



Belfast City Council

Report to: Health & Environmental Services

Subject: **Consultation Document - Introduction of Restrictions on the Landfilling of Certain Wastes**

Date: 8th September, 2010

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Relevant Background Information

In June, as one of a number of consultation papers, the Department of Environment (DOE) issued a "*Consultation Paper on the Introduction of Restrictions on the Landfilling of Certain Wastes*" proposing the possible introduction of further restrictions on the landfilling of certain wastes.

This Consultation considers the principle of introducing landfill restrictions, and is available on the DOE website at www.doeni.gov.uk/waste.html. It sets out the policy drivers behind the DOE's aims to divert recyclable and biodegradable waste from landfill. This consultation paper also includes evidence from recent research on banning such wastes from landfill. A list of candidate waste types for which the evidence suggests the benefits of diversion from landfill in terms of greenhouse gases and resource efficiency gains could outweigh the costs of diversion are included. Again, as per the other consultation response on meeting EU Landfill Diversion Targets submitted to the Committee this month, this exercise is being conducted to ensure that the Government correctly addresses the requirements of the EU Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) – WFD, and has already concluded in England and Wales.

Responses from this consultation will inform the DOE's decision of whether it is desirable, practical and affordable to introduce restrictions. Should the DOE conclude this to be the case, the specific proposals would be the subject of a second consultation exercise on the preferred options.

The closing date for responses to this exercise is 8th October, 2010.

Key Issues

The DOE has identified the following options for introducing new policies to restrict biodegradable and recyclable wastes being sent to landfill:

- A) do nothing
- B) introduce landfill bans i) on their own or ii) accompanied by a requirement to sort
- C) introduce a sorting or tougher pre-treatment requirement (no landfill ban)
- D) introduce producer responsibility linked to recycling targets

The DOE considers Option B (i) as its preferred position as this would send out a clear signal to promote maximum diversion from landfill. The consultation identifies a number of candidate waste types which could be suitable for banning from landfill, as follows:

- Metals
- Glass
- Food
- Wood
- Textiles
- Paper/Card
- Plastics
- Green (garden) waste
- WEEE

The DOE recognises that the manner in which any landfill ban will be regulated will also have to be considered, as will the potential for dealing with any fly-tipping which may arise. It anticipates, however, that such issues will be considered in a subsequent consultation. Research within the consultation paper, which was undertaken by Eunomia, recommends a lead-in period of at least 5 years for the introduction of any restrictions or landfill bans.

As with the earlier consultation paper, in order to inform a suitable response to this paper, arc21 met with the other Waste Management Groups, the NI Local Government Association (NILGA), the Local Government Technical Advisers Group (TAG) and the Local Authorities Recycling Advisory Council (LARAC) to discuss the content. The key points within the attached arc21 response are that:

- arc21 is generally supportive of these proposals
- a longer lead-in period would be appropriate
- as with the earlier consultation paper response, the DOE should take this opportunity to consider accessing landfill tax monies and extending producer responsibility
- the DOE should take this opportunity to review its Waste Strategy (2006-2020)
- the “*Duty of Care*” be reviewed as an appropriate control measure and
- further resources are likely to be needed to address potential increases in flytipping

The Service would concur with the response, and as arc21 points out, would urge the DOE to consider this as only one strand of its efforts to reduce reliance on landfill and improve resource efficiency. arc21 and Service are eager to explore other instruments to divert more waste from landfill, such as how to better engage with households, and lobby the DOE when necessary.

Resource Implications

Financial

N/A

Human Resources

N/A

Asset and Other Implications

N/A

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to endorse the attached arc21 response.

Key to Abbreviations

DOE – Department of the Environment

WFD – Waste Framework Directive

Eunomia – a Bristol-based consultancy which specialises in waste management

Document Attached

arc21 Response on the Introduction of Restrictions on Landfilling of Certain Wastes

Decision Tracking

Should Members approve this consultation response, the Head of Waste Management will ensure that it is submitted to the DOE.