

## **SUMMARY BRIEFING FOR EXTERNAL AUDIENCES – ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE OUR REVISED APPROACH WITHIN EPR PERMITTING**

Adapting to climate change is a priority and we want to support regulated businesses to maintain compliance and so that they can cope with:

- an increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events as well as gradual changes to weather patterns causing unforeseen challenges
- disruption and failure of supply chains locally and globally because of climate change
- increased risks from mean global temperature rises of 2 °C by 2050 and 4 °C by 2100

### **Background**

In 2019 we introduced a screening process for new bespoke waste and installations permit applications. Applicants whose activities exceed the screening criteria were required to complete a risk assessment, and a specific condition to review the risk assessment every four years may be added to their permit. This has been well received but to date impacts only a small proportion of our permitted sites.

Within our third adaptation report: - [Living better with a changing climate \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#). we committed to “*all regulatory permissions and activities [within Regulated Industry] to support & deliver embedding of climate change adaptation based on a mean global temperature rise of +4°C by 2100 including a corresponding rise by 2050*”.

This means we need to move away from the current permitting approach and move to a much broader approach. We are doing this by refocussing on an existing requirement to consider climate change adaptation within sites management systems.

Whilst we will stop the current approach on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, we will support business to update their management systems over time, prioritising highest hazard activities first. By 2026 we will expect all permitted activities to have robust climate change adaptation planning embedded into their management systems. When we assess management systems (through routine compliance activity), we will offer advice and guidance initially but by applying increasing scrutiny of management systems over time, we will expect to see all sites fully incorporating climate change adaptation planning by 2026. We are working with sector leads to determine the best way and timescale for this.

### **Applications for new bespoke permits**

All new applications as well as all existing permit holders will need to include an assessment of risks and proposed mitigations resulting from climate change to and from their businesses via their management systems. From the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 there will no longer be an additional risk assessment process for new bespoke waste and installations permit applications. The overarching MS guidance explains the need to consider extreme weather events in contingency plans and in accident prevention management plans. There is also an existing section 'a changing climate' which says '*It is important you consider whether your operations could be affected by a changing climate and that you plan for this*'. This has been the case since 2019.

To support operators we have clarified how to comply with the existing requirement within our overarching MS system guidance: [Develop a Management System: environmental permits](#)

### **Sector specific risk assessment examples on Gov.uk will remain**

There are also sector specific examples of climate related risks to regulated activities and possible mitigations to support the existing requirement which provide a helpful steer on some of the commonly encountered issues. These are published here: [Adapting to climate change: industry sector examples for your risk assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adapting-to-climate-change-industry-sector-examples-for-your-risk-assessment) and will remain to help support businesses undertake their own climate change risk assessments. We will look to revise these risk assessments with input from sectors over time.

### **Applications already submitted**

From 31<sup>st</sup> August our revised approach will also apply to applications currently in the permitting queue or in determination. This means that they will not be required to complete a climate change risk assessment as part of the permitting process, and any risk assessment submitted with the application or subsequently will not be scrutinised.

### **What next?**

We need to act faster than the climate is changing. We need to move at pace. We need to embed climate adaptation into all that we do to ensure and maintain resilience.

If you can offer help or would like to discuss any of the above with us, then please get in touch via your usual contacts or sector leads.