

HOT ISSUES

dti

Manufacturing, Materials,
and Environment Unit Newsletter
Hot Issues

Issue 25: November 2006

Dear Reader

Welcome to the latest edition of our Hot Issues Newsletter.

We have pleasure in confirming that the Materials, Engineering & Manufacturing Policy team have been joined by colleagues from the Environment Industries Unit. The new unit will be known as the Manufacturing, Materials and Environment unit. Further details of the new unit's programme of activities will appear in the next edition of Hot Issues

This edition includes the Climate Change Bill and updates on the High Level Group on Energy, Environment & Competitiveness, and EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

Any new subject ideas for future issues of the newsletter can be sent to tony.mills@dti.gsi.gov.uk who would be happy to take these on board.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who have given us feedback on previous Hot issues newsletters. Your comments and queries are much appreciated. Do continue to send us your feedback, as we like to know we are conveying the information our readers will find most useful. Feedback can be sent to Judith Williams, Judith.Williams@dti.gov.gsi.uk .

Should you wish to discuss issues affecting your sector please feel free to contact us. Your first point of call to arrange a meeting should be your relationship manager. Contact details are included in the newsletter (last page) should you need them.



Manufacturing, Materials and Environment

Influence and Impact Team

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Hot Issues

Climate Change Bill

The Climate Change Bill was covered in the Queen's Speech at the State Opening of Parliament on 15 November.

The Bill will form a fundamental part of the UK 's strategy to tackle climate change and address the issues raised by the Stern Review.

The climate change legislation aims to put in place a credible long-term goal and framework for emissions reductions to provide a firm basis on which business could plan ahead.

It will comprise four key elements:

- Put the Government's long-term goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050 into statute. How the target is defined and set, and how progress is measured and reported, are fundamental issues that are still being considered. Also under consideration are appropriate interim targets.
- Establish an independent body – the Carbon Committee – to work with Government to reduce emissions over time and across the economy. Its advice will be open, transparent, equitable and mindful of sectoral and competitiveness impacts, including the need to secure energy supplies at competitive prices.
- Create enabling powers to put in place new emissions reduction measures needed to achieve our goals.
- Improve monitoring and reporting arrangements, including how the Government reports to Parliament.

We will keep you informed of developments and opportunities to feed into the debate as the Bill makes its way through the Parliamentary process.

Queens Speech to Parliament

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199697/ldhansrd/pdvn/lds06/text/61115-0001.htm#0611151000008>

DEFRA Press Release

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2006/climate-1115.htm>

Contact: keith.avis@dti.gsi.gov.uk

High Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy, and the Environment

The High Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy, and the Environment (HLG), is a strategic advisory group for the European Commission which aims to foster closer coordination between these key policy areas, while contributing to the creation of a more stable and predictable regulatory framework. The group is made up of Commissioners, Member State representatives, and representatives from industry and the civil society. Alistair Darling, UK Trade and Industry Secretary of State, participates as one of the Member States representatives.

The HLG met for the third time on 30th October. During this meeting the members adopted the group's Second report, which detailed recommendations on 'Long term energy futures and investment in power generation and energy efficiency' (see link below), under three broad areas:

- Creating a framework for promoting a sustainable, secure, and competitive energy future
- Strengthening international cooperation
- Innovation and R&D

We welcomed specific recommendations on energy efficiency, promoting international cooperation, and confirmation from the group of its support for the EU ETS as an essential tool in tackling climate change.

Looking forward, the HLG is planning to consider the following workstreams:

- Innovation and Technology Perspectives in Energy Intensive Industries
- Environmentally Harmful Subsidies
- Reflecting Energy Policy in Lisbon National Reform Programmes
- Natural Resources and Waste
- Better Regulation
- Sustainable Consumption and Production

The next meeting of the HLG will be held on 27th February 2007 and will consider and make recommendations on the first two areas detailed above. We will be working with the Commission, other members of the group, and UK stakeholders to develop ambitious proposals which address all three objectives of the group – climate and energy security, and competitiveness.

