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Landfill Restrictions Consultation  
Waste Permitting Unit  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Consultation on the introduction of restrictions on the landfilling of certain wastes**

This response to the consultation document is made on behalf of the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI). CPI has within its membership mill-owned and independent recovered paper merchants and exporters, paper manufacturers, tissue manufacturers and corrugated converters. All CPI Members will be affected by any proposed restrictions on the landfilling of certain wastes either by impacts on the supply of recovered paper as a raw material to the industry for recycling or on the ability of the paper industry to deal with waste streams created during the processes listed above.

CPI thanks Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government for the opportunity to input into the development of proposed landfill restrictions.

#### **Background:**

- CPI estimates that around 12.1 million tonnes of paper products were consumed in the UK in 2009, including imports of finished paper products and paper packaging around imported goods. This is an 8% fall on the volume consumed in 2008.
- Of this volume CPI believes around 81% <sup>1</sup>was recoverable for recycling (9.8 million tonnes) into new paper products by the global paper industry.
- Non-recyclable paper products include tissue and hygiene products, paper building products, medical papers, wallpaper, archived materials, teabag papers, cigarette papers etc.
- 8.2 million tonnes of waste paper was recovered from the UK waste stream in 2009 for recycling by the global paper industry.
- This data suggests that in 2009 around 3.9 million tonnes of waste paper was being treated through other waste disposal options such as landfill, energy from waste, composting and water treatment (toilet tissue).
- CPI believes there is a potential for 1.6 million tonnes of material currently being disposed of in the UK to be diverted to recycling; offering the highest carbon benefits to the UK in line with the waste hierarchy.
- Taking the carbon benefits available from UK paper recycling over current alternative UK waste disposal options, as identified by WRAP<sup>2</sup>, maximum UK recycling is likely to offer around a further 2.1 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> eq. benefits to the UK annually.
- In 2009 46% of waste paper recovered from the UK waste stream was recycled domestically with 54% being exported to overseas paper mills.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.paperrecovery.org/files/non%20coll%20Summ-074440A.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Is\\_Recycled\\_better\\_than\\_virgin\\_3.bde20c41.3143.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Is_Recycled_better_than_virgin_3.bde20c41.3143.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.paper.org.uk/information/statistics/2009IndustryFacts.pdf>

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**General response:**

The vast majority of paper based materials consumed in the UK are recyclable if presented to the various global paper making industries in a format that is suitable for efficient reprocessing into new paper products and;

- contains minimal levels of non-recyclable paper;
- contains minimal levels of non-paper component contamination; and,
- exposure to precipitation and organic waste has been minimised.

To this end there is an agreed European standard for recovered paper grades, BS EN 643.

This is one of the reasons why paper recycling has such a successful history in the UK and paper recycling rates are very high.

However, there is a significant quantity of paper currently lost to the recycling chain either by:

- the producer choosing not to recycle for economic or commitment reasons;
- not being designed for recycling (when additives and lamination to non recyclable materials are applied);
- it being used with and exposed to products and materials which contaminate the material;
- it being lost to paper recycling by waste management through the composting or energy recovery processes; or,
- it being heavily contaminated through poor collection methods by the waste management industry.

With regard to the above, the potential introduction of landfill restrictions for waste paper may send a strong signal to those still disposing of recyclable paper through waste disposal options that this is no longer acceptable and they must be more responsible for the waste they create. They may also send a strong message to designers that paper products should be designed to be recyclable at end of useful life to ease the waste management burden. However, any restriction on the landfilling of waste paper, or indeed on any disposal routes further down the waste hierarchy from recycling, must be managed alongside other policies to drive recycling through effective segregation of recyclable paper materials at source or through effective sorting facilities that deal with mixed recyclable waste streams. Only with effective segregation and sorting of waste paper can the full carbon and economic benefits of recycling to society, as highlighted in the RIA, be realised.

If balanced policies are introduced in line with the UK's minute statement to the EU Commission on the revised EU Waste Framework Directive (segregation as a first choice followed by mixed dry recyclate collections for certain streams where this is the best option) then there is probably sufficient infrastructure already available in the UK to deal with all the recyclable waste paper available from the UK waste stream. However, there is probably insufficient infrastructure to deal with all the recyclable waste paper if greater quantities are collected in mixed recyclate collection systems with subsequent sorting requirements at materials recovery facilities (MRFs).

