

## **EU Circular Economy Proposals and Meeting EU Recycling Targets**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report provides an update on work carried out following discussion at the last Board meeting to influence the agenda on the future of waste and recycling services. It also provides copies of the LGA position papers which will form the basis of discussion with ministers and further lobbying work.

### **Summary**

2. The Board has identified two key opportunities to influence the agenda on the future of waste and recycling which are high on councils' agenda. The first relates the existing EU targets the UK is subject to – to reduce landfill by 65 per cent landfill and to increase recycling to 50 per cent by 2020. The UK is expected to exceed its landfill targets due to the extensive efforts of local authorities, but despite significant improvements we are not yet on track to meet the recycling target, which could lead to EU infringement fines. This is despite the efforts of councils to increase recycling rates by 400 per cent since the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup>
3. The second development is the recent withdrawal of the European Commission circular economy legislative proposals. The original proposals contained a range of top down waste requirements and targets that would have had significant implications for local authorities, including a new recycling target of 70 per cent and other requirements on collection of bio (organic) waste and landfilling. The Commission are now revising their proposals following criticism that they were too focussed on waste with insufficient policy on waste reduction through changes to the way products are designed and manufactured.
4. At the Board meeting in March, Members agreed a twin-track programme of work to influence future EU legislation on waste and recycling and to develop proposals that would help meet the existing EU recycling target.
5. Further to the Board's discussion, work has included:
  - 5.1 Delegation to Brussels led by Cllr Jones to discuss our proposals for the Circular Economy with MEPs, UK government representatives, the Commission official leading the work on the proposals and the CBI team in Brussels (a further verbal update will be provided at the Board meeting).
  - 5.2 Meeting to discuss the proposals with previous Defra Minister with responsibility for waste and in more detail with Defra officials.
  - 5.3 LGA policy position papers on Circular Economy and meeting EU recycling targets (these are attached to this paper).
6. The Commission representative confirmed that they will consult on new proposals in the near future. These are expected to bring back the majority of the waste related proposals but add in more on the top half of the circle (design, manufacture and consumption) which would be welcome.

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<sup>1</sup> The percentage of household waste recycling in 2003/04 was 17.8 per cent and in 2013/14 it was 43.5 per cent

4 June 2015

7. The next steps for this work are to:

- 7.1 meet with new Defra Ministers to present both sets of proposals;
- 7.2 respond to the revised consultation on the EU Circular Economy proposals;
- 7.3 potentially send another delegation to Brussels in autumn at the end of the consultation period; and
- 7.4 develop further media strategy to support the work on recycling targets.

**Recommendation**

That the Board note the policy positions set out in the two policy papers attached at Appendix A and B and comment on the proposed next steps outlined above.

**Action**

To take forward the proposed project subject to Members' views.

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