High Level Group website

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/environment/hlg/hlg_en.htm

Second Report of the High Level Group

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/environment/hlg/doc_06/second_report_30_10_06.pdf

For further information please contact: faith.quigley@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Gas Supply

The DTI has set up a Winter Energy Supply webpage on the DTI website. The webpage provides information about energy supplies for this winter and includes links to recent statements by the Government, frequently asked questions and to other publicly available information, including the National Grid Daily Gas Summary report. The webpage can be accessed via the weblink below.

The Business Energy Forum met for the second time on 20 September. This is a high-level group jointly chaired by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Richard Lambert, Director General of the CBI. Its members include representatives from industry bodies including the EEF and the Energy Intensive Users Group. The main focus of the second meeting was improving communications and understanding price volatility.

Ofgem published National Grid's Winter Consultation Report on 21 September, which presents the outcome of the 2006/07 winter consultation process. It contains analysis of the supply and demand backgrounds in the gas and electricity markets under a range of winter weather conditions. The report can be accessed by the weblink below.

On 1 November, the Met Office published its latest winter forecast (Dec-Feb). The main message on temperature is: following the finely balanced situation last month, probabilities now slightly favour temperatures warmer than 1971-2000 averages over much of northern and central Europe. For the UK, warmer-than-average or near-average temperatures are the more likely outcomes for the winter period as a whole. However, later in the winter season, there remains a signal for lower temperatures (relative to average) and an increase in the frequency of cold snaps. Note that an average winter is likely to include some notable cold snaps and snowfalls. For further details on the Met Office forecast please see the weblink below. The next monthly update is due on 1 December.

As reported in the September edition, the market is responding to the need for more gas supply and storage by developing new infrastructure in time for the coming winter, listed below. These projects could increase GB's gas import capacity by over 100mcm/day for this winter. The utilisation of facilities would however depend on technical and commercial factors.

- The new Langeled pipeline from Norway (officially commissioned on 1 October)
- Further expansion of the Belgium-GB Interconnector (completed on 1 October)
- The new BBL pipeline from the Netherlands to Bacton (first gas due to flow 1 December)
- New LNG import project into Teesside (first cargo planned for mid January)
- Full availability of the new Humbly Grove storage facility in Hampshire

In addition, the large Rough storage facility, which was put out of action by an explosion in February, is now full and operational.

Fuel Switching – The Government is keen to ensure that large users of gas, who can reduce demand when prices are high by switching to alternative fuels, are enabled to do so. However, this must clearly be subject to consideration of the environmental impacts of such action. Further details on fuel switching can be obtained from the weblink below.

The Government is not expecting an emergency situation to occur this winter. However, as part of proper contingency planning, IGEM (Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers) has published "Guidance for large consumers in dealing with Natural Gas supply emergencies" IGE/GL/9, Communication 1724. It is available from IGEM either in hard copy or through the weblink below.

For further information, please contact: Terry Martin (terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk),

Weblinks

DTI Winter Energy Supply webpage – www.dti.gov.uk/energy/winter-supply/page32154.html

National Grid Winter 06/07 Consultation Report – www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Gas/TYS/outlook/

Met Office - www.metoffice.com/weather/seasonal/winter2006_7/index.html

Fuel Switching – www.dti.gov.uk/energy/winter-supply/fuel-switching/page21183.html

IGEM "Guidance for large gas consumers in dealing with Natural Gas supply emergencies" weblink - <http://www.igem.org.uk/f/IGE-GL-9.pdf>

Emissions Trading Scheme

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme is a community-wide scheme established for trading allowances to cover the emissions of greenhouse gases from permitted installations. Along with a number of other sectors, steel production is captured by the scheme, as are any combustion plants that have an aggregated thermal input of over 20MW. Phase I of the Scheme runs from 2005 to 2007 and Phase II from 2008 to 2012.

The UK Phase II National Allocation Plan (NAP) was published on 21 August and submitted to the European Commission for review. The cap of 238 MtCO₂ per year for Phase II (for installations that were covered by the scheme in Phase I) represents a reduction of 29.3 MtCO₂ against projected business as usual emissions for 2010. As in Phase 1, industrial sectors will continue to be allocated at projected business as usual levels, the reductions in allowances being borne by the Large Electricity Producers sector.

