at local government level for 60% municipal recycling by 2020. The Department is also seeking to develop more accurate information on the C&I recycling rate and, based on this, will seek to set similar recycling targets for C&I waste. Setting similar targets for C&I waste reflects the need to treat all waste as a valuable resource. It also reflects the need to ensure that all those managing waste, whether in business, local government or community and voluntary sector, should be encouraged to move up the waste hierarchy away from disposal and energy recovery and towards waste prevention, recycling and re-use.

Accordingly, the Department will be considering in future legislation and other interventions, how to establish a comprehensive regime of incentives and sanctions across all sectors of waste management to encourage the best outcomes consistent with these targets.

2. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this consultation

- 2.1 This consultation document reflects a renewed focus on increasing recycling rates. It sets out a new recycling policy which includes new, more ambitious targets for the recycling of municipal waste and also describes some of the work which will be necessary to meet targets for commercial and industrial (C&I) and construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) waste.
- 2.2 The document describes the impact that this will make in terms of increasing resource efficiency and the Executive's Programme of Government priorities to grow the economy, to reduce green house gas emissions and to promote health and wellbeing. By recycling more waste and reducing waste to landfill it will be possible to ensure that more waste is managed in a manner consistent with the waste management hierarchy.
- 2.3 The proposals include higher targets for the recycling of municipal waste along with some suggestions as to how this improved performance could be facilitated. One method of improving performance could be the introduction of statutory recycling targets underpinned by legislation. If the Department decides that such legislation is required, this would be the subject of a second stage consultation.

How to Respond

- 2.4 Respondents are requested to explain who they are and, in the case of representative groups, to give a summary of the people and / or organisations they represent. **The closing date for responses is 10 June 2011.** Please send your responses by post, email or fax and marked

Consultation on Recycling Policy Proposals to:

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Environmental Policy Division
Department of the Environment
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Goodwood House
44-58 May Street
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BT1 4NN
Email to wendy.cooke@doeni.gov.uk
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Textphone: 028 90540642

- 2.5 Further copies of the consultation paper may be obtained from the Department's website www.doeni.gov.uk/waste or from the contact above. This consultation document can be made available in large print, disc, Braille or audiocassette and may also be made available in minority languages for those not proficient in English.

Publication of Responses

- 2.6 In line with the Department's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of the responses received may be made publicly available, upon request, from the Department (see above for contact details). The information they contain may also be published in a summary of responses (see also below).
- 2.7 The Department will publish a summary of responses received after the consultation process has ended. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations which provide guidance on the legal

position concerning any information provided by you in response to this consultation.

- 2.8 If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response is treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in email responses will not be treated as such a request. You should also be aware that there may be circumstances in which the Department will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.¹

Freedom of Information Act 2000

- 2.9 The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case, the Department. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation exercise. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in the course of a consultation exercise. However, the Department does have a responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential.
- 2.10 This means that information provided by you in response to this consultation will not be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act² provides that:

¹ S.I. 2004/3391

² <http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/docs/foi-section45-code-of-practice.pdf>

- a. The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- b. The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature;
- c. Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified by the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office at:³

Information Commissioner's Office (Northern Ireland)

**51 Adelaide Street
Belfast,
BT2 8FE**

Tel: 028 9026 9380

Fax: 028 9026 9388

Email: ni@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Comments or Complaints

- 2.11 Comments or complaints about this consultation process (as opposed to comments about the issue which is the subject of this consultation) should be addressed to:

³ See <http://www.ico.gov.uk> for details

**Corporate & Resources Group
Department of the Environment
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street Belfast
BT2 8GB**

Outcome of the Consultation

2.12 At the end of the consultation period the Department will consider all the responses received and will produce a summary document which will be available on the Department's website. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, it is intended that it may be followed by a second stage consultation, if appropriate, on detailed proposals for draft regulations.

Equality Issues

2.13 Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998⁴, public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity. We have completed an equality screening of the proposals and have concluded that they do not impact on equality of opportunity on any of the groups specified in section 75. A summary of the screening paper is attached as Annex A and the full screening paper will be posted on the DOE Equality Unit Website.⁵

2.14 The Equality Commission will receive copies of this consultation document as part of the consultation exercise. We will take into account any comments that the Commission might have.

⁴ 1998 c. 47

⁵ http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/equality_unit.htm

Human Rights Issues

- 2.15 The Human Rights Act 1998⁶ implements the European Convention on Human Rights. The 1998 Act makes it unlawful for any public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with these rights. We believe that the proposals in this consultation document are compatible with the Human Rights Act, but would welcome any views that you might have.
- 2.16 The Human Rights Commission will receive copies of the consultation document as part of this consultation. We will take into account any comments that the Commission might have.

