

Attachment H.4 Waste Hierarchy

The foundation statement on national waste management policy “Changing Our Ways” was issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in September 1998. The statement firmly based national policy on the EU Waste Management Hierarchy, which in descending order of preference is:

- Prevention;
- Preparing for Reuse;
- Recycling;
- Other Recovery (including energy recovery), and
- Disposal.

The statement was based on and supported by EU legislation that required the reduction in the volume of biodegradable waste disposed to landfill. EU Landfill Directive 99/31/EC set out the following reduction targets, which are based on 1995 figures:

- Minimum 25% reduction by 2010 (includes 4 year derogation);
- Minimum 50% reduction by 2013 (includes 4 year derogation)
- Minimum 65% reduction by 2016 (derogation available but not taken).

The 2002 government policy statement ‘Preventing and Recycling Waste - Delivering Change’ identified initiatives to achieve progress at the top of the Waste Hierarchy to prevent waste arising and increase recycling rates.

In 2004 ‘Waste Management – Taking Stock and Moving Forward’, the significant improvement in recycling rates achieved since 1998 was recognised, but the need for further expansion was emphasised. The Statement confirmed that Ireland’s national policy approach remained ‘grounded in the concept of integrated waste management, based on the internationally recognised waste hierarchy, designed to achieve, by 2013, the ambitious targets set out in Changing Our Ways’.

The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC was introduced to coordinate waste management in the Member States so as to limit the generation of waste and optimise the organisation of waste treatment and disposal.

The Directive, which also established the first EU wide recycling targets, was transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011 (S. I. No.126 of 2011). By 2020, Member States must reuse or recycle 50% of certain categories of household waste and reuse, recycle or recover 70% of non-hazardous C & D waste.

The most recent Policy Statement ‘A Resource Opportunity Waste Management Policy In Ireland 2012’ is also predicated on the EU Waste Management Hierarchy and encompasses a range of measures across all tiers namely, prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling, other recovery and disposal.

The Statement sets out how the higher tiers can reduce Ireland's reliance on finite resources, virtually eliminate reliance on landfill and minimise the impact of waste management on the environment. It is a policy objective that when waste is generated, the maximum value must be extracted from it by ensuring that it is reused, recycled or recovered.

The current Waste Management Plan for the Eastern Midlands Region 2015-2021 was published in May 2015 and remains in place until a new Regional Plan is made. The Plan recognises the significant advances in the development of thermal recovery capacity in Ireland, where the principal use of the waste is as a fuel to generate energy.

Energy recovery within the region includes Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) recovered at an existing and planned waste to energy (WtE) facilities, and Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) used as an alternative fuel source in two cement manufacturing facilities. It is policy of the Plan to aim to improve regional and national self-sufficiency of waste management infrastructure for the reprocessing and recovery of particular waste streams in accordance with the proximity principal.

The PANDA installation is designed and operated to maximise the recovery of recyclables from the incoming wastes. The proposed changes are consistent with the Waste Hierarchy as the recovery of recyclable material from the ash waste and making it suitable for reuse will gain the maximum value from the waste. . The biodegradable wastes that were intended to be treated in the anaerobic digestion plant will be sent to a licensed biological treatment plant in the Eastern and Midlands Region.

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