



Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [Waste management](#), HC 241

Wednesday 2 July 2014

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 2 July 2014

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [National Farmers Union](#)
- [Local Government Association](#)

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Members present: Miss Anne McIntosh (Chair); Richard Drax; Jim Fitzpatrick; Mrs Mary Glindon; Sheryll Murray; Neil Parish; Ms Margaret Ritchie; Mr Mark Spencer

Questions 124-212

Witness: **Dr Andy Rees**, Head of Waste Strategy Branch, Welsh Government, gave evidence.

Q124 Chair: Good afternoon and welcome, Dr Rees. Thank you very much indeed for agreeing to participate in our inquiry on waste management in England. I just wondered, for the record, if you could just give us your name and position.

Dr Rees: Thank you. I am Andy Rees and I am Head of Waste Strategy Branch for the Welsh Government.

Q125 Chair: Thank you very much indeed. Just a couple of general questions to begin with. When the decision was taken in Brussels on the EU Waste Framework Directive originally, would you have been consulted in the Department on the very ambitious targets that were set?

Dr Rees: Do you mean for the revision of the Waste Framework Directive in 2008?

Chair: Well, even the original, but the revision—

Dr Rees: Yes, we were consulted by Defra. That is very common; that normally happens for most pieces of legislation.

Q126 Chair: What do you understand the expression “zero waste” to mean?

Dr Rees: In our waste strategy, Towards Zero Waste, we put at the end in the glossary the definition from Zero Waste International Alliance, which includes the phrase “where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use”. In our waste strategy, we have set a goal of zero waste by 2050, and that we define as reducing the impact of waste in Wales to “one planet” levels of waste and also to phase out residual waste so that effectively we recycle 100% of our waste. In the interim, we do see a role

for a limited amount of energy from waste. We have also set an interim goal of essentially zero landfill—or as close to zero landfill as possible—by 2025.

Q127 Chair: Without going into too much detail, because there will be more detailed questions later, are you managing to raise an income from some of the waste that you are disposing of?

Dr Rees: Yes, indeed. That is part of the business case that our local authorities put together to increase their recycling levels. They will factor in the amount of income that they receive. Most certainly, the amount of income has been going up over the last few years, although it does fluctuate month by month and year on year according to the marketplace.

Q128 Chair: Could you share with us how you expect Wales will achieve zero waste by 2050?

Dr Rees: We have got a big focus on waste prevention, reuse and recycling. We have set very challenging waste prevention and recycling targets, and the recycling targets have been made statutory for local authorities. We have set targets to demonstrate our commitment to hold ourselves to account and to enable us to monitor progress and the effectiveness of our actions. Essentially, we have developed a mix of interventions, including funding support, legislation and a series of programmes to provide support to those who need to make the changes. Legislation, including statutory targets, and funding have been the key towards our trying to achieve the zero-waste ambition.

Q129 Chair: You are committed to a maximum of 30% energy being created from waste by 2024/25. How do you expect to achieve that?

Dr Rees: We have got a formal programme in place with our local authorities. They have been grouped together into consortia and they have been provided with funding and technical support to carry out the procurement. It is a proviso that only a maximum of 30% energy from waste can take place. Two of the tenders have gone out to market; one of the plants is currently being built and planning permission is going in for the other. At the moment we have an energy-from-waste rate of about 6% in Wales.

Q130 Chair: Is this new build? Will houses nearby benefit from that?

Dr Rees: The electricity generated will be fed into the national grid. For the plant in Cardiff, I know the operators are looking to supply heat to facilities nearby that need it, including public buildings and possibly some private individuals or companies there will use the heat, but probably it will not be supplied to housing, because of the difficulties and expense of that at the moment.

Q131 Ms Ritchie: Dr Rees, moving on to household recycling, under existing policies, will the UK reach the EU household waste recycling target of 50% by 2020?

Dr Rees: We have already reached the 50% level last year or maybe the year before. We had a 52% recycling rate for municipal waste in 2012/13. I cannot really comment on the rest of the UK, but certainly for us, 50% was achievable and we have done it.

Q132 Ms Ritchie: How has Wales achieved higher rates of recycling than England?

Dr Rees: The main area of focus for us has been on setting statutory recycling targets. That has very much focused the minds of local authorities. Allied to that, we have also provided additional funding support in terms of the Sustainable Waste

Management Grant, which this year is running at £66 million. We have 3 million people and about 1 million households in Wales, to put that into comparison.

Q133 Ms Ritchie: Could the changes to waste regulations requiring separate collections for paper, metal, plastics and glass in England and Wales have a negative impact on recycling rates?

Dr Rees: We do not think that will be the case. It is more in terms of the quality of the material; that is the aim of the regulations. We effectively already have those four materials collected by all our local authorities, but they are not necessarily separately collected. A number of our authorities collect it commingling, and they will need to be able to justify that stance under the regulations.

Chair: I do not know if Mr Fitzpatrick wanted to ask anything.

Jim Fitzpatrick: I was interested in the financial figure, but I see it is the next question, Chair, so I am very happy to hear what the next answer will be, and maybe then. Well spotted.

Q134 Sheryll Murray: Turning to funding, we have heard evidence that local authorities in Wales spend about an extra £70 per household than local authorities in England. What practical difference do you think this additional funding can make?

Dr Rees: Yes, I noticed that from your first evidence session. It is complicated in terms of local authority costs. I looked at the figures for gate fees in the WRAP report for last year and in Wales the gate fees are significantly higher than in England. There are also other factors that affect cost. It is not the case that recycling necessarily costs more money, so I need to make that point. In terms of the funding that we have provided to local authorities, the key difference that it has made is for them to provide separate collection of food waste. We introduced the extra funding about three or four years ago—an extra £20 million—and as a result, 96% of our households in Wales have had a separate collection service for food waste put in place by their local authorities. That has probably made one of the biggest differences.

Local authorities have also been improving their services generally, particularly in terms of the additional recyclable materials that they have been collecting, and they are starting to get into more niche materials now, like mattresses and carpets. They have also used the funding to enhance their civic amenity sites and their household waste recycling centres. They have put in effort across the board using that funding, which is ring-fenced specifically for waste.

Q135 Sheryll Murray: Do you have any other examples of the way they use the extra funding?

Dr Rees: I know Rhondda Cynon Taff, for example, have introduced a mattress recycling facility. They have been overwhelmed by the number of mattresses that they have been managing to receive. A number of other local authorities, which have also been monitoring, for example, how many mattresses come through their civic amenity sites, have been surprised. A lot of them are now sending it to that centralised facility. I stress it is food waste that has really made the difference. That has probably added around five to six percentage points to our recycling rate.