Rural

- 2.17 It is Government policy that all Government Departments and Agencies intending to introduce a new policy should subject that policy to rural proofing. **Annex B** sets out the likely effects of the proposals.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

- 2.18 As stated earlier, this consultation concerns the introduction of a new recycling policy and new targets for the recycling of municipal waste. The Department will decide based on the outcome of this consultation process whether legislation is required to provide a statutory basis for the targets. If considered necessary a second stage consultation will be undertaken outlining draft Regulations to effect the improvement in recycling activity.
- 2.19 Accordingly, the policy interventions which will be taken forward are not yet known and as such cannot accurately be reflected in a regulatory

⁶ 1998 c. 42

impact assessment. If a decision is made to introduce statutory targets, they will be reflected in draft Regulations and an associated stage two consultation. Therefore, a regulatory assessment has not been prepared for this consultation but will be carried out as part of any proposed stage two consultation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In Northern Ireland we produce over 6 million tonnes of waste from a range of sources each year. Of this municipal waste accounts for just over 1 million tonnes whilst the construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) sector produces 4 million tonnes with the remaining 1 million tonnes of waste from the commercial and industrial (C&I) sector. The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020 (“Towards Resource Management”) (“the Strategy”) sets out a number of key policies, actions and targets that can contribute to better waste management practices, increase resource efficiency and sustainable development. One key element of that strategy is the diversion of waste from landfill, particularly by preventing waste from arising and by increasing recycling rates through kerbside and bring schemes and residual waste treatment.
- 3.2 We have made significant progress over the last ten years in reducing the amount of this waste which is sent to landfill, in improving our recycling activity and thereby preserving the value that may be derived from waste materials but we still require the development of significant residual waste infrastructure if we are to meet statutory Landfill Directive targets and avoid EU Infraction. Local councils have played a key role in this regard and have proactively sought to increase recycling rates. In 2009/2010 around 35.6% of household waste was recycled and composted compared to only 5% in 1999. In parallel, the particularly harmful biodegradable element of municipal waste sent to landfill has seen a steady decline from circa 558,000 tonnes in 2005/06⁷ to 383,000 in 2009/10.
- 3.3 The commercial and industrial sectors and the construction and demolition sectors have also played a significant role in minimising the harmful environmental impacts of waste. While comprehensive data are not

⁷ 2005/06 is the first year of the NI Landfill Allowance Scheme

available for these sectors, there have been a series of developments such as a reduction in packaging, the use of Environmental Management Systems (EMS's) and the re-use of topsoil. It is clear that in the current economic climate there has never been a better case for making every possible use of the resources available to businesses, including those previously labelled as waste.

A Changing Emphasis

- 3.4 Our approach to waste management has traditionally focused on minimising the harmful environmental impacts of waste on land, waterways and ecosystems and reducing the associated harmful greenhouse gas emissions and their contribution to climate change. This has driven the marked improvement in our recycling performance, a reduction in landfilled waste and the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from such waste.
- 3.5 However, the context within which we manage our waste is changing. Waste is increasingly recognised as a resource of intrinsic value which, if managed effectively, can generate substantial economic, social and environmental benefits to all in Northern Ireland. This approach is based on the concept of **resource efficiency** and is fully aligned with the principles of sustainable development and the waste treatment hierarchy.
- 3.6 It is concerned with a **life-cycle approach** to waste management, from product design to end of life treatment, rather than focusing simply on end-of-life methods. It is concerned with realising the full value of waste as a resource by maximising its economic and social benefits and minimising harmful environmental impacts. It is about individuals, businesses and the public sector recognising the environmental, economic and social value of resources and playing their part in using these resources efficiently. The

European revised Waste Framework Directive (rWFD) sets the objective of reducing the overall impacts of resource use and improving the efficiency of such use.

- 3.7 In line with this more holistic approach, there is also a much greater emphasis on commercial and industrial (C&I) and construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) waste, rather than a pure focus on municipal and household waste.
- 3.8 Recycling is an essential and central aspect of this approach. Recycling more of the materials which would otherwise be sent to landfill reduces material demand and emissions. Recycling is recognised by the Waste and Resources Action Programme⁸ as one of the seven key resource efficiency strategies which could make a significant contribution to the 10% target reduction in UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

⁸ WRAP report, November 2010, “Securing the Future – The Role of Resource Efficiency.”

4. DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

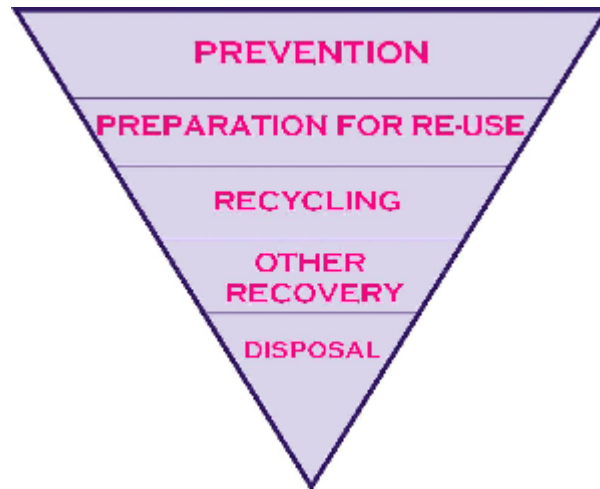
Ministerial Commitment

- 4.1. Minister for the Environment, Edwin Poots, has made clear his view that there is scope to achieve recycling rates which go well beyond the 50% EU target for household waste. Analyses underpinning this document indicate that the achievement of a municipal recycling rate of 60% by 2020 whilst stretching, is achievable. This would require further kerbside recycling schemes, improvements to existing schemes and recycling centres, additional recycling achieved from residual waste treatment and harmonisation of the definition of what comprises recycling.

