

## • Waste Management Policy

### *National Waste Management Policy*

The foundation policy statement on waste management “*Changing Our Ways*” was published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in September 1998. This statement firmly bases national policy on the EU Waste Management Hierarchy. In descending order, the current preference is: -

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

The 2002 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 ‘*Waste Management – Taking Stock and Moving Forward*’ 2004, the significant improvement in recycling rates achieved since 1998 were 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*’.

In 2006, the National Biodegradable Waste Strategy was published. Its primary focus was to achieve the targets set for the quantity of biodegradable municipal waste that can be landfilled under the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC). A key element was the collection of source separated household and commercial food waste or “brown bin” material and its treatment.

In 2008, the Government initiated a review of waste policy, to identify possible changes to policy at national level that would assist Ireland to move towards a sustainable resource and waste policy, including minimising the creation of waste and self-sufficiency in the reuse and recycling of materials. The review also addressed the application of alternative waste management technologies.

The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC was introduced to co-ordinate waste management in Member States, with the objective of limiting the generation of waste and optimising 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).

In response, the Government initiated a further review of national waste policy, one of whose objectives was to provide the necessary measures to ensure that waste undergoes recovery operations in accordance with Articles 4 and 13 of the Directive. A consultation document issued by the Department stated that classification of a treatment process as a recovery activity depends on the level of success in either recovering wastes, or producing heat and/or power.

The most recent Policy Statement '*A Resource Opportunity Waste Management Policy*' In Ireland 2012 is also based on the EU Waste Management Hierarchy and encompasses a range of measures across all tiers namely, prevention and minimisation, reuse, recycling, 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.

#### *Waste Management Plan for the Eastern and Midlands Region*

The waste management regions in Ireland were reformed in 2013 and County Offaly is now part of the Eastern and Midland Waste Management Region. The Waste Management Plan for the Region 2015-2021 recognises the significant advances in the development of thermal recovery capacity in Ireland, where the principal use of residual non-recyclable waste is as a fuel to generate energy.

There are eight authorised active and pending thermal recovery plants - three WtE installations, and five cement kilns, in the country. These facilities typically accept waste from all parts of Ireland and operate on a national market basis.

The local authorities in the region, who are the authors of the Plan, view thermal treatment as a means of addressing national needs for the recovery of residual municipal waste and other waste streams.

Currently waste derived fuel is exported to WtE facilities in Europe and, while this assists Ireland in meeting its recovery targets, the Plan considers that a growing dependence on export may lead to an overreliance on overseas markets that could have consequences for the national policy of becoming self-sufficient in treating residual wastes.

The long term alternative to the export of residual wastes is for Ireland to manage and treat its waste in indigenous energy efficient incinerators, in co-combustion industrial furnaces and cement kilns. While indigenous thermal treatment capacity has increased there remains a significant deficit and export for recovery is required in the medium term in order to meet national waste recovery targets.

## Food Waste Regulations

It is not proposed to accept food waste at the installation.

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