

Resources and Waste Targets Expert Group

Meeting minutes – 29 October 2021

Attendees

Expert panellists: Paul Ekins (Chair), Margaret Bates, Lucy O'Shea, Phil Purnell, Jacopo Torriti

Apologies: Raimund Bleischwitz, John Barrett, Peter Hopkinson

Other attendees: Defra group officials, representatives from WRAP and representatives from the University of Leeds

1. Defra progress update on residual waste work

- 1.1. A presentation was given by Defra to update on the ongoing modelling work to forecast our baseline and model the possible impacts of potential policy levers. This included work to forecast the non-major mineral waste tonnages that originate from non-municipal sources, to update the baseline to a scope of all residual waste excluding major mineral wastes.
- 1.2. Findings include residual waste policies tend to overlap substantially, and that the success of earlier policies could limit the effectiveness of those that follow. RWTEG agrees that the early interventions are likely to be the most effective and reiterates the importance of considering the interactions between policy impacts.
- 1.3. RWTEG notes the importance of specifying potential policies when presenting modelling to give an understanding of how the reductions can be made.

2. WRAP presentation and discussion on residual waste policy modelling outputs

- 2.1. A presentation was given by WRAP summarising their analysis on the impact of potential residual waste policies on recycling rates, waste arisings and the associated costs to government. They detailed the evidence and assumptions feeding into their modelling, such as observations from existing schemes.
- 2.2. WRAP presented an overview on current household recycling enforcement, how this varies across the UK and data limitations on this topic.
- 2.3. RWTEG questioned whether some policies designed to increase recycling rates may instead encourage individuals to place residual waste in recycling

waste streams. WRAP answered that there is an assumption that some recycling is currently being placed in residual waste streams, and that this is the waste being targeted. They are not aware of any evidence that incentivising recycling increases contamination of recycling streams.

- 2.4. RWTEG has requested further details into assumptions for each modelled policy, as well as some breakdowns of cost results, which WRAP will look to provide following the meeting.

3. Defra progress updates on resource productivity work

- 3.1. Defra provided an overview of the ongoing work with WRAP, the University of Leeds and the macroeconomic project to assess the impact of potential resource productivity sector-specific and economy-wide policies. This work will inform an ambitious and achievable target by looking at the impact on material footprints, greenhouse gas emissions and economic variables.
- 3.2. Defra expects to receive modelling results from the externally commissioned macroeconomic project over the next month, with the full written report due to be completed in January. The report will be for internal use in the first instance with possible subsequent publication (to be confirmed).
- 3.3. RTWEG questioned how the intensities of the separate policies change in the combined scenario. Defra responded that these are modelled to remain the same so we can determine their total impact.
- 3.4. RWTEG requested greater detail of the resource productivity policies being considered in this modelling.

4. University of Leeds presentation and discussion on resource productivity modelling outputs

- 4.1. University of Leeds presented some key initial findings from their modelling of potential resource productivity 'regulatory' type policies. They covered the impact on raw material consumption (RMC), resource productivity and greenhouse gas emissions. There will be further analysis of these policies grouped by sector (and additionally of fiscal policies) in the macroeconomic project.
- 4.2. University of Leeds gave an overview of their reference scenario, which policies could be most effective at reducing RMC, and the relative impacts policies from different sectors can have on RMC and emissions.
- 4.3. Further impact breakdowns were presented, looking at how a scenario including all 'regulatory' policies reduces RMC and emissions from different regions. RWTEG questioned the disparity in impacts on these different

indicators for certain regions. University of Leeds will return with a further explanation on this.

4.4. University of Leeds also notes that all potential policies could not be modelled due to data limitations.

4.5. RWTEG commented that the impact on greenhouse gas emissions presented seems smaller than other work on resource productivity that they had previously seen. University of Leeds explained this is due to the policies being selected for their large impact on RMC rather than those with the greatest impact on emissions.

4.6. University of Leeds to send the full set of results to Defra and will write a full report with WRAP. This will be for internal use in the first instance, with possible subsequent publication. This analysis will be used in combination with the results from the macroeconomic project.

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