European Drivers

- 4.2. The European Landfill Directive has been the main statutory driver behind member states actions to reduce landfilled waste. At national level the Climate Change Act 2008 and the targets set therein to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions is also a key factor influencing how we manage our waste. The European revised Waste Framework Directive (rWFD) places a renewed emphasis on the importance of treating waste further up the waste hierarchy – away from disposal and towards waste prevention, recycling and reuse and energy recovery – and has set targets to recycle 50% of household waste by 2020 and 70% of construction and demolition waste by that date.

The Waste Hierarchy:



- 4.3. The Packaging Directive also sets targets for the recycling/recovery of packaging waste. The recovery and recycling targets set by the original Directive for packaging waste were revised in 2004 by an amending Directive, increasing the recycling targets to be met by Member States by 2008 to 60% overall recovery of packaging waste; and 55% minimum and 80% maximum recycling of packaging waste. The amending Directive also set material specific recycling targets by weight, namely: glass (60%), paper and board (60%), metals (50%), plastics (22.5%), and wood (15%).

Policy Drivers

- 4.4. Other UK regions, namely Scotland and Wales, have voluntarily chosen to set more challenging recycling targets of between 60 and 70% to be achieved by 2025 and have also set out plans to become “zero waste” societies, with these plans relying on a range of measures including waste reduction, recycling, re-use and energy recovery.⁹¹⁰ The Welsh Assembly Government in the Waste (Wales) Measure 2010 establishes statutory

⁹ There is some debate about the definition of “zero waste” with an argument that approximately 5% of waste will always tend to be landfilled.

¹⁰ Different regions have adopted various definitions of recycling. However, the Department is engaging in discussions with DEFRA (and counterparts in the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Executive) on this matter.

targets for the percentage of a local authority's municipal waste that is to be recycled, prepared for re-use and composted in a target financial year and intervening financial years. In contrast, Councils in England are working to the rWFD target of 50% recycling and re-use by 2020.

- 4.5. While there are differences between Northern Ireland and these other administrations, and market conditions, it is reasonable to consider Northern Ireland's policy and objectives in light of the other UK Administrations' aims as well as the aims of other EU regions and countries.

Sustainable Economy

- 4.6. In managing our waste we must ensure that the principles of resource efficiency, value for money and sustainable development are enshrined in the approaches that we implement so that Northern Ireland maximises and fully benefits from the economic, environmental and social return. The recycling/reprocessing sector supports many local jobs and has provided much needed investment into the local economy generating income and in turn creating indirect multiplier effects.
- 4.7. We want to see further growth in businesses, both in the recycling sector and in sectors which use recyclates. By supporting local councils in their efforts to increase their recycling rates this will help ensure a steady supply of materials suitable for reprocessing. The quality of materials collected for recycling is also important and, in line with the Waste Framework Directive, the Department will assist councils in their effort to collect waste materials for recycling whether through source-segregated or comingled collections. Decisions to pursue these aims should however also be informed by the potential employment and environmental benefits associated with prevention, re-use and recovery.

- 4.8. We are working closely with the Waste and Resources Action Programme and with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on a number of initiatives including the Quality Protocols Programme to improve recycle quality.

Wider Environmental and Social Factors

- 4.9. Managing waste efficiently generates social benefits. Recycling more waste helps to protect and conserve the natural environment and enhances the quality of life for all in Northern Ireland by minimising pollution and its harmful effects on public health. At the same time, it is recognised that reuse and recovery activities will also provide benefits to the economic well being of Northern Ireland in terms of jobs, and environmental improvements while contributing to other policy objectives particularly relating to sustainable energy.

5. PROGRESS TO DATE ON RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

- 5.1. In Northern Ireland we have made steady progress in improving our recycling performance. Central and local government, the Waste Management Groups, the Waste and Resources Action Programme and local householders have all played an important role in this regard.
- 5.2. Councils have set in place recycling collection schemes for dry recyclables such as paper, card and plastic and many councils now also offer a collection service for organic waste. By collecting these materials for recycling and composting this has helped develop the local recycling and reprocessing sector – generating a demand for and investment in facilities (such as Material Recovery Facilities or Composting Facilities) that can sort and treat the materials for further reprocessing and producing quality products to meet market demand in the reprocessing sector.
- 5.3. Communication has been a key aspect of this and councils have played an important role in educating householders on the importance of recycling and on how to recycle. The **Reduce, Reuse Recycle** campaign has been particularly successful in conveying the key message which underpins the waste management hierarchy and in helping householders, the public and private sectors to understand the principles of good waste management.
- 5.4. In 2010 the Department launched the **Rethink Waste** communication campaign (and website) to reinforce the key messages on how we should manage our waste and has also launched a **Love Food Hate Waste** campaign. In this same year the Department also launched the **Rethink Waste Capital and Revenue Funds**, with over £5 million capital and £240,000 revenue funding made available in the 2010/2011 financial year for projects which will boost recycling or re-use. By way of demonstrating