On 29 November the Commission announced their decision to accept the UK NAP, with a total cap of 246.2 MtCO₂ per year during Phase II. Details of this decision, and decisions on other Member States' NAPs can be found on the Commission's website (see link below). Any important announcements leading up to the Final Allocation Decision will be sent to those on our Hot Issues circulation list in due course.

Focus is now turning to EU ETS post – 2012. The European Commission have recently published a report to the European Parliament and Council considering the functioning of the EU ETS and the review process (see link below). This report details priorities for the review, which will be ongoing into 2007, including scope, harmonisation and predictability, compliance and enforcement, and linking with other schemes.

Following the publication of the Stern Review into the Economics of Climate Change, HMG confirmed its commitment to the scheme and published the 'UK Government Vision' on ETS (see link below).

The UK welcomes the review and will be using stakeholder consultation responses (see link below) to develop our views and feed these into the Commission over the coming months.

National Allocation Plan and installation level allocation

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/trading/eu/phase2/phase2nap.htm>

European Commission Assessment of Phase II NAPs

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/ip_1650.htm

European Commission Report on functioning of the EU ETS

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/emission/review_en.htm

EU ETS: UK Government Vision

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/98D/4B/environment_emissionstrading301006.pdf

Stakeholder questionnaire on priorities for the EU ETS Review

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/trading/eu/future/review/questionnaire.htm>

Contact: keith.avis@dti.gsi.gov.uk or faith.quigley@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Ministerial Responsibilities at the Department of Trade and Industry

Changes to Ministerial responsibilities at the Department of Trade and Industry were outlined following the recent retirement of Lord Sainsbury.

Ministerial responsibilities:

ALISTAIR DARLING MP: SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Overall responsibility for the Department and its policies including leading on energy.

MALCOLM WICKS MP: MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

Science & Engineering; 10 year investment framework for science & innovation; Office of Science and Innovation (OSI); Research Councils; Knowledge Transfer & innovation; Technology Strategy; Patent Office; National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML); Chemicals; Bioscience; DTT's interest in skills; British National Space Centre (BNSC); Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE); Coal health claims; export control; and steel. Supports the Secretary of State on energy in the House of Commons.

MARGARET HODGE MBE MP: MINISTER OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY AND THE REGIONS

Responsibility for Business and Enterprise Group issues including enterprise, growth and business investment; strengthening regional economies; Small Business Service; E-commerce; communications and information industries; Companies Act implementation; Companies House; Shareholder Executive Industrial Development Unit portfolio; and corporate social responsibility.

IAN MCCARTNEY: MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INVESTMENT AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (JOINT WITH FCO)

Responsible for trade policy; UK Trade and Investment; Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD); foreign affairs; competition; consumer affairs; and corporate governance. Also attends Cabinet.

JIM FITZPATRICK: PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AND POSTAL SERVICES

Responsibility for maximising potential in the workplace; better regulation; ACAS; Shareholder Executive oversight plus Royal Mail and Post Office; corporate and insolvency activity; and the Insolvency Service. Also Minister for London.

LORD TRUSCOTT: PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

Supports the Secretary of State on energy issues; sustainability & the environment; security of energy supply; fuel poverty; nuclear security; and Shareholder Executive energy portfolio. Covers all DTI business in the House of Lords.

Other Issues

New Consultations.....

Measures to reduce carbon emissions in large non-energy intensive business and public sector organisations

On 8 November the Government published a consultation on measures to reduce carbon emissions in the large non-energy intensive business and public sectors.

For the purposes of this consultation, large non-energy-intensive organisations are defined as those with annual mandatory half-hourly metered electricity consumption higher than 3,000MWh. This would include a wide variety of organisations – among them supermarkets, hotel chains, rail operators, large offices, hospitals, universities, central government departments and large local authorities.

The consultation covers a number of options for achieving carbon savings, most notably an Energy Performance Commitment (EPC) and Voluntary Reporting and Benchmarking.

The consultation document is split into two parts. Part I covers the broad policy context and summarises the two instruments considered in further detail. Part II provides more information about the EPC to inform discussion. Stakeholder feedback is requested on both parts.

