

Resources and Waste Targets Expert Group

Meeting minutes – 3 December 2021

Attendees

Expert panellists: Margaret Bates (Chair), John Barrett, Raimund Bleischwitz, Phil Purnell, Jacopo Torriti

Apologies: Paul Ekins, Peter Hopkinson, Lucy O'Shea

Other attendees: Defra group officials and representatives from WRAP

1. Defra progress update on Residual Waste target and ambition level modelling

- 1.1. A presentation was given by Defra to update on the ongoing modelling work to inform the residual waste target ambition level.
- 1.2. Work to inform the ambition level has involved a range of modelling approaches, to sense-check outputs and align with complementary departmental strategies and commitments. This proposed target level is based on modelling the collective impacts of the planned Collection and Packaging Reforms (CPR) on residual waste, as well as considering potential future policy pathways. Trajectories for the 65% municipal recycling rate by 2035 and zero avoidable waste by 2050 commitments have also been considered.
- 1.3. Future policy modelling is based on assessing the historic impact of price-based levers on reducing waste to landfill and considering a range of assumptions around what level of reduction we might expect to be possible across total residual waste using appropriate interventions.
- 1.4. RWTEG noted that any further policy pathway should include appropriate pull factors as well as push factors, e.g. investment in sorting and reprocessing infrastructure. Should be using the most appropriate levers to drive change across the system, including some elements of waste prevention and some of recycling.
- 1.5. RWTEG flagged potential risk of stranded incineration assets from diversion of recyclates from residual waste, and also reducing calorific value.
- 1.6. RWTEG agreed that future policies to divert waste from residual will be less effective than historic attempts to divert from landfill. Need multiple individuals who may or may not be invested or incentivised to deliver the change. Stressed that pull factors are key. Ultimately need to re-evaluate

following CPR and plastic packaging tax as these will create pull factors and direct incentives higher up the value chain.

1.7. RWTEG agreed that the modelling stands up to scrutiny, and that we now have sufficient evidence to go to consultation and seek further information.

1.8. Defra agreed to further investigate RWTEG's points around the importance of having sufficient "pull factors" to meet the target.

2. Defra update on Resource Productivity target and Macroeconomics project outputs

2.1. Defra presented some key initial findings from the macroeconomics project, which were discussed with RWTEG. RWTEG explained why the analysis identified some unexpected results regarding the effects of the policies on employment, which was due to the type of modelling approach used.

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