

Submission from North Lanarkshire Council

North Lanarkshire Council notes and welcomes the opportunity to submit further comments in connection with the Waste Regulations (Scotland).

North Lanarkshire Council has, with the assistance of the Scottish Government, made significant investment in its recycling programme, with the introduction of various kerbside and community centred recycling schemes. In addition material recovery rates from the Bulky Uplift service and Household Waste Recovery Sites have resulted in significant improvements in the recycling rate declared by the Council (Currently in excess of 40%)

Despite the improvements, and the positive commitment from both Council and residents, with the schemes currently in operation, i.e. Co-mingled Blue Bin, Brown Bin Garden Waste, Brown Bin Co-mingled organics (part area), kerbside Glass collection (part area) and community based recycling banks, there remains uncertainty in connection with the future direction of schemes and their subsequent funding and continued sustainability, while the Waste Regulations (Scotland) progress through Parliament.

The current schemes implemented by North Lanarkshire Council have as indicated above been introduced with the welcomed assistance of the Scottish Government in the past, and are now at a mature state operating successfully, being both convenient for the Council and most importantly for the local residents, who have come to accept and understand the collection system. It is also noted that the current processor of the co-mingled waste stream has adjusted and developed their infrastructure and systems as well as their off-take marketing to ensure that the recovery of the material delivered is maximised with approximately only 2% being sent to landfill. Continued discussions with the processor and others within the industry would indicate that further developments could result in this reject material being further treated resulting in a zero landfill operation.

With respect to the collection and processing of other Household Waste Streams, particularly the expansion of Glass and Food Waste have been delayed due to the uncertainty of the preferred options being proposed and ultimately incorporated within the proposed regulations. This uncertainty is also in part due to the requirement for further investment in the collection systems i.e. vehicles, staff and collection infrastructure and the availability of appropriate disposal and or treatment outlets within the immediate collection area. While North Lanarkshire Council is keen to implement appropriate systems it recognises that the schemes must be sustainable and acceptable to residents in order for success. In the current economic climate scheme changes must offer value for money and be sustainable, with this balance being difficult to achieve with continued pressures on Council funding. Accordingly North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the opportunity to obtain additional funding in order to introduce revised and or additional collection schemes.

However it should be noted that while the Regulations should indicate the targets and outcomes that should be achieved North Lanarkshire Council believes that the methodology and the collection system should be left for the Council to determine as that which best suits the local need and is attractive to the locally available disposal/recycling operators.

In conclusion North Lanarkshire Council in general welcomes the proposed regulations, however indicates that the collection systems to be implemented within particular areas should be determined by the Authority as that best to suit the individual need of the community and the particular market circumstances at the time. This will not negate the requirement for the Authority to ensure that the quality of the material collected or that the out put of the material from the processor is not maintained at the highest quality achievable, but will result in the introduction/continuation of the best practicable solution for resident acceptability, financial constraints, market availability, quality and sustainability.

North Lanarkshire Council is also Lead Authority for the Clyde Valley Waste Management Initiative, which along with our partners are seeking a long term solution for the treatment and disposal of residual waste. Accordingly the Group need to establish the contract tonnage, and to do this front line collection services must be established or at least known. The delay in the finalised regulations and certainty on preferred collection methods has resulted in North Lanarkshire Council and the partner Authorities delaying any introduction/expansion of services. There is a real concern that further delay and uncertainty will impact on the ability to have meaningful dialogue with the Bidders with regards to technology and waste flows.