- the scale of this investment, it is estimated that the first 15 projects which accepted some £2.7 million of funding through Round 1 of the capital fund should enable an additional 11,000 tonnes of municipal waste to be recycled or re-used each year.
- 5.5. The **Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)** continues to receive funding from the Department to provide advice and support to councils, businesses and householders on waste prevention, recycling and re-use. From this a total of £1.5 million has been allocated over 3 years to the costs of the Natural World Products In-Vessel Composting facility based in Dunmurry. This will provide much needed treatment facilities for thousands of tonnes of food and garden waste each year.
 - 5.6. Other interventions include the **Quality Protocols** programme, which aims to ensure that materials which would otherwise be treated as waste and landfill can be transported and used as basic resources for businesses. This aim is currently also facilitated by the work of the **North South Market Development Group** and an **All Island Plastics Recycling Study**.
 - 5.7. The Department is supporting the Strategic Waste Infrastructure projects that were developed to meet Statutory Landfill Directive and Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme targets in line with the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy and Waste Group Waste Management Plans. This infrastructure allows capture of significant recyclable material from the residual waste stream.
 - 5.8. While much of the work so far has concentrated on municipal waste, the rWFD has specific recycling targets in relation to construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) and commercial and industrial (C&I) waste. In addition, as a result in EU-driven changes in the definition of municipal

waste, it is likely that more of the material previously classified as C&I will become municipal. The Minister has established and chairs a **Waste Programme Board** which includes representatives from local government, the business and construction sectors. Early tasks for this Board include an improvement in the quality of information on C&I and CD&E waste. In addition, there are specific initiatives to improve recycling rates in these sectors, including WRAP support programmes for business and regulations for compulsory Site Waste Management Plans.

6. POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

Policy Objectives

- 6.1. This section argues that there is a clear potential for Northern Ireland to achieve municipal recycling rates in the region of 60% over the next 10 years – this analysis assumes that the 50% household recycling target for 2020 set in the Waste Framework Directive will be achieved as a key element of the progress towards the municipal targets.
- 6.2. The Department also recognises that recycling performance is dependent on various social and physical factors such as social demographics, housing type and geographical remoteness. For example, participation and capture rates can vary from 30% to 80% dependant on deprivation levels. Also it can be impractical or represent poor value for money to provide multiple recycling receptacles to flats and multiple occupancy housing or to very remote dwellings. Accordingly, given that these factors are outside the control of individual councils, the Department believes that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to recycling.

The Department therefore intends to set an aspirational regional target of 60% municipal recycling by 2020. Achievement of this target will depend on the successful implementation of the strategic waste infrastructure programme which will make a significant contribution to increasing recycling rates and also on the appropriate classification of output materials as recyclates, dependent on market development.

It is important that all activities entailing the recycling of key output materials are properly taken into account e.g. any recycling of bottom ash from municipal waste treatment plants and the recycling

of construction & demolition waste from Council Bring Centres.

It is also seeking to develop more accurate information on the C&I recycling rate and, based on this, will seek to set similar recycling targets for C&I waste.

- 6.3. Setting similar targets for C&I waste reflects the need to treat all waste as a valuable resource. It also reflects the need to ensure that all those managing waste, whether in business, local government or community and voluntary sector, should be encouraged to move up the waste hierarchy away from disposal and energy recovery and towards waste prevention, recycling and re-use.

Accordingly, the Department will be considering in future legislation how to establish a comprehensive regime of incentives and sanctions across all sectors of waste management to encourage the best outcomes.

- 6.4. At present the above targets would complement the statutory 50% municipal waste and the 70% CD&E targets in the rWFD for 2020. They would not have a statutory basis. In considering a comprehensive regime of incentives and sanctions, however, the Department will give consideration to reflecting the targets in future legislation as part of a wider landscape of legislative provisions to promote the appropriate management of waste.

Consultation Questions

Do you think that an aspirational regional target municipal recycling rate of 60% by 2020 is appropriate?

How can this target be achieved?

Do you think that, subject to more accurate data becoming available on commercial and industrial waste, similar targets should be set for this form of waste?

How can these targets be achieved?

How can the 70% recycling target for construction, demolition and excavation waste be achieved?

Do you think that targets should be developed at individual council level and as well as for Northern Ireland as a whole?

What are your views on the need for a comprehensive regime of measures, including incentives and sanctions, across all sectors of waste management to encourage the best outcomes?

What are your views on the Department's intention to consider giving the targets in this paper a statutory basis as part of a wider landscape of legislative provisions to promote the appropriate management of waste?

