



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2019/0161, 19 June 2019

Debate on an e-petition relating to unsustainable packaging

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall at 4.30pm on Monday 24 June 2019 on the petition [Ban the use of all non-recyclable and unsustainable food packaging](#). The debate will be opened by Daniel Zeichner MP.

This pack contains recent relevant news items, press releases, Parliamentary material and useful links.

Please see also the Commons Library briefing [Plastic waste](#).

By Louise Smith
Nikki Sutherland

Contents

1. The petition	2
2. News items	4
3. Press releases	6
4. Parliamentary material	17
Debates	17
Ten-minute Rule Bill	17
PQs	17
5. Useful links and further reading	31

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. The petition

The petition [Ban the use of all non-recyclable and unsustainable food packaging](#) had 247,048 signatures when it closed after 6 months on 5 June 2019.

The petition reads

Today the Earth is at a crisis point due to our plastic consumption, and as a result, people in the UK are more willing than ever to engage in recycling. Yet so much food packaging remains completely, frustratingly unrecyclable. Let's aim for the UK to lead the world with a 100% recycling rate.

Every day we send to landfill, to decompose over thousands of years:

- Cereal box inner bags
- Peel-off film (fruit and veg punnets/ready meals/yoghurt pots)
- Almost all plastic supermarket fruit and veg packets
- Crisp packets
- Sweets wrappers
- Chocolate bar wrappers
- Styrofoam
- Vacuum pack plastic

-to name a few

The British public WANTS to recycle but we can't get away from the vast amounts of waste that poorly designed packaging creates- appoint people to design alternatives and the UK will thank you!

The Government responded on 18 June 2019

Our Strategy sets out plans to eliminate avoidable plastic waste. We have consulted on proposals to incentivise producers to make more sustainable packaging design choices and recyclable packaging.

Most food packaging is technically recyclable, though the current market does not make all recycling economically viable. The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England published in December last year sets out our plans to reduce plastic pollution and move towards a more circular economy. This builds on the commitment in the 25 Year Environment Plan to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste. For the most problematic plastics we are going faster, which is why we commit to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the UK market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.

Our general approach is to help people and companies make the right choice and develop alternatives, rather than move to banning items outright. There are circumstances when a ban is appropriate as part of a wider strategic approach. We have already banned the sale of plastic microbeads, will be banning the supply of plastic drinking straws, stirrers and plastic stemmed cotton buds from April 2020 in England, and are assessing the

impact of banning other single-use plastic items. We will continue to review the latest evidence on problematic products and/ or materials to take a systematic approach to reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastic products including problematic packaging materials, in line with our commitment to match and where economically practicable exceed the ambition of the EU in this regard.

Our priority is to prevent or reduce waste in the first place. The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations already require businesses to ensure that all their packaging does not exceed what is needed to make sure that the products are safe, hygienic and acceptable for both the packed product and for the consumer. As part of the Resources and Waste Strategy, we have committed to review the effectiveness of these Regulations by the end of next year. These Regulations apply to those responsible for the packing or filling of products into packaging and those importing packed or filled packaging into the UK from elsewhere.

On 18 February, the Government launched several consultations to overhaul the waste system. This includes proposals to reform packaging waste regulations to financially incentivise packaging producers to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products. We also consulted on introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers and increasing consistency in recycling collections. We also consulted on introducing a tax on plastic packaging containing less than 30% recycled content. These consultations closed on 13 May. We are analysing the responses and will publish the government's response in due course.

The reforms to the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations will require producers to fund the full net-cost of managing the packaging they place on the market, once it becomes waste. This creates an incentive for companies to use less packaging and to ensure that their packaging can be recycled at end of life as it will reduce their costs in complying with the Regulations. We will also ensure that producer fees fund a move to a system where a nationally agreed set of packaging materials are collected and where it is easier for consumers to know what packaging they can recycle, through improved communication campaigns and packaging labelling.

We have set out in our consultation options for how we want to enhance the incentive for producers to make better, more sustainable packaging design choices. The options are for a modulated fee system or a deposit fee system. These options provide a financial incentive for producers, in addition to the full-net cost fees, to move towards using more easily recycled packaging materials and formats. To support this we want to introduce an "approved list". This list will set out what packaging materials are recyclable.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

This is a revised response. The Petitions Committee requested a response which more directly addressed the request of the petition. You can find the original response towards the bottom of the petition page (<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/232684>)

2. News items

Resource Magazine

PRN 'crisis' as UK could miss packaging recycling targets

17 June 2019

<https://resource.co/article/prn-crisis-uk-could-miss-packaging-recycling-targets>

Retail Gazette

80% shoppers say grocers aren't doing enough to reduce plastic waste

14 June 2019

<https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2019/06/shoppers-supermarkets-arent-enough-reduce-plastic-waste/>

Guardian

The zero-waste revolution: how a new wave of shops could end excess packaging

21 April 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/21/the-zero-waste-revolution-how-a-new-wave-of-shops-could-end-excess-packaging>

Business Green

M&S launches 'non-recyclable' plastic take-back scheme

30 January 2019

<https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/3070085/m-s-launches-non-recyclable-plastic-take-back-scheme>

Packaging News

Survey shows consumers want legislation on sustainable packaging

27 November 2018

<https://www.packagingnews.co.uk/news/environment/survey-shows-consumers-rejection-unsustainable-packaging-27-11-2018>

Which?

Up to 29% of supermarket packaging is not recyclable, Which? finds

19 July 2018

<https://www.which.co.uk/news/2018/07/up-to-29-of-supermarket-packaging-is-not-recyclable-which-finds/>

3. Press releases

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Fund opens to reduce waste from plastic packaging and textiles £4.7 million government fund launched to drive up the recycling of hard-to-recycle materials.

12 June 2019

The government is inviting organisations to apply for funding under a multi-million pound grant scheme to help boost the recycling of plastic packaging and textiles.

