**ADEPT Waste Group meeting 21 March 2018**

This is an exciting time for waste management. The popular television show, Blue Planet, has highlighted the amount of plastic that is finding its way into our oceans and this has been met with the high level of public indignation it deserves. This has pushed the issue of plastics waste up the agenda.

China’s import ban or restriction on some waste materials has also been highlighted in the press and this issue is placing strain on the waste management industry as outlets for materials collected are restricting in their availability, the quality of the material they will accept and/or the price paid or charged. Local authorities are worried about the potential impacts of this which could be service related, financial and also reputational.

Robert Vaughan, DEFRA, attended the meeting to inform and engage the group on the development of the Resources and Waste Strategy. This is due to be published in the autumn and has the potential to improve resource and waste management holistically and sustainably. The structure of the document will be based on the life cycle of materials and this approach should lead to a strategy focused as much on producers at the front end of the pipe, as the waste industry including local authorities who are very much at the end of the pipe. Extended producer responsibility will be a key theme in the strategy and this was strongly supported whilst recognising that there may well be impacts or unintended consequences that would need to be managed.

There certainly appears to be a head of political steam that has built up that should push this important strategy work forward. The Waste Group is keen to engage further and will be represented at a number of workshops including urban recycling and extended producer responsibility, and then at wider strategy stakeholder workshops in April.

The Waste Group are keen to run a workshop at this year’s ADEPT Conference in November, by which time the new Resources and Waste Strategy should be published so there should be a lot to present and stimulate discussion.

Unfortunately, Tracy Carter is stepping down as chairman of the Waste Group. The group recognised the outstanding contribution that Tracy has made over many years and thanked her for this. The Group will decide a new chairman at its next meeting.

Andrew Pau

28 March 2018