Comments on the consultation document and RIA are required by **31 January 2007**. Defra are also planning on holding a number of workshops during January. While we do not envisage that this will be an issue that directly affects materials and engineering stakeholders, if you do have an interest in attending these events this can be registered through the Email address below.

Consultation Document

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/carbon-emissions/consultation.pdf>

Contact: brian.rapose@defra.gsi.gov.uk
keith.avis@dti.gsi.gov.uk

January Workshops – to register interest: epc@defra.gsi.gov.uk

EU Green Paper on Labour Law

The European Commission has published its Green paper on Labour Law. This is not a proposal for legislation but sets out a series of questions on labour law and labour market flexibility.

The Green paper's purpose is to start an open-ended EU-wide debate on how labour law impacts on labour market flexibility and how to facilitate new ways of working and promote employment. The output from the Green Paper will have a huge impact on EU level initiatives and policy direction.

Readers will be interested in this debate and will want to respond **directly** to the Commission. DTI will also be responding to the consultation - although not formally consulting separately - you are welcome to share your views with us.

Consultation closes on **31st March 2007**.

Consultation Document:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=189

DTI Contact: Neil.Bond@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Waste

Defra have issued a public consultation on the proposed Waste Framework Directive. This proposal was issued by the European Commission in December 2005, and is now going through the legislative process in Europe. Negotiations on the legislation are now taking place under the Finnish Presidency, who have indicated a desire to make substantial progress on this Directive. This consultation is an opportunity for stakeholders to influence the UK's negotiating position.

Views are invited from anyone who has an interest in waste prevention, is a producer of waste, has an interest in the collection, transport, recovery or disposal of waste, or has an interest in waste as a dealer or broker.

Stakeholders are invited to submit their comments before the deadline wherever possible.

Defra have issued a public consultation on the controls on the handling, transfer and transport of waste. The consultation outlines problems with the current waste carrier registration system and considers a number of ideas to improve:

The waste Duty of care

The registration of waste carriers; and

The registration and control of waste brokers.

Views are invited from all those with an interest in protecting the environment from the effects of waste crime and the illegal disposal of waste.

The consultation on the waste framework Directive closes on: **5th January 2007**

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waste-directive/index.htm>

The consultation on the controls on the handling, transfer and transport of waste closes

On: **6 March 2007**

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waste-controls/index.htm>

Environmental Liability Directive

Within the next few days, Defra will be issuing a public consultation on the transposition into UK law of the Environmental Liability Directive.

The Directive is aimed at the prevention and remedying of environmental damage - specifically, damage to habitats and species protected by EC law, damage to water resources, and land contamination which presents a threat to human health. It is based on the polluter pays principle, i.e. polluters should bear the cost of remediating the damage they cause to the environment, or of measures to prevent imminent threat of damage. Polluters would meet their liability by remediating the damaged environment directly, or by taking measures to prevent imminent damage, or by reimbursing competent authorities who, in default, remediate the damage or take action to prevent damage.

The consultation document will be available on the link below:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/current.htm>

National Emissions Ceiling Directive – Consultation on Draft National Plan

By the terms of the National Emissions Ceilings Directive, 2001, Member States are required to report periodically on the programmes they have in place to meet the requirements of that Directive. This Directive sets ceilings for emissions of the four transboundary air pollutants: sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, volatile organic compounds and ammonia. The UK's first report on its national plans was submitted in 2002, and the second report is now due to be sent to the Commission. Defra, on behalf of the UK Government and in consultation with the devolved administrations, has produced a draft, and is now inviting views on that draft in a public consultation.

The document records the measures that are being taken in the UK to meet the obligations of the NECD. It is a report on the measures that are being taken, not a proposal for new policy developments.

The consultation closes on 26 January 2007.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/nec/index.htm>

Flexible Working Regulations

The Government published its response to the consultation on the draft flexible working regulations on Thursday 9th November.

The definition of which carers will be covered by the legislation will be an employee who is, or expects to be, caring for an adult who:

- Is married to, or the partner or civil partner of the employee; or
- Is a near relative¹ of the employee; or
- Falls into neither category, but lives at the same address as the employee.

Deciding on the near relative option best balances the interests of both employers and employees, and will cover around 80% of carers.

