



Association of Directors of  
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

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By email to: [recycling@defra.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@defra.gov.uk)

Dear Naomi and team

### **Consultation on exemptions and statutory guidance for Simpler Recycling in England: ADEPT response**

This is a consultation response on behalf of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT).

ADEPT represents 'directors of place' who are responsible for providing day-to-day services including local highways, recycling, waste and planning as well as the strategic long-term planning and delivery of sustainable places. ADEPT members are at the very heart of delivering clean sustainable growth, tackling climate change at a local level. We manage the projects that are fundamental to creating more resilient, inclusive and safe communities, economies and infrastructure. ADEPT is a membership based professional organisation with over 100 county, unitary and combined authority members.

A response to the numbered questions in the consultation follows. In addition there are a number of key concerns that ADEPT wishes to raise in relation to Simpler Recycling:

- **Clarity over new burdens payment values is needed now.** The Government's ambition is for Simpler Recycling services to be provided to all residents by 31 March 2026. In order for councils to implement Simpler Recycling, they will need to plan, invest in and deliver improvements to infrastructure (depots, MRFs); procure or negotiate different processing and collection service contracts; and order new fleets of vehicles and containers. In order to take the key investment, procurement and service decisions, local councillors will rightly ask what the impact will be on their authority's budget. Until councils have indicative figures for the value of new burdens funding for the requirements of Simpler Recycling, councillors are faced with a choice between 'signing blank cheques' or missing the Government's deadlines.
- **What is the service requirement for Cartons?** Based on previous Consistency consultations, this composite material packaging format was expected to be part of the 'Simpler Recycling' mix, but its position is unclear.
- **Resource security and investment in infrastructure** – the Collection and Packaging Reforms present a massive opportunity to increase UK resource security and reduce reliance on volatile overseas markets and to deliver green jobs. However the UK's MRF and reprocessing facilities are not currently fit for purpose to reprocess the volume, mix and quality of materials required under Simpler Recycling and pEPR. Government needs to develop and communicate a clear plan for the necessary investment in UK infrastructure to take advantage of this economic opportunity and to avoid worsening UK security.

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- **Non-household premises requirement needs to align with household implementation date** – both material streams rely upon the same infrastructure for collection, sorting and reprocessing. WRAP estimates that an additional 1,000 vehicles will be required to provide Simpler Recycling collections from non-household premises; by requiring an earlier compliance date (2025) for non-household premises DEFRA will effectively destroy any opportunity for councils to meet the 2026 date for households by exacerbating the already widely recognised supply chain challenges.
- **Effective communication to non-household premises** - all occupiers but especially SMEs will need to understand their new obligations. This will require a concerted and effective communications campaign. Evidence from the recent introduction of the Single Use Plastics Ban (Oct 2023) indicates very few SMEs were aware, suggesting communications was too little too late.

Q1 – Would you like your response to be confidential?

A - No

Q2 – What is your name?

A - Steve Palfrey

Q3 – What is your email address?

A - [steve.palfrey@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:steve.palfrey@suffolk.gov.uk)

Q4 – Which of the organisation types below best describes you?

A - Local Government

Q5 – If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is its name?

A - the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT)

Q6 – Do you agree with the provision of an exemption to allow for the co-collection of paper and card, plastic, metal and glass in one bin without needing a written assessment?

A - Agree – but note that ‘comingled’ here should be clearly defined as “meaning two or more recyclable waste streams mixed together” (i.e. consistent with the wording in Consultation 1 on waste tracking service), for clarity and to ensure that it is understood this covers a range of mixing e.g. dual stream or fully comingled.

Q7 – Do you agree with the provision of an exemption to allow for the co-collection of food and garden waste in one bin without needing a written assessment?

A - Unsure - ADEPT supports the improved environmental outcomes that are achieved through separate food waste collection (i.e. higher capture rate and energy generation), but also recognises that some councils may need to continue to comingle food and garden waste as a transitional measure due to current contractual commitments and infrastructure.



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Q8 – The guidance advises that waste collection authorities should build flexibility into their contracts to ensure materials can be added/removed to the recyclable waste streams as new recycling technologies develop. Do you agree or disagree with the content of this section?

