

Waste review and action plan – June 2011

Defra has undertaken a complete review of all waste policy in England and has written up the results with an action plan. Click [here](#) to read the full documents. Regen SW has summarised the key points relating to energy from waste below.

Government is committed to promoting energy from waste technologies as having a role to play within the waste hierarchy – “[the] aim is to get the most energy out of genuinely residual waste, not to get the most waste into energy recovery”. Government supports energy from waste where appropriate, and for waste which cannot be recycled.

The publication of the anaerobic digestion strategy is designed to signal government’s commitment to promoting AD – the AD strategy is summarised below.

Commitments from the government on energy from waste are to:

- produce a guide to energy from waste to help all involved make decisions best suited to their specific requirements, covering the full range of recovery technologies available and their relative merits – “right fuel, right place and right time.”
- provide the necessary framework to address market failures and ensure the correct blend of incentives are in place to support the development of recovery infrastructure as a renewable energy source.
- consult on restricting wood waste from landfill and review the case for restrictions on sending other materials to landfill.
- work with all involved to identify commercially viable routes by which communities can realise benefits from hosting recovery infrastructure, e.g. community incentives, to help support community acceptance.
- introduce a duty to cooperate for local authorities through the Localism Bill that will help ensure that opportunities for trans-boundary options on waste management are explored.

Anaerobic digestion strategy and action plan

Defra published the anaerobic digestion (AD) strategy and action plan in June 2011. Regen SW has summarised the key points below. Click [here](#) to read the full document.

The vast majority of the AD strategy is devoted to setting out background information about the different types of AD. The remaining content sets out a number of actions for WRAP, government, industry groups and the Environment Agency under three themes: knowledge and understanding; smarter working models; and regulation and finance.

In general the actions are limited to information gathering and dissemination about all aspects of the AD industry and processes and do not go very far towards offering active support to the industry. The majority of dissemination activity planned is through the existing AD portal - www.biogas-info.co.uk and government has agreed to continue funding for this web-site.

One notable action announced through the strategy is the set up of a new £10million loan fund to provide debt finance to stimulate investment in additional AD capacity. Spread over

four years the fund will be administered by WRAP and launched in September 2011. A more detailed announcement will set out the fund criteria. .

Ambition

The strategy estimates that if the Action Plan is effective, then AD could potentially produce between 3-5 TWh of energy by 2020 and create 35,000 new jobs.

Summary of actions

Theme 1: Knowledge and Understanding

- **Information collection and provision:** Using the existing AD portal to disseminate information – on areas such as: current and planned developments; economic and other benefits of AD; R&D; supply chain analysis; data on feedstocks; and commercial food waste collection
- **Training:** understanding and promoting current private sector training provision and undertaking analysis to understand where there are gaps in provision.
- **Digestate:** collating, publishing and reviewing information about digestate, including quality, benefits, markets, safety and the relationship with organic farming.

Theme 2: Smarter Working Models

- **Case studies and toolkit:** Development of good practice case studies and a 'toolkit' to help and support all those involved in the planning, procurement, building and operating of AD plants, including template documentation.
- **Biomethane:** Gathering and disseminating information on biomethane as a transport fuel and for injection into the gas grid, as well as facilitating discussions with Ofgem about improving the process for electricity grid connections for small AD plants.

Theme 3: Regulation and Finance

- **Regulation:** There are a number of actions for the Environment Agency around clarifying and simplifying AD regulations, such as: the enactment of revised standard rules from August 2011, a review of regulations around the transport of feedstocks and digestate; the extension of PAS110 and the development of a quality protocol on biomethane.
- **Finance:** Compile and publicise a consolidated list of financial schemes available to AD projects and promote access to these funds to industry. Set up £10million loan fund to provide debt finance.

To find out more about Defra's policy direction, come to Regen SW's Renewable Solutions conference on 5 July 2011 in Bristol. Karen Lepper, **deputy director of energy from waste and food waste at Defra**, will be presenting on government policy at the conference in a dedicated workshop.

Click [here](#) to find out more about the conference and book tickets. Tickets are only £25 (£10 for Regen SW local authority members.)