PRESS RELEASE

SESA voices concerns over Scotland EfW carbon report

Edinburgh, 5 October 2020: The Scottish Environmental Services Association (SESA) has today voiced concerns about a recent new report, published by Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS), entitled *The climate change impacts of burning municipal waste in Scotland*.

SESA believes the report draws a fundamentally unfair comparison between energy recovery infrastructure and other sources of low-carbon energy generation, and is concerned that the report advocates both maintaining Scotland's current landfill rates, and the use of Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) to treat residual waste over energy recovery – a seemingly retrograde step at odds with more than a decade of waste policy development.

Scottish Environmental Services Association (SESA) Policy Advisor, Stephen Freeland, said: *"The resources and waste management industry continues to make considerable investment in Scotland's recycling capacity while at the same time investing in alternative residual waste treatment options, essential for diverting waste from landfill in compliance with Scotland's 2025 landfill ban. Zero Waste Scotland's research usefully points to the fact that energy from waste (EfW) delivers carbon savings over disposal of waste in landfill.*

The research also confirms the potential for greater carbon savings and efficiencies through the deployment of Combined Heat and Power (CHP). All EfW plants in Scotland are designed to be CHP-ready and operators actively explore options to connect with heat customers. Public policy could assist in this regard by helping to secure delivery in off-site heat infrastructure (such as local heat pipe networks or connections to heat customer premises) and ensuring that EfW-CHP is better integrated into the built environment.

However, we are deeply surprised by the recommendation that the best option for Scotland's residual waste is to maintain current rates of landfill, and subject residual waste firstly to an MBT process. Experience elsewhere tends to point to the limitations of Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT), while its outputs would likely be challenged to meet the stringent respiration thresholds of Scotland's 2025 landfill ban. The ZWS report is also strangely at odds with Scottish Government policy which is rightly aimed at diverting waste from landfill.

The alternative to EfW is not wind power but landfill, and therefore an unfair comparison in considering the low carbon merits of EfW. However, the industry is fully committed to net zero

carbon and ESA is developing a carbon strategy to help demonstrate where emissions in the waste sector can be reduced, including EfW."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The **Scottish Environmental Services Association** (SESA) is the voice of the Scotland's waste and resource management sector. This work helps our members continue to turn Scotland's waste into valuable resources, whilst protecting the environment.

2. For further details please visit www.esauk.org

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