



environmental
services
association

PRESS COMMENT

ESA examines content of Labour, Green and Lib Dem Manifestos for direction of travel on resources and waste policy

London, November 22 2019, The ESA has today reacted to the content of the Labour, Green Party and Liberal Democrat manifestos, and the direction of travel set out for resources and waste policy.

Executive Director of the Environmental Services Association (ESA), Jacob Hayler, said:

"Although Labour's position on recycling and waste occupies just three paragraphs of a manifesto exceeding one hundred pages, it is comforting to see that cross-party support exists for full-cost extended producer responsibility. This policy, currently proposed as part of Defra's Resources & Waste Strategy, is a fundamental driving force towards higher recycling rates and a more resource-efficient, sustainable, economy, and will have a profound impact on the way recycling and waste services are delivered.

In its *Green New Deal for Industry*, The Green Party manifesto evokes the Circular Economy as its guiding principle, and also pledges to implement full cost producer responsibility. In addition, it targets product design standards but, uniquely, singles out vehicles and a range of common household items for improvement, aiming for better durability, repairability and energy-efficiency. Interestingly, it is the only party to set out an intention to encourage a societal shift of ownership model to goods as services, although the manifesto doesn't say how this would be encouraged or incentivised in practice.

The Liberal Democrats promise a *Zero-Waste & Resource-Efficiency Act* to stimulate a circular economy, although their proposals seem a little piecemeal. The Liberal Democrats pledge to eliminate single-use plastics within three years; introduce deposit return schemes for all food and drink containers; achieve better product design for repairability and re-use; introduce legally binding targets on the consumption of natural resources; and introduce a statutory national recycling target of seventy per cent. However, it is not clear how these changes are going to be achieved or incentivised, or how these policies will make the UK less reliant on volatile global markets for recycled product.

We still await the Conservative Manifesto, but it is expected that they will continue on the current path set out in both the Resources & Waste Strategy and the Environment Bill, introduced weeks before the General Election was announced.

It would seem, therefore, that radical changes are on the horizon for the resources and waste sector regardless of the political colour of the next Government. ESA Members have promised to invest more than £10bn over the next ten years in the UK, but this is contingent on the right policy framework being in place and, whatever the outcome of the election, it is essential that the new Government provides our sector with confidence that these policies will be implemented without further delay.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The **Environmental Services Association** (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK’s resource and waste management industry, which is leading the transformation of how the UK’s waste is managed.
2. We work with all levels of government, regulators and the public to deliver a more sustainable waste and resource management solution for the UK. All of our reports and publications are available to view and download from our website.
3. ESA’s Members manage waste on behalf of the whole of society and we are recovering more than ever before. For example, the industry has helped quintuple the UK’s household recycling rates over the last decade.

4. The sector at a glance

- Total turnover: **£11 billion**
- Direct Employment: **106,000 people** (*including waste collection, treatment and materials recovery*)
- Municipal waste handled each year: **27 million tonnes**
- Energy generated (across landfill gas, anaerobic digestion and energy from waste) each year: **approximately 11,867 GWh**, which is 3.5% of the UK’s electricity
 - **9,083 GWh of that was renewable electricity** (taking out non-biodegradable portion of EfW) which is **11%** of UK’s renewable electricity
- Greenhouse **gas emissions down by 70% since 1990.**
- The **top seven companies account for approximately 40% of turnover.** Many hundreds of SMEs provide either localised or more specialised services
- Waste & recycling is the **most highly rated of all council services** by the public (2016 survey)

For further details please visit www.esauk.org

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