**ADEPT Waste Group meeting 18 December 2018**

The Waste Group met on 18 December which was the day the Government published its new Waste and Resources Strategy.

Much of the debate was taken up with the detail of the new strategy but the meeting included an interesting and very timely presentation from Thom Kholler from the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association. The presentation sparked a debate about the current barriers to extending food waste collections and what Local Authorities need to communicate the benefits of food waste collections to the public more, and to better engage with plant operators.

Evidence emerged that cost was a key barrier to extending food waste collections, and that perceptions of poor public acceptance or complex logistics were not long term issues. It was noted that food collections operate in 30 of 32 Scottish authorities, with 13 years’ successful experience in Somerset.

Concern was expressed at when and how treatment capacity for a national roll out of food waste collections would be delivered.  It was suggested that circa 50% of households currently had access to a food waste service (Wrap 2017/18 reference) but that capture rates were low and that Government’s strategy is to increase performance whilst rolling out to a wider area. These combined measures will mean capacity would need to increase by 3-400% with risks highlighted about the ability for the industry to deliver. The debate was summarised as:

1. A key area for local authorities was how their costs would be met.
2. Best value for money for food waste would vary depending on what a local authority’s existing service model was.
3. That additional revenue cost (communications, liners, caddies etc) would need to be weighed up against potential mitigation measures such as reduced frequency collections
4. There is a concern over the capacity of the sector to deliver in the indicative timeline to 2023.

In relation to the new Waste and Resources Strategy, the Group recognised and welcomed the Government’s ambition, and were pleased to see full cost recovery included in relation to disposal, and the position on food waste was being covered clearly as real positive developments.

Other points highlighted from a quick analysis were:

* A proposed consultation on not charging for garden waste (with the conflict with home composting and budget effects recognised early)
* A reference to seeking to review recycling credits
* A proposed review of Controlled Waste Regulations and a reference to seeking to prevent charging for DIY waste at HWRCs
* A proposal for HWRCs to accept hazardous waste
* A desire to use HWRCs to focus on reuse focus
* An apparent lack of reference to the spatial need for infrastructure and capacity development
* Little detail on funding and no reference to a waste plan for England

The meeting concluded with a discussion about the draft ADEPT waste position statement and the usual updates from stakeholders, including a useful presentation from Nick Bethell of the Environment Agency on planning for Brexit. In particular Nick highlighted that in relation to a no-deal Brexit additional controls and checks at ports would be expected, especially at Dover with severe disruption expected. Perishable goods would be prioritised but the implications for waste were unclear. The matter was to be discussed further at a workshop to be hosted by DEFRA on 10 January.

**Ian Fielding**

**Chair**