



## **What does *Zero Waste* and *Zero Waste to Landfill* actually mean?**

With an increase in awareness and legislation companies are setting more environmentally focused targets and goals, it is important to verify and clarify what the terminology and practice of *Zero Waste* and *Zero Waste to landfill* actually means.

It is not surprising that more and more companies are considering *Zero Waste* to landfill targets, as there is a clear correlation between better use of resources and direct cost savings. Depending on the type and size of the business savings can be in the thousands. Compliance to EU regulation has helped to bring about a change in behaviour however, uncertainty with Brexit and snap (2017) elections do not help!

With landfill tax currently at £88.95 per tonne, businesses are incentivised to make changes in the way waste is managed and viewed. Between 2012 and 2014 the total amount of commercial and industrial waste produced in the UK was reduced by more than 5 million tonnes, through smarter working methods. With better segregation diverting food waste away from landfill has also become an important action for businesses.

### **Zero Waste**

Need to be careful with such terminology as it can cause some confusion. Some larger (high profile) companies have taken steps to zero waste however, this is a long term goal as opposed to an immediate goal. Zero Waste is to completely eliminate waste from all business activities with suppliers, manufacturing and on to the customers. Nice to concept to be working towards however, for the majority of businesses Zero Waste is a long way from becoming a reality.

### **Zero Waste to Landfill**

On the other hand Zero Waste to Landfill is a more realistic goal that can be achieved through smarter contract negotiation. What this actually means is that through a reuse, recycling and composting process around 99% of your waste will be diverted from landfill and not 100% for example:

- Cardboard goes to paper mills
- Glass goes to be re-melted
- Plastic goes to be made into new packaging
- Food waste goes to composting

Other waste which cannot be re-used or recycled is recovered via methods such as Energy from Waste, incineration, plasmosis and gasification. Even with the most up to date and efficient systems in place some materials (at some point) will end up in landfill for example the ash from Energy from Waste incinerator. Don't let this deter you, as 1% of your material ending up in landfill is much better than 40-50%. Setting such goals gives businesses a great starting point for continually improving their waste management processes that provides you with a more circular use of resource.

### **How can we help?**

Our experience over the years of conducting these waste generation audits and prevention assessments, and procuring the best possible collection contracts/services, has helped companies not only save thousands off their waste bill, but has helped them on the journey to *Zero Waste* to Landfill and ultimately *Zero Waste* producing.