From today (Wednesday, 12 June), [organisations in England can apply for government funding](#) for innovative solutions to drive up the recycling of hard-to-recycle plastic packaging such as plastic trays, pots and tubs, plastic films and pouches, as well as funding for innovative projects that boost the recycling of textiles when they have reached the end of their life.

For plastics this could include innovative sorting or segregation equipment, and smarter systems to enable sorting of different polymers. For textiles this could include machinery for recycling textiles, technology for disassembling or sorting textiles, automated processes for removing items from textiles such as zips, and technology to sort textiles by fibre type and colour.

The UK generates around [2.4 million tonnes of packaging waste per year](#). [Around 40% of all plastic produced](#) in the UK is used in the packaging of goods.

In 2015, there [were 300,000 tonnes of clothing in the UK](#) going to landfill or incineration.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

We are committed to going further and faster to reduce, reuse, recycle and cut waste. Valuable waste ending up in landfill makes no sense environmentally or economically.

We are making progress but there is more to do, and I encourage organisations to apply for our multi-million pound grant to drive-up the recycling of these valuable materials.

Today's announcement builds on the [government's landmark Resources and Waste Strategy](#) - which sets out how following the [overhaul of the packaging regulations which will see producers pay the full cost of managing their waste](#) the government will place greater responsibility on producers to make their items easier to reuse and recycle. [Textiles is a key priority area for action](#).

The government has recently announced a range of measures to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste including [taking over 15 billion plastic bags out of circulation](#) with our 5p plastic bag charge with plans [to raise the charge to 10p and extend it to all retailers](#).

We have also [confirmed a ban on plastic straws, drinks stirrers, and plastic stemmed cotton buds in April 2020](#), introduced a world-leading ban on microbeads, and have [consulted on introducing a deposit return scheme](#) to drive up the recycling of drinks bottles and cans.

Earlier this year, [the government consulted on a world-leading tax on plastic packaging](#) which does not contain a minimum of 30% recycled content from April 2022 to cut the use of virgin plastics and encourage more sustainable packaging.

The [UK government has also committed a £61.4 million package of funding](#) to boost global research and help countries across the Commonwealth stop plastic waste from entering the oceans. Building on this, [the government's £20 million Plastics Research and Innovation Fund encourages researchers and businesses to develop new innovations](#) that can bring changes in the UK's plastics manufacturing and consumption patterns, which will be key to developing a cleaner, greener economy [through the Industrial Strategy](#).

Further information:

- There has been a [14% drop in clothing thrown away in the UK since 2012](#), as well as [a more than 11% drop in carbon footprint per tonne of clothing](#), and [a more than 17% drop in water usage](#) achieved by the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan (SCAP) signatories between 2012 and 2017.
- [The European Clothing Action Plan](#), led by WRAP, aims to divert over 90,000 tonnes of clothing waste from landfill and incineration across Europe by December 2019.
- We support the ['Love Your Clothes'](#) campaign which aims to raise awareness of the value of clothes and encourage people to make the most of the clothes they already have.

Wrap

WRAP marks first anniversary of The UK Plastics Pact with new progress report

21st May 2019

- Unrecyclable plastics such as non-detectable black plastics and polystyrene are disappearing from UK supermarket shelves
- Members have started removing unnecessary single use plastics such as straws and plastic cutlery

One year since UK businesses across the plastics supply chain made a unique pact to tackle plastics pollution, WRAP has published a [report of progress](#) made by members to date. The report also details the pledges members have made to take action against the Pact's targets in the near future.

WRAP CEO Marcus Gover said:

When we launched The UK Plastics Pact a year ago, we knew that we had a monumental task on our hands. Tackling plastics pollution remains high in the public consciousness, and citizens quite rightly want to see action from the businesses that put plastic packaging onto our supermarket shelves and into our cafes and restaurants. So I'm delighted to celebrate the first anniversary of the Pact by revealing the huge array of initiatives members have been working on over the past year.

The first year was about building solid foundations and setting a clear direction of travel for collaborative change. Moving forward there will be tough decisions to make, new innovations to foster, and investment to be made – all at great pace and with an urgency that reflects the scale of the problem we are tackling. Our members have shown they are up for the challenge and we have great momentum to propel us forward. I'm convinced we are on the way to transforming forever the way we make, use and dispose of plastic.

The UK Plastics Pact has set four ambitious targets by 2025, and members have reported progress against each one, demonstrating how collaboration across the entire plastics supply chain can deliver real change. Some examples against each target include:

- Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative (re-use) delivery models.
 - M&S has replaced plastic cutlery with alternatives made from FSC certified wood and swapped plastic straws for paper versions. Waitrose has committed to stop selling plastic cutlery by the end of this year. Most retailers have removed plastic straws from sale and in cafes – Morrisons estimates that this removes approximately 30 tonnes of plastic and 65m straws per year
 - Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose, M&S and Morrisons are trialling the removal of plastic packaging across a number of produce lines, to understand where plastic can be removed without impacting food waste
 - Tesco, Asda and Aldi combined have removed almost 700 tonnes of non-recyclable polystyrene pizza bases by introducing a cardboard alternative
- 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.
 - Members have reported widespread progress on removing unrecyclable black plastic from their packaging. For example, M&S phased out 1700 tonnes of black plastic packaging, Lidl has removed all black plastic packaging from primary fruit and vegetable packaging, and Ocado have removed it from 83 product lines, representing 90% of Ocado Own Brand lines that had black plastic. Brakes has removed 80% of black plastic (by weight) from its products. Other members, including Unilever, are working in collaboration with

