June 2021

REA Response to consultation on Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England

This response focuses on the questions related to Organics.
Answers are in purple.

About the REA

The Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology (the REA) is a not-for-profit trade association, representing British renewable energy producers and clean technology and promoting the use of renewable energy in the UK. It has around 550 corporate members, making it the largest renewable energy trade association in the UK.

The REA's Organics and Natural Capital forum and its Biogas forum together comprise 422 members, numerous of which operate commercial composting facilities, commercial scale anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities and recycle organics to land. The REA works with stakeholders with the aim of achieving policy and regulatory frameworks for renewables and organic waste recycling that deliver an increasing contribution to the UK's electricity, heat, recycling and transport needs. More info available at www.r-e-a.net

Questions from consultation

Proposal 3 – Definition of food waste

We propose that the following should be included in regulations to describe the materials to be included within the food waste stream:
All food material that has become a waste, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be, or reasonably expected to be consumed by humans and including any substance, including water, intentionally incorporated into the food during its manufacture, preparation or treatment. This includes the following:

- Food scraps
- Tea bags
- Coffee grounds

We propose that the above describes the materials to be collected as food waste from households, businesses and non-domestic premises

Q13 - **Do you agree or disagree that the above should be collected for recycling within the food waste stream?**

Disagree.

We agree with the majority of what is proposed but have concerns about tea bags. Many tea bags still contain non-compostable plastic and although the tea leaves and some of the bag will degrade in composting and anaerobic digestion facilities, there is potential for small fragments of non-compostable plastic to remain. These small fragments are very difficult to remove and may end up in the final compost or digestate.

Work is underway by many tea bag producers to convert to wholly compostable tea bags and we would urge that the definition of food waste considers this. Whilst we don't want to complicate the system and might need temporary alternative instructions whilst transition takes place, the organics industry would much prefer that tea bags are all required to be independently certified compostable. This would help drive tea bag manufacturers, specifiers and buyers to procure compostable ones and to get them independently certified. Independent certification is important as it helps to remove any fakes off the market, deter the placing of fakes on the market and reduces uncertainties about whether an item truly is compostable where the organisation responsible for placing it on the market hasn't bothered to pursue certification or understood that it is necessary.

Compostable coffee capsules (aka 'coffee pods') and compostable coffee filter papers are further examples of compostable items that, respectively, have track record (principally in Italy) of co-disposal with separately collected food waste and biodegrading in composting and suitably equipped/designed AD systems. We have also received enquiry about acceptability of compostable kitchen towels and believe these could beneficially be co-disposed with food wastes.

Tea bags, coffee pods/capsules and coffee filter papers are not classified as packaging under the current UK Packaging Producer Responsibility System; this influences the wording of our suggestion for improving the definition of food waste.

Used 'paper only' products that are soiled only by food or beverage residues or cooking oil should also be considered in the definition of food waste. A good example is the paper in which fish & chip shop food is wrapped, which after use can be re-purposed as a home-made caddy / food bin liner or simply co-disposed with the food waste.

We suggest the definition of food waste includes the following:

- 'items independently certified compliant with BS EN 13432 or BS EN 14995, which are not packaging but integral to the use of a food or beverage product or which, after washing, remain permeated by food, beverage or cooking oil residues and so are unsuitable for disposal with wastes separately collected for recycling via mechanical or chemical processes; and

- any sticker or label independently certified compliant with BS EN 13432 or BS EN 14995 which is directly adhered to food,
- items made ONLY of paper AND which are soiled only by food or beverage residues or by cooking oil'

The sticker or label bullet point is to ensure that any fruit, vegetable or other food item that is sold or supplied with a compostable sticker or label stuck directly on it can be discarded with the food item (e.g. if a fruit item goes mouldy or starts to rot before being eaten) or discarded with the skin from or husk or peel from a food item.

For your awareness, in amendments to Environment Bill that are being discussed in the House of Lords, we are calling for 'compostable flexible materials' – meaning items independently certified to BS EN 13432 or BS EN 14995' – to become a waste type mandated for collection with food waste. If this remains non-mandated, and taking account of our above proposal for amending Defra's proposed definition of food waste, statutory guidance should specifically state that packaging and non-packaging items independently certified compliant with BS EN 13432 or BS EN 14995 are allowed to be co-collected with food wastes or co-collected food and garden wastes, and that a defined list of item format types (see our answer to question 17) that are also independently certified compliant with BS EN 13432 or BS EN 14995) are allowed to be co-collected with garden/green wastes. This would make clear that public and private sector organisations and their food / garden / food+garden waste treatment contractors could do such co-collection if and where they so choose.

Similarly, if 'compostable flexible materials' do not become a waste type mandated for collection with food waste, the definition of food waste should include bags (a type of packaging) independently certified to BS EN 13432, which are re-purposed (after initial use or multiple re-uses as a bag) as kitchen caddy / food bin liners. Please also see our answer to question 16 and our policy at https://www.r-e-a.net/resources/policy-on-and-liners-and-re-purposed-bags/. (The Co-Operative's lightweight carrier bags that are independently certified compliant with BS EN 13432 have a successful track record of being re-purposed for food waste collection and being co-composted with food wastes in IVC facilities. To the best of our knowledge they continue to also be certified home compostable under TUV Austria's well-established 'OK compost HOME' criteria set and scheme, and so can be home composted, e.g. with fruit & veg peelings from kitchens and garden waste.)

Co-collection of used cooking oil with food waste: this should be considered and the definition of food waste should be made clear on whether or not it's within scope. Used cooking oil is likely to arise from households as a relatively small proportion of the food waste disposed and could simply be disposed with the food together inside a compostable liner if a low proportion of the food waste bin's contents or the used cooking oil could be put in a compostable container then put in the food waste bin. We have suggested this because we're aware of one local authority that has advised householders to put used cooking oil in a plastic bottle (but not specified the bottle must be compostable) then place it in their food waste bin. Potential for co-collection

with food waste of larger quantities of used cooking oil from business and non-household public sector sources may need further consideration; we would be pleased to work further with Defra on this.

Pet food has been highlighted as a material that could be collected in the food waste stream but is excluded from Defra's proposed definition of food waste. It is likely that pet food would be suitable for treatment through AD or IVC facilities approved for treating animal by-products. We recognise there are ABPR driven restrictions, such as the pet food not being derived from Category 1 ABPs or unrendered Category 2 ABPs. Pet food could be included in the definition of food waste or statutory guidance could make clear that pet food can be co-collected with food waste where organisations choose to co-collect food that was fit for human consumption with pet-food (and with food plus garden waste where justified under TEEP provisions) and biodegrade that waste stream in an ABPR-approved AD or composting facility.

Proposal 4 – Separate collection of food waste from households for recycling

The Environment Bill will require local authorities in England to arrange for the separate collection of food waste for recycling at least weekly. We propose that local authorities already collecting food waste separately must, as required under the Environment Bill duties, continue to collect this for recycling from all household properties, including flats, at least weekly, in the **2023/24** financial year. There may be local authorities that require longer to implement a separate food waste collection service, and these are detailed below.

