

# Appendix 2

## **National context: The proposed National Resources and Waste Strategy**

1. The Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy for England on 18 December 2018. The Strategy sets out how the UK will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. The key concepts within the strategy are subject to further consultation in 2020. In May 2019 Oxford City Council and Oxford Direct Services submitted responses to all four consultations (Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Scheme, Consistency and the Plastic Packaging Tax).
2. The proposed National Resources and Waste Strategy has the potential to transform the waste industry. Government has indicated that it is keen to preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. The Strategy addresses some well-known issues in the waste industry and seems to embrace the circular economy approach of keeping products in use for as long as possible, and making it easier to reuse, repair, refurbish, or recycle.
3. There are several policies within the strategy that have the potential to impact the types and quantities of materials Local Authorities (LA) collect and change how they are funded for the waste management services provided. It is proposed that:
  - a. Producers of packaging will need to pay the full net cost of managing the products that they place on the market. LAs will receive funding to manage packaging through a central body (Extended Producer Responsibility).

*The Council's response expressed the view that the success of all these proposed changes rests heavily on the effectiveness of EPR, that we support the idea of producers paying the costs incurred from their packaging, and we support 'Model 2' as the method of governance (a single, independent organisation). We support the idea of a Plastic Packaging Tax in principle and oppose the inclusion of pre-consumer plastics in the definition of 'recycled material' as this could have a detrimental effect on our authority.*

- b. A deposit recovery scheme is introduced for drinks containers so residents will need to return them to a specific location rather than place them in their kerbside bin.

*The Council's response expressed the view that we fully support the principle and aims of a DRS, we do not support introducing a DRS at the same time or before introducing ERT, PPT, and Consistency, if a scheme was introduced we would support an 'on-the-go' system for hard-to-recycle materials as opposed to 'all-in', and we could support the introduction of a DRS in future following more research and after the changes in*

## Appendix 2

*other consultations have taken effect.*

- c. Service standards will be set for LA waste services, detailing what materials are collected, how and how often.

*The Council's response expressed the view that we support the introduction of 'core materials', support a numbering system for recyclable items, rather than a universal nationwide collection system (i.e. same number colour and type of bins), support a consistent approach to recycling in the UK, and strongly expect to be reimbursed for any changes.*

4. It has been stated that the net cost of any new burdens on LA will be met by Government, and this Council will be holding the Environment Minister to account for that welcome commitment. These policies are in their infancy and reportedly will be developed through further stakeholder engagement and consultation during 2019/20. First draft responses were published in July 2019. Implementation dates stretch through to 2023.
5. Oxfordshire's ability to reach the recycling targets proposed in the JMWMS may be affected by these national changes. Oxfordshire's JMWMS proposes a 65% recycling rate by 2025, but national changes are not set to be implemented until 2023, and it is understood that the process of withdrawing from the European Union has further halted national strategy development, so there may be a time lag before recycling rates rise. Oxford City's performance impacts the overall targets as well as its own ambitious commitments to work towards waste reduction and improved recycling performance. Alternatively, new policies and legislation may remove recyclable material from local authority control, and while more material will be recycled nationally, it may no longer count towards our figures and therefore lower Oxfordshire LA recycling rates.
6. The county's ability to reach the less than 3% to landfill target is currently being impacted by several external factors, including Brexit and continuing political uncertainties and absorption of Government and Parliament as a result, the global commodities markets, and the appetite for cost effective waste contracts in the industry. A recent contract to provide a bulky waste shredding service that would have reduced our landfill to less than 1% was not awarded following a change in risk profile and cost increases that rendered it undeliverable. We are continuing to explore other avenues and monitoring market developments and may revisit this contract in due course.
7. OEP has stated that they wish Oxfordshire's strategy to be ambitious, helping economic and population growth while using our resources sustainably. The targets in the JMWMS have been set to demonstrate Oxfordshire's commitment to reducing waste arisings and increasing recycling, but it should be noted that the JMWMS will be reviewed in 2023/2024 (in accordance with the 5-year review cycle), and that targets may be adjusted then to reflect the changing situation.