Q136 Jim Fitzpatrick: Just following on from that, Dr Rees, in terms of your relationship with counterparts in Defra, have they shown an interest in the outcomes and how much it has cost you? Have you been sharing data with them? Have they been down to have a look?

Dr Rees: We do have regular liaison meetings. I cannot recall if we have shared the cost information, but, as I say, we do have regular meetings and we share information with each other. There is a lot we can learn from each other. There are good examples going on in English local authorities as well and we go to various conferences and both Defra and ourselves listen to what is being put forward at those conferences.

Q137 Neil Parish: Good afternoon, Dr Rees. My question is on education about how people recycle and the reasons for recycling. My wife puts all our stuff in the various bins; I would just throw it all in the same bin because I would not have the patience to sort it all out. How are you getting to people who perhaps are resisting a little bit the great benefits of recycling?

Dr Rees: Since 2002, we have had a twin-tracked approach. We have had a national campaign on recycling and we have also supported local campaigns through Waste Awareness Wales. About seven or eight years ago we ran a national TV advertising campaign for three years. Now we are convinced that that has done its job, we do not run that campaign anymore. Local authorities are supported by Waste Awareness Wales to do very local campaigns based on the service that each authority provides, and also there has been various market research done to identify those segments of the population that perhaps need a bit more encouraging than others, and there have been certain targeted interventions using all sorts of media—electronic media, etc. It is quite an ongoing campaign to encourage people to recycle.

Q138 Neil Parish: In these campaigns, do you tell people what is happening to the recycled waste? I am a little bit cynical and I am inclined to think that it may be all collected separately but a lot of it still lands up in landfill. How are you convincing people that by putting it in all the various containers in the end it is properly recycled?

Dr Rees: I can reassure you that the vast majority of it is recycled. The element that is not recycled is the rejects and contaminated material, and that will either go to landfill or energy from waste. For the last three years, we have been publishing what we call our end destinations report, which as far as possible identifies the end destination of recyclate. That has been available as a paper report for the last two years and is now about to be published as an electronic report. That allows councillors, members of the public and businesses to see where the recyclate is reported as going. Interestingly, the Welsh press picked up on it the first year that we published it, and I think they also did last year, so there has been quite a lot of interest in it.

Q139 Neil Parish: Just two last bits of the question. Who has funded and led the campaigns in Wales? How is the issue of contamination of recyclates being addressed in Wales?

Dr Rees: In terms of awareness campaigns, we set up in 2002 the Waste Awareness Wales campaign and have funded it ever since.

Q140 Neil Parish: Who led that?

Dr Rees: It is based in the Welsh Local Government Association. It is a joint collaborative venture between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government

Association. It is important that whatever messaging is put out there is tailored to the needs of local authorities, because they have the targets to meet. In terms of—

Neil Parish: The contamination of recyclates. That is where, I suppose, people have not put it necessarily in the right containers.

Dr Rees: You want to know how that is tackled.

Neil Parish: Yes.

Dr Rees: Our authorities do various things. Where they have identified that it is a problem, they will do targeted communication campaigns through leafleting, articles in the local paper, articles on their website, etc. Some of them may go round to individual households if they identify that as a particular problem, but I suspect that does not happen that often. Certainly if they can identify an area where it is happening, they will do something a bit more locally.

Q141 Mr Spencer: Can I turn to carrots and sticks, particularly financial ones? Has the number of financial penalties or reward schemes increased since the introduction of statutory local authority targets?

Dr Rees: There are no real financial penalties applied to the householder. There are provisions under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act for local authorities to require members of the public to use certain containers, but I am not aware that there have ever been any fines under that in Wales. In terms of fines for failing to meet the targets, the Welsh Government decided not to fine any of the authorities in 2012/13 who failed to meet their targets because it was the first year and we were convinced they were taking reasonable steps to improve. In terms of rewards, a few years ago a number of our authorities did trial reward schemes, but I had a quick check in the last few days and I am pretty sure there are no comprehensive reward or incentive schemes currently underway in Wales. We rely on the goodwill and voluntary participation of householders to put their material out for recycling.

Q142 Mr Spencer: If push comes to shove at some point in the future and you are not meeting the targets you want to reach, will you move down the route of compulsory recycling?

Dr Rees: That would be a decision for Ministers. We have not looked into that at the moment.

Q143 Mr Spencer: So there are certainly no plans and it has not been scoped at all.

Dr Rees: No. We are still on a straight-line trajectory in terms of increasing recycling, so there is no need to introduce that sort of thing in the foreseeable future at all.

Q144 Mr Spencer: Are you confident you can do it without, then?

Dr Rees: We will have to see. We are still on a straight-line trajectory. Well, I say that; we were at 4% per year to meet the targets up to 2012/13, then the authorities have to go 2% per year, and it is looking like in the last year they have been on a 2% trajectory. Fingers crossed, that will carry on.

Q145 Mrs Glendon: If Wales continues to move towards zero waste, then it stands to reason there will be far less need for residual waste treatment plants. How is the Welsh Government ensuring that Wales is not left with surplus residual waste treatment capacity?

Dr Rees: By setting a minimum recycling target of 70%, we have automatically set a maximum ceiling of 30% for residual waste, so it cannot go above that. In the procurement programme that I mentioned earlier, we get outline and final business cases from the local authorities, and they have to be scrutinised by ourselves before we will agree to the funding. We do look very carefully at the capacity and the figures in terms of minimum tonnage that are put into those contracts, and we look at waste-minimisation efforts and the recycling efforts and make sure the facilities or the contracts are sized appropriately. Also, we have published our Collections, Infrastructure and Markets Sector Plan, which has tried to forecast different scenarios for residual arisings in the future depending on how recycling targets and waste-prevention targets are met. That provides an envelope of capacity that is needed, and then our planning authorities use those figures when planning applications come in for individual facilities.

It is always hard to predict the future in terms of whether waste-prevention targets will be met, so authorities have to make their best estimate of what residual arisings they think they will get in the future, and there are projected population increases in the future that they have to factor in. But very much so there is a cap on the amount of energy from waste. If the recycling targets increase beyond 70%, there are provisions within the contracts for tonnages to be amended. There are contractual arrangements in place to cater for that, where alternative waste could come in to substitute for local authority waste. There are provisions there.

Q146 Mrs Glendon: Do you think that Wales could become an importer of residual waste?

