



Consultation responses on 'Towards zero waste'

This briefing provides a summary of the consultation on 'Towards zero waste' – the new waste strategy for Wales. This briefing is provided to local authority chief executives, council leaders and all APSE waste contacts in Wales and to England, Scotland and Northern Ireland contacts for information.

Key Issues:

- A summary of the consultation from the stakeholder workshops, written consultation and consultation with young people.
- Common issues raised by APSE and a number of other organizations are included such as financing the implementation of the strategy, comments on the headline indicators and the need for change in individual behaviour.
- APSE has requested to be involved in and consulted on the development of these sector plans.

1. Introduction

The draft strategy 'Towards zero waste' from the Welsh Assembly Government aims to build on the successes of 'Wise about Waste – The National Waste Strategy for Wales' and set out a long-term strategy for waste management and resource efficiency – from now until 2050. It highlights the challenges we are facing in terms of sustainability and tackling climate change and sets out what the strategy means for businesses, communities, Government and the public sector.

The Welsh Assembly Government issued a consultation paper and the consultation period ran from 29 April to 22 July 2009. APSE responded to the consultation and the response was issued in a briefing paper (click here: <http://www.apse.org.uk/briefings/09/09-42%20Towards%20zero%20waste%20response.pdf>). Following on from this response, APSE has been sent a summary report on the consultation. The consultation process consisted of 3 strands; stakeholder workshops, public written consultation and consultation for young people. This briefing paper highlights the key points that were raised during the consultation process.

2. Similarities in the consultation strands

A number of issues recurred throughout the meetings and the written consultation. Since the consultation for young people was smaller in scope, the Welsh Assembly Government have indicated where key points that were also made in this consultation strand.

Commitment to goals

- There is significant support for the overall goals (also in results of consultation for young people)
- There needs to be more detail about implementation in the strategy (also in results of consultation for young people)
- Clarify evidence of how the targets have been set
- Give more attention to waste reduction participants perceive the emphasis on recycling is disproportional to its potential for waste minimisation
- Consider potential conflicts between targets. These conflicts need to be resolved
- Set up the sector plans as fast as possible to deliver the strategy, there are concerns about timescale
- There needs to be a multilevel approach: Wales needs to work within the UK, and beyond as well as with sector organisations/representatives within Wales.

Waste reduction

- Behaviour change is key to the success of the strategy. The buy and throwaway culture needs to be challenged (also in results of consultation for young people)
- Businesses need to be encouraged to reduce waste at the design stage, spanning the life cycle of the product or service. Products should be designed to last longer and to allow for reuse or recycling at the end of the life cycle.
- Public bodies' procurement policies and practices should lead Wales' resource use and waste minimisation
- Use incentives, fines or tax to steer behaviour in the right direction
- Encourage community engagement in order to get everyone involved.

Recycling

- The strategy places too much emphasis on recycling over waste reduction
- There needs to be more consistency in the provision of waste facilities, e.g. collection schemes, home composting
- There is a need to develop markets for recyclates
- Consider statutory targets for commerce and industry

Waste infrastructure

- Consider potential conflicts between targets when new waste facilities are envisaged and planned
- Consider economies of scale when building new infrastructure. There is a need for more small, local recycling facilities
- Ensure sufficient funding for Local Authorities.

Roles and responsibilities

- Clarify implementation roles of everyone, and Local Authorities in particular. They do not want to assume the responsibilities for waste from industry and commerce if the Welsh Assembly Government does not set mandatory targets for these sectors.
- As regards sector plans, consider cross sector planning and engagement

- Make sure financial and legislative drivers are in place
- Businesses (SME) need to receive training/coaching
- Working with the public sector should be a priority for the Welsh Assembly Government
- Education and awareness raising is needed for all the different segments of society.

3. Themes/issues stressed at the consultation events

- Find a suitable way to organise public awareness campaigns
- Consider the role of the media
- Explain Zero Waste, and ecological footprinting concepts thoroughly and in accessible terms – civic society is more familiar with CO2 footprinting and other symptomatic measures of consumption
- Improve the design of buildings to encourage better resource use, including recycling
- Local Authorities request flexibility in the measures taken to achieve targets

4. Themes/issues stressed in the written consultation

- There was some opposition to incineration.
- Linked to the above: There were several critical remarks regarding the zero waste concept used in the strategy, arguing that zero waste and incineration do not fit together
- Some participants hold the view that the targets are not ambitious enough.

5. Observations specific to the consultation for young people

The consultation for young people contained four questions on a more general level. Apart from general support for the goals and the plans to achieve them, a number of concerns were voiced which mostly parallel the other engagement strands. Two quotes may illustrate that this consultation still brought a different angle to the overall picture:

- 'make waste recycling more fun/pretty'
- 'If everyone can encourage each other this will work.'

6. APSE comment

APSE has been quoted in the consultation document alongside other organisations in relation to the following:

- 11 people (including APSE) expressed concerns around financing the implementation of the strategy and possible penalties for failing to reach targets. APSE's response was as follows: *"There are some concerns on how these changes in waste management required to deliver the strategy are going to be financed, in addition to the need to obtain additional data to support the reporting needed for ecological footprinting. There are other targets that local authorities are working towards, specifically on efficiency savings which will obviously negate against procurement of expensive new methods."*
- In relation to question 3b (do you have any comment on the headline indicators?), 45 people responded to this question. 12 people explicitly support the headline indicators while 15 discuss the need for more clarity or detail, including APSE. APSE's response was as follows: *"APSE would welcome further information on the headline indicators to be*

able comment fully on these, such as targets, definitions and scope. In addition, further clarity needs to be provided on how ecological footprint is going to be measured at a local level and how this differs from measuring CO2 emissions."

- In relation to question 4 (massive levels of waste reduction are needed to achieve zero waste and one Wales: one planet levels by 2050. What can the Assembly do to help the different sectors achieve the waste reduction targets set?), 59 people responded to this question. More than a third of the respondents to this question (22) discuss the need for change in individual behaviour to achieve these targets and the education and awareness raising needed to make this happen, including APSE. APSE's response was as follows: *"In conjunction with this, there needs to be further behavioural change by households and for local authorities to be given financial support for educational work such as door stepping, leafleting and road shows."*

Over the next few months the Welsh Assembly Government will be considering the responses and reviewing and revising the draft strategy prior to the publication of the final version. APSE has already requested to be involved in and consulted on the development of these sector plans, in particular the sector plan relating to municipal waste.

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