



environmental
services
association

Media statement

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Planning system reforms must support UK's "green recovery"

A new report released today (July 13, 2021) by the Environmental Services Association (ESA), *Planning for a Green Economic Recovery*, sets out the crucial role that planning reforms could play in supporting future development of circular economy infrastructure in the UK.

As set out in the Queen's Speech, significant reforms of the UK's planning system, and a new Planning Bill, are anticipated later this year – building on the broad policy principles and assumptions already set out in last year's Planning White Paper consultation.

However, much of the commentary surrounding these reforms to date has focussed on the housing sector, which runs the risk of overlooking the potential for these much-needed reforms to also help deliver essential UK infrastructure. That is why *Planning for a Green Economic Recovery* sets out how overhauls to the UK's planning system could also benefit waste management planning – ultimately helping to unlock the domestic recycling and waste processing capacity needed to meet Government ambitions to achieve a 65% municipal recycling rate by 2035 and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Stephen Freeland, ESA planning policy advisor, said: "The ESA and its members are committed to helping the government meet the ambitious targets set out in its Resources and Waste Strategy and we have also clearly set out our ambition for the recycling and waste management sector to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040 – playing an important role in the UK's pursuit of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Meeting these targets will require billions of pounds of investment in new recycling and waste management capacity, helping to on-shore the material processing activities that the UK currently relies on export markets to deliver.

But the UK planning system must play its part in facilitating this transition and planning reforms should allow for a system which is more responsive to the needs of the modern waste management industry, and which recognises the dynamic nature of our operations.

With reduced reliance on landfill, much more of this material is on the move as a valuable commodity, crossing local authority boundaries for recycling or processing as markets require. Modern waste management development is therefore entirely consistent with development criteria in the envisaged "growth areas"; should be accommodated within Local Plans accordingly, and should benefit from a more streamlined, efficient, approval process.

We hope the various recommendations set out today in *Planning for a Green Economic Recovery* will help inform debate during the Planning Bill's passage through Parliament and deliver a planning system more closely aligned with wider Government policies to preserve resources and reduce emissions."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- A. The Environmental Services Association (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK's resource and waste management industry. Our members are directly transforming the way the UK's waste is managed in pursuit of a circular economy and are leading the sector in an effort to decarbonise recycling and waste management operations.
- B. The ESA works with all levels of government, regulators and the public to deliver sustainable waste and resource management solutions for the UK. You can find out more about us and our members in our [Annual report](#) for 2019/20 and in our [Net Zero strategy](#) released in June 2021.
- C. A full copy of *Planning for a Green Economic Recovery* is available to download from the www.esauk.org

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