- waste management companies to introduce a new type of black pigment for its personal care bottles that can be detected by infra-red scanners and therefore recycled.
- Morrisons has moved polystyrene egg boxes into paper pulp – saving 294 tonnes of unrecyclable plastic
 - Unilever is making all PG Tips tea bags biodegradable when placed in your food waste caddy
 - Several supermarkets now welcome the use of customers' own containers at fresh food counters
 - Reckitt Benckiser has removed the metal components from Cillit Bang, Vanish and Dettol cleaning triggers, as this is problematic for the recycling process
- 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted.
 - Members have reported significantly enhanced communications to citizens about what can be recycled across the board. All retailer members and a large number of brands are signed up to the On Pack Recycling Labelling scheme to provide clear messaging on what can or cannot be recycled.
 - Boots has run a trial to understand the effectiveness of adding front of pack recycling messages on their bathroom toiletries
 - Hovis now include a recycling logo on the front of a range of bread bags to let citizens know that this packaging can be recycled with carrier bags at larger stores
 - Coca-Cola has introduced a "Please Recycle Me" message on over 500 million of its bottle tops each year, and Britvic included a "Please Recycle" message on its recent Robinsons Fruit Creations TV advert.
 - PepsiCo (Walkers Crisps) launched the UK's first nationwide crisp packet recycling scheme – it's free, accepts any crisp packet brand and has already collected 2.4million packets
 - 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging.
 - Danone has reported that all evian 75cl, 1L and 1.5L bottles produced for the UK market now contain 50% recycled content
 - innocent have achieved a minimum of 30% recycled content in their bottles, with their smoothie bottles now containing 50%.
 - Ecover and Highland Spring Group have launched PET bottles with 100% recycled content

This is just the tip of the iceberg, with the new report also capturing pledges Pact members have made for action against the targets in the near future. Many members are looking at refillable alternatives for their plastic packaging – particularly for cleaning products – so that the primary packaging is reusable. Further efforts to help citizens recycle more and recycle better also feature.

Removing unrecyclable plastics will be a key focus for members over the coming year. While the Pact targets run until 2025, WRAP is challenging members to act urgently. As far as possible, by the end of this year, they should remove polystyrene and PVC from food packaging and by the end of 2020 they should be eradicated from non-food products. These plastics are not recycled and in the case of PVC it also contaminates plastic recycling. Also by the end of 2019 members are being requested to only use plastic that can be sorted effectively in the recycling process, such as adopting 'detectable black' pigments.

About The UK Plastic Pact:

- *The UK Plastics Pact was the first initiative of its kind in the world. It is being replicated in other countries to form a powerful global movement for change as part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy initiative. It is led by WRAP, the sustainability experts. For more information see www.wrap.org.uk/ukplasticspact*

About WRAP

- *First established in 2000, WRAP is a not for profit organisation which works with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world in which we source and use resources sustainably.*
- *Our impact spans the entire life-cycle of the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the products we buy, from production to consumption and beyond.*

House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

Plastic food and drink packaging inquiry launched

28 March 2019

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee is launching an inquiry into plastic food and drink packaging.

- [Inquiry: Plastic food and drink packaging](#)
- [Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee](#)

Chair's comments

Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee Neil Parish MP said:

Plastic currently pollutes this country's soils, rivers and coasts, with millions of tonnes of plastics used in the UK every single year. It has become a global environmental problem. Once plastic packaging becomes waste, most of it does not biodegrade – which damages the environment and affects a range of marine species.

The Committee is keen to find out what progress has been made in developing and using more environmentally friendly alternatives to plastics and how they perform when compared to plastic food and drink packaging.

It is imperative that we find practical ways to protect the environment and reduce the risks posed by increasing plastic pollution. We also hope to highlight how Government action may help to alleviate this significant threat.

Terms of reference

The Committee is seeking written submissions that address the following questions:

1. What progress have packaging manufacturers, food producers and retailers made in developing and using alternatives to, and reducing consumers' use of plastic food and drink packaging?
2. What are the barriers to and opportunities for further innovation?
3. How do alternatives to plastic perform compared to plastic food and drink packaging?
4. Are there food and drink products for which it is essential to use plastic, or for which it is more difficult to develop and use alternatives?
5. What impact will the following two Government proposals have on reducing plastic food and drink packaging?
 - a. an extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging to ensure the costs of collection and recycling are borne by those that produce packaging and place it on the market, and
 - b. a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled plastic, to encourage manufacturers to produce more sustainable packaging and create greater demand for recycled material?
6. Is there adequate research and development funding and support for alternatives to plastic food and drink packaging?

Deadline for submissions

Written evidence should be submitted through the [Committee's web portal](#) by midnight on Thursday 2 May. It is recommended that all submitters familiarise themselves with the Guidance on giving evidence to a Select Committee of the House of Commons which outlines particulars of word count, format, document size, and content restrictions.

Diversity

We encourage members of underrepresented groups to submit written evidence. We aim to have diverse panels of Select Committee witnesses and ask organisations to bear this in mind when we ask them to choose a representative. We are currently monitoring the diversity of our witnesses.

National Audit Office

The packaging recycling obligations

23 July 2018

The UK's approach to calculating packaging recycling rates is not sufficiently robust, and government appears not to have faced up to underlying recycling issues, says today's report by the National Audit Office (NAO).

Reducing waste and using resources more efficiently are long-standing objectives for the government, and tackling packaging waste is essential to achieving these ambitions. The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (the Department) estimates that the UK has exceeded its overall packaging recycling target every year since 1997 and recycled 64% of packaging in 2017. However, the NAO has found that these figures do not account for the risk of undetected fraud and error.

A key government initiative to ensure that packaging is recycled – the packaging recycling obligation system – has subsidised waste exports to other parts of the world without adequate checks to ensure it is recycled. The Department also has no evidence that the system has encouraged companies to minimise the use of packaging or make it easy to recycle.

The packaging regulations create a complex market-based system to meet packaging recycling targets. They require companies that handle over 50 tonnes of packaging per year and have a turnover higher than £2 million to demonstrate that they have recycled a certain amount of packaging by obtaining recovery evidence notes from accredited UK reprocessors and companies exporting waste for recycling abroad. In 2017, 7002 companies registered and paid a total of £73 million towards the cost of recycling packaging.

The report identifies that the Environment Agency (the Agency), which is responsible for enforcing the system's regulations in England, has fallen well short of its targets for inspections. In 2016-17 the Agency only carried out 40% of planned compliance visits to reprocessors and exporters to check they accurately report the amount of packaging recycled.

