

**TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD  
7 JULY 2015**

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**LEGISLATIVE CHANGES  
re3 Project Director**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 There are a number of legislative changes that have or are being proposed that have implications for the waste disposal sector. This information report appraises the Board of some of those that are or will have an implication to re3.

**2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Landfill Tax update**

- 2.1 In recent years, landfill tax has been increasing at a rate of £8 per tonne reaching £80 per tonne in 2014. There is widespread consensus that Landfill Tax has achieved what it set out to do – encourage local authorities and businesses to manage waste in a more sustainable way.
- 2.2 From 01 April 2015 the standard rate of landfill tax for active waste rose with inflation from £80 to £82.60 per tonne. We estimate this will increase by approximately 2% to circa £84.40 per tonne for disposals made in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on or after 1 April 2016.
- 2.3 The lower rate of tax applying to “inactive” wastes (such as rubble from building sites) increased from £2.50 per tonne to £2.60 per tonne in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from 1 April 2015, and will increase again to £2.65 per tonne for disposals made on or after 1 April 2016.

**Implications for re3 Partnership**

- 2.4 The implication of this change has been built into the budgets for the current year. Based on predicted tonnage for the next financial year, the landfill tax increase represents an additional cost to the partnership of £100k. The Board will be aware that the cost of sending a tonne of waste to landfill significantly exceeds the cost of sending a tonne for recycling. In 2015/16 the cost per tonne of landfill is £123 per tonne, compared to a cost of c£33 per tonne for recycling (an increase of 273%). The partnership can, through its collection strategies, seek to influence the tonnages recycled and thereby save landfill costs and potentially gain income from sales.

**Carrier bag charges**

- 2.5 The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, (Defra) has issued guidance on the Government’s decision to charge 5p on single-use plastic carrier bags from 5 October 2015. Retailers employing less than 250 full-time equivalent employees (in both retail and non-retail roles) will be exempt from levying the charge.
- 2.6 Bags that do not fall under the scope of the charge include those handed out for uncooked fish or meat products, for unwrapped food or flowers, for prescription medicine, woven plastic bags, reusable bags, or where there is no sale of goods such as in dry cleaning or shoe repairs.

- 2.7 Meanwhile, the European Parliament has voted in favour of legislation requiring EU countries to reduce their use of lightweight plastic bags. The law, passed on 28 April 2015, requires EU member states either to reduce annual consumption to 90 lightweight bags per citizen per year by the end of 2019, with an interim target of 40 by the end of 2015, or to ensure that no cost-free lightweight plastic bags are given to shoppers by the end of 2018. The legislation defines lightweight as bags thinner than 0.05mm.

#### **Implications for re3 Partnership**

- 2.8 Plastic bags are not specifically segregated from the waste stream. It would not be cost effective to do so. The significance of this change is most likely to be seen in the recycling as it is hoped that with less plastic bags in circulation the temptation for residents to bag their recyclables will be reduced. As the Board will recall the Contract deems carrier bags to be contamination and the MRF has problems when recycle materials are presented in small plastic knotted carrier bags. This adds to processing cost and/or contamination costs.

#### **2015 WEEE Targets announced**

- 2.9 The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills has announced that the overall waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) industry collection target for 2015 is 506,878 tonnes. This is approximately 16,000 tonnes more than the total amount of household WEEE collected and recorded in 2014. The new target is above the requirements to achieve the EU member state target of 484,661 tonnes and follows the announcement in February 2015 that internal UK targets for 2014 were exceeded by more than 1,000 tonnes.
- 2.10 Collection data for the first quarter of 2015 published by the Environment Agency shows that industry in the UK has made strong progress towards meeting its WEEE recycling target for the year. This progress has been aided by a change in guidance on the classification of business and household electrical goods, which is likely to mean that more WEEE from business sources can be counted towards household collection figures.
- 2.11 Definitions of household and non-household WEEE were amended after the UK's classification of household and business WEEE were found to be at odds with that held by the European Commission. The difference centred on the interpretation of 'dual use' WEEE, which includes items such as PCs or television screens, which could conceivably be used in business or by consumers. In the UK the definition was also qualified by the quantity of WEEE being presented for collection.
- 2.12 The new definition is in line with that held by the European Commission and states that any WEEE of a similar nature to that presented to householders, regardless of how much is presented, should be classed as household WEEE.

#### **Implications for re3 Partnership**

- 2.13 The Partnership collects WEEE through the HWRC and in some instances through other ad hoc arrangements. The potential is there through the Contract for the Councils to benefit from any sales of this recyclable material. We need to better understand how we may take advantage of the changes and how we might be able to do more to encourage the extraction of more WEEE from the general waste stream.

Contacts for further information

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