Guidance on recycling will help Welsh councils and businesses continue to lead the way, according to Minister for Natural Resources and Food Alun Davies. The Minister has launched a consultation on guidance to support organisations and businesses affected by new EU legal requirements for the separate collection of four waste materials – paper, metal, plastic and glass.

From January 1, 2015 all organisations involved in waste collection are required to set up separate collection for paper, metal, plastic and glass, as long as this is what is necessary, in effect, to achieve high quality recycling and it is technically, environmentally and economically practicable to collect the four materials separately.

This change will affect Welsh councils as well as businesses that collect, transport and receive the four waste materials.

Alun Davies said:

“I want it to be as simple as possible for everyone in Wales to recycle the four materials to a high quality, so we can continue to improve our recycling rates and continue to lead the way with the highest recycling rates in the UK.

“Increasing the quantity and the quality of materials available for recycling will ensure that Welsh councils and businesses can get a better price for what they collect. It will help to grow Wales’ market for recycled materials which will pay more for quality resources, which can only benefit Welsh companies. This is why our overarching strategy, Towards Zero Waste, lays out a policy of separate collection for recyclable waste.

”It’s vital that Welsh councils and businesses are clear on their responsibilities so that they can plan effectively for next year.”

Separating materials for recycling avoids contamination and ensures that they can be recycled to a higher standard, creating more valuable products and more opportunities for Welsh manufacturers to make use of the materials.

Whilst the regulations set separate collection as the default position, they don’t prohibit the use of mixed or co-mingled collections of paper, metal, plastic and glass as long as it results in a similar quantity of high-quality recyclates, to that achievable by separate collection, or if separate collection isn’t technically, environmentally or economically practicable.