The risk that companies over-claim is potentially more acute for exporters than for UK-based recycling companies, with risks that some exported material is not recycled under equivalent standards to the UK and is instead sent to landfill or contributes to pollution. Yet exporters

rated as high-risk were less likely to receive a compliance visit than those rated low-risk.

The Agency has also identified a large number of companies that may have an obligation to pay into the system but have not registered. It does not have a good understanding of how significant the financial risk could be.

The Department has committed to reform the system as part of a new strategy for waste and resources. The NAO recommends that the Department should improve its approach to calculating packaging recycling rates. It should also do more to tackle the risks associated with waste being exported for recycling overseas.

If the UK wants to play its part in fully tackling the impacts of waste and pollution, a tighter grip on packaging recycling is needed. Twenty years ago, the government set up a complex system to subsidise packaging recycling, which appears to have evolved into a comfortable way of meeting targets without addressing the fundamental issues. The government should have a much better understanding of the difference this system makes and a better handle on the risks associated with so much packaging waste being recycled overseas.

Amyas Morse, the head of the NAO

Notes for Editors

64% - reported proportion of UK packaging waste recycled in 2017 against a target of 55%

Unknown - range of uncertainty in reported packaging recycling rates

1 of 4 - High-risk exporters subject to a compliance visit in 2017, a lower proportion than low-risk companies

11 million - government's estimate of tonnes of packaging waste used by UK households and businesses in 2017

7,002 - companies that registered as having packaging obligations across the UK in 2017

£73 million - amount raised by the system UK-wide to help fund recycling of packaging waste in 2017

Sixfold - increase in exports of packaging material for recycling abroad between 2002 and 2017, with exports accounting for half of the packaging reported as recycled in 2017

124 - compliance visits to recyclers and exporters carried out by the Environment Agency in 2016-17, against a target of 346

3 - unannounced site visits carried out by the Environment Agency in 2017-18, covering 1.4% of accredited English recyclers and exporters

1. The NAO reviewed the packaging recycling obligation system in response to a request from the Environmental Audit Committee.
2. The packaging recycling obligation system is the UK's implementation of an EU Directive on packaging and packaging waste. This set minimum targets to recover 50% and recycle

25%, of packaging waste by 2001, and required member states to undertake 'the necessary measures' to meet the targets. The UK transposed the Directive into UK law in 1997, and introduced legislation to establish a packaging recycling obligation system. A new Directive published in 2004 increased the minimum packaging recovery target to 60% and the minimum recycling target to 55% from 2008 and added separate targets for each of the main packaging materials (Figure 1).

3. The Department estimates that UK packaging recycling rates have increased from 31% in 1998 to 64% in 2017, exceeding the EU target of 55%.
4. Overall the increase in packaging recycling rates has been mostly due to a growth in exports: since 2002 the quantity of packaging waste exported abroad has increased sixfold while the quantity recycled in the UK has remained the same. Exports accounted for half of the tonnage of packaging reported as recycled in 2017 (Figure 7). The trends differ between the different packaging materials. For plastic, glass, steel and aluminium, the amount reprocessed in the UK has increased since 2002, while for paper and card it has decreased and for wood packaging it has increased and then declined (Appendix Three).
5. The government estimates that around 11 million tonnes of packaging is used in the UK each year, which would imply packaging constitutes around 17% of total household and commercial waste in the UK.
6. An analysis of the Agency's records for 2009-2016, triggered by the NAO review, found 1,889 companies flagged as potential free-riders – those that have an obligation to pay into the system but have not registered – but with no follow up recorded. If the proportion of actual non-compliance is similar to that in the potential cases that officers have reviewed, it would mean that 331 additional companies should be paying into the system, and at least 4.5% of obligated companies do not register. The Agency considers that it has prioritised the most significant potential cases, so the financial impact of bringing any additional companies into the system could be small, but we are not convinced that its analysis is strong enough for it to be confident in this conclusion.
7. Press notices and reports are available from the date of publication on the [NAO website](#). Hard copies can be obtained by using the relevant links on our website.
8. The National Audit Office scrutinises public spending for Parliament and is independent of government. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Sir Amyas Morse KCB, is an Officer of the House of Commons and leads the NAO, which employs some 785 people. The C&AG certifies the accounts of

all government departments and many other public sector bodies. He has statutory authority to examine and report to Parliament on whether departments and the bodies they fund have used their resources efficiently, effectively, and with economy. Our studies evaluate the value for money of public spending, nationally and locally. Our recommendations and reports on good practice help government improve public services. Our work led to audited savings of £741 million in 2017.

Wrap

WRAP, INCPEN and ACP present recommendations on packaging regulatory reform

15th May 2018

Following a round table discussion convened by the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, in December last year WRAP, INCPEN (Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment) and Defra's Advisory Committee on Packaging (ACP) have, for the last two months, been engaged in a comprehensive programme of discussions with stakeholders from across the UK packaging supply chain. The talks explored how packaging regulatory reform could help to reduce the environmental impact caused by the way we use and dispose of packaging, especially plastic packaging.

Following six sector workshops, a summit was convened on April 16 to share the findings with stakeholders across the UK and agree on a set of recommendations to be sent to the Secretary of State. There was broad support across the whole packaging value chain for radical change to the existing producer responsibility regime. There was also agreement that change needs to be cohesive with other policy instruments and consistent across the UK with greater transparency and accountability. Businesses were clear that they are willing to pay more into the system to ensure it is adequately funded and works effectively.

The recommendations are geared towards:

- Achieving better packaging design
- Making it easier for people to recycle, whether at home, at work, and on-the-go
- Achieving higher quality, consistent collections
- Encouraging UK reprocessing through quality feedstock
- Creating markets with strong demand for recycled content

There was also support for the establishment of an independent arbiter to ensure that funds raised through the system are spent in the system in the most effective way possible.

We welcome the Secretary of State's response to the recommendations and his recognition that they will inform future policy decision making. We stand ready to continue to input into this important area of work.