Rationale for Improvement

- 6.5. There is no doubt that over the last decade much has been achieved in relation to recycling, but it is also clear that much more remains to be achieved. Whilst all councils have witnessed steady increases in their recycling performance there is considerable variation in recycling rates with top performers achieving rates of around 50% compared to around 26% for the lowest performing councils. As mentioned it is however also

recognised that recycling performance is dependent on various social and physical factors such as social demographics, housing type and geographical remoteness as well as council performance in the management of waste.

- 6.6. It is also the case that many councils with very high recycling rates also exhibit high levels of waste arisings per capita – the converse is equally true. As waste prevention is accorded the highest ranking in the waste management hierarchy in terms of its environmental benefits over any other waste management option it is important that we do not promote recycling to the detriment of efforts to prevent waste arising in the first place.

**Household Recycling Rates & Waste Arisings Per Capita By District
Council (2009/10)**

HH Waste Arisings Per Capita (Kg)		HH Recycling & Composting Rate	
Armagh	443	Magherafelt	50.0%
Newry & Mourne	445	Banbridge	49.6%
Castlereagh	446	Antrim	47.5%
Omagh	447	North Down	41.8%
Ballymoney	455	Larne	41.1%
Down	455	Ards	40.2%
Strabane	463	Omagh	39.9%
Derry	465	Cookstown	38.6%
Fermanagh	469	Armagh	38.3%
Craigavon	474	Castlereagh	37.6%
Lisburn	477	Newtownabbey	37.3%
Belfast	482	Craigavon	37.1%
Carrickfergus	491	Lisburn	37.0%
Cookstown	493	Ballymoney	35.5%
North Down	496	Coleraine	34.9%
Magherafelt	502	Moyle	34.4%
Ballymena	507	Limavady	34.3%
Newtownabbey	510	Carrickfergus	34.2%
Limavady	518	Newry & Mourne	33.7%
Dungannon	521	Ballymena	33.3%
Moyle	522	Dungannon	33.2%
Ards	530	Down	32.5%
Larne	545	Derry	31.9%
Banbridge	559	Fermanagh	29.7%
Antrim	567	Belfast	26.6%
Coleraine	581	Strabane	26.1%

- 6.7. To meet statutory EU targets, councils across Northern Ireland will be required to divert much more waste from landfill. There is also a requirement to reduce the overall impacts of resource use and improve the efficiency of such use. The Department has assessed in partnership with the Waste Management Groups the potential to maximise our recycling performance and consequently to realise the environmental, economic and social benefits which this will generate. The Department's assessment was informed by baseline statistical information provided by the Waste Management Groups.
- 6.8. We have looked at the composition of key waste streams and analysed the extent to which these materials are currently being recycled. This analysis has been useful in helping us to understand the key waste streams which make-up our residual or black bin waste and the potential to recycle more of these materials. Maximising this would require further kerbside recycling schemes, improvements to existing recycling schemes and recycling centres, additional recycling achieved from residual waste treatment and harmonisation of the definition of what comprises recycling. Further detail on the key waste streams where there is potential to achieve much higher recycling and composting rates is set out in the following sections.

Organic Waste

- 6.9. There are approximately 190,000 tonnes of organic food waste in Northern Ireland's residual waste, representing a significant potential opportunity to boost recycling and composting activity¹¹ and to contribute to efforts to reduce biodegradable landfill in line with the European Landfill Directive. Many councils are already in the process of rolling out food waste

¹¹ Source: 2007/2008 WasteDataFlow and NIEA Waste Composition Analysis 2008.

collection schemes (generally along with garden waste in the brown bin) and a number of schemes will have come into operation since 2007/2008 (the base year for the estimate of residual food waste). It is likely therefore that significant progress will already have been made in capturing some of this food waste. Infrastructure will however be required to treat food waste once it is extracted from the waste stream; for example, Anaerobic Digestors (ADs) or In-Vessel Composters (IVCs).

- 6.10. Even with very challenging capture rates which will need to be achieved to deliver against the targets in this document, considerable organic waste will remain in the residual waste stream. Residual waste treatment infrastructure is therefore also required to ensure this BMW is diverted from landfill to meet statutory targets. Subject to definition, this can also contribute to recycling rates where, for example, compost like output is used for land restoration or for the cultivation of renewable energy crops.

Glass

- 6.11. An NIEA Compositional Analysis concluded that glass accounted for almost 63,000 tonnes of total municipal waste arisings in Northern Ireland of which just over 23,000 tonnes are currently recycled. If an additional 14,000 tonnes to 19,000 tonnes glass was recycled each year this could add some 1.4 up to 1.9 percentage points to our municipal recycling rate. Considerable glass will however remain in the residual waste stream. Again, residual waste treatment infrastructure will be required to reduce the amount of this material that goes to landfill and subject to definition, can contribute to recycling where, for example, the material is used for virgin aggregate displacement.