Dr Rees: That is a matter for the operators, because it is a free and open market in terms of the waste industry. The contracts that are laid down between the local authorities and the operator are for the local authority's waste; it is up to the waste-management company to decide how big to build the facility, subject to planning permission. The decision on the size really rests with the planning authority and the case that the energy-from-waste company can make. There are jobs to be made from energy from waste, so it is a factor that has to be taken into consideration.

Q147 Richard Drax: Measures announced in Brussels today confirm that the European Commission plans to ban the landfilling of all recoverable municipal waste by 2030. First of all, is this an achievable target for the UK? Second, may I also draw your attention to the fact that a certain proportion of this waste is non-recoverable and therefore will be potentially landfill, since there is no alternative treatment option? The European Commission proposes that that would be limited to a maximum of 5%. That is the second part of the question, but the main one is: is the ban on the landfilling of recoverable municipal waste achievable?

Dr Rees: I cannot really comment for the whole of the UK, but certainly for Wales we already have proposals in place through our Environment Bill to have a landfill ban for recyclable waste and combustible waste by 2017, so we do think that is achievable. I stress our zero-waste-to-landfill goal does accept that there will still be a need for some landfill and we would like to see it being less than 5%, which seems to accord with the European Commission's proposed figure as well. Yes, there will always be some waste that will need to be landfill.

Q148 Richard Drax: With your knowledge of the UK—you have got a lot of knowledge throughout not just Wales—can you give a guesstimate? Is it achievable for the rest of the UK to meet this target? You say Wales can, but can we?

Dr Rees: As I say, I am a civil servant who works for the Welsh Government; it is hard for me to comment on other parts of the UK. We certainly think it will be achievable for Wales.

Q149 Chair: You said earlier, when talking about energy created from waste, that there is at least one facility being planned. What would you say the lead-in time is for a decision to be taken in Wales by a local authority for planning permission? I remember prior to the 2010 election there was doom and gloom that we were never going to have enough facilities on time because of the length of time taken by local authorities for planning. Is that different with you?

Dr Rees: It is very variable.

Q150 Chair: Would you like to describe “variable”?

Dr Rees: It depends on the circumstance. I am trying to remember now back in the dim and distant past when the original concept came together for the Project Green proposal. I think it was around 2006/07 when the consortium got together. The planning application went through about a year and a half or two years ago and then the plant was constructed, or the initial groundwork started, virtually straightaway. I believe it will start operating sometime next year. In effect, that is a fairly rapid process. I cannot guarantee that that will be the case across the board, but the important thing is that the operator puts in a lot of effort to reassure the local public and the planning committee. It also depends upon the sensitivity of the site and the degree of opposition. That was probably one of the quicker facilities that went through, certainly compared to some.

Q151 Chair: You also said that you have a flow of information and good practice between the Welsh Government, Defra and planning authorities. Do you also think lessons can be learnt from other countries, like the Scandinavian countries, Austria and Germany, in terms of energy from waste and gasification?

Dr Rees: Yes. Over the years, we have watched very closely what has been going on in other EU countries, not just for energy from waste, but also for recycling and food waste. There was a report produced about 10 years ago looking at the public perception of energy from waste across Europe. Certainly in a lot of other parts of Europe there is a far more favourable public response to energy from waste because it is seen as an important mix of energy supply. Certainly in Denmark in the 1970s it was seen as a major route to produce energy and not rely on fossil fuels. One of the keys in Scandinavian countries is the provision of heat; in Scandinavian countries they do need the heat and it is a bit easier there to provide it because the houses need it. Also, when the Waste Incineration Directive came in in the 1990s, that helped allay a lot of the fears that there might have been in the rest of Europe. Indeed, in Germany the Greens are certainly quite receptive to energy from waste and it is less of a political issue there, for example, from what I have read and heard.

Q152 Chair: If you were to make one recommendation in terms of waste management to this inquiry, what would your recommendation be?

Dr Rees: As I said before, I have really got to stick to what we do in Wales. What has worked for us has certainly been the ring-fenced funding provided to local authorities

and the setting of statutory recycling targets. We have also learnt lessons from elsewhere, and we think that is a good route to follow.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed, Dr Rees, for taking the time to be with us and to answer our questions today. You are most welcome. If you would like to remain for the rest of it, you are very welcome indeed. Thank you very much indeed.

Dr Rees: Thank you.

Chair: If I could invite the next witnesses to step forward and while they are doing so, if I could take the opportunity to make a housekeeping announcement. We are expecting a vote at approximately four o'clock. As they say in all polite places, we are not expecting a fire drill, so if the fire alarm goes, run like hell and get out the building as fast as possible, but it is not to be confused with the division bell at that time.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Minette Batters**, Deputy President, National Farmers Union, and **Anna Simpson**, Environment Policy Adviser, National Farmers Union, gave evidence.

Q153 Chair: I welcome the next set of witnesses most warmly. May I invite you in turn to introduce yourselves and say who you are for the purposes of the record, if you would?

Minette Batters: Yes. Thank you, Chair. Minette Batters, Deputy President of the National Farmers Union.

Anna Simpson: Anna Simpson, Environment Policy Adviser, National Farmers Union.

Chair: Thank you. You are both extremely welcome. Is that the first female—dare we say lady—Deputy President of the NFU?

Minette Batters: It certainly is, Chair, yes.

Chair: That is wonderful. I think it is your first occasion before us. Both of you are most welcome and it is an historic occasion, so thank you.

Minette Batters: Thank you.

Q154 Chair: We are very grateful for the written evidence that you have provided us, which will also be taken into consideration in the inquiry. When it came to both the original Directive and the revision to the Waste Framework Directive—I know it might have been before your individual times—would the NFU have been consulted on the targets and the achievability of the targets?

Anna Simpson: Yes, we were consulted and we did respond to the consultation on the targets.

Q155 Chair: As far as you are aware, is there any difference between the way that farms are treated in Wales, for example, or in the rest of the United Kingdom, from the way they are treated in England in terms of waste disposal?

Anna Simpson: The environmental permitting regulations and the waste management regulations do differ slightly. We do not have the specifics with us today, but we could provide more evidence on that.

Q156 Chair: That would be interesting, if you would. In the view of the NFU, what role would you like the Government to take in waste management?

Minette Batters: It is important that we have measures put in place that are easily accessible. We have concerns that if we put too many blockages on landfill, for example, to start off with, there might be more fly-tipping. We also have concerns around incineration—there are a lot of small-scale incineration plants—and about people not having wide access to the Fallen Stock Scheme used by local hunt kennels. They are already compliant with regulation and we would certainly want those protected.