Local authorities without existing contracts in place that would be affected by introducing a separate food waste collection service, should have a separate, weekly food waste collection service in place by the **2024/25** financial year at the latest. This reflects the additional time required to procure the necessary capital goods and implement separate food waste collections effectively.

For local authorities with existing long-term mixed food/garden waste collection or disposal contracts in place (e.g. In Vessel Composting contracts), we propose that they should transition to a separate, weekly food waste collection service for all household properties including flats, as quickly as contracts allow. We are seeking views on the latest this should be done by – we anticipate setting a date between **2024/25 and 2030/31** subject to further evidence on the associated costs and benefits.

Local authorities with long term residual waste disposal contracts affected by introducing a separate food waste collection service (e.g. some Energy from Waste or Mechanical Biological Treatment contracts) should introduce a separate, weekly food waste collection service to all households including flats as soon as contracts allow. We are seeking views on the latest this should be done by – we anticipate setting a date between **2024/25 and 2030/31** subject to further evidence on the associated costs and benefits. For these local authorities, there may be some barriers to implementing a separate food waste collection service and we will be exploring the transitional barriers

including costs (arising from, for example, amending or breaking existing contracts where necessary) with those local authorities.

In all the cases above, the collection service introduced should be a separate food waste collection, unless an exception applies that would allow the collection of food waste with garden waste, as per Proposal 11 below.

Q14. Which parts of Proposal 4 do you agree or disagree with?

	Agree	**Disagree**	**Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable**
Local authorities already collecting food waste separately must continue to collect this material for recycling at least weekly from the **2023/24** financial year	✔	□	□
Local authorities should have a separate food waste collection service (at least weekly) in place for all household properties including flats as quickly as contracts allow		✔	
Local authorities without existing contracts in place that would be affected by introducing a separate food waste collection service should have a separate food waste collection service in place (at least weekly), for all households including flats, by the **2024/25** financial year at the latest		✔	
Local authorities with long term existing mixed food/garden waste collection or disposal contracts in place should have a separate food waste collection service in place (at least weekly) for all household properties including flats as soon as soon as contracts allow, with an end date to meet this requirement between **2024/25** and **2030/31**		✔	
Local authorities with long term residual waste disposal contracts affected by introducing a separate food waste collection service (e.g. some Energy from Waste or Mechanical Biological Treatment contracts) should introduce a separate food waste collection service (at least weekly) to all households including flats as soon as contracts allow, with an end date to meet this requirement to be set between **2024/25** and **2030/31**	✔		

Please provide any views on the end date for these obligations and any evidence on associated costs and benefits.

We support the policy objective of providing a food waste collection service to all domestic properties at the earliest opportunity. The aim of the obligations to collect food waste must focus on maximising the amount of organic waste that is collected (and then recycled or composted) due to the large detrimental environmental impact of it remaining in the residual waste stream and being sent for disposal in landfill or energy from waste. For this reason, the requirements for Local Authorities to have a food waste collection must come into force at the earliest possible date. This will also have the fastest impact on improving recycling rates due to capturing more organic material and enabling it to be treated separately.

Local Authorities should have the autonomy to decide on how to implement the policy objective, i.e., determine what collection system is most appropriate to their area. Timescales must allow for proper consideration by the local authorities on how to deliver the services.

Separate food waste collections (i.e., separate from garden waste) may be appropriate for many areas but this should not be seen as the only option. We are aware of examples where co-mingled food and garden waste collections result in food waste tonnages comparable to the estimated tonnage from a separate food waste collection. These include: East Riding of Yorkshire, Manchester, Stockport, Rochdale and Trafford. This is why local decision making is important. There are also examples of Local Authorities in the top 20 overall recycling rates who offer a co-mingled food and garden waste collection. There have been examples in Scotland where Local Authorities have moved from separate food waste collections to co-mingled food and garden waste collections based on best value (North Lanarkshire, Stirling and West Lothian). High recycling performance and achieving the overall policy objective of diverting food waste from the residual bin should be the priority, leaving the approach to be decided by the individual local authorities.

Certainty of policy and implementation dates will enable all parts of the supply chain to adapt and gain investment where needed to ensure that the demand can be met.

There needs to be a way of measuring the success of the food waste collections and an opportunity to re-evaluate the collection approach where required. It is important that food waste collections are not only provided to householders but that the education and communications are effective, and they are actually using them, and the food waste is being recycled or composted and does not remain in the residual bin. We suggest there needs to be a target for the amount of food waste that remains in residual waste collections following the introduction of the requirements. Compositional analysis will need to be undertaken by Local Authorities to enable them to report against the targets and measure the success of their collections. This should be reported and published on an annual basis. These targets should adopt a phased approach tied to the implementation dates, a suggestion is:

- Less than 50% of food waste in the residual bin 2 years after the implementation of collections

- Less than 30% of food waste in the residual bin 4 years after the implementation of collections
- Less than 20% of food waste in the residual bin 6 years after the implementation of collections

We have five members who operate In-vessel composting facilities who have raised serious concerns with the proposals. These facilities presently offer 700,000 tonnes of recycling capacity and have a net turnover of £14.2m which will be lost through the implementation of the policy. Discussions with these REA members have stated that their IVC facilities will likely close within four years of this policy implementation which is an outcome that Defra have not anticipated in considering and evaluating the policy proposals.

Q15. Some local authorities may experience greater barriers to introducing a separate food waste collection service to all household properties, including flats, by the dates proposed above. For what reasons might it be appropriate for these collection services to begin after this date?

- Collection contracts ✔
- Treatment contracts ✔
- Cost burden
- Reprocessing
- End markets
- Other (please specify)

If you have disagreed with any of the proposed implementation dates above, please provide examples of circumstances where it would be appropriate for this collection service to begin after these proposed dates and any supporting evidence where possible.

The reasons for delaying food waste collections services must be as few as possible to achieve the overarching ambitions of the Resources and Waste Strategy, minimise the amount of organic waste in the residual waste stream and maximise recycling rates. We acknowledge that some existing contractual arrangements both for collection and treatment may result in a delay to implementing collections.

The cost burden will be covered by additional government funding so should not be considered a barrier or result in delay in implementation. However, we have concerns about the cost estimates presented in the consultation and if the stability of market prices (gate fees) is reflected in these calculations. Greater Manchester, which comprises 9 collection authorities recently made a press release stating that the cost of source segregation was £31m. Given there are 160 authorities who do not collect food waste, the cost estimate of £200m looks to be underestimated.