Marcus Gover, chief executive, WRAP, commented:

We were delighted with the rich and fruitful discussions across the whole packaging chain and the participants' genuine commitment to radical reform. I want to thank Paul Vanston and Phil Conran for their important contribution to the process.

The Secretary of State's response is very encouraging and I am particularly pleased to see his commitment to accelerating the move to uniform recycling collections, as this supports a key area of work for WRAP. The need for government policy to underpin the commitments made by business will be key to us achieving the ambitious goals we have laid out in The UK Plastics Pact.

Paul Vanston, chief executive INCPEN echoed this view and said:

I'm delighted with the leadership by Michael Gove, Secretary of State and Thérèse Coffey, Environment Minister in wishing to create a better functioning packaging value chain from design through to consumers and on to reprocessing and continued life of materials. The breadth and depth of engagement in the last six months, facilitated by WRAP, INCPEN and the ACP, led to a universally supported message that funds raised by the value chain need to be used to solve problems within it.

"We're also enthused that, after years of debate, we have moved closer to seeing a consistent collection system for used packaging across our country. The next steps are to continue working with the government to support the packaging reforms consultation later this year, alongside publication of a comprehensive Resources & Waste Strategy.

Phil Conran, Chair of ACP, commented:

We welcome the Secretary of State's very positive response that will help to focus the direction of travel in the work the ACP is doing with Defra in developing options for change.

About WRAP

- *First established in 2000, WRAP is a not for profit organisation which works with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world in which we source and use resources sustainably.*
- *Our impact spans the entire life-cycle of the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the products we buy, from production to consumption and beyond.*

Please see related links for [open letter on plastic waste and recycling strategy](#), and exchange of letters on [reform to regulations relating to packaging](#).

4. Parliamentary material

Debates

Commons debate - Plastics Recycling

HC Deb 23 April 2019 | Vol 658 c271WH-

<http://bit.ly/2XFhEey>

Commons adjournment debate - Packaging: Extended Producer Responsibility

HC Deb 03 April 2019 | Vol 657 c1219-

<http://bit.ly/2WR9xvj>

Ten-minute Rule Bill

Packaging (Extended Producer Responsibility)

HC Deb 13 June 2018 | Vol 642 c905-

<http://bit.ly/2OYOreZ>

[see the [Bill](#) and [Bill Page](#)]

PQs

[Recycling Infrastructure](#)

Asked by: Kyle, Peter

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the creation of new recycling infrastructure.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Through our Resources and Waste Strategy we have set long-term targets to divert more waste from landfill and to drive up recycling. Key ambitions include delivering a 65% municipal waste recycling rate by 2035, a minimum 70% recycling rate for packaging waste by 2030 and implementing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, subject to consultation. The publication of the Strategy, setting out the long-term policy environment will encourage and support the required investment.

Specific measures taken by the Government that are already supporting the creation of new recycling infrastructure include:

- £4.7m of grant funding, which was announced on 12 June and made available through the Waste and Resources Action Programme, to support new capital infrastructure projects that will help to recycle difficult plastic packaging and textile materials. Further grant opportunities around recycling will follow in due course.
- The packaging waste producer responsibility scheme, which raised £130 million in 2018 through the purchase by producers of packaging waste recovery and export notes. Just under £82 million of this supported the development of infrastructure. Proposed reforms will support the development of new and improved recycling infrastructure.
- Investment of £3 billion of grant funding in 24 Private Finance Initiative waste infrastructure projects. These grants support infrastructure including material recovery, mechanical biological treatment and anaerobic digestion facilities, as well as implementation and expanding kerbside recycling services.

HC Deb 18 June 2019 | PQ 264445

[Plastics: Seas and Oceans](#)

Asked by: Rosindell, Andrew

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to prevent plastic waste from the UK entering the world's oceans.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK is making significant progress in addressing the issue of plastic in the oceans, and is taking measures to stop plastic from entering the oceans in the first place. Our ban on microbeads in cosmetic and personal care products, one of the strongest in the world, came into force in June 2018. Our plastic bag charge has led to an 86% reduction in the use of plastic carrier bags and last year alone raised over £51 million for environmental causes. We have consulted on plans to extend the charge to all retailers and on increasing the minimum 5p charge to at least 10p, and last month announced that a ban on the distribution and/or sale of plastic straws, stirrers, and plastic stemmed cotton buds will come into force from April 2020. A full response to this consultation can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gove-takes-action-to-ban-plastic-straws-stirrers-and-cotton-buds>.

These policies are helping to deliver the Resources and Waste Strategy for England, our framework for eliminating all avoidable plastic waste. It builds on commitments in our 25 Year Environment Plan and sets out plans to maximise the value we get from resources, minimise waste, promote a circular economy and protect the environment better.

Earlier this year we published consultations on a number of key policy measures to significantly change the way that we manage our waste, and in doing so, prevent plastic waste from entering the oceans in the first place: reforming existing packaging waste regulations, exploring the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, and increasing consistency in the recycling system, along with a parallel consultation on the plastic packaging tax that the Chancellor announced in the Budget last year. We will publish the Government's responses to these consultations on GOV.UK in due course.

Although 80% of plastic waste comes from land, 20% comes from ocean sources. Abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) accounts for 10% of all plastic waste in the ocean and presents acute threats to marine life. Through the forthcoming International Ocean Strategy the UK is committed to spearheading international collaboration to establish a detailed understanding of the ocean, with the aim of significantly reducing the contribution of ALDFG to the problem of marine litter. The UK also signed up to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative in 2016, a pioneering scheme tackling lost and abandoned fishing gear on a global scale. Through this initiative we are committed to working with our partners to address the management of existing ALDFG and the mitigation of potential ALDFG.

The Government recognises the benefits and importance of youth outreach and education programmes in tackling this issue. In 2018 a new partnership between the UK Scouts and the Government was set up to help young people better understand the importance of reducing plastic consumption and marine litter. The UK is also working in partnership with UN Environment, collaborating internationally with young people across the Commonwealth to support them in becoming leaders and advocates for behaviour change.

