

# PRESS RELEASE

30 June 2022 – for immediate release

## PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS VOICE CONCERN OVER RWS IMPLEMENTATION PRESSURES

The Environmental Services Association (ESA), has today written an open letter to Defra Minister Jo Churchill voicing concerns about the mounting timescale pressures on recycling and waste providers to implement the emerging Resources and Waste Strategy reforms within the Government's desired timescales.

The letter was jointly issued with the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) and National Association of Waste Disposal Officers (NAWDO) on 30th June 2022 and calls for urgent clarity on several key points of information.

The letter points out that, to meet the objectives of Defra's Resources and Waste Strategy, the recycling and waste management sector will need to purchase new vehicles and containers; amend or build infrastructure (ie sorting plants and transfer stations); review and amend existing contracts and services – including new data reporting arrangements, logistics and payment mechanisms; and identify and purchase sites for new sorting and treatment processes and logistics facilities.

Furthermore, new facilities and operations will require the timely provision of permits by the Environment Agency, which is currently struggling under a significant backlog of applications causing delays across the sector. Additionally, tendering and appointing construction contractors to build new infrastructure must be done against a backdrop of inflation and scarcity, which also applies to the procurement of new plant and equipment.

The letter called on Defra to urgently clarify seven key points so that the sector could start implementing the necessary changes in order to stand a chance of meeting the Government's delivery timescales:

1. Confirm the list of materials which will need to be separated for recycling under Consistency of Collections, along with the clear implementation timeline.
2. Provide clarity of the final form that modulated fees will take under EPR, both in terms of their monetary value and the overall assessment framework for recyclability, so that producers can begin to adapt the composition of their packaging portfolios.
3. Confirm the final form and timeline for the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme, which we anticipate will divert thirty-five per cent of the material value from local authorities' kerbside recycling services and provide clarity on whether a digital DRS is under consideration.
4. Provide final TEEP guidance and minimum service standards so that the sector can understand these requirements as well as any flexibility and derogations which may apply going forward.
5. Confirm that the test of 'Efficient and Effective' under EPR cannot override a successful TEEP assessment.
6. Provide clarity over penalties and the enforcement regime so that the industry can anticipate likely compliance levels with the regulations, which we believe will be essential to facilitate investment.

7. Provide transparency about how and who will financially support the new costs being incurred by the sector in supporting all of these changes. This could include a flexibility mechanism given to retrofitting and/or replacing infrastructure before its expected or contracted end of life.

The letter pointed out that private sector operators and local government partners are waiting to invest in new services but are currently unable to do so in the absence of clarity on the above points.

The ESA anticipates that Defra intends for the majority of the planned reforms to come into effect from 2025 but warned that any further delay to the necessary policy clarifications puts achieving this timescale at risk and certainly makes it more challenging.

**Executive Director of the ESA, Jacob Hayler, said:** “Local authorities and their contractors remain supportive of the Government’s packaging and recycling reforms and we are committed to working with Government to ensure their successful delivery.

We believe they are a necessary and important step towards reducing resource pressures and saving carbon by driving up the recycling of material from the domestic and commercial waste streams at a point where recycling can have the greatest decarbonisation impact.

If done well, these reforms could unlock hundreds of millions of pounds of private investment into state-of-the-art new recycling and reprocessing infrastructure, support thousands of skilled jobs across all regions of the UK and help deliver key government objectives to end the export of certain waste streams such as plastics.

However, both our members and counterparts in local government are becoming increasingly concerned that the delay in timelines for the delivery of the flagship packaging reforms will in turn delay implementation, cause unnecessary bottlenecks in local authority contracting and inhibit necessary contractual, service and infrastructure investments happening in a timely and effective manner.

That is why we have written to the minister seeking urgent clarity on seven key points that will allow us to begin the complex process of implementing the changes required for successful delivery of the reforms from 2025 onwards.”

## **ENDS**

Notes to editors:

A. The **Environmental Services Association (ESA)** is the trade association representing the UK’s resource and waste management industry. Our members are directly transforming the way the UK’s waste is managed in pursuit of a circular economy and are leading the sector in an effort to decarbonise recycling and waste management operations. The ESA works with all levels of government, regulators and the public to deliver a more sustainable waste and resource management solution for the UK. You can find out more about us and our members in our **Annual report** for 2019/20.

B. A copy of the original open letter is attached to this press release for information.

For further details please visit [www.esauk.org](http://www.esauk.org)

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