Background:

1. In April 2003 the Government introduced a new right - the right to request and duty to consider flexible working - to enable parents who face particular challenges to ask their employer for flexible working and be confident that their request will be taken seriously.

2. Parents of children aged under six or disabled children under 18 have the legal right to apply to work flexibly and their employers have a duty to consider these requests seriously.

3. The Work and Families Act receive Royal Assent on 21 June 2006, and will come into force in full on 6 April 2007. The Act extends the scope of the right to request flexible working to carers of adults to come into effect from 6 April 2007. The DTI launched a consultation on draft regulations on flexible working on 31st January 2006, seeking views on which carers should be covered by the legislation and closing on 25th April 2006.

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/employment/workandfamilies/flexible-working/flexi-working-consresponse/page35184.html>

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HMRC Sets up Specialist Units for R&D Tax Credit Claims

HM Revenue & Customs has set up seven specialist research and development (R&D) tax credit units around the country. The units will deal with all R&D tax credit claims from companies apart from those dealt with by the Large Business Service. The units will deal with claims from small and medium enterprises under Schedule 20, Finance Act 2000 as well as claims by large companies under Schedule 12, Finance Act 2002 and claims to vaccine research relief under Schedule 13 Finance Act 2002.

The aim of these specialist units is to improve the handling of claims by concentrating the work in a smaller number of locations staffed by specially trained officers. This should lead to greater consistency from HMRC in dealing with claims and more certainty for companies making claims.

Further Details from <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/randd/special-units.htm>

Environmental Goods and Services Markets and Innovation

The Joint DTI/Defra Environmental Industries Unit has just published two reports.

The *Emerging Markets In the Environmental Industries Sector* report confirms earlier research done by the unit, that today the sector has an estimated turnover of over £25 billion in the UK. The new report estimates that turnover will increase to over £34 billion by 2010, and £46 billion by 2015.

The sector currently has around 17,000 companies, employing 400,000 people in the UK. The Treasury have estimated that a further 100,000 jobs could be created over the next 10 years.

The global market for environmental goods and services is worth \$548bn and is set to rise to \$688bn by 2010 and almost \$800bn by 2015.

The Environmental Innovations Advisory Group (EIAG), which was tasked with tackling barriers to innovation in the environmental industries, has also just published its first annual report "Bridging the gap between environmental necessity and economic opportunity".

The report sets out analysis of the barriers to innovation in the UK environmental sector as well as solutions. It also sets out progress in bringing about change in a number of key areas such as procurement, regulation, finance, technology and skills.

Alistair Darling and David Miliband will be co-chairing a new Commission on Environmental Markets and Economic Performance and this will take as its starting point the analysis and opportunities set out in these reports.

Both reports can be found at:
www.dti.gov.uk/sectors/environmental/index.html

Revision of Charges for PPC permitting by local Authorities

Consultation on local authority environmental regulation of industrial plant: 2007/08 risk based fees and charges

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 provide for the setting of fees and charges for Local Air Pollution Control (LAPC), Local Air - Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (LA-IPPC), and Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control (LAPPC) at levels that will recover costs of local authorities of implementing the system. This consultation relates to the fees and charges in England. It is the practice of Defra to consult affected industries and local authority associations as part of the annual review of the local authority charging schemes.

It is proposed that the fees and charges for the two local air pollution control (LAPC/LAPPC) and local authority integrated pollution prevention and control (LA-IPPC) regimes for 2007/8 are increased by between 2.37% and 2.86% over current levels for subsistence charges and by 2.11% over current levels for all other charges. In addition to the above, it is proposed that all standard process application fees are increased by £1058 and all reduced fee application fees are increased to £201 for applications made after the due date - ie in relation to installations operating without a permit.

The consultation closes on: **5 January 2007.**
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/localauth-plantfees07-08/index.htm>

Proposed Changes to the Patents Rules

The Patents Rules 1995 (S.I. 1995/2093, as amended) set out procedural and administrative requirements which apply to Patents and patent applications. This consultation paper sets out some proposed changes to the 1995 Rules and seeks comments on those proposals.