Q157 Chair: Do you believe that the Government provides a co-ordinated and consistent message as regards waste management policy for farmers?

Minette Batters: We need to see co-ordination across all Departments and that the targets are realistic. That is very important. Anna, do you want to add anything else?

Anna Simpson: Yes. We feel that there could be more co-ordination across the Departments, because it does affect lots of Government Departments, including DECC and the Treasury. Waste management is multifaceted. Also, when the targets are being set, these are evolving at an EU level, so whilst Defra may say, “We might take a step back from waste management at the moment”, you need to consider that waste targets are evolving within the European Commission.

Q158 Chair: Do you believe that Defra is taking a strong enough role in challenging those targets before they are agreed?

Anna Simpson: Defra does need to challenge those targets to give us the best possible advantage in meeting any targets that are set. I also think that any targets that are made need to be evidence based.

Q159 Chair: Do you believe that the message coming out from the Department is consistent?

Anna Simpson: There is one example where we feel there is a little bit of inconsistency, and that is in terms of anaerobic digestion. We feel the Government is trying to encourage anaerobic digestion, and small-scale on-farm anaerobic digestion, whereas some of the incentives, such as the feed-in tariffs, have been pulled back slightly by DECC.

Q160 Chair: You note in your written evidence that “food waste prevention is a farmer’s primary aim during food production”. What measures do you take to try to reduce food waste as much as possible during production?

Minette Batters: It is well regulated and certainly very well monitored through farm assurance that you have to sort your waste on-farm and you have to have, I suppose more importantly, the correct procedures in place to sort that.

Q161 Neil Parish: Good afternoon. You have partly answered my question in your response to the Chairman. It is about anaerobic digestion and the small-scale plants. You made the point that there is an argument—this is DECC, really, not ourselves in Defra—about the level of support there should be; the strike price for small scale should be higher

than that of the larger scale ones. What representations are the NFU making to Government on that?

Minette Batters: Dr Jonathan Scurlock heads that up for us. Anna, do you want to comment on that?

Anna Simpson: Yes. We are very engaged with the anaerobic digestion industry. We feel that the incentives for small-scale on-farm anaerobic digestion are not supportive enough. We also feel that it is quite burdensome in terms of the regulations surrounding small scale, and we think that that should be scaled back slightly to make it more cost efficient to have AD on-farm.

Q162 Neil Parish: Also, anaerobic digestion works best really when you have a mixture of farm waste along with food waste and others. Are Defra and Government doing enough to try to co-ordinate to bring these things together? You need for an anaerobic digestion plant not just farm slurries and waste; you need other waste as well.

Jim Fitzpatrick: Can I just supplement that by asking: given your comment, Anna, about DECC withdrawing some of the subsidy, just to reinforce Neil's question, does that mean that the NFU then has to lobby Treasury and DECC and Defra, or does Defra act on your behalf with the other Government Departments when you spot problems? How do you deal with that?

Anna Simpson: No, we have to lobby various Departments, but I do know that we try to have a co-ordinated approach and get the various Departments in the room together.

Jim Fitzpatrick: Sorry, I did not mean to interrupt your answering Neil's question.

Q163 Neil Parish: You see, there is an argument that the money—the subsidy for these plants—would be best targeted towards the small-scale ones in order that we can get more and more on-farm. We make the point that the digestate is a jolly good fertiliser and then we have got heat, fuel, electricity and even gas into the grid. What more can Defra do and what more can we do to change the policy? It might be a case of reducing some of the money to the bigger ones and getting it to the small ones—some adjustment. What more can we do?

Minette Batters: There are slightly mixed messages coming out. We do have challenges within the Union to anaerobic digestion—the argument of energy versus food. It is a difficult one. It does need leadership and we do need very clear messages coming out from Defra. The Secretary of State has said very openly and passionately that it must be for food waste and we do not want to see large fields of maize being grown that are pushing rents up. It needs very clear messaging and very clear leadership.

Q164 Neil Parish: As a farmers' union, are you able to broker between those who want to grow maize to put into a gas plant and those who believe we should be using waste?

Minette Batters: It is an ongoing discussion—put it that way—because ultimately it is a form of diversification and it has to be about choice. It is never for us to say how people should run their businesses. It is quite challenging, is it not, for all of us?

Anna Simpson: If I could just add one point, one barrier to the uptake of on-farm AD is the definition of waste. We have some examples where producers may be growing a crop of potatoes and they cannot make a decision about whether that crop is going to go into their AD plant until it has been graded, and because that crop has gone over a picking

line or processing line, it is then classed as waste. It makes the process of anaerobic digestion and the regulation surrounding it much more difficult. If the flexibility of that definition of waste could be improved and made more realistic, that could be really—

Chair: Could you just pause there? We are coming onto the technology, so I would like to invite Mark Spencer to lead on this, please.

Q165 Mr Spencer: Thank you, Chair. Can I just draw the Committee's attention to my membership of the NFU? I just wondered, in that case, whether AD is the best use of unavoidable farm waste or whether we should be looking to use it in some other area rather than anaerobic digestion.

Minette Batters: It is a really good use of farm waste because you get the two uses out of it: you get the digestate out of it, which can then offset your fertiliser costs and go back to be spread on land; and then you get the biogas, which can be used on-farm and, if there are any extras, can be sold back into the grid and add value. It is the very best model, but it is getting a joined-up approach so that others can feed into it. It is good. The principle is really good.

Q166 Mr Spencer: What about those waste products like high-lignan type products? Take, for example, your potatoes. Would that waste potato crop be best used to feed animals, saving the production of proteins elsewhere, or being fed through an AD plant?

Minette Batters: Again, that has got to be about choice. It is often used for feeding animals, but then you are seeing less livestock in many places. Again, it is back to having the choice as to what you do. The main thing is that that waste product is utilised to best advantage.

Anna Simpson: It also depends on the location of your farm. You might not necessarily have alternative markets for that waste product.

Q167 Sheryll Murray: Is there an opportunity for outputs to provide additional income, or do farms use all the digestate and biogas themselves?

Minette Batters: No, there is definitely an opportunity for the biogas to be sold into the grid and also—the technology is not there yet—for running vehicles. That would add significant value, if it could be used for running vehicles, but the technology is not quite there. With the lack of mixed farming now, there is enormous value in the digestate waste going back onto the land, and there is no reason why there could not be a centralised AD plant that was then co-ordinating with other farming businesses around it. It would be adding value, potentially, all ways round and what was not being used of the biogas could then be sold into the grid.