In terms of capacity for additional food waste with existing infrastructure, the WRAP AD and Composting Industry Market Survey Report 2020 reports spare capacity for food waste of at least 500,000 tonnes at existing commercial AD sites and a further 450,000 tonnes of spare capacity at farm sites. There is 1.7 million tonnes of spare capacity in the composting industry (although this is likely to be mostly for garden waste). In addition to this, according to the NNFCC 2021 edition of Anaerobic Digestion deployment in the UK report, there are another 77 waste fed AD sites in development with a feedstock demand for 1,815,000 tonnes of food waste. The Green Gas Support Scheme will become available from Autumn 2021 and is likely to see the development of a further 10 - 20 AD plants that will be nearing commissioning by 2023. We acknowledge there are regional variations with regards to capacity and this is something that will be able to be considered by Local Authorities when making their decisions on how to provide the service. Certainty of feedstocks will enable investment in the sector to add additional treatment capacity where required.

With regards to gate fees, Local Authorities should achieve a saving in treatment costs due to the reduced volumes of residual waste. The gate fees for composting and AD are considerably less than the costs for disposal.

The consultation refers to 'compensation costs' for contract termination. This creates a potential route for IVC operators to be bought out of contracts in order to implement a separate food waste collection which could in turn result in redundant serviceable assets. Any termination of a contract of this type must make sense from an environmental perspective and economically for the local taxpayer.

These proposals have been in the pipeline since 2019 so Local Authorities should not have entered into long term contracts for residual waste since then. It is important that Local Authorities must not be able to extend existing contracts for non-compliant services for residual waste.

In terms of the end markets, there are a number of projects underway to improve the quality of composts and digestates and ensure that there is a demand from the end market. This includes the Environment Agency's Five-year plan for reducing plastic contamination in feedstocks and in outputs, the revision of the Quality Protocols and a number of actions in WRAP's Organics Strategic Report 2021 (aka Organics Roadmap), which is due to be published soon.

It is imperative that there is proper funding for effective education and communication to ensure the quality of materials collected are suitable and free from contamination. It is essential that this is delivered on an on-going basis and not just at the roll-out of service to ensure long-term awareness of the materials that are accepted.

The new burdens funding should be ring-fenced to be used only to cover the costs of providing the service (including communications, collections, transfer, treatment etc) it is intended to cover and not subsidise other services.

Proposal 5 – Caddy liners

We propose that the provision of

caddy liners in the collection of separately collected food waste should be promoted as good practice and that guidance should be provided on caddy liners, including on caddy liner material types.

Q16. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal? Please provide any other comments on the use of caddy liners in separate food waste collections, including on any preferences for caddy liner material types.

Agree

We agree local authorities should provide caddy liners to householders, that this could work on an 'upon request' basis but emphasise supply would need to be timely so that no householder runs out of suitable caddy liners and chooses to use an unsuitable one while they are waiting for liners the LA will supply. The cost of provision of liners must be covered by the 'additional burden' funding from Government.

Caddy liner material types: these must only be the liner types defined in REA's key liners and re-purposed bags policy criterion we have quoted below. We have stated supporting reasons in the rest of our answer below.

The benefits of supplying liners for kitchen food caddies and outdoor food bins

It is well known that supplying liners for kitchen food waste caddies and kerbside food waste bins increases the amount of food waste that is separately collected, diverting more of it from residual waste bins. Householder surveys carried out as part of WRAP food waste collections trials in 2008 - 2009 suggested that participation would be significantly affected if supplies of free liners were removed, and residents were then required to purchase liners from retail outlets. Building on this, more recent WRAP research on barriers to participation found that households without an ongoing or adequate liner supply tended to stop participating with subsequent difficulties in re-recruiting these households onto the scheme later' (https://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/HH_food_waste_collections_guide_section_4_caddies_and_liners.pdf, section 4.2, pages 5 – 6, unfortunately this document is currently not downloadable).

WRAP's summary document (Household food waste collection guide, https://wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/household-food-waste-collections-guide) also highlights that 'providing householders with a combination of well-designed internal and external containers plus a supply of caddy liners supported by quality communication materials can help ensure good engagement and good participation and capture rates'.

Type of liners

Government, regulators and industry are seeking ways to reduce the amount of visible plastics and microplastics that reach soils via waste-derived composts and digestates. In addition, the biowaste recycling and recovery sector is committed to producing digestates and composts of the highest possible quality and to manage food wastes as efficiently as possible. In order to maximise biowaste recycling, minimise any potential impact on the environment and reduce the millions of pounds the UK's organics recovery and recycling industry spends annually on removing and sending incompatible plastics and other contaminants to waste recovery or disposal facilities, the REA and contributing organisations have developed a policy on liners and re-purposed bags (see https://www.r-e-a.net/resources/policy-on-and-liners-and-re-purposed-bags/). This policy covers liners and re-purposed bags suitable for separately collecting food waste (non-packaged and user-unpackaged) from households, businesses and non-domestic premises, in England from 2023 onwards.

Criterion 1 from REA liners and re-purposed bags policy (full criteria set and details separately sent to Defra):

1. **Non-packaged and user-unpackaged food that is discarded and separately collected - including where co-collected with plant waste - must be presented:**

    a. **in plastic or paper liners or re-purposed bags (inside the caddy/bin) independently certified compliant with BS EN 13432 or BS EN 14995*:**
    b. **in a user-made caddy/bin lining made of a re-purposed paper, non-bag / non-liner item, e.g., newspaper; or**
    c. **loose inside the bin** (also referred to as naked), as the least preferred but still acceptable option if the bin user or organisation responsible for such bins so chooses.

* The liners or re-purposed bags must have a valid certificate of conformance to BS EN 13432 or BS EN 14995, issued by an independent certification body. The latter standard mirrors EN 13432, its scope being for plastics rather than packaging, which is the scope of the former standard. (Liners are not currently classified as packaging whereas bags are.) Both standards include disintegration and biodegradation criteria for item biodegradation under industrial scale composting conditions as well as under AD followed by composting conditions, although item testing for conformance to the latter specific criteria has tended not to be pursued to date. Paper bags / liners must have a valid certificate because they often have glued seals and printed on ink(s) which need to be checked for their compostability.

N.B.: For brevity in answer to questions 16 and 17 we have termed liners and re-purposed bags that comply with our policy as 'industrially compostable'; we mean liners and re-purposed bags that are 'industrially compostable' and/or industrially biodegradable in systems that digest waste and then further biodegrade them in an aerobic phase for maturing separated fibre digestate (as is allowed under PAS 110) or

composts them with other suitable biowastes, which we term 'industrially digestible + aerobically matured'.

Our policy facilitates higher quality and higher yields of composts and digestates produced from organic recycling and recovery of separately collected biodegradable wastes, and reduced risk of pollution when the composts and digestates are spread on land.

Compostable liners have been shown to lead to reduced levels of contamination by non-compostable plastics*. This can help to avoid the financial costs of removing and sending front-end removed liners/re-purposed bags to recovery (e.g., energy from waste) or landfill facilities and the associated negative impacts on the environment. It will also enable the compostable bags/liners to be fed into Anaerobic Digesters after suitable pre-treatment or sent and fed into In-Vessel Composting (IVC) after front-end removal at the AD facility.

