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Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd a Datblygu Cynaliadwy
Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-341
Ein cyf/Our ref JG/06941/11

William Powell AM
Chair Petition's committee
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2 December 2011

Dear William,

P-04-341 Waste and Incineration

Thank you for your letter dated 15 November 2011 seeking my views on the petition received regarding waste and incineration.

My views on each specific item in the petition are as follows:

Item 1: To review Prosiect Gwyrdd, which is against WAG policy of localised facilities, and allow councils to choose their own waste technology and waste management procurement.

As part of the Welsh Government's waste strategy "Towards Zero Waste", Prosiect Gwyrdd is taking forward policy for the treatment of residual waste and localised facilities. It is subject to monitoring and evaluation. Local Authorities are able to choose their own waste technologies and waste procurements

Decisions on the location of waste facilities need to bear in mind the 'proximity principal' which is part of the Waste Framework Directive. The Directive establishes the principle of 'proximity' within the context of the requirement for member states to establish an integrated and adequate network of waste disposal installations and of installations for the recovery of

mixed municipal waste collected from private households, including where such collection also covers such waste from other producers, taking into account best available techniques. The Directive requires that the network shall enable waste to be disposed of, or the wastes referred to above to be recovered, in one of the nearest appropriate installations, by means of the most appropriate methods and technologies, in order to ensure a high level of protection for the environment and public health. The proximity principle also links to the Directive's requirement that the network shall be designed to enable member states to move towards the aim of self-sufficiency in waste disposal as well as in the recovery of waste referred to above, taking into account geographical circumstances or the need for specialised installations for certain types of waste. The Directive also makes it clear that each member state does not have to possess the full range of final recovery facilities within that member state. Both Technical Advice Note 21 (Waste) and the three Regional Waste Plans recognise the need for waste facilities that service the needs of regions of Wales. Decisions on the location of waste facilities rest with the Local Planning Authorities.

Under the Residual Municipal Waste Treatment Procurement Programme local authorities are free to choose which waste technology they wish to procure for the treatment of their residual municipal waste. The tender issued by Prosiect Gwyrdd was "technology neutral". Bids were assessed according to the National Evaluation Framework which includes criteria covering deliverability, cost, financial viability of the company, and a number of sustainability criteria. The National Evaluation Framework has been developed by the Welsh Government's Residual Municipal Waste Treatment Procurement Programme. At each stage the Prosiect Gwyrdd procurement project has been subject to rigorous monitoring and control.

The five authorities working within the Prosiect Gwyrdd Consortium are working together because it is recognised that there are clear economies of scale when procuring residual waste management options. It is important that the management of waste is as cost effective as possible given the financial pressures that we are all under.

Item 2: To review the Wales waste survey that only gave people a 2 choice option on waste disposal

The Waste Awareness Wales report was produced in August 2010 for the Welsh Government seeking public attitudes to waste. The survey as a whole gave the public several options regarding waste management.

The report was based on a detailed survey and a series of focus groups with the Welsh public. The report looked at consumer attitudes to the 4 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover. The report asked a number of detailed questions on the waste hierarchy including people's views on recycling, what barriers they faced, how effective recycling information available was as well as possible methods to increase recycling.

Anaerobic digestion (AD) from food waste was discussed during the recover questions, as one of the options.

The survey sought views on incineration as a way of recovering energy from residual waste rather than landfilling it, but only as the next to last item on the waste hierarchy after waste had been reduced, reused and recycled and food waste had been separated for anaerobic digestion. The aim of this part of the survey was to gauge the public's view on incineration. The survey asked specifically for opinions on burning non-recyclable waste to produce energy.

Item 3: By 2020, make it illegal to burn recyclable waste which would promote councils to recycle.

The Welsh Government has acted to stop potentially recyclable materials from going to incineration by setting statutory targets to recycle 70% of municipal waste by 2025 and meet the interim targets before then. Wales is the only UK country to have such statutory targets.

In March 2011 the Welsh Government consulted on the Collections, Infrastructure and Markets (CIM) Sector Plan which identified the need to increase significantly the recycling of wastes produced by businesses. The CIM Sector Plan consultation document referenced a study that the Welsh Government has commissioned to consider instruments to facilitate the increased recycling of business waste, including measures such as the introduction of energy from waste bans for specific materials which can be recycled. The responses to the consultation document are being considered and the final version of the CIM Sector Plan is due to be published in spring 2012.

Yours,



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