Q168 Mrs Glendon: Would you support or oppose a landfill ban?

Minette Batters: We would have to have other measures in place, because there would be real concerns about the fly-tipping. We would fully support it—we all want to see an end to landfill—but it is about taking the steps to have those other measures in place so that we do not create the unintended consequences. Yes, we fully support it, but let us get those measures in place first.

Q169 Mrs Glendon: What impact could a change of policy in this area have on farms and the agricultural industry?

Minette Batters: If we had a landfill ban?

Mrs Glindon: Yes.

Minette Batters: I would like to see more accessibility. I sent all our black plastic off yesterday, and that had to go right up to north Wiltshire. That is an hour's drive. We had a lorry from there come down and collect it. That means getting a bulk lot for us to justify the cost of a lorry coming to get it. Even if we do it in smaller amounts, there is then the cost of going backwards and forwards. I would like to see more accessibility—that through the local authorities we had more suitable services that were closer to hand. A lot of people have to travel a long distance, which then defeats the effect of recycling.

Q170 Chair: What is the extent of fly-tipping and other waste crimes on farmland at the present time?

Minette Batters: It is significant. Anna will correct me if I am wrong, but over two-thirds of farmers are affected by fly-tipping.

Anna Simpson: Yes, that is right.

Minette Batters: It is worse in some areas than others. We ran a countryside campaign on fly-tipping and we got massive support right across the country. It really is a big problem, with people using unlicensed carriers. They just presume that if they look in the *Yellow Pages* or phone up the operator, everybody is licensed, and so many people are not licensed.

Q171 Chair: In your written evidence, you do say that you are concerned about the availability and the existing state of facilities and infrastructure to take anything that would normally go to landfill. Would you like to expand on that now?

Minette Batters: Another frustration we have is that local authorities do not have a very joined-up approach. Some are being incredibly helpful and taking things away at low cost, but then you will find that another local authority will not have the same approach. We would like local authorities to all be on the same page. That would help enormously.

Q172 Chair: Do you see that changing in the foreseeable future?

Minette Batters: It is in all our interests for it to change and for local authorities to make it accessible. It is the unintended cost that it creates, is it not? Some local authorities are providing a much better service, but ultimately they are having to pick up a cost by collecting the fly-tip off the edges of roads.

Q173 Chair: Are you able to say what the cost would be on an annual basis for a small or medium-sized farm of even things like removing the plastic that the haylage has been in—so the waste cost per farm? Would the NFU have that figure?

Minette Batters: To my farming business, which is a predominantly livestock one of 200 hectares, the cost is between £400 and £600 per annum.

Chair: That is not counting food waste.

Minette Batters: No, not at all. That is purely black plastic and string.

Q174 Chair: If you were able to make one recommendation to us as part of this inquiry, what would it be? If you had a single recommendation to make.

Minette Batters: That we look at a broad approach and we do not take anything out. I do have real concerns about the incineration, because the backlash of that would be

huge. More accessibility—if I had a recycling centre that was closer to me, I would be able to do it far more frequently. At the moment it is very costly. That is the case for many farmers throughout the country; it is a real cost to recycle. They have to be compliant because the farm assurance holds them to that, and you have to have the certification that you have dealt with your waste effectively. It is not something that farmers can escape, because when the farm assurance inspection happens, that will be checked up on and they will have to have documentation for that.

Q175 Richard Drax: I apologise; I had to take an emergency call. You may have discussed this, but do you think there should be some more incentives? We used to get 5p back a bottle, or whatever it was—certainly when I was a child we did. Should there be some incentives? We personally suffer from fly-tipping, like all other farmers; it is a real, growing problem. Should people be given some incentive—financial or otherwise—to take that waste somewhere?

Minette Batters: There should be. I should make clear that farmers are not, as you know, responsible for the fly-tipping. I certainly do not know any farmers who are responsible for it.

Richard Drax: That is not what I was saying and nor did I imply it. They suffer from it.

Minette Batters: No, I know. They suffer from it. You are absolutely right; there should be incentives. We get a lot, as you probably do, of hedge clippings and tree trimmings. We are dealing with people who are working in an unlicensed world; they do not necessarily have road tax or insurance. Ultimately, when I speak to my local police, as I am sure you do, they just say, “There is not a lot we can do”. I wonder how we can incentivise those people to take the correct measures. It is very difficult with fewer police to police it. Ultimately, that cost then gets picked up by the farmers. Whatever it is—whether it is tyres; no matter what—the farmer ends up picking up the cost for that. They then have to comply, as I have said, with the farm assurance measures themselves. It is enormously frustrating, but incredibly difficult to get people incentivised to be responsible.

Q176 Richard Drax: Secondly, very briefly, if I may, Chair, if it lands on the landowner’s—whatever he or she may be—land, as I understand it, that person then has to pay for it.

Minette Batters: Yes, absolutely.

Richard Drax: That is hugely punitive when it was not put there by them in the first place.

Minette Batters: Yes, absolutely. Unless it is very close to the road. It has to be right by the road, does it not? If it is on farm land at all—

Q177 Richard Drax: Absolutely. Should the Government be looking at changing the law or something to make sure that farmers and landowners are not punished for doing something they have not done?

Minette Batters: It would be enormously appreciated. There are many farmers who have picked up huge cost—we know of many for whom it has been £2,000, £3,000, £4,000 or £5,000—to dispose of illegal waste. That is an unfair burden when you have

had nothing to do with it. It is always done in the middle of the night; they are never caught. That would be very much appreciated.

Q178 Chair: I just heard you say that you had real concerns about incineration. Is that the public reaction to incineration? You sound quite positive about energy from waste in your—

Minette Batters: The concerns from the agricultural perspective would be that we would not want to lose any of the farm incineration services that we have. For instance, we do not have a fallen-stock scheme around us, so our local hunt kennels would do a round of picking up fallen stock and then they would take them back to those kennels. They have got a licensed incinerator, but very small scale, where they dispose of that stock. If we lost that, that would be an absolute tragedy and also add to a welfare and disease burden.

Chair: You do have small incinerators to dispose of pig and poultry carcasses already.

Minette Batters: Yes.

Chair: I do not think we are picking up that they would be closed. Thank you very much indeed for being with us and answering our questions as part of our inquiry.

Minette Batters: Thank you very much.