* A SEPA funded study (Plastic in food waste at compost sites, Project report, November 2019, https://www.r-e-a.net/resources/sepa-report-on-compost-feedstock-quality/) on physical contaminants (with emphasis on plastic contaminants) in domestic and commercial food wastes received at Scottish composting sites found that the results of examining and quantifying the plastics provided '..a strong indication that provision of compostable caddy liners by local authorities leads to lower plastic contamination (both in terms of the bag itself and the contents of the bag)'.

REA analysis of some of the study's Table 2 data found that where local authorities provided compostable caddy liners, total non-compostable plastics (bags/liners and plastic inside the bags) was 0.224 %, 1.46 times higher than the 0.327 % w/w they represented where other local authorities did not provide compostable caddy liners (figures on a % w/w fresh matter basis). We regard this difference as significant because Scotland's plastics limits on product status composts and digestates derived from wastes are the tightest in the world and revisions to the Compost Quality Protocol and Anaerobic Digestion Quality Protocol this year could mean that similarly stringent limits become phased in in England over the next 5 years.

Appropriate provisions in waste supply and treatment contracts and at-waste-source measures that reduce contamination by non-compostable plastics are important. SEPA's study said that 'feedstock with 5 %, or even 1 %, of contamination requires significant clean-up if the final compost is to achieve either PAS 100 or the new [the current SEPA] regulatory limits' and '..achieving such reduction levels [at composting facilities] is extremely difficult'.

Lastly, in Scotland AD sector compliance with considerably tighter plastics limits than in PAS 110 has been achieved through more finely screening digestates to remove even more plastic > 2 mm in the digestate, with the screened-out plastics and digested solids being sent to EfW or landfill facilities. If non-packaged and user-unpackaged food waste were to be collected only in bags/liners compliant with our policy (or none) then a

higher percentage of the organic matter and nutrients locked into the organic matter in the food waste could reach soils, via higher marketable yields of digestates and composts (the latter where the AD operator front-end removes compostable bags/liners and sends them to IVC).

Proposal 6 – Biodegradable and compostable plastics packaging materials.

We propose to provide further guidance to local authorities and other waste collectors on the collection and disposal of compostable and biodegradable materials in kerbside waste streams.

Q17. Do you have any comments on how the collection and disposal of compostable and biodegradable materials should be treated under recycling consistency reforms? For example, this could include examples of what should be provided in guidance on the collection and disposal of these materials.

Government should redesign the EPR and waste collection consistency rules and systems so they support the co-collection of independently certified industrially compostable PACKAGING (in well-targeted applications where alternatives are unrecyclable because of their small size and/or are likely to have food/drink/cooking oil residues on them, e.g. ready-meal trays with baked on food after use and fruit & veg stickers) with non-packaged and user-unpackaged food wastes arising at household and many commercial, business and public sector organisation sources.

Our view is the same for well-targeted, independently certified industrially compostable NON-PACKAGING items, such as the co-disposal of compostable tea bags with spent tea into food waste bins; this is a notable opportunity to reduce the non-compostable plastics in food wastes and residues of them which may contribute to microplastics content in food-waste derived composts and digestates.

The closed loop, business to business collection of independently certified, compostable packaging (e.g. cups and lids) and non-packaging items (e.g. straws) used in food service contexts where there are no washing facilities or insufficient capacity of washing facilities for re-usable food service ware (e.g. ceramic crockery) should also be supported; examples are festivals, street markets and some sports stadia and events spaces, where dedicated bins are provided for food waste and used compostable food service packaging and non-packaging items.

If WRAP's guidance on considerations for compostable plastic packaging (which discusses key potential applications for these materials, see https://wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/compostable-plastic-packaging-guidance) continues to be the key guidance that UK plastic packaging and non-packaging item stakeholders use in future, it should be reviewed and updated more frequently, at least in the short term. Currently, the range of compostable item formats placed on the market in the UK is far greater than is currently recommended in WRAP's guidance and we believe it is currently too narrow. Organisations such as the Ellen MacArthur

Foundation and 'A Plastic Planet' have recently been working on Green and Red lists for compostable item applications. Defra and WRAP should consider these in the UK context and work with stakeholders to provide updated guidance.

England's, Wales's and Northern Ireland's commercial scale composters and AD operators who treat food wastes and food waste co-collected with plant wastes will soon experience significant drivers for change. Where they do not already do so, in England permits to operate will, by 2022 at the latest, require treatment facilities to take all reasonable steps to reduce concentrations of contaminants to As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP). New Environment Agency Standard Rule Permits to be issued in 2021, and bespoke permits when updated, will include limits on contaminants in biodegradable wastes delivered for composting or anaerobic digestion. Non-compostable plastics in wastes delivered and wastes prepared for the biological treatment phase(s) will continue to count as contaminants. This, together with imminent revision of the Compost Quality Protocol and AD Quality Protocol and the anticipated tightening of limits on any kinds of plastics > 2 mm in composts and digestates, means that changes are needed to the ways in which food and plant wastes are collected. Levels of contamination by non-compostable plastics must be reduced to ALARP; this means significant reductions in contamination by non-compostable plastics, considering levels that have been visually estimated by operators or reported as findings from R&D projects.

We also ask Defra and the Environment Agency to talk with us about on-going use of the APHA, EA, SEPA and REA agreement published at http://www.organics-recycling.org.uk/page.php?article=3466. It enables specified independently certified industrially compostable packaging and non-packaging item formats to be composted in facilities that do not have APHA approval under Animal By-Products Regulations (e.g. open-air, turned windrow composting), where only milk and cream fit for human consumption have been in contact with the above material as part of the drink contents. To date, this agreement has been used in business-to-business, closed loop arrangements, allowing used, compliant compostable items to be composted at facilities nearer to where those wastes arise. We do not support the directing of other most other compostable item formats towards non-ABPR composting facilities, even where they have no milk or cream residues on them; compostable plant pots are amongst the few compostable items formats that make sense to be discarded into garden waste bins and supplied through to non-ABPR composting facilities to be biodegraded. The issue of updating guidance on suitable compostable item formats and their intended disposal and waste management routes needs further attention and we would be pleased to work with Defra and WRAP on this topic.

The creation and dissemination of guidance on pre-treatment and biodegradation of compostable items at AD facilities, taking account of the UK AD facility landscape is a further topic where Defra's support could help advance more sustainable and circular management of food wastes and compostable items.

Labelling of compostable items

A project between Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd and the On-Pack Recycling Label Ltd will aim to develop and drive more uniform labelling of independently certified, industrially compostable plastics and packaging. These and other stakeholders are engaging with University College London Plastic Waste Innovation Hub's current R&D project on 'Compostable plastics: unlocking barriers to systems change' which includes a workstream on how compostables labelling could be optimised for maximum efficacy in driving compostable items into food waste bins after their use, e.g. a 'Recycle with food waste' and an alternative 'Biorecycle with food waste' call to action, for inclusion in item labelling, is likely to be evaluated for its effects on bin user behaviour. Findings from these projects should be reviewed by Defra and other key stakeholders in terms of recommendations that should become supported in policy and industry practices.