Mixed Plastics

- 6.12. Mixed plastics make up a considerable element of residual waste. The NIEA Compositional Study noted that plastics account for almost 114,000 tonnes of municipal waste arisings of which only some 9% is currently recycled. Plastics are one of the most complex materials to recycle because of the variety of plastics in use. At present not all types can be recycled, however, as technology develops in coming years it is likely that much more of this material could be recycled each year by capturing additional materials through kerbside collection/civic amenity sites. Residual waste treatment infrastructure can also reduce the amount of this material that goes to landfill through advanced optical sorting of residual waste.

Paper and Card

- 6.13. Paper and card accounts for almost 180,000 tonnes of total municipal waste arisings around 49% of which is currently recycled/composted. Through continued educational and communication campaigns to raise awareness and encourage behaviour change there is potential to capture more of these important materials for recycling. It will however continue to be necessary to ensure that any of remaining paper and card BMW is diverted from landfill through residual waste infrastructure in order to meet statutory targets. Subject to definition, this can contribute to recycling where, for example, compost like output is used for land restoration or cultivation.

Metals

- 6.14. Metals (ferrous and non-ferrous) account for almost 40, 000 tonnes of municipal waste arisings of which just under 14,000 tonnes (34.7%) is

currently recycled. Metals are identified as one of the key waste streams for household recycling in the Revised Waste Framework Directive. Residual waste treatment infrastructure will also eliminate any of this material remaining from going to landfill through advanced magnetic and eddy-current sorting.

Textiles

- 6.15. There are around 31,000 tonnes of textiles in total municipal waste of which 10.7% is currently recycled. The value of textiles for reuse/recycling is increasing and businesses now pay to receive these materials. There is clearly potential to achieve higher recycling of this waste stream.

Other Waste Streams

- 6.16. Other waste streams where there is potential for higher levels of recycling include miscellaneous combustibles (eg. treated and untreated wood, disposable nappies, carpet) and non-combustibles (eg rubble, tiles) which account for around 189,000 tonnes of municipal waste arisings of which 17.8% is currently recycled and waste electronic and electrical equipment. As with other materials, residual waste treatment infrastructure can reduce the amount of non-combustibles that go to landfill and subject to definition, can contribute to recycling where, for example, the material is used for virgin aggregate displacement.

7. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

Recycling and the Economy

- 7.1. Increasing recycling rates has contributed to the development of the local recycle reprocessing sector. Local companies take key waste materials such as plastic bottles, paper, glass and garden/food waste and reprocess these into new products either for their own use or for other end-markets, thereby sustaining the economic value of these materials, prolonging their useful life and preventing the use of increasingly scarce raw materials. Many of these businesses are highly innovative finding new ways of processing waste materials into new and valuable products.
- 7.2. The local Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) also play a key role in sorting and baling waste material for further processing and providing a supply of this material to the end-processors, as will the forthcoming residual treatment facilities. Such facilities are an important part in the recycling chain and are important employers in their own rights.
- 7.3. The recycling and reprocessing sectors have been characterised by sustained growth in recent years. These sectors have the potential to sustain and create further employment opportunities, enter or grow export markets and generate profits, income and wealth. Whilst many materials can now be recycled into new products, for some materials the technology does not exist as yet to reprocess these into viable products where there is a sustainable end market. There is, however, a clear incentive for innovative recycling businesses to develop new technologies which will facilitate the recycling of such materials and avail from the business opportunities this presents.
- 7.4. The recycling sector will play an increasingly important part in the

development of the local **green economy**. The Department's annual funding to WRAP will enable WRAP to continue to work with the recycling sector to improve quality and develop sustainable end-markets for recyclables.

Merits of Recycling Methodologies

- 7.5. There are various views on the merits of different collection methods – comingled or source segregated - in terms of the quality of recyclables which each method produces for further processing. The evidence suggests that it is not possible to make a general conclusion about the merits of specific collection systems.¹² For example, there is no doubt that segregation of materials at source can provide a high quality of recyclates, although this does not necessarily work as well in inner city areas where there is less space and traditionally there has been a lower level of compliance with source segregation.
- 7.6. As new technologies are developed, it is anticipated that the mechanical sorting of materials for further reprocessing will continue to improve and the range of materials which can be reprocessed will expand. This in turn will influence the approach to be adopted in recycling.
- 7.7. It should also be recognised that, whilst ideally recycled materials should be used and reprocessed locally, the market for recyclables is of a global nature. Much of the materials produced are reprocessed and used by local businesses or businesses based elsewhere in the UK and a considerable element is also destined for export markets where there is a high demand for quality recyclables. Like the rest of the UK Northern Ireland is dependent on export markets to take much of the material

¹² See, for example, the White, Young, Green Environment Report Review of Kerbside Recycling Collection Schemes Operated by Local Authorities (Amended Version May 2010) and WRAP's Report "Choosing the Right Recycling Collection System (2009).

collected for reprocessing as there is insufficient local demand to take all the material collected for this purpose. Without these global market outlets our potential to recycle much of the waste we generate would be significantly reduced. It should, however, also be recognised that there is an environmental impact from transporting materials long distances and this should be taken into account in assessing the life cycle costs associated with different measures.

