

Grwp yr Economi, Sgiliau a Chyfoeth Naturiol
Economy, Skills and Natural Resources Group

Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol - Director General



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

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Dear Adrian

**Response to the Report of the Wales Audit Office on Waste Management in Wales:
Waste Prevention**

I welcome publication of the above report and I am pleased to set out the Welsh Government's response to the three recommendations at Annex A.

After twenty years of progress, Wales is now a high recycling society, with high quality collection infrastructure, well-developed re-processing infrastructure and a worldwide reputation for achievement.

The report acknowledges that Wales is one of only a few countries worldwide to have set waste prevention targets and that we need to focus more on prevention going forward. We plan to renew our focus in our revised waste strategy and circular economy route map which we will consult on later this year.

In the meantime, we are focussing on measures to stimulate innovation and change in packaging by taking part in UK wide consultations on a Deposit Return Scheme, introducing extended producer responsibility for packaging and a plastics tax on any relevant packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled materials.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Slade
Director General
Economy, Skills and Natural Resources

Parc Cathays/Cathays Park
Caerdydd/Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Recommendation 1

Increasing the focus on waste prevention to reflect the overall aims of Towards Zero Waste

Available data on the amount of waste produced suggests mixed progress to deliver Welsh Government's waste prevention targets. We recommend that the Welsh Government:

- a) revisits the relative priority it gives to recycling and waste prevention as part of its review of Towards Zero Waste;*
- b) sets out clearly the expectations on different organisations and sectors for waste prevention; and*
- c) revisits its overall waste prevention targets and the approach it has taken to monitor them in light of progress to date, examples from other countries and in the context of current projections about waste arising through to 2050.*

Response: Accepted

In its revision of the Wales waste strategy, the Welsh Government will re-examine the effort it is able to apply to waste prevention, in line with the waste hierarchy, including examining what further levers it has available. This will include setting out the expectations on different key stakeholders such as the Welsh Government, business, public sector, and social enterprise, and on the key waste sectors of household, industrial, commercial and construction and demolition waste. This will also include a consideration of the waste prevention targets and the measures needed to monitor them.

As stated in the response to the AGW's report on 'Procuring residual and food waste treatment capacity' published in October 2018, the Welsh Government will keep under review future residual waste projections and ongoing work to minimise residual waste, and will work with local authorities to efficiently manage their residual waste contracts.

The current timetable is for a consultation document on a revised waste strategy to be published in autumn 2019.

Recommendation 2

Improving data on commercial, industrial, construction and demolition waste

The Welsh Government is a partner in initial work to assess the feasibility of developing a new digital solution to track all waste. If this preferred option does not succeed, we recommend that the Welsh Government works with Natural Resources Wales to explore the costs and benefits of other options to improve non-municipal waste data in Wales, including additional powers to require waste data from businesses.

Response: Accepted

The Welsh Government is represented on the board of the UK Waste Tracking project which aims to develop a digital solution to track all waste including that produced and managed in Wales.

The Welsh Government has funded Natural Resources Wales to commission a new survey of industrial and commercial waste in Wales. It is due to report in 2020. Options to obtain more up to date data on construction and demolition will be explored, subject to budgetary pressures.

The Welsh Government will continue to support the Defra-led waste tracking project. It will also give consideration to what powers can be used or sought to require businesses to report the data. Other means to gather the data in future will be explored as part of the consultation on a revised waste strategy, in autumn 2019.

Recommendation 3

Enhancing producer responsibility and using more legal, financial and fiscal levers

The Welsh Government has opportunities to influence waste prevention through legislation and financial incentives. It can also influence changes at UK level where fiscal matters are not devolved. We recommend that the Welsh Government consider whether provisions to extend producer responsibility and the use of financial powers such as grant conditions, fiscal measures and customer charges and incentives, are needed to promote and to prioritise waste prevention.

Response: Accepted

The Welsh Government is currently consulting along with Defra and the other devolved administrations on proposals for new extended producer responsibility provisions for packaging. Whilst primarily aimed at increasing recycling and reducing the littering of packaging, the provisions (for example, the application of a 'modulated fee') may also help reduce the amount of packaging used and wasted.

The Welsh Government will explore the further potential to use extended producer responsibility (including 'modulated fees'), financial powers such as grant conditions, fiscal measures and customer charges and incentives to promote and to prioritise waste prevention as part of the consultation on a revised waste strategy, in autumn 2019.