Keeping oxo-degradable plastics out of food and plant waste streams

Standards relevant to oxo-degradable plastics (including PAS 9017) do not include pass/fail criteria for determining their suitability in any scale of composting system or type of AD system and to the best of our knowledge, such plastics have not complied with the standards the organics recycling sector accepts for compostable packaging and plastics (currently EN 13432, EN 14995 and ASTM D6400 in a composting context [Compost Quality Protocol] and EN 13432, DIN V 54900 and ASTM D6400 in an AD context [AD Quality Protocol]). We anticipate and support bans on the use of oxo-degradable plastics in the countries of the UK in the near future.

In the event they are not banned before implementation of the reformed EPR and waste collection consistency systems: we suggest that during any period when they remain on the market after the new systems begin to be implemented, that rules and guidance ensure they are not co-collected with separately collected food and plant wastes (not in any product format), are not used as liners for kitchen caddies or food waste bins and that oxo-degradable plastic bags are not re-purposed for final use as a kitchen caddy or food waste bin liner.

We would be pleased to provide to Defra, on request, information that would help to define and identify oxo-degradable plastics.

Q18. Do you agree or disagree that anaerobic digestion plants treating food waste should be required to include a composting phase in the treatment process?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

Please provide any evidence where possible and explain any advantages and disadvantages.

It is important to be clear about what is meant by a composting phase and what is the Government rationale for including this requirement. Whole digestate cannot be composted without at least dewatering in the first instance and only the fibre fraction would be suitable for composting.

There are number of barriers for existing AD plants to include a composting phase on the same site including: planning and permitting constraints; lack of suitable space; need for additional infrastructure (a short- to medium-term issue); changes to the emissions from the facility and the resulting on-site infrastructure requirements and impact on local environment; and investment (the next revision of the Green Gas Support Scheme could address investment issues) etc. It is important that the current portfolio of sites is not undermined.

There are potentially benefits of including a composting phase in the treatment process for solid digestate derived from food waste treated through AD. These include facilitating the processing of compostable packaging and non-packaging products and further treatment of digestate to aid with storage and spreading of the final product, helping minimise emissions and maximise the value.

It should be noted that composting is not the only option for further treatment of the digestate; aerobic maturation of fibre digestate is already an allowed and used option by some existing AD operators, and there are other technologies that further process or enhance digestate to enable recovery of the nutrients without the need for storage of large volumes of whole liquid digestate. It is important that innovation is not stifled, and policy is flexible to accommodate commercially ready new technologies, others that are near-to-market and, in due course, others currently at earlier stages of development.

There are also other pre-treatment technologies available that facilitate the processing of compostable materials at AD sites. One example of this is autoclave technology. AeroThermal Ltd is a company who make autoclave pre-treatment technology, which is in use at an AD plant in the UK. Autoclave technology is in widespread use in Italy, where food waste is co-collected with compostable packaging and in compostable bags/liners. A recent trial by AeroThermal (sent to Defra separately by REA) found that after autoclaving, mixed Vegware compostable food packaging materials had a bio-methane potential (BMP) value of 375 m^3 CH_4/ton VS. They go on to report 'this indicates that processing one ton of the Vegware products using AeroThermal Thermo-Pressure Hydrolysis (TPH) pre-treatment and AD technology could potentially produce about 329 m^3 of bio-methane.' We acknowledge that this technology will not be appropriate or viable at all existing facilities.

As previously mentioned, some of our IVC members have said that their sites will have to close in 4 years if this policy is implemented as proposed. It is likely that in excess of one million tonnes of treatment capacity will be rendered redundant due to a lack of feedstock and with it millions of investment, future income, assets and jobs will be lost. This will have an impact on those AD operators whose facilities are not suitably designed or do not become suitably equipped for feeding in compostable liners or re-

purposed bags, who will not be able to send their front-end removed liners / bags of these types to IVC to be biodegraded if anchor contracts for co-mingled materials are withdrawn from IVC operators.

Proposal 7 – Definition of garden waste

We propose that the following should be included in the description of garden waste included in regulations.

Unwanted organic material arising from a garden, including:

- Grass cuttings
- Garden weeds
- Plants and flowers
- Hedge Clippings
- Leaves
- Twigs and small branches

This excludes:

- Waste products of animal origin
- Bulky waste (including but not limited to garden furniture and fencing)
- Plant pots
- Garden tools or other gardening equipment
- Soil, stone, gravel or bricks

Q19. Do you agree or disagree with the materials in and excluded from this description of garden waste?

Disagree

If you disagree, please provide the reason for your response and specify which materials should be included or excluded in this definition.

The definition of garden waste materials in list covers most of the wastes usually produced and accepted at composting sites. We suggest adding 'prunings' to the acceptable materials list.

Plastic must be included in the excluded list. Plastic is the single biggest contaminant at composting sites so we need to explicitly say plastic must be excluded. We also recommend that glass is specifically excluded.

Independently certified compostable plant pots are acceptable, so this distinction needs to be made.

There are a number of noxious weeds that are not recommended for composting. A noxious weed is 'a plant species that has been designated as one that is injurious to agricultural and/or horticultural crops, natural habitats and/or ecosystems, and/or humans or livestock'. Noxious weeds include poisonous weeds and invasive, non-native weeds. The list of exclusions should include reference to weed species not suitable for

composting. The Compost Certification Scheme have guidance on this. https://www.qualitycompost.org.uk/upload/files/f43_31_ORG_information_sheet_on_composting_noxious_weeds.pdf

Proposal 8 – Increasing recycling of garden waste from households

In response to the first consultation, there was mixed support that, if a free minimum collection service for garden waste is introduced for households with a garden, this should be a minimum fortnightly collection service, equivalent to a maximum capacity of 240-litre (either bin or sacks) and local authorities would be able to charge for more frequent collections and/or additional capacity. We are seeking further views on the updated costs and carbon benefits of this proposal as detailed in the table below, subject to securing funding for the policy.

Please note that any new additional burdens to local authorities incurred through this policy would be covered by Government.

Costs	**Benefits**
Increase in waste management costs of £2,222m over the total appraisal period (i.e., mainly driven by lost revenue from garden waste charging; some of which is partly offset by some savings from residual waste treatment)	Average carbon savings of 793 kT CO2e per annum (traded, 84kT CO2e, non-traded, 709 kT CO2e respectively. 25% increase of garden waste tonnage collected for recycling, shifted from residual waste. Societal savings from not paying for garden waste services, totalling £2,514m.

Table A: The estimated costs and benefits of a free minimum collection service for garden waste as set out in the impact assessment.

Note, the appraisal period is between the 2023/24 and 2035/36 financial years.
These costs and benefits compare a scenario where all local authorities charge with a free minimum collection service. All costs and benefits are discounted (please see glossary).