A - Disagree – whilst the sentiment of encouraging contract flexibility is sensible and councils are well practiced at varying contracts where appropriate, the practical reality of adding or removing materials to and from public recycling services needs careful consideration. Adding materials may have very significant infrastructure implications (e.g. reconfiguring MRFs; vehicle compartment sizes etc), whilst removing materials basically doesn't achieve mass compliance, leading to contamination and material quality issues. Adding and removing materials from recycling services will need to link to pEPR investment and national packaging labelling.

Similarly the sentiment of 'regularly reviewing collection frequency and container capacity' sounds laudable, but in reality has significant cost ramifications e.g. provision of a fleet of new containers or additional trucks and crews. Councils will do this anyway where it is necessary, but guidance requiring regular review sets an unfunded and unnecessary expectation.

Q9 – Do you agree or disagree with the contents of the list above, detailing the materials that are out of scope of the recyclable waste streams?

A - Unsure – broadly agree. Need clarity about cartons – they are a composite material packaging format.

Q10 – Guidance is provided regarding the requirement to collect dry recycling from premises and the use of communal bins. Do you agree or disagree with the content of this section?

A - Disagree – agree with the principle of ensuring recycling services are at least as convenient as refuse services BUT only excepting some flats and communal properties from a requirement for kerbside collection is too restrictive and could limit efficiency and innovation – e.g. new town style developments could, for example be designed to provide a best in class communal bin service per 10-20 properties instead of the greater cost, carbon and space required for a kerbside service. Furthermore Government should ensure that guidance to developers (e.g. building regulations) requires adequate provision of bin storage to ensure service requirements on councils can be met.

Q11 – Is there any additional guidance that would be useful regarding the provision of caddy liners?

A - Unsure – the provision of liners is expensive and adds additional single-use material to the waste stream that AD facilities are unable to digest and many see as a contaminant. Provision of liners should be directly linked to food processing contracts which can accept this material. Nationally we should be driving to minimise liner use except in areas where their use is proven necessary to support capture rates. **Guidance should not imply that LAs should provide liners UNLESS this is fully funded in New Burdens settlement.**

Q12 – Guidance is provided regarding the requirement to collect food waste from premises and the use of communal bins. Do you agree or disagree with the content of this section?

A - Disagree - see response to Q10.

Q13 – The guidance provides advice on collection frequency of garden waste. Do you agree or disagree with the advice on collection frequency of garden waste?

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A - Disagree – growing conditions vary massively across the country – Councils are best placed to determine efficient service provision in their locality.

Q14 – The guidance outlines that anaerobic digestion is the preferred method for treating food waste, where suitable, but composting is also permitted. Do you agree or disagree with the content of this section?

A - Disagree – this is not guidance and is unnecessary.

Q15 – The guidance outlines a backstop on the frequency of collection of residual waste, to protect householders' local amenity. Do you agree or disagree with the content of this section?

A - Disagree. Councils' current waste responsibilities stem from Environmental Protection Act and Environment Act which don't prescribe frequency and are intended to achieve environmental outcomes (e.g. increased recycling, carbon reduction/contribution to Net Zero). Evidence shows (for detailed evidence see response from LARAC) that, in areas with a separate food collection in place removing the main putrescible element of residual waste, those authorities that have implemented less frequent refuse collections outperform peers with more frequent refuse collections. Councils will be required to provide an 'efficient and effective' service under packaging Extended Producer Responsibility, or penalised for not doing so. Inclusion of a required minimum refuse frequency in statutory guidance will limit the opportunities for councils to improve efficiency and effectiveness of producer funded recycling services resulting in an increased cost burden on producers and an increased financial risk on councils.

Q16 – The guidance outlines that anaerobic digestion is the preferred method for treating food waste, there suitable, but composting is also permitted. Do you agree or disagree with the content of this section?

A - Disagree – this is not guidance and is unnecessary.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of the points above in more detail if this is useful to the team, and look forward to further refinements to the Simper Recycling policy and guidance in order to ensure that local and national government is able to maximise the success of this key reform.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Palfrey, Chair of ADEPT Waste Panel