Chair: You are most welcome. If I could invite the next witness to take his place and again just reiterate, if I may, that we are expecting a vote in a little over 20 minutes' time or possibly earlier, so we will suspend and we will come back as soon as we can.

Examination of Witness

Witness: Councillor Gary Porter, Vice Chair, Local Government Association and Leader of South Holland District Council, gave evidence.

Q179 Chair: Councillor Porter, welcome. Thank you very much indeed for being with us. I am just wondering if you would be good enough to introduce yourself and give your name and position for the record.

Councillor Porter: I am Gary Porter. I am the Vice Chairman of the Local Government Association and I am Leader of South Holland District Council in Lincolnshire.

Q180 Chair: Excellent. Can I just ask what discussions the LGA have with the Department when it comes to targets being set at EU level in Brussels?

Councillor Porter: The main point of contact is through our members of staff and the civil servants at Defra. We are lobbying to have lower targets and have concerns that Defra does not appear to be taking on board the concerns that we have expressed. As we saw yesterday, Europe appears to be flying up with even higher targets that are going to be even more punitive.

Q181 Chair: Would you like to share with us a ballpark figure—an average—of what the length of time would be for planning permission and construction of a medium-sized waste facility under planning law?

Councillor Porter: I do not have that to hand, but we can make sure that the Committee is furnished with it. Planning permission will not be the big obstacle to any provision of plant; the big obstacle is going to be the viability of the plant and the finances to build it.

Q182 Chair: Are you aware of the withdrawal of private finance initiatives from two or three waste facilities, including one in North Yorkshire? Have you made an assessment of what the impact of the withdrawal of those facilities will be on the waste management hierarchy in those areas?

Councillor Porter: There are a couple of those. The one in Norfolk is the one that I am most aware of on a personal level, given that I border Norfolk, and I am aware of the controversy that surrounded that particular application. I am going to go off-LGA-message and go to a South Holland message on this one. PFI should never have been introduced in the first place. It is not a good use of taxpayers' money. The taxpayer ends up paying several times over for a piece of kit that would have been better off if we had built it with our own finances in the first place. Given that the Treasury takes about £1.2 billion out of the waste industry in terms of landfill tax for the private sector and landfill tax on councils, we think that money would be better off being left with councils to determine what services are necessary locally and to make sure that the appropriate infrastructure is built with that money.

Q183 Chair: But, Councillor Porter, that landfill tax will go and is already being reduced as landfill is being scaled out.

Councillor Porter: Eventually the industry will be self-sustaining because there will be no more landfill, but can you see that in our lifetimes being achievable?

Q184 Chair: From the LGA perspective, what would you like to see the role of Defra be in waste management?

Councillor Porter: If you have seen the Rewiring document that we put out, unfortunately Defra is one of the parts of Government that we would ask to be piled into a local-government-specific unit. There are too many different Departments that have too much influence over too many different pieces of the work that we do and, as is usually the way with large organisations, it is not very joined up. While Defra does exist, we would urge it to be more proactive in protecting the interests of British taxpayers against the effect of the EU legislation, but ultimately for the work that Defra does in relation to local government to rest with a local government department.

Q185 Chair: Do you believe that Defra should challenge the targets that are being discussed and set at EU level? Should they take a little more aggressive approach?

Councillor Porter: They should take a much more aggressive approach. Until the infrastructure is in place, setting an arbitrary target is neither helpful nor achievable, nor viable. We will be spending more money in paying tax to the Treasury, which is fine for the Treasury, but we will be getting less infrastructure built because more of our taxpayers' money will be sitting in the Treasury.

Q186 Chair: Do you think that is the same across the European Union or do you think that we are pandering to targets that are going to be easily met in other parts of the European Union and will be slower to be effected here?

Councillor Porter: Again, I do not have the LGA perspective on that. I am sure the office will furnish the Committee with that. From my own experience of France, there

is a notion of a target and there is a notion of reality about what happens on the ground, and the two are not necessarily the same thing.

Q187 Chair: Do you believe that the Government currently provides a consistent and co-ordinated message to councils and to the public on waste management policy?

Councillor Porter: Again, given that waste policy seems to sit with more than one Department, the Departments responsible for it do not necessarily appear to be co-ordinating their approach to us. The biggest single thing that shows the Government is saying one thing and doing something else is the landfill tax and the fact that we do not get access to that money. The Treasury is the biggest obstacle. I know Defra and DCLG have a row quite often about who is in charge of what part of waste, but the Treasury really is the Department that needs fixing. We need that £1.2 billion that is in the system being spent in the system.

Q188 Chair: Do you understand that the Department has now said it is going to step back from any involvement with waste policy? Do you think that is a good decision and it is the right time to do so?

Councillor Porter: If it is going to step back, then the bits that we really do need the Government to be lobbying for in our case need to be somewhere. I personally do not have an opinion about which Department it should be, but there should be a Department that we know about that is prepared to go and argue the case for the benefit of local government and for local taxpayers.

Q189 Mr Spencer: I think it is fair to say that there have been significant improvements across England by local authorities in improving recycling rates. I just wonder if you could give us an idea of the most innovative or the most effective measures that have led to that.

Councillor Porter: You are right; local government and the people we look after have done a fantastic job of improving. In the last 10 years we have gone from something like 13% to 43% across the country, which is a huge step up. From the work that we do with our residents, simplicity of the collection regime is quite important and clear communication about what is desirable is important. I am not so sure about the previous conversations you were having about people being that bothered about end destination. The argument needs to be: "It is cheaper for you to do the right thing than it is for you to do the wrong thing. If you keep putting your recyclates into your putrescible waste stream, we are going to be paying your money to somebody else to deal with it, and that means we will not be keeping your library open, because we have spent the money on processing waste that we did not need to in that particular way."

Q190 Mr Spencer: So, "keep it simple" is the message that you think that is the most effective way.

Councillor Porter: Yes. It does need to be done on a local basis. Councils do know their people better than any national organisation; it is just the nature of the beast. Whatever is done with the people should be done with and for them and not done to them. If residents are saying, "We would do more if we knew what we could do", councils will step up and take that lead.

Q191 Mr Spencer: Whilst you have made all those gains, I think it is also fair to say that that trajectory has slowed down a bit and tailed off. What are the challenges facing local authorities? How are you going to meet that 50% target by 2020?