Q20. Given the above costs, recycling benefits and carbon emissions reductions, do you agree or disagree that local authorities should be required to introduce a free minimum standard garden waste collection (240 litre containers, fortnightly collection frequency and throughout the growing season), if this is fully funded by Government, and if authorities remain free to charge for more frequent collections and/or additional capacity?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

Please provide any comments or evidence on the costs and benefits presented above.

Whilst there were differing views on the provision of free garden waste collections from our members, the majority support the requirement for all properties with a garden. This will drive organic material from the residual bin and allow it to be composted, improving recycling rates.

There has been some feedback that Local Authorities who have moved from free garden waste collections to a paid for services has resulted in lower levels of contamination received at composting facilities. However, it has also usually resulted in a decrease in the tonnage of material received and reduction in revenue (although in some cases this has also led to reduced costs in removal and disposal of contamination).

There are a number of actions underway to improve the quality of material received at sites. These include the Environment Agency revision of Permits to limit the percentage of contamination that plants are able to accept in incoming feedstock and the forthcoming revision to the Quality Protocols which is highly likely to result in a lower limit for plastic contamination in compost (& digestate) to meet the End of Waste requirements. These actions, along with Government funding for education and communications will improve the quality of materials received at site.

There must be statutory guidance on the quality of garden waste materials collected and Local Authorities must have to meet the requirements and report on the levels of contamination. The level of contamination acceptable must be aligned with the Environment Agency's quality requirements for feedstocks (0.5% contamination for garden waste accepted for composting under a standard rules permit). Too many contracts specific 5% contamination as acceptable, whereas composting sites have to comply with the forthcoming permit limits for feedstocks and a physical contamination limit in compost of 0.25% in the finished product if certified to PAS100 (and this is likely to be tightened under the Quality Protocol revision). The best way of dealing with contamination is to remove it from the front end of the process.

The provision of free garden waste collections will increase the tonnage of material received at composting sites, reduce the amount of garden waste that is likely to end up in the residual bin (and the negative environmental impact of its disposal) and maximise recycling rates. Effective communication is the key to success.

Proposal 9

We are seeking views on options, either alongside or instead of a free, minimum collection service for garden waste, and the extent to which they would achieve the aim of increasing the recycling of garden waste and decreasing the quantity of garden waste in residual waste streams.

Q21. How likely are the following options to support the above policy aims?

	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely
Provide updated guidance on reasonable charges for garden waste.		✔	
Issue clear communications to non-participating households	✔		
Support on increasing home composting (e.g. subsidised bin provision).		✔	

Q22. Do you have any further comments on the above options, or any other alternatives that could help to increase the recycling of garden waste and/or reduce the quantity of garden waste in the residual waste stream? Please provide supporting evidence where possible.

Proper funding for effective education and communication is the single biggest factor that will increase the recycling of garden waste and improve the quality of materials collected. It is essential that this is delivered on an on-going basis and not just at the roll-out of service to ensure long-term awareness of the materials that are accepted. Provision of generic information to Local Authorities who can then adapt this to their circumstances has been successful for other waste streams through the WRAP Recycle now communication toolkit.

Communications for householders should go further than stating what materials are or not acceptable. They need to include details on what happens to the waste, how is it recycled and what it is used for, explaining that it is often part of the food chain. This helps to explain why the quality of material is important and why householders should care about what they put in the bin. Examples of effective communication on biowaste collections in Italy is where they run dedicated awareness campaigns which include: direct marketing (letters to all residents, posters, leaflets and bin stickers), direct contact with building managers and citizens, a smart phone app, public meetings, a customer contact centre and school educational projects with special materials for students. They share relatable information about how the residents' waste is processed and what the results are, for example:

- 130kg of food waste can produce enough biomethane for a 100km journey
- 1 tonnes of food waste can produce 200kg compost, 500 litres of clean water and 160m3 biogas which either produce 400kW electricity and 400kW heat or 90kg of biomethane (1,800 km) and 64kg of carbon dioxide.

- A family producing 550kg of organic waste can produce 100kg of compost and 45kg of biomethane, for a 900km family road trip.

Not all the above will be applicable in all circumstances but provision of information beyond 'what goes in the bin' helps to increase the overall education of why recycling is important and the environmental benefits that it brings. This results in lower contamination rates in feedstocks arriving at sites.

Training of the collection crews alongside the communication to householders has also show to be effective at managing contamination in garden waste bins. Where collection crews are lifting lids of bins to check contents and tagging and rejecting bins with obvious contamination this can assist with changing householder behaviour. Local Authorities must train their staff, allow them time to check bins and empower them to reject bins when contamination is observed.

Home composting is a great way of treating garden waste at the source, minimising the amount of material entering the waste management system and should be encouraged. Many keen gardeners will already home compost and provision of information on this may be beneficial for those people who are interested. Previous home composting schemes have had success in distributing free (or subsidised) composting bins, but it is unclear how many of these are in use long-term. Our experience is that householders who are keen on composting will do it regardless of support. However freely available information on how to compost at home would be beneficial. For many householders the provision of a free garden waste collection is likely to drive more garden waste out of the residual bin long term than the provision of a subsidised composting bin.

Proposal 11 - Conditions where an exception may apply, and two or more recyclable waste streams may be collected together from households

Technically practicable

By technically practicable we mean that the separate collection may be implemented through a system which has been technically developed and proven to function in practice.

Q25. Do you have any views on the proposed definition for 'technically practicable'?

To satisfy this requirement, an option would need to be undeliverable. Any source segregated approach could be technically practicable at a cost, and so the TEEP test needs to be a balance of all three criteria.

Suggested insertion: "Or that alternatives can provide comparable performance". This insertion would mean that a technically practicable alternative could be considered in situations where the policy proposal is comparable, not undeliverable.

In order to make the case that separate collection is not technically practicable, local authorities will need to demonstrate that their local circumstances mean that it is not practicable to have separate collection of the recyclable waste streams. Examples of this could include, but are not limited to:

- Type of housing stock and accessibility – e.g. flats, houses of multiple occupation, student accommodation, historic buildings, dwellings with communal recycling points
- Rurality and geography of property location
- Availability of suitable containers
- Storage of containers at properties
- Storage in existing waste transfer infrastructure

Q26. Do you agree or disagree that the proposed examples cover areas where it may not be 'technically practicable' to deliver separate collection?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

If you disagree with any of the above, please provide the reason for your response and indicate which example you are referring to.

Local Authorities need the flexibility to look at their own circumstances and consider a wide variety of factors in making the decisions on collections. They should have the ability to assess their own service and undertake detailed analysis.

Availability of suitable containers is not a reason for a service not to be 'technically practicable', merely likely to result in a time delay to implementation.

Availability of local treatment infrastructure should be considered.

Q27. What other examples of areas that are not 'technically practicable' should be considered in this proposal? Please be as specific as possible.

The location of treatment facilities with spare capacity should also be a key consideration in 'technically practicable' as this will have a large influence on the need for intermediate transfer stations.