We are committed to our international work to lead action on the global threat of marine litter. We continue to actively engage internationally through OSPAR, the G7 and the G20, and the UN. In April 2018, the Prime Minister announced the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance, a ground breaking initiative working with our Commonwealth partners to reduce marine plastic pollution. To help deliver this, we committed an ambitious package of up to £70 million of UK Aid to drive research and innovation.

HC Deb 18 June 2019 | PQ 262282

[Plastics: Packaging](#)

Asked by: Gill, Preet Kaur

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to help reduce plastic packaging in supermarkets.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department:
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government is currently working with retailers and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to encourage their efforts to reduce waste and to explore the introduction of plastic-free supermarket initiatives in which fresh food is sold loose, giving consumers the choice.

The government recently consulted on reforms to the packaging producer responsibility system to ensure that packaging producers meet the full cost of managing and recycling packaging waste. This provides a strong incentive to producers to reduce the amount of packaging they use and to make packaging that is more easily collected and recycled. Plastic food packaging serves important purposes such as protecting food, providing important storage information, extending the shelf life and decreasing food waste.

However there are opportunities where offering food loose may help to reduce plastic waste whilst not impacting on shelf life. WRAP have published a technical report on the evidence for providing fresh produce loose and this will inform future guidance. And industry is already taking action. In April last year, WRAP and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation launched their world-leading UK Plastics Pact, with support from the Government, and all the major supermarkets have signed up to it. The Pact brings these organisations together with four key targets for 2025 that aim to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated. Which include action to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic packaging items. Our proposed reforms will support supermarkets in achieving those targets.

HC Deb 10 June 2019 | PQ 259383

[Plastics: Consumption](#)

Asked by: Field, Frank

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to reduce levels of plastic consumption in the UK.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

This Government is taking action to tackle all avoidable plastic waste. We have introduced one of the world's toughest bans on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products and significantly reduced the use of plastic bags by around 86% with our 5p carrier bag charge. New measures to ban the distribution and/or sale of plastic straws, stirrers, and plastic-stemmed cotton buds have been announced which will come into force from April 2020. We have consulted on plans to extend the charge to all retailers, and consulted on increasing the minimum 5p charge to at least 10p.

Earlier this year, we published consultations on measures to significantly change the way that we deal with our waste in the UK, helping to cut plastic pollution as we move towards a more circular economy. These

included proposals to: reform the existing packaging waste regulations; introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers; and to increase consistency in the recycling system. Legislative proposals will be developed taking account of the consultation responses.

HC Deb 10 June 2019 | PQ 259012

[Plastics: *Recycling*](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with businesses on the use of detectable black pigment in plastics to facilitate the recycling of plastic.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Defra Ministers and officials have met industry representatives to highlight the importance of increasing the recyclability of materials, including black plastics. As part of our proposals to reform the UK packaging producer responsibility system, we have outlined options that provide a financial incentive for producers to move towards using more easily recycled packaging materials and formats. We expect these initiatives by industry, combined with our reforms, to work together to eliminate from use the problematic and difficult to recycle plastic packaging.

Industry has committed to taking action on implementing solutions to prevent black plastic waste going to landfill and encourage recycling. In April 2018, WRAP and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation published its Plastics Pact with support from Defra and 80 businesses, NGOs, government organisations and service providers. The Pact brings these organisations together with the aim of making 100% of plastic packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. A number of UK Plastic Pact members, including Waitrose, Aldi and Lidl have committed to reducing or eliminating black plastic packaging, while other companies are using detectable pigment that enables black plastic to be recycled.

HC Deb 30 May 2019 | PQ 257075

[Plastics: *Packaging*](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to restrict the use of (a) polystyrene and (b) PVC in plastic packaging.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

In our Resources and Waste Strategy we committed to reform our current packaging producer responsibility system. We recently consulted

on measures to ensure that producers pay the full costs of disposal for packaging they place on the market, as well as mechanisms to incentivise producers to make better, more sustainable decisions at the design stage and point of manufacture. This includes making producers pay more if their products aren't easily recyclable.

We will consider legislative proposals as necessary in achieving our objective.

HC Deb 30 May 2019 | PQ 257074

[Plastics: Packaging](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of supermarket chains on the reduction of single-use plastics for product packaging.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government is currently working with retailers and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to encourage their efforts to reduce waste and to explore the introduction of plastic-free supermarket initiatives in which fresh food is sold loose, giving consumers the choice.

The Government recently consulted on reforms to the packaging producer responsibility system to ensure that packaging producers meet the full cost of managing and recycling packaging waste. This provides a strong incentive to producers to reduce the amount of packaging they use and to make packaging that is more easily collected and recycled.

Industry is already taking action. In April last year, WRAP and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation launched their world-leading UK Plastics Pact, with support from the Government, and all the major supermarkets have signed up to it. The Pact brings these organisations together with four key targets for 2025 that aim to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated, which include action to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic packaging items. Our proposed reforms will support supermarkets in achieving those targets.

HC Deb 30 May 2019 | PQ 257073

[Recycling](#)

Asked by: Farrelly, Paul

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of a national campaign to (a) reinforce recycling behaviour, (b) signpost recycling facilities and (c) ensure the public know what materials they can recycle.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department:
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Our consultations on 'consistency in household and business recycling collections in England' and on 'reforming the packaging producer responsibility schemes' proposed measures for local authorities collecting the same core set of materials for recycling from households and potentially using fees from producers to fund public communication campaigns on recycling.

Our consultations also proposed a mandatory UK wide labelling scheme in which producers label their packaging as recyclable or not recyclable.

These consultations closed on 13 May and we are currently analysing responses and will publish the Government's response in due course.

Defra currently supports the Waste and Resources Action Programme's RecycleNow campaign which provides support for local campaigns. It also provides a toolkit for local authorities to help with their messaging on recycling.