Councillor Porter: There is a greater move now towards incentivisation. More and more councils now are incentivising their residents, so the “What’s in it for me?” is direct and in people’s faces. My own council has just started giving people cash. Last week we had our first £1,000 winner for somebody doing the right thing. Hopefully, with the media campaign around that, that will encourage more and more people to do it. We have seen about a 4% increase since we have started doing incentive schemes. One of the reasons why it is getting harder to meet the target is that the amount of landfill waste in the system is being reduced. That has got to be a better outcome: reducing the amount of waste in the system in the first place.

Q192 Mr Spencer: So you think carrot not stick.

Councillor Porter: Carrot mostly; stick as a very last resort. The Deregulation Bill is taking the £1,000 fine, which is far too expensive—that is far too high—down to £60, which is far too low. The Deregulation Bill should set the fine at about £200 so there is still a financial disincentive for people to do the wrong thing, but we agree £1,000 is far too much.

Q193 Jim Fitzpatrick: Can I just follow up on the £1,000 bonus or reward for the person who is doing the right thing? You must have done a cost-benefit analysis of how much you are going to save by the increase in recycling that will be achieved. How does that work out? Is it a very big win for the local authority?

Chair: I am going to ask Councillor Porter to hold his answer until we return. I will suspend the session temporarily and we will come back hopefully in 15 minutes at the maximum if there is only one vote. Thank you.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

On resuming—

Chair: If we reconvene the session. Could I convey apologies from Mr Fitzpatrick, who is not able to come back here? We will share the answer with him, Councillor Porter, if you would like to carry on.

Councillor Porter: The question was whether it is viable and whether we did a cost/benefit analysis. We did not, but we were confident that recycling would go up. The reason we were not that bothered about the cost-benefit analysis was that we used the DCLG money to pay for it. As I said, we are up about 4%, so we are confident it is also financially viable in its own right to do it.

Q194 Neil Parish: Good afternoon. The Vale of White Horse district has got the highest performance, with 65.1% of recycling; the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is the lowest, at 26.8%. It is interesting; there are 40 percentage points between the highest and the lowest. Some of the lowest recycling rates are either in the urban areas or the rural areas. Why is this?

Councillor Porter: Recycling rates will be largely higher in the rural areas and less high in the urban areas. That is for a number of reasons. There is the demographic of the population. If you look after lots of houses with lots of single males in then your recycling rates are going to be extremely difficult to achieve; if you look after lots of bungalows with one-and-a-half-acre gardens and you are able to class grass as recycling, then your targets are going to be much easier to achieve.

Q195 Neil Parish: Are you saying the type of waste, or what?

Councillor Porter: Type of waste is a big chunk of that. Most dry-side recycling is about 35% or 36%; it is grass that bulks it up closer to the 50%.

Q196 Neil Parish: If you are in a rural area, you have got to go miles to collect all your waste, whereas if you are in an urban area, it is much more compact, so surely your cost of collection has got to be a lot less.

Councillor Porter: Yes, but it is not the cost of collection that improves recycling; it is the ease of the recycling and the type of population you look after. I look after a very rural area and we have got about 32% dry-side recycling, but I make it simple for my people to get on with it; we just collect it in one bag every week. You have got different frequencies, different types of collection method and different populations to serve. If you have got lots of student accommodation, then you are pushing water uphill to try to get students to recycle; if you have got lots of inward migration that makes it more difficult because of the language barrier and different accepted norms. There are a number of reasons. Deprivation plays a big part in it; I should think Dagenham will probably claim a fair bit of its lower performance is down to the deprivation suffered by its community.

Q197 Neil Parish: Is this because people do not put stuff into the recycling bins? Aluminium cans or whatever are surely recyclable. You are talking about populations that may be different in aspects, but what is going wrong that means they are not recycling? Is it the fact that rubbish is not being put in the right containers, or have those authorities not got the right containers for the recycling to go in? What is it?

Councillor Porter: The population not engaging with the process is the largest reason. It is very difficult to get certain parts of the population to engage with the process, which is why some councils, like my own, are now moving out into incentivisation on a very specific individual basis to see whether that will help as well. There is not just one answer.

Q198 Neil Parish: You talked about young people. Young people are inclined to be green, so can we not have a green philosophy? Why can we not appeal to their green-ness, if you like, in order to get them to recycle more? Where are we going wrong in the education process?

Councillor Porter: Far be it from me to say where we are going wrong with the education process for young people. I know from my own family's circumstance my daughter is extremely good at recycling and all my grandchildren that she has look after recycling and do a really good job of it; my son is as much use as a chocolate teapot when it comes to recycling. He would not have the first idea of what can go into a recycling container.

Neil Parish: Yes, I did make that point earlier on.

Q199 Richard Drax: If more funding was made available to local authorities for the purposes of improving waste services, what would it be spent on? Bear in mind that we have heard that councils are facing ongoing budgetary pressures, are they not?

Councillor Porter: Yes. By the end of this Parliament, we will have taken close to 40% out of our budget in terms of central Government funding, so we are under continual financial pressure, and I do not think anybody is envisaging a time when that will not be the case. Certainly into the next Parliament, we will still be under financial pressure. We pay £600 million of our residents' money to the Treasury—that is just for our public doing

it—and the private sector pays £600 million to the Treasury for the privilege of putting stuff in a hole in the ground. We would like our £600 million retained by us to be spent by us on incentivisation schemes, on education schemes to make people better aware, and on improving our own collection methods, where we can do that; and we would like the £600 million that the Treasury currently gets from the industry to be spent on new physical infrastructure nationally.

Q200 Richard Drax: When you say collection, education and all these things are all very worthy but often do not necessarily work, do they, physically? I recall the NFU said that what they would like is something nearer to their home—i.e. where you can take it and dispose of it. Is that something you would like money invested in—more centres, more collection points, more bins?

Councillor Porter: More types of infrastructure. There is going to be a big push to move food waste out of the waste stream; we have not got enough anaerobic digesters to cope with it. It is all well and good having a target to get the stuff out, but there has got to be an alternative for where it can go. We need more—and more local—anaerobic digestion for food waste. In terms of closeness of facilities, from a council's perspective that is not really the issue. That does add to transport costs, but it is having the ability to have a decent MRF that separates out the waste. The public engage more if we make it simple for them, so if we can give them a collection system where all of the waste that is to be recycled is in one receptacle and the process of sorting it out is done elsewhere, recycling rates will go up, but we do not have enough sites where that can take place. Again, coming back to the European stuff, they are going to start interfering in whether we have to do kerbside separation for collections, which is going to be counterproductive.

Q201 Richard Drax: I entirely concur with that very good point you made that if you could just put your rubbish into one bag and give it to someone and they would recycle it, we would all do it. Is the technology here? With the money and the investment, when the rubbish arrives at point X, is there the kit that would do that?