Other reasons could include:

- Examples of where capture rates are comparable.
- High levels of resident participation and set out rate for alternative services
- Material streams that have large quantities of compostable packaging which cannot be dealt with through certain treatment facilities.
- Proximity principle for treatment capacity and market risk/exposure (e.g., north-west region)
- Lack of suitable collection vehicles

Economically practicable

In order make the case that separate collection is not economically practicable, local authorities will need to demonstrate that their specific financial costs (caused by their local circumstances) mean that it is significantly more expensive to have separate collection. Examples of this could include, but are not limited to:

- Type of housing stock and accessibility – e.g. flats; houses of multiple occupation, student accommodation, historic buildings, dwellings with communal recycling points
- Rurality and geography of property location
- Available recycling and treatment infrastructure

Q28. Do you agree or disagree that the proposed examples cover areas that may not be 'economically practicable' to deliver separate collection?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

If you disagree with any of the above, please provide the reason for your response and indicate which example you are referring to.

The policy proposals state that examples of TEEP circumstances will be provided in statutory guidance which will be developed. References are also made to a WRAP tool which is in revision. Without sight of this guidance and tools, industry cannot provide meaningful or substantive feedback on important matters such as what constitutes "significant cost" or "significant environmental benefit".

A full and robust cost assessment is required. Local Authorities should have the ability to take account of the various costs that could differ between authorities. The economic aspect of TEEP needs to be wide enough to allow a whole service assessment with any cost benefits netted off. Assumptions need to be robust used in economic modelling, particularly in respect of gate fee movements, which can change over time.

Q29. What other examples of 'economically practicable' should be considered in this proposal? Please be as specific as possible.

The "Best Value" obligation as defined in the Local Government Act 1999 should be recognised as an economic practicable reason in TEEP. It is important that a best value option is not discounted because another part of the public sector is underwriting the costs.

The cost of writing off redundant assets with a serviceable design life is not in the interests of the taxpayer. Cheshire East have a facility with a 22-year residual design life and decommissioning this facility in the next 4-10 years is unreasonable. These costs need to be considered in the economic assessment of TEEP.

Costs associated with wilfully inducing a breach of contract (i.e., not just compensation costs) should also be considered.

Economically practicable refers to separate collection which does not cause excessive costs in comparison with the treatment of a non-separated waste stream, considering the added value of recovery and recycling and the principle of proportionality. If the additional cost of collecting a recyclable waste stream separately outweighs its value once collected it may not be economically practicable to collect a waste stream separately.

Q30. Do you have any views on what might constitute 'excessive costs' in terms of economic practicability?

The Best Value obligations should be considered. The assessment of excessive cost could be looked at on a £/tonne recycled or a £/increase in recycling rate increase to help identify/test the definition of economically practicable. A cap and collar based on established local authority costs could be established as a guide to what constitutes excessive.

No significant environmental benefit

In order to make the case that separate collection is of no significant environment benefit compared to the collection of recyclable waste streams together, local authorities will need to demonstrate that this is the case in their circumstances and that separate collection does not provide additional benefits over other systems. Local authorities should consider the overall impact of the management of the household waste stream throughout the system, from collection through to reprocessing. Examples of this could include, but are not limited to:

- Greenhouse gas emissions – for examples from vehicles or Materials Facilities
- Lifts per vehicle and journey length
- Availability of recycling facilities
- Reject tonnages

Q31. Do you have any views on what should be considered 'significant,' in terms of cases where separate collection provides no significant environmental benefit over the collection of recyclable waste streams together?

The potential for new innovative technologies needs to be acknowledged and there should be no policy barriers in place for the uptake of these. Defra have acknowledged that Dry AD has been overlooked. There are likely to be multiple benefits for co-collected food and garden wastes to be 'dry'-digested or managed in facilities that can separate the food waste and any liquid fraction of the garden waste and digest it (producing gas) and treat the remainder of the material through In-vessel Composting. The proposed format, template and standardised values for TEEP needs to fully reflect the scope and potential for these technologies (e.g., biomethane can be captured from garden waste as well as food wastes). The TEEP assessment approach must be wide enough to allow a full and proper comparison of all potential approaches, for all TEEP criteria not just environmental benefit.

Q32. Do you agree or disagree that the proposed examples for 'no significant environmental benefit' are appropriate?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

If you disagree with any of the above, please provide the reason for your response and indicate which example you are referring to.

Q33. What other examples of 'no significant environmental benefit' should be included in this proposal? Please be as specific as possible.

The environmental benefit assessment should include the full range of environmental indicators, not just carbon emissions. There must be clear recycling benefit and a demonstrated market for the outputs from the process. There is an oversight in the collections proposal that doesn't acknowledge the contribution to gas yield from garden waste.

Proposal 12 – Compliance and enforcement

In circumstances where it is not technically or economically practicable, or where there is no significant environmental benefit to collecting two or more waste streams separately, obligated parties are required to complete a written assessment.

We want to avoid unnecessary burden on local authorities. We therefore propose that local authorities should only be required to complete a single written assessment for their service area, which will take account of the different exceptions, rather than multiple assessments for the same service area. It may be appropriate for a single assessment to be completed across more than one authority. For example, for two- tier authorities, partnerships, or authorities that share treatment infrastructure.

Q34. Do you agree or disagree that local authorities should only be required to submit a single written assessment for their service area?

Agree
Disagree
Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable
If you disagree, please provide the reason for your response.

Local Authorities should provide the evidence base they require and not be limited in format or scope. This could include a quantitative model (financial or waste flow) and a qualitative written assessment.

Q35. What other ways to reduce the burden on local authorities should we consider for the written assessment?

An assessment of service is not a burden. It is the role of a local authority waste manager to develop and oversee efficient, well organised services that are appropriate to the local area.

Q36. What factors should be taken into consideration including in the written assessment? For example, different housing stock in a service area, costs of breaking existing contractual arrangements and/or access to treatment facilities.

Local Authorities are best placed to understand their local area and circumstances and what factors need to be taken into account when assessing collections. Assessments should be robust, well justified and subject to the scrutiny of governance and appeals procedures operating within local authorities.

Q37. Do you agree or disagree that reference to standard default values and data, which could be used to support a written assessment, would be useful?
Agree
Disagree
Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

If you disagree, please provide the reason for your response.

Insufficient detail is provided for substantive feedback in this consultation. There should be no 'one-size fits all' approach. Different Authorities will have different levels of data and different circumstances to which reference data may not apply. Local Authorities should be able to take account of standard data if it is appropriate to their circumstances but not be required to only use this when assessing TEEP. Default and reference values should be optional. Local authorities have first-hand service data which is more relevant than any reference values and there should be an option for departure from reference values where desired.

Robust, justified assumption should be used. Defra must consider all collection approaches and technologies in developing reference benchmarks which could be used.

Q38. Do you agree or disagree that a template for a written assessment would be useful to include in guidance?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

If you disagree, please provide the reason for your response.