There are three proposals for Change. Two proposals relate to the removal of provisions in the 1995 Rules which are incompatible with the efficient operation of the Patent Office's recently-introduced system for electronic case-files for patent applications.

The third proposal concerns a change to the 1995 Rules which is necessary if the UK is to comply with the amended Regulations under the WIPO Patent Co-operation Treaty ("PCT").

Consultation paper: <http://www.Patent.gov.uk/consult-changepatentrules.pdf>

Closing date: **7 Feb 2007**

Reminders of Ongoing Consultations, Issues Covered In Previous Hot Issues.....

REACH

REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) is the proposed new EU Regulation of chemicals and other substances (including metals), adopted by the European Commission on 29 October 2003. It will replace and rationalise the current ad hoc regulatory framework for chemicals and other substances, repealing over 40 pieces of existing legislation. The primary aim of REACH is to gather information on the 30, 000 substances currently marketed in the EU above 1 tonne per year, the vast majority of which we currently know little about.

REACH is subject to the Co-decision process, whereby the Council (Member States) and the European Parliament first scrutinise the proposed regulation separately, and then seek to jointly agree a final package of provisions. The European Parliament delivered its First Reading of REACH on 17 November 2005. The Council achieved political agreement on 13 December 2005 under the UK Presidency (translated into a Common Position of the Council on 27 June 2006 following the standard legal-linguistic checks).

REACH is now well into its Second Reading with the European Parliament. The Parliament and Council are already close on many issues, but there is a key difference of approach over how REACH should encourage the substitution of substances of very high concern (e.g. carcinogens). The Parliament favours mandatory substitution where suitable alternatives exist, while the Council supports a more risk-based approach. The Finnish Presidency is currently holding a series of high-level Trialogues with the European Parliament and the Commission, aimed at securing a Second Reading deal by the end of the year. Should a Second Reading deal be achieved, REACH is likely to enter into force in April 2007. If a deal is not possible, REACH will enter a final Conciliation stage under the German Presidency, with entry into force then likely to be delayed until the second half of 2007.

Industry input into this next stage of the process is very much welcome, and we continue to work with the Metal industry REACH group to ensure views from the sector are adequately represented

Websites:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/chemicals/reach/index.htm>

Contact: necs@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Contact: Keith.avis@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Global Harmonised System of Classification & Labeling of Chemicals (GHS)

The Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) provide a harmonised basis for globally uniform health and safety information on hazardous chemical substances and mixtures (currently known as preparations). It is a culmination of more than a decade of work, which began with the premise that existing systems should be harmonised in order to develop a single, globally harmonised system to address classification of chemicals, labels and safety data sheets.

During the consultation period (Which closed on 21 October 2006) The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consulted widely among external stakeholders encouraging them to engage with the EC and respond on the proposed Regulation.

The non-confidential replies and comments from respondents, including the UK Government Response are available from www.hse.gov.uk/ghs.

Consultation on Proposals for Creating a Streamlined Environmental Permitting & Compliance System

Defra, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Environment Agency have launched the second joint consultation on proposals for a streamlined environmental permitting and compliance system.

There are three main parts to this consultation package:

- 1) The Consultation document sets out revised (following analysis of responses to the First consultation) policy proposals for a streamlined and simplified permitting and compliance system and explaining how the new system would work.
- 2) The partial Regulatory Impact Assessment forecasts the costs and benefits associated with the proposals
- 3) The draft Regulations set out the legal framework for the proposed system.

Consultation package is available at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/envpermitprog2/>

Closing Date: **6 December 2006**

Consultation on the Interface between Planning Permissions and Pollution Control Permits

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Defra have issued a joint consultation on how the interface between planning permissions and pollution control permits can be improved. The aims are to secure better delivery and promote community confidence, while removing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

Consultation documents are available:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502826>

Closing Date: **6 December 2006**

The Pension Protection Fund

The consultation document is the second in a series of consultation documents seeking views on two sets of proposed regulations to be made in exercise of powers contained in the Pensions Act 2004 as they apply to the Pension Protection Fund (PPF). This consultation document seeks views on the following draft regulations:

The Pension Protection Fund (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2007;

The Pension Protection Fund (Waiver of Pension Protection Levy and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2007.