Councillor Porter: Yes. There are two councils in Lincolnshire—including my own—that recycle loads of different products. In my own council, everything goes in one recycling bag, including yoghurt pots and margarine tubs—things that are not touched in other councils. The technology is there to deal with it, but it is having access to enough of that around the country. There are too few plants around.

Q202 Richard Drax: And these plants are expensive, presumably.

Councillor Porter: Yes, and people need a long-term vision of what we are going to do nationally with our waste to make sure that people can invest and see a point to investing in the technology. At the moment we have got quite a lot of low-grade waste being exported, which is, from some people's perspectives, not desirable.

Q203 Richard Drax: Finally, just very quickly, where you have some councils that demand certain things in certain bins, particularly if you have not got a garden or somewhere at the back where you can put these things, you walk into a street and the first thing you see is rows and rows of brown bins and green bins outside people's homes. It is not exactly a tourist winner—or even for those who live there, for that matter. Would you argue that that sometimes is counter to the aim of trying to do what we are all trying to achieve?

Councillor Porter: From a Local Government Association perspective, I would have to argue that it is for the local council, with their local population, to work out the

best methods of collection in their area. As Leader of South Holland District Council, I do not have a wheelie bin in the place. I would not have anybody with wheelie bins. I do black sack collection for putrescible waste every week and I do green sack recycling collections every week. My costs for collections are one of the cheapest in the country.

Q204 Mrs Glindon: Councillor Porter, you have talked about making things simple and incentives for people, but should compulsory household recycling across England be used to increase recycling rates?

Councillor Porter: The LGA would not support compulsory anything across the country unless all of our members supported it, and I do not think we would get all of our members to support compulsory recycling.

Q205 Mrs Glindon: Do you know how successful compulsory recycling has been for local councils that have introduced these sorts of schemes?

Councillor Porter: I personally do not have any knowledge of that, but, again, the staff in the office will furnish you with that information if we have it.

Q206 Mrs Glindon: You have already mentioned incentives. Are reward schemes more effective than imposing penalties?

Councillor Porter: It is probably going to be a mixture of both that is necessary. No matter how much you incentivise it, some people will still not engage with the process, so ultimately you do need some sanction against particularly those people who wilfully contaminate the recyclates, because they are not just contaminating their own bag of rubbish; they are contaminating the lorry full of it from everybody else. There is still going to be a need for penalties, which is why we are arguing that the £1,000 should be reduced to £200 and not down to £60. From a normal person's perspective, incentivisation is always better than penalties, because people are actively doing something by choice because they think there is a personal aspect that they will be rewarded for. Rewarding good behaviour is a much better way than punishing bad behaviour.

Q207 Ms Ritchie: Is there a risk that recycling schemes get neglected when local councils are tied into minimum or fixed tonnage contracts with energy-from-waste plants?

Councillor Porter: Again, from an LGA perspective, we would have to stay away from taking a position other than to say that councils, because of the tight financial constraints they are under, will be looking to see what the bottom line is on any disposal method. If having minimum tonnages is the only way they can achieve a good value for those disposal methods, then that is the route that councils will take.

Q208 Chair: Do you believe, from an LGA perspective, that the Government should do more to promote energy from waste and the whole concept of that form of energy—gasification?

Councillor Porter: Yes. We know that in comparison with some countries in Europe, as you have heard from previous witnesses, we are a long way behind the curve on the acceptability of energy from waste, and we do need as a nation to be able to start to take the lead from some other countries that are really good at it. Yes, we do need to do more, but the same is true for most of the communication around the waste agenda. Governments—this one and the previous one—do, or did, need to do considerably more to make the public aware of the benefits of different types of disposal and the benefits of recycling and what can be recycled. Local government needs to do more about

encouraging people on a local level, and national Government needs to do more on a national level.

Q209 Chair: You expressed concerns in your written evidence about the powers being removed from councils to encourage councils to recycle more, so I presume the moment has passed now in the Deregulation Bill on that. The plan was to remove the powers from councils. From the Government's point of view, there was a concern that these were being used in a very arbitrary way. Do you want to expand a little on your thoughts there?

Councillor Porter: The LGA's position has always been the same: we need to have the ability to deal with those people who wilfully refuse to engage. Our preferred route is still incentivisation, but for the Government to take away any ability for us to deal with the worst offenders is wrong. You heard from the previous witnesses from the farming industry about fly-tipping. The Government needs to do more about forcing the judiciary to make sure that when we do catch somebody who is fly-tipping the sentence that they get is one that makes the prosecution worthwhile. There is the ability to crush their vehicles. That has never been used, but it would be a fantastic advert if the vehicle of the next fly-tipper who got caught was crushed and then put into a nice little cube and sat outside the town hall.

Neil Parish: That is an excellent idea.

Councillor Porter: That would engage the media more and you would be sure that if Jeremy Clarkson was crushing on television a fly-tipper's vehicle you would get much more national buy-in to it.

Q210 Chair: A rather graphic example. You say that we should be doing more to reduce waste. Where do you think we are with the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive?

Councillor Porter: It has been getting better, but we all know every Christmas the amount of unnecessary packaging that sits around any of the products that we buy—foolishly buy, for some of our people—is still far too much. Again, not from an LGA perspective, but from a personal perspective, I am not sure why we have to have so many different shapes and colours of bottles in the country. Why can we not get some sort of national standards for all beer to come in a particular type of bottle so that those bottles could be reused more easily as opposed to dealing with it? It has been a partial success story. The work that the Government has done, as we have seen, has started to reduce the amount of packaging that gets into the system, but that will have a knock-on impact in terms of recycling; that will make it more difficult to meet the recycling target.

Q211 Chair: You refer to the packaging recovery and you would like to see the system reformed. Would you like to expand on how that can be reformed and improved?

Councillor Porter: Again, that is not something that I have written, so I would have to get the office to expand on that.

Q212 Chair: If they could perhaps elaborate on that. If there was one single recommendation you would like to share with the Committee in our inquiry as to how we could improve waste management, what would your recommendation be?

Councillor Porter: You have heard me complain about it several times in my evidence. We need that money that the Treasury are currently taking out of the system in

landfill tax. We need our £600 million spent locally and we need the £600 million nationally spent on nationally important parts of the kit that we need to process.

Chair: Thank you very much for being here and sharing your views with us. We are very grateful, Councillor Porter. We stand adjourned until our next meeting.