There are currently strong global markets for all the recovered waste paper available from the UK waste stream and WRAP believe these will expand in the future ensuring demand for the any extra material extracted<sup>4</sup>.

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The UK recovered and sent for recycling almost 8.8 million tonnes of waste paper in 2008 yet a fall in the use of paper products during the recession of 2009 meant that only 8.1 million tonnes was recovered in that year. This suggests that there is currently a minimum of 0.7 million tonnes of unused capacity in the system at present and the true figure is likely to be much higher than this, particularly with the development of further MRF sorting infrastructure through 2009 and 2010. CPI estimates that to get to the maximum recycling levels in the UK (81% of that flowing into the waste stream) the UK would need to recover a further 1.6 million tonnes to achieve this and shows there is a currently only a maximum shortfall in capacity of around 0.9 million tonnes; around 10% of the total volume.

Perhaps the biggest risk to the overall UK paper recycling industry without specific segregation and defined sorting policies alongside landfill restrictions will be the impact of proposed restrictions on other non-paper materials. The proposals in the consultation appear to look at material restrictions independently but the collection and recovery of each material will have serious impacts on each other and should not be looked at in isolation. CPI is fearful that any environmental and carbon gains associated with other material restrictions will be offset by significant losses of benefits from any deterioration in recovered waste paper quality. It is also important to point out that for the packaging industry quality degradation of recovered waste paper packaging may undermine their chances of reaching proposed stretching recycling targets to 2020. The newsprint industry is also fearful that further degradation of used newspapers and magazines quality is likely to damage their significant achievements within their voluntary agreement with Defra on newspaper recycled content. It may also impact the magazine and Direct Marketing industries voluntary agreements with Defra on their product recycling levels.

In order for the paper recycling industry to maintain the very high levels of recycling achieved to date there must be an emphasis on quality management and control through the collection and recovery phase for all materials; regulatory in nature where required. Work in this area is currently being carried out by the Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) looking particularly at higher risk areas to recycle quality such as poor performing materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and we would encourage Defra to continue to fund work in this area to ensure paper recycling remains a success. Segregation requirements and technologically advanced MRFs can achieve the desired quality requirements for the global paper making industries but they must be able to deal with any potential rise in material volumes associated with landfill restrictions imposed on a number of materials through effective management. There will also be significant educational requirements on producers of waste and the public to ensure there is no contamination of the recyclable paper streams by non-recyclable paper materials through lack of knowledge; CPI would be happy to offer support to this process.

It will be critically important to measure the effectiveness of the WRAP work on material quality as landfill restrictions develop to determine if it is delivering quality recycle to the markets and if it is not then some form of regulatory intervention may be necessary to specify collection systems and sorting technology. There may also be a need to introduce regulated standards of collection and sorting to ensure quality standards are maintained if voluntary work in this area is proving ineffective.

Perhaps less of a risk, but something that needs to be considered, is the reliance the UK has, and will continue to have, on overseas recycling of recovered materials to achieve landfill restrictions. The UK now relies on export markets, particularly China, for over 50% of its paper recycling. It will be critical that the current regulations associated with export of recyclable materials are enforced effectively to ensure material quality is protected and poor practices in the collection and recovery phases are not masked by poor quality material leaking onto the export markets.

## LIST OF QUESTIONS IN THE CONSULTATION PAPER

### Paper and Card

Q1. Given the evidence available, do you think there is a case for a landfill ban on this waste type?