- 7.8. Even with very ambitious kerbside and Recycling Centre recyclate capture rates, considerable recyclable materials remain in the residual waste stream. Accordingly, increasing recycling beyond that achievable with further kerbside recycling schemes and improvements to existing schemes and recycling sites requires the additional recycling achieved from residual waste treatment and harmonisation of the definition of what comprises recycling.
- 7.9. The Department recognises that there is no room for dogma in deciding which approach to use across Northern Ireland. This is why councils should, in line with their statutory responsibilities for collecting and managing waste, continue to decide on the collection system which best meets the needs of their local communities. Similarly, businesses should use the compliant approach which is most appropriate for their specific circumstances.

Social Benefits

- 7.10. Recycling more waste generates a range of social benefits. Increasing the amount we recycle reduces waste to landfill, harmful greenhouse gas emissions and prevents pollution of land, air, waterways and ecosystems. This in turn helps protect our health and quality of life. Recycling also encourages people to think carefully about their consumption of resources

and can in turn encourage reduced consumption. Given the links between reduced consumption and improved health and wellbeing – for example, by helping to tackle obesity and stress – this could be a very positive side effect.

- 7.11. Northern Ireland enjoys an international reputation for the quality of its environment. Measures which continue to protect or conserve this environment such as improvements in recycling levels (and reduced use of landfill sites) are important in helping to ensure that those who live here or those who chose to visit Northern Ireland can continue to enjoy the inherent beauty of our natural environment.

Consultation Question

What interventions – if any – by local and central government do you think could help contribute to further growth in the recycling and reprocessing sectors?

8. RECYCLING IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION SECTORS AND IN THE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

The Construction Demolition and Excavation (CD&E) Sector

- 8.1. The European revised Waste Framework Directive includes a target of 70% recycling for Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste materials by 2020. At present, however, there are limited data on waste arisings from the CD&E sector in Northern Ireland and on levels of associated recycling activity. The most recent survey by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency completed in 2005/06¹³ estimated waste arisings from the sector to be in the region of 1.7 million tonnes.
- 8.2. This survey covered the inert component of CD&E waste suitable for recycling or re-use as aggregate or soil. The project did not attempt to estimate the extent of fly tipping or seek to estimate arisings of other wastes generated on construction and demolition sites, such as wood, glass, metals, plastics, packaging, waste oil.
- 8.3. More recently the WRAP programme estimated that the amount of CD&E waste produced in Northern Ireland at around 4 million tonnes per annum, of which around 1.3 million tonnes (33%) is currently reused or recycled.¹⁴ NIEA has estimated that up to 1.7 million tonnes (42.5%) of CD&E waste per year is unaccounted for (potentially, illegally dumped).
- 8.4. This implies that some 1 million tonnes (25%) of CD&E waste is landfilled every year. The Department has given a commitment in the NI Waste Management Strategy that 75% of CD&E waste will be recycled or reused by 2020. Based solely on the current estimate of 4 million tonnes of

¹³ http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/finalcombinedCDEWsurveyreport04_0505_06.pdf

¹⁴ At the UK level, however, it is estimated that the construction industry generates some 120 million tonnes of construction, demolition and excavation waste every year – around one third of all waste in the UK.

CD&E waste produced, this commitment would mean that 3 million tonnes should be reused or recycled.

- 8.5. Much work has been undertaken to encourage waste prevention, re-use and recycling in the sector through partnership working between the Department and the government's Central Procurement Directorate, WRAP, Strategic Investment Board Ltd and other stakeholders. Specific initiatives have included the Sustainable Procurement Commitment and the development of the Sustainable Procurement Action Plan. Public sector procurements for construction projects with a value of £200,000 are also required to produce Site Waste Management Plans detailing the amount and type of waste which will be produced and how that waste will be reduced, reused, recycled and disposed of.
- 8.6. The Department encourages the use of Site Waste Management Plans (SWMP) through its support of WRAP's UK-wide construction commitment – Halving Waste to Landfill¹⁵. This construction commitment was launched across the UK in October 2008 by WRAP and represents a voluntary agreement whereby organizations commit to reducing CD&E waste by half (on 2008 levels) by 2012. At present 26 Northern-Ireland based organizations have signed the agreement¹⁶. Whilst a number of larger NI-based companies and organisations have signed up to the commitment many smaller sized organised are not yet engaged in it.
- 8.7. The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy indicated that the Department would promote the use of SWMP to developers and that the Department would bring forward for public consultation proposals for a statutory requirement to prepare SWMP. The intention is to have SWMP regulations coming into operation later in 2011.

