

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY, 24th MAY 2022
title: DRS, EPR AND COLLECTION CONSISTENCY CONSULTATIONS
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide Members with an update on the above

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities – To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The consultations were launched for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) by DEFRA on the 24th of March 2021 with a closing date of the 24th of June.

2.1.1 **EPR**:- The proposals covered in this consultation were concerned with reforms to the packaging waste regulations. The current system of producer responsibility for packaging has been in place since 1997 but needs reform. Initial reforms were outlined in the first consultation, where governments signalled their intent to introduce EPR for packaging so that producers pay for the cost of packaging from cradle to grave.

2.1.2 The government estimated that producers' costs would be in the region of £2.7bn in the first year of implementation. £1bn of this related to packaging waste collected from households, £1.5bn for packaging waste collected from businesses, and £200m for the management of bin and ground packaging litter.

2.1.3 **DRS**:- The consultation sought views on proposals to introduce a DRS for drinks containers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It referred solely to deposit return schemes (for drinks containers explicitly) and not reward and return schemes. So, a system where you pay an upfront deposit, which you must return the container to redeem.

2.2 A second consultation was launched for Consistency of Collections by DEFRA on 7th May with a closing date of the 4th of July 2021.

2.2.1 The consultation was concerned with having consistent recycling collections to improve the quantity and quality of municipal waste recycled in England and achieve a national recycling rate of 65% by 2035. It directly impacted on local authority waste services and was looking for proposals for all waste collection authorities to:

- Collect the same core set of dry recyclable materials from households.

- Have separate weekly food waste collections from households.
- Have separate minimum fortnightly collection of green waste (possibly free)

3 ISSUES

3.1 EPR

After months of deliberation, the government published its response to its consultation on extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging in late March.

EPR places the cost of managing products once they reach end-of-life on to producers. The response sets out the way in which the government and devolved nations will implement EPR across the UK

In a controversial move, the estimated costs to producers fell from £2.7 billion to £1.7 billion. This is down to two main factors. Firstly, the government dropped plans to make producers responsible for the cost of business waste until at least 2026/27, when there will be a review. Secondly, England and Northern Ireland will not make producers responsible for litter “on the ground”,

Other headline moves include delaying implementation of EPR from 2023 to 2024 and excluding glass from the scope of the deposit return scheme (DRS) in England and Northern Ireland, despite its inclusion in Wales.

3.2 LITTER

It is likely the government made the decision as a response to quite hard lobbying by producers who did not feel they should pay for “inappropriate behaviour by individuals”. Unfortunately, that will mean that the cost for the litter removal will fall again on local authorities.

3.3 CONSISTENCY

EPR is just one aspect of the government’s reforms. It has yet to publish its responses to the consultations on the DRS in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and on consistent collections in England.

One of the biggest issues around consistent collections is the call for weekly separate collections of food. The delay in the decision is not helping councils make the necessary plans. It is not known whether a separate pod would be needed on collection vehicles or separate vehicles, how many different ways of collecting were required and whether co-mingled collections would be sufficient. This was planned to be in place by 2023 but it is now likely to be delayed.

Seemingly, the EPR system will tell councils how much money they will get, while consistency will tell them how to proceed.

It is thought that with local elections looming on the horizon the government will not publish its response until the end of May.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – Until the White Paper is published the extra resource implications are unknown.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None arising as a result of this report.
- Political – None arising as a result of this report.
- Reputation – None arising as a result of this report.
- Equality & Diversity – None arising as a result of this report.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Note the report

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REF: AH/COMMUNITY 240522