**CPI Response:** CPI believes there is a case for a landfill restriction on recyclable paper waste which would send a strong message to those currently disposing of recyclable waste paper through general waste disposal systems. However, to maximize the carbon benefits it would only be effective alongside recycling targets, producer responsibility initiatives and a requirement to sort through segregated collection at source or through technologically advanced MRFs that can provide a high quality material to the global paper making industry. The requirement to sort for recyclable paper waste should also be applied to other forms of disposal such as energy from waste where carbon benefits for paper waste management are recognized as being lower than recycling. There may be a requirement to have an exemption to any landfill restriction for non-recyclable paper wastes either produced at source or as part of the rejects from the paper recovery and recycling process until sufficient energy from waste infrastructure is available to provide the next best resource option for this type of waste. There would also be a significant educational requirement to waste producers and the public to ensure that contamination of the recyclable waste paper stream by non-recyclable paper waste streams is avoided. CPI would be happy to offer support to this process.

Q2. What would be the practical difficulties and issues in implementing a landfill ban on this waste type?

**CPI Response:** There is already likely to be sufficient capacity in the UK to effectively collect and sort all the recyclable waste paper in the UK as long as a balance between source segregation and mixed recyclate sorting is implemented as envisaged in the revised EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD). However, if more material needs to be recovered through mixed dry recyclate sorting at MRFs then there is likely to be insufficient capacity at present. For non-recyclable waste paper and rejects from the collection, sorting and reprocessing stages, there is unlikely to be sufficient energy from waste capacity at present and this may require an exemption from landfill restrictions until this is achieved. Restricting non-paper materials from landfill is also likely to have an impact on paper quality during the collection and sorting phase; these need to be considered by Defra and not looked at in isolation.

Q3. If you support a ban on this type of waste what should the lead-in time be for a ban on this waste type, to allow time for the necessary infrastructure to develop?

**CPI Response:** Please see answer to question 3 above. If greater levels of waste paper are recovered through mixed recyclate collections with subsequent sorting at MRFs then there may need to be a delay until this infrastructure is developed. However, there are a number of large developments underway which may make a lead in time requirement quite short. Planning constraints on energy from waste plants may make exemptions for non-recyclable paper product restrictions less timely.

Q4. If you do not support a ban on this waste type, do you think other measures should be used to divert it from landfill and if so what would they be? (Please consider the alternative options listed in paragraphs 7.8 -7.17 and any other possibilities)

**CPI Response:** No comment.

Q5. There may be other possible approaches to improve resource efficiency and reduce GHG emissions from this waste type (for example encouraging manufacturers and retailers to move away from using materials that are hard to recover or recycle). We would welcome observations and suggestions for each waste type.

**CPI Response: Landfill restrictions on paper waste may make designers look at better design for recyclability in future and this may be beneficial in terms of reducing non-recyclable waste paper levels and subsequent contamination of recyclable waste paper streams. Waste recycling targets and producer responsibility agreements will continue to play a significant part in diverting recyclable paper from the waste stream into recycling as opposed to energy recovery where carbon benefits are lower.**

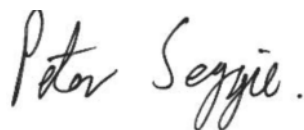
Q6. In addition to the above we invite comments on the costs and benefits detailed in the Consultation Stage Impact Assessment. In particular we would welcome information/views concerning three issues: (i) the likely impacts of the policy options in light of changes already occurring from existing instruments; (ii) the assumptions on the diversion rates assumed from different policy options; and (iii) the impact of the policy options on the efficiency of recycling markets – whether the unit cost estimates are reasonable and whether the implementation of the options would lower unit costs over time.

**CPI Response: It is not clear what options have been modeled for waste paper recovery and sorting so it is difficult to comment on the unit cost element. WRAP probably have the best data on overall system costs and we would be unable to offer better information. In our background comments, above, we have highlighted what we believe is still achievable in terms of waste paper recycling and again we share this information with WRAP who should be best placed to determine the economic and carbon benefits available from a landfill restriction on paper waste.**

#### Other Material Restrictions and bans

CPI has mentioned the potential for quality problems if landfill restrictions and bans are introduced for materials including waste paper and card without a defined and structured requirement to sort either at source or through technologically advanced MRFs to ensure high quality recyclable outputs. However, there is still likely to be some non paper materials carried through the recovery and sorting process and so there must be scope to have an exemption to a landfill restriction on these waste streams from a reprocessing operation.

Kind regards,



**Peter Seggie**  
CPI Recovered Paper Sector Manager