The two sets of regulations within the consultation document relate to the implementation of the Pension Protection Fund. Views are sought on whether the draft regulations effectively implement the policy decisions, which the Government has taken. It is aimed at employers, pension scheme administrators, trustees and managers, pension scheme members and their representatives.

Consultation Document:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2006/index.asp>

Closing Date: **5 December 2006**

Industry Support

Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)

The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) plays a major role in providing UK manufacturers with the practical support they need to improve productivity and achieve success in an increasingly competitive global economy.

MAS owes much of its success to the strong partnership between DTI, RDA s and other key stakeholders who provide access to free hands-on advice and assistance from professional experts. More than a third of firms have gone on to take up in-depth project work with the service at a subsidised rate, enabling them to achieve a vital competitive edge through adopting global best practice in manufacturing.

You can register with the national website to receive a regular e-newsletter in order to find out about recent news and forthcoming events involving MAS.

For further information about the services offered by MAS, go to the MAS national website www.mas.dti.gov.uk or get in touch with your local MAS Regional Centre direct by calling the MAS helpline number 0845 658 9600.

Materials, Engineering and Manufacturing Policy

DIRECTOR Richard Sullivan 0207 215 1474 robert.sullivan@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Director PA – Norren Moriarty 0207 215 1178 Noreen.Moriarty@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Manufacturing Strategy	Manufacturing Policy	Relationship Management
Deputy Director Keith Hodgkinson 0207 215 1094 Keith.Hodgkinson@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Deputy Director Martin Berry 0207 215 2927 Martin.Berry@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Deputy Director Brian Greenwood 020 7215 1298 Brian.Greenwood@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Matt Faultless Manufacturing Forum Secretariat 0207 215 0876 – Mob 07793 447285 matt.faultless@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Dave Courtney Executive Co-ordinator -Manufacturing Advisory Service 020 7215 1490 Dave.Courtney@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Sandy Grom Relationship Manager- Paper, Print and Metals 020 7215 2963 Sandy.Grom@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Russell Kerr Senior Policy Advisor- Manufacturing Forum 020 7215 1296 R.Kerr@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Materials Innovation & Growth Nick Morgan Assistant Director, Materials Innovation & Growth team Engineering 0207 215 1105 nick.morgan@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Simon Greaves Relationship Manager – Metals and Engineering simon.greaves@dti.gsi.gov.uk Tel: 01132 338241
Matt Kelly Senior Policy Advisor Manufacturing Forum 0207 215 1974 matt.kelly@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Robert Quarshie Chief Analytical Advisor Materials Technology 0207 215 1563 Robert.Quarshie@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Demos Demosthenous Relationship Manager – Furniture, Industrial Minerals 020 7215 1890 Demos.Demosthenous@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Stuart Barthropp Senior Policy Advisor, Manufacturing Forum 020 7215 1898 Stuart.Barthropp@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Denton Robinson Information Manager – Matrix 0207 215 1467 Denton.robinson@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Ashley Rosengarten Relationship Manager – Engineering and Metals 0161 952 4308 Ashley.Rosengarten@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Annie Norgrove Assistant Director: Cox Review & Design Council 0207 215 1637 annie.norgrove@dti.gsi.gov.uk	Sagitta Fernando 0207 215 1088 Sagitta.Fernando@dti.gsi.gov.uk	David Robinson Relationship Manager – Technical textiles 0161 952 4193 David.Robinson@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Influence and Impact Team (IIT)		
Terry Martin Assistant Director 0207 215 1102 Terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk		
Keith Avis Assistant Director, Metals Policy 0207 215 1455 keith.avis@dti.gsi.gov.uk		
David Williams Senior Policy Advisor- environmental issues 020 7215 1357 David.Williams@dti.gsi.gov.uk		
Tony Mills Senior Policy Advisor 020 7215 1512 Tony.Mills@dti.gsi.gov.uk		
Judith Williams MEMP Administrator 0207 215 6517 judith.williams@dti.gsi.gov.uk		
Faith Quigley Senior Policy Advisor 0207 215 4121 faith.quigley@dti.gsi.gov.uk		