Templates and guidance are useful to assist Local Authorities, but these should remain as guidance and be non-statutory.

Proposal 16 – Recycling credits

Q43. Do you agree or disagree that provision for exchange of recycling credits should not relate to packaging material subject to Extended Producer Responsibility payments?

Agree
Disagree
Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable
Please provide the reason for your response.

Part 2 - Measures to improve the recycling of non-household municipal waste from businesses and non-domestic premises

Proposal 19 – On-site food waste treatment technologies

Food waste that is not properly recycled or fully recovered on the site of production should be separately collected for recycling or recovery elsewhere**.**

Food waste treatment technologies can be used to pre-treat waste prior to being separately collected for these purposes. Disposal of food waste by landfill or into the sewer system (even if pre-treated) should only be carried out as a last resort in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

Where food waste treatment technologies are used, they should be operated in line with relevant guidelines on environmental and wastewater management and should be compliant with Animal By-Product (ABP) regulations and other appropriate regulatory requirements.

Q50. Do you agree or disagree with Proposal 19?
Agree
Disagree
Not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable

Q51. Do you have any other comments on the use of these technologies and the impact on costs to businesses and recycling performance?
The sale of new macerators should be banned to ensure that food waste does not end up in the sewer system. We are aware that many waste water treatment plants may be able to co-digestate food waste with sewage sludge, however this should be done in a visible manner, by the acceptance of food waste as an input, rather than allowing the food waste into the sewer system. This allows those waste water treatment plants who choose to accept food waste to deal with it effectively and those who would prefer not to accept food waste (or are unequipped to deal with it) to not have this material coming through the sewer system.

Proposal 20 – Reducing barriers to recycling for non-household municipal waste producers

We propose to continue to support businesses and small and micro-firms (i.e. those employing fewer than 50 and 10 Full Time Equivalent employees respectively) to recycle and overcome any barriers associated with increasing recycling.

Q52. What are the main barriers that businesses (and micro-firms in particular) face to recycle more?

	Large barrier	Some barrier	Low /no barrier
Communication		✔	
Financial		✔	
Space		✔	
Engagement		✔	
Drivers to segregate waste	✔		
Location		✔	
Enforcement	✔		
Variation in bin colours and signage			✔
Contractual		✔	
Staff / training		✔	
Other			

If you have selected other above, please specify.

Please provide any comments on how these barriers can be overcome.

Food waste collections from business have been in place in Scotland for seven years. There are lessons that can be learnt from there and an opportunity to mirror tried and tested methods of collections, bin storage, training, communications to businesses etc. Many of the businesses offering food waste collections operate across the UK so are well placed to offer a good service to businesses immediately.

Proposal 21 – Exemptions and phasing for microfirms

We propose that micro-sized producers of non-household municipal waste should have special arrangements in place to reflect the higher barriers to recycling that they often face.

We are consulting on two options:

Option 1: Micro-firm producers of non-household municipal waste should be **exempt** from the requirement to arrange for the collection of five recyclable waste streams (glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food waste) for recycling and to present this waste in accordance with the arrangements.

Option 2: Micro-firm producers of non-household municipal waste are **phased** into the new recycling consistency requirements in the Environment Bill, two years after the recycling consistency go live date.

Q53.Should micro-firms (including businesses, other organisations and non-domestic premises that employ fewer than 10 FTEs) be exempt from the requirement to present the five recyclable waste streams (paper & card, glass, metal, plastic, food waste) for recycling? Please select the option below that most closely represents your view and provide any evidence to support your comments.

- Yes – all micro-firms should be exempt from the requirement – **Option 1**
- No – but all micro-firms should be given two additional years to comply with the new requirements in the Environment Bill (i.e. compliant in 2025/26) – **Option 2**
- No – all micro-firms should be required to present these waste streams for recycling, from the 'go live' date in 2023/24

Q54. Should any non-household municipal premises other than micro-sized firms be exempt from the requirement? Please provide evidence to support your comments.

Micro-firms should not be exempt from the requirements to comply. Some micro-businesses may produce large quantities of food waste and the amount of food waste produced is not necessarily linked to the number of FTE employees. Having an exemption in place based on the number of employees could lead to the unintended consequence of businesses having employees on zero-hour contracts to claim to be exempt from the requirements.

There are some barriers for businesses to implementing food waste collections, however there are ways that these can be dealt with rather than just exempting them from the requirements. In terms of cost, the route density for collections is often a large factor in the cost of the collection and having exemptions for micro-firms is likely to make route efficiencies more difficult and therefore cost will remain a barrier. The more businesses are required to have food waste collections, the more efficient the routes can be which can help to reduce costs.

Proposal 22 – Other cost reductions options

We propose to continue to explore cost reduction options to reduce the cost burden for non-household municipal waste producers and are seeking further views on waste zoning/franchising and collaborative procurement options. We continue to develop these and other cost reduction options that we consulted on previously.

Waste franchising / zoning

Q55. Which recyclable waste streams should be included under a potential zoning scheme?

For each option, please select either agree, disagree, or not sure / don't have an opinion / not applicable.

- Dry recyclable waste streams (glass, metal, plastic, paper and card)

- Food waste
- Other items e.g. bulky office waste (please specify)

Q56. Which of the below options, if any, is your preferred option for zoning/collaborative procurement? Please select the option that most closely aligns with your preference

- Encouraging two neighbouring businesses to share the same containers under contract
- Encouraging businesses to use shared facilities on a site/estate
- Business Improvement Districts/partnerships tendering to offer a preferential rate (opt-in)
- Co-collection – the contractor for household services also deliver the non-household municipal services
- Framework zoning – shortlist of suppliers licensed to offer services in the zone
- Material specific zoning – one contractor delivers food, one for packaging, one for refuse collection services
- Exclusive service zoning – one contractor delivers the core recycling and waste services for the zone
- None of the above

Q57. Do you have any views on the roles of stakeholders (for example Defra, the Environment Agency, WRAP, local authorities, business improvement districts, businesses and other organisations and chambers of commerce) in implementing a potential zoning or franchising scheme?

For example, do you think there could be roles for one or more of these organisations in each of the following activities:

- Procurement
- Scheme design
- Administration and day to day management
- Enforcement
- Business support
- Development of tools and guidance
- Delivery of communications campaigns
- Any other activities (please specify)

If you think that there is a role for any other stakeholders, please specify.

Please provide explanations where possible to support your above response.

Q58. Do you have any further views on how a potential waste collection franchising / zoning scheme could be implemented?

Specific waste streams from similar industries, based around hubs, could be a further area where franchising or zoning schemes could be used to encourage the collections specific waste that deliver preferred homogenous feedstocks ideal for specific recovery technologies, depending on the nature of the waste stream. For example, collections

from similar agri-food and drink business within a zone could support hubs for composting or AD. While other non-food waste could help drive hubs around advanced conversion technologies and delivery of range of renewable end products.

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