HC Deb 20 May 2019 | PQ 253526

[Packaging](#)

Asked by: Shannon, Jim

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage online businesses to use environmentally friendly packaging.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department:
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England published in December last year sets out our plans to reduce plastic pollution and move towards a more circular economy. This builds on the commitment in the 25 Year Environment Plan to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste.

Our priority is to prevent or reduce waste in the first place. The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations already require businesses, including online retailers, to ensure that all their packaging does not exceed what is needed to make sure that the products are safe, hygienic and acceptable for both the packed product and for the consumer. As part of the Resources and Waste Strategy, we have committed to review the effectiveness of these regulations by the end of next year. These regulations apply to those responsible for the packing or filling of products into packaging and those importing packed or filled packaging into the UK from elsewhere.

We are also consulting on reforms to the way we manage packaging waste. The reforms to the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations will require producers to fund the full net cost of managing the packaging they place on the market, once it becomes waste. This creates an incentive for companies, including obligated online businesses, to use less packaging and to ensure that

their packaging can be recycled at end of life as it will reduce their costs in complying with the regulations.

We have set out in our consultation options for how we want to enhance the incentive for producers to make better packaging design choices. The options are for a modulated fee system or a deposit fee system. These options provide a financial incentive for producers, in addition to the full net cost fees, to move towards using more easily recycled packaging materials and formats.

In addition to this, the consultation also sets out a proposal to require online marketplace businesses to ensure that the packaging that is sold through their websites from outside the UK is compliant with the regulations.

HC Deb 07 May 2019 | PQ 249304

[Plastics: Waste](#)

Asked by: Farrelly, Paul

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress his Department has made on banning single-use plastics by 2021.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government published the Resources and Waste Strategy for England in December last year which sets out our plans to reduce plastic pollution and to move towards a more circular economy.

We have already made good progress, banning microbeads in rinse-off personal care products and removing 15.6 billion plastic bags from circulation with our 5p charge. We have already consulted on banning plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds in addition to extending the carrier bag charge. Consultation has also begun on reforming existing packaging waste regulation, introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers and increasing consistency in the recycling system. Legislative proposals will be developed taking account of the consultation responses.

We will continue to review the latest evidence on problematic products and materials to take a systematic approach to reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastic products including problematic packaging materials, in line with our commitment to match, and where economically practicable exceed, the ambition of the EU in this regard.

Our ambition is to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste throughout the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan. For the most problematic plastics we are going faster – that is why we commit to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the UK market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.

HC Deb 15 April 2019 | PQ 242041

Plastics: Recycling

Asked by: Sheerman, Mr Barry

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce the amount of non-recyclable plastic; and what initiatives he is rolling out on recycling.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, published in January 2018, its commitment to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste and to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025. Our Resource and Waste Strategy was published in December 2018 and contains details of measures that will help to achieve this.

We are currently consulting on a suite of proposals that will lead to an increase in the supply and demand for secondary materials. These include reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system, the introduction of a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, and a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content, all subject to consultation. These measures will provide a strong incentive for producers to design and make plastic packaging that uses less virgin materials and is more easily recyclable.

We want to increase the quantity and quality of material that is collected and recycled. To achieve this, we are consulting on requiring all waste collection authorities to collect the same core set of dry materials from households across England. We want to make recycling clearer and easier so that everyone knows exactly what they can put in the recycling bin, whether at work or at home.

The consultations setting out the Government's proposals and measures referred to above were published on 18 February and can be found here: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/resource-and-waste-and-plastic-packaging-tax-consu-1/>.

There may be times when a ban is appropriate as part of a wider strategic approach. We have already banned the sale of plastic microbeads, consulted on banning plastic drinking straws, stirrers and cotton buds, and are assessing the impact of banning other single-use plastic items.

HC Deb 15 April 2019 | PQ 242710

Waste Disposal

Asked by: Knight, Julian

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve England's waste disposal system; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Our overarching ambition is to manage residual waste in a way that maximises its value as a resource whilst minimising its environmental impact. We are committed to eliminating avoidable waste by 2050.

In December 2018, we published our Resources and Waste Strategy which explains how we will overhaul current waste management systems. Building on the commitments in the Strategy, we have published three consultations:

- On making producers pay the full cost of dealing with packaging waste ([Reforming the Packaging Producer Responsibility System](#))
- On a consistent set of materials to be collected across England from households and businesses for recycling ([Consultation on consistency in household and business recycling collections in England](#))
- On bringing in a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks cans and bottles ([Consultation on Introducing a DRS in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)).

These consultations are open until 13 May.

HC Deb 09 April 2019 | PQ 240016

[Plastics: Packaging](#)

Asked by: Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the report entitled Plastic packaging plan: Achieving zero 'waste' exports, published by Policy Connect in January 2019, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a target of net zero UK exports of recyclable plastic packaging by 2030.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK is recycling more than ever and the Government is committed to increasing domestic recycling. Our approach in the Resources and Waste Strategy, from production through consumption to end of life, is focused on increasing supply and demand for secondary materials to be recycled in the UK. This will grow the UK recycling industry and reduce the need to export recyclable waste. Waste is a commodity and these secondary materials will always have a global market. Exports from the UK will therefore form an ongoing part of our resource management where there is demand.

We are currently consulting on reforms to the Packaging Waste Regulations and are seeking views on the issue of exporting of packaging waste. We want to ensure that export of packaging waste is done in an environmentally responsible way and that domestic reprocessors are not unfairly disadvantaged. The consultation includes proposals to better manage and control packaging waste exports, including through tighter monitoring and enforcement of existing export regulations. We will also be looking at a suite of measures on waste shipments including increasing monitoring, improved provision

for waste repatriation, and charging higher fees to improve compliance in the near future.

