



environmental
services
association

ESA PRESS STATEMENT

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New ESA report asks “what will it take for councils to hit future recycling targets”

LONDON, 25 May 2018: The Environmental Services Association (ESA), the voice for the UK’s resource and waste management industry, today launched the first of 2 new reports looking at what it will take to meet the (weight based) recycling targets proposed by the EU Circular Economy Package.

The report, ‘*An economic assessment and feasibility study of how the UK could meet the Circular Economy Package recycling targets*’, written by Ricardo Energy and Environment, covers a wide range of topics and issues, including:

- That over half of councils will be able to meet the target of 60% recycling at no additional cost - but only if they are willing to make the necessary changes to their services. Changes that councils could make include reducing the frequency of waste collections to make the savings that could pay for additional recycling services.
- How critical it is that all the materials we collect for recycling are actually recycled into new products. If we don’t have these end markets for recycled materials then there is no point increasing collections.
- That the current weight based system incentivises the collection of heavy low value materials such as garden waste some of which we should for example be composting at home if we can.

ESA’s Executive Director, Jacob Hayler said:

“The UK is struggling to meet the EU’s existing targets for 50% household recycling. This is largely due to a historic lack of funding and policy support in England – particularly on end-markets for recyclates – essential to driving recycling rates higher.

Current policy delivers current outcomes. If we want higher recycling rates then we will need fresh interventions and additional funding. This report investigates precisely what additional

costs and interventions would be required to meet the higher weight-based recycling targets contained in the forthcoming EU Circular Economy Package.

“In all scenarios there will be a need to manage waste that cannot be practically or economically recycled – this black bag waste is estimated to be as much as 9.5 million tonnes by 2030, - that’s enough waste to fill Wembley stadium over 9 times right up to the roof! Currently this waste is turned into energy which is a good outcome - but much is still landfilled.”

The second report will look at how we can recycle smarter by focussing on the materials that do the most damage and from which we can gain the most value from recycling.

A copy of the report can be found on the ESA website at: http://www.esauk.org/esa_reports/

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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. ESA’s recent Circular Economy report ‘*Going for Growth – A practical route to a circular economy*’, which outlines how a Circular rather than a linear economy can help manage resources sustainably, can be downloaded [here](#).
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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