¹⁵ http://www.wrap.org.uk/construction/halving_waste_to_landfill/index.html

¹⁶ Further information on the "Halving Waste to Landfill" initiative and the Northern Ireland signatories can be found on the WRAP website at http://www.wrap.org.uk/construction/halving_waste_to_landfill/index.html

- 8.8. The Department, through the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), has also produced a range of Quality Protocols. The aim of a quality protocol is to identify the point at which waste, having been the subject of a complete recovery operation, may become a non-waste product or material that can be used by businesses or supplied into other markets, enabling such fully recovered products to be used without the need for waste management controls. This in turn leads to increasing market confidence in waste-derived products and driving markets for recyclates. A number of recyclates from the construction and demolition waste stream have been identified for production of a quality protocol such as aggregates and gypsum.
- 8.9. The Department has commissioned WRAP to undertake a study of waste arisings/treatment methods for the sector. It is anticipated that the research will be completed in Spring 2011. It is also working with the construction sector to identify further ways to facilitate the industry in increasing its recycling rate.

Consultation Questions

Are there other ways through which the Department could encourage the construction, demolition and excavation sector to recycle more of the waste produced and ensure the targets are met?

The Commercial and Industrial (C&I) Sector

- 8.10. A survey of commercial and industrial waste arisings in Northern Ireland was undertaken for 2004/2005 by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. At this point an estimated 24% of waste from the sector was recycled. There is not a specific target for recycling in the revised Waste

Framework Directive, although significant amounts of what is currently classed as C&I waste is likely to become included in municipal waste figures as a result of planned changes to the definition of municipal waste. In addition, the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy currently sets a target for 60% recycling of C&I waste by 2020.

- 8.11. There is currently a lack of up-to-date information to ascertain how much waste from the sector is being recycled. The Department has commissioned WRAP to undertake research to establish waste arisings and treatment methods in the sectors and it is anticipated that the results will be available by the Spring 2011.

Consultation Questions

Are there other ways through which the Department could encourage the commercial and industrial sector to recycle more of the waste produced and ensure the targets are met?

EQUALITY SCREENING

Background

Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependents and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Department is also required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions or racial group.

The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020 (“Towards Resource Management”) (“the Strategy”) sets out a number of key policies, actions and targets that can contribute to better waste management practices, increase resource efficiency and sustainable development. This Department is considering whether a new recycling policy and higher recycling targets would make an effective contribution to meeting the Strategy’s general objective of increasing resource efficiency and to the Programme for Government targets to grow the economy, to reduce green house gas emissions and to promote health and well-being. By recycling more waste and reducing waste to landfill this will ensure that waste is managed in a manner consistent with the waste management hierarchy.

Screening Analysis

The purpose of this exercise is to assess whether or not the Department's proposals on to increase recycling activity may or may not have a differential impact on any of the section 75 categories. It has been performed in accordance with the Department's Equality Scheme approved in 2001. It is based upon the criteria contained in the guidance for performing the "screening" to identify if any of the nine categories of groups identified in section 75 might be affected by the policy proposals (religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, dependents).

The screening analysis is summarised below:

1. Is there any indication or evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups within any of the nine categories?

No – This is a high level policy document. It is a matter for each local council how they choose to implement the policy and consider whether their implementation method will impact on any of the Section 75 groups.

2. Is there any indication or evidence that any of the section 75 categories have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?

No - This is a high level policy document. It is a matter for each local council how they choose to implement the policy and consider whether their implementation method will impact on any of the Section 75 groups.

3. Have consultations in the past with relevant groups, organisations or individuals within any of the section 75 categories indicated that policies of this type create problems that are specific to them?

No. The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020 ("Towards Resource Management") ("the Strategy") sets out a number of key policies, actions and targets – which includes recycling targets - that can contribute to better waste management practices, increase resource efficiency and sustainable development. The consultation exercise on the Strategy was issued to Section 75 groups and no Section 75 issues were raised during this process. Public consultation will issue in XX and any responses received will be considered.

4. Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or community relations by altering the policy or by working with others in Government or in the larger community in the context of this policy?

No

Conclusion

As a result of the screening analysis, we consider that there will be no significant implications for equality of opportunity as a result of the policy and legislative proposals outlined in this consultation document. It will be for each local council to conduct an equality screening exercise when considering how they will implement this policy. A full Equality Impact Assessment is therefore not required.

RURAL PROOFING

Rural proofing is a process to ensure that all relevant Government policies are carefully and objectively examined to determine whether or not they have a different impact in rural areas from that elsewhere, because of the particular circumstances of rural areas, and, where necessary, what policy adjustments might be made to reflect rural needs and in particular to ensure that, as far as possible, public services are accessible on a fair basis to the rural community.

This paper is a first stage consultation on the options under consideration by the Department to improve recycling performance across all councils and for Northern Ireland as a whole. If the Department decides legislative change is desirable a second stage consultation will follow containing further detail on the preferred option(s) and the way any requirement would be introduced accompanied by draft Regulations to implement these option(s). The proposals would mainly affect district councils, householders, landfill operators and waste management companies.

The Department is of the view that the draft policy, as it stands, will not have a different impact in rural areas and will not affect accessibility to public services in rural areas. It will be for local councils to decide how they implement the policy and to consider at whether there is the potential for their implementation methods to have a negative/positive impact on rural areas and communities.

Further rural proofing, however, will be part of any proposed second stage consultation.