HC Deb 12 March 2019 | PQ 228065

[Plastics](#)

Asked by: Rowley, Danielle

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to phase out the (a) production and (b) use of unneeded plastics.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

This Government is taking action to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste. We have introduced one of the world's toughest bans on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products, and have significantly reduced the use of plastic bags by around 86% with our 5p carrier bag charge. We recognise that more needs to be done, which is why we have set out an ambitious approach in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

The Resources and Waste Strategy, published December last year, sets out our plans to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste. We will take action at each stage of the product lifecycle: production, consumption and end of life. At the production stage, this includes encouraging producers to take more responsibility for the environmental impact of their products and making sure plastic items are more carefully designed. At the consumer stage we want to reduce demand for single-use plastic. At the end of life stage, we will make it easier for people to recycle and increase the amount of plastic being recycled.

The Government has set out proposals to reform the current packaging producer responsibility regulations, invoking the 'Polluter Pays' principle to financially incentivise producers to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of packaging they place on the market. This includes mechanisms to incentivise better design, encourage the use of recycled material and ensure that producers pay the full costs of disposal for packaging they place on the market. These measures aim to reduce the amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging and increase the amount of packaging that can and is recycled, including plastic packaging. We are currently consulting on these proposals in conjunction with the Scottish Government. The consultation will close on 13 May and can be accessed at: www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-to-overhaul-waste-system.

HC Deb 04 March 2019 | PQ 226198

[Plastics: Waste](#)

Asked by: Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to address the problem of plastic waste at design and manufacture level.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, published in January last year, its commitment to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste and to reform the packaging producer responsibility system. Our Resources and Waste Strategy was published in December last year and contains details on how we will do this, including measures to incentivise packaging producers to make better, more sustainable decisions at the design stage and point of manufacture. Through reforming the current system we will require producers to fund the full net cost of managing the packaging they place on the market, once it becomes waste. We will strengthen the incentives of these reforms by also setting minimum ecodesign requirements.

Other measures set out in the Strategy, as well as in the Budget 2018, will lead to an increase in the supply and demand for secondary materials. These include the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers in England, introducing consistency in household and business recycling collections in England and a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content, all subject to consultation. These measures will provide a strong incentive for producers to design and make plastic packaging that uses less virgin materials and is more easily recyclable.

The consultations setting out the Government's proposals on the measures referred to above were published on 18 February this year and can be found at: consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/resource-and-waste-and-plastic-packaging-tax-consu-1.

HC Deb 04 March 2019 | PQ 225612

[Plastics: Recycling](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has met with major supermarkets to discuss (a) reducing plastic packaging and (b) introducing deposit return schemes for plastics.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Secretary of State has met leaders from retailers, brands, manufacturers and representative organisations to discuss the levels of plastic pollution and how to increase the recyclability of plastics, including 'on the go' waste issues. Defra officials have met

representatives of major supermarkets where they discussed proposals regarding the introduction of a deposit return scheme.

HC Deb 04 March 2019 | PQ 225580

[*Food. Packaging*](#)

Asked by: Simpson, David

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage food manufacturers to reduce the use of plastic.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Resources and Waste Strategy sets out the Government's ambition to maximise the value we get from resources and to minimise waste. We are committed to being the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it, and to eliminating avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan.

The Government is currently consulting on reforming existing packaging waste regulations to financially incentivise packaging producers, including those who package food products, to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products. Our plans for Extended Producer Responsibility include requiring producers to pay the full cost of recycling and disposing of their packaging waste and making producers pay more if their products are not easily recyclable. Current packaging waste regulations operate on a UK-wide basis. The benefits of continuing with a UK-wide approach are recognised and our consultation on reforming the regulations is being undertaken jointly by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments. As the Northern Ireland Assembly is not sitting, the UK Government has agreed to consult on behalf of Northern Ireland.

Industry is already taking action. Last year, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation published their Plastics Pact with support from the Government and more than 80 businesses, including major food manufacturers such as Birds Eye, Quorn, and McCain Foods GB. The Pact brings these organisations together to aim to meet four key ambitions by 2025, including making 100% of plastic packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable. The Government welcomes voluntary initiatives aimed at tackling plastic pollution and will continue to seek opportunities to support such work through policy solutions.

Plastic packaging can have a role to play in reducing product damage, increasing shelf life and reducing food waste. However, there are opportunities where offering food loose may help to reduce plastic waste while not impacting on shelf life. The Government is working with retailers and WRAP to encourage their efforts to reduce waste and to explore the introduction of plastic free supermarket initiatives in

which fresh food is sold loose, giving consumers more choice. WRAP has published a technical report on the evidence for providing fresh produce loose. This report will inform future published guidance.

HC Deb 04 March 2019 | PQ 225469

[Food. Packaging](#)

Asked by: Offord, Dr Matthew

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the proportion of food waste packaging used in the UK that is fully compostable.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department:
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy outlines our plans to reduce plastic pollution and our commitment to eliminate avoidable plastic waste. Packaging reform is our immediate priority, and we are consulting on reforms to the current packaging regulations.

We have committed to working towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025. We will continue to establish and evaluate appropriate evidence, and once life-cycle analysis has established which product groups biodegradable or compostable plastics may be beneficial for, we will look at them again on a case by case basis.

We have no current estimates for fully compostable food waste packaging use in the UK.

HC Deb 22 February 2019 | PQ 220889

5. Useful links and further reading

British Plastics Federation *Plastics: Recycling and Sustainability*

https://www.bpf.co.uk/sustainability/Plastics_and_Sustainability.aspx

incpen (Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment) *Letter to Secretary of State and Ministers in Scotland and Wales*

<https://incpen.org/letter-to-secretary-of-state-and-ministers-in-scotland-and-wales/>

Scottish Government *Deposit return scheme*

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/managing-waste/deposit-return-scheme/>

House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
current enquiry *Plastic food packaging*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/plastic-food-and-drink-packaging-17-19/>

House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report *Disposable Packaging: Coffee Cups* HC657 2017-19

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/657/657.pdf>

Government response HC867 2017-19

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/867/867.pdf>

House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report *Plastic bottles: Turning Back the Plastic Tide* HC339 2017-19

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/339/339.pdf>

Government response HC841 2017-19

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/841/841.pdf>

Wrap *The UK Plastics Pact*

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact>

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).