



House of Commons  
Environmental Audit Committee

---

# Plastic bottles: Turning Back the Plastic Tide

---

First Report of Session 2017–19

EMBARGOED ADVANCE COPY: Not to be published in full or in part in any form before 00.01 a.m. on Friday 22 December 2017

EMBARGOED ADVANCE COPY: Not to be published in full, or in part,  
in any form before 00.01 a.m. on Friday 22 December 2017



House of Commons  
Environmental Audit Committee

---

**Plastic bottles: Turning  
Back the Plastic Tide**

---

**First Report of Session 2017–19**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed  
19 December 2017*

**HC 339**

Published on 22 December 2017  
by authority of the House of Commons

## Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

### Current membership

[Mary Creagh MP](#) (*Labour, Wakefield*) (Chair)

[Colin Clark MP](#) (*Conservative, Gordon*)

[Dr Thérèse Coffey MP](#) (*Conservative, Suffolk Coastal*)

[Geraint Davies MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Swansea West*)

[Glyn Davies MP](#) (*Conservative, Montgomeryshire*)

[Zac Goldsmith MP](#) (*Conservative, Richmond Park*)

[Caroline Lucas MP](#) (*Green Party, Brighton, Pavilion*)

[Kerry McCarthy MP](#) (*Labour, Bristol East*)

[Anna McMorrin MP](#) (*Labour, Cardiff North*)

[John McNally MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Falkirk*)

[Dr Matthew Offord MP](#) (*Conservative, Hendon*)

[Dr Dan Poulter MP](#) (*Conservative, Central Suffolk and North Ipswich*)

[Joan Ryan MP](#) (*Labour, Enfield North*)

[Alex Sobel MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Leeds North West*)

### Powers

The constitution and powers are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152A. These are available on the internet via <http://www.parliament.uk/>.

### Publications

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at <http://www.parliament.uk/eacom> and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are David Slater (Clerk), Nina Foster (Second Clerk), Nicholas Davies (Committee Specialist), Ian Cruse, (Committee Specialist), Dr Fedra Vanhuysse (Committee Specialist), Ameet Chudasama (Senior Committee Assistant) and Baris Tufeki (Committee Assistant).

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Environmental Audit Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5776; the Committee's email address is [eacom@parliament.uk](mailto:eacom@parliament.uk).

# Contents

---

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Summary</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1 Introduction</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| Progress during this Inquiry  | 6         |
| <b>2 Plastic Bottle Waste in the UK</b>                                 | <b>8</b>  |
| Scale of Plastic Bottle Waste   | 8         |
| Littering   | 8         |
| Impact on the Marine Environment  | 10        |
| <b>3 Preventing Plastic Bottle Use</b>                                  | <b>13</b> |
| Drinking Water Availability   | 13        |
| <b>4 Shifting the Financial Burden of Packaging Waste</b>               | <b>16</b> |
| Producer Responsibility Obligations                                     | 16        |
| Reforming Producer Responsibility Obligations                           | 17        |
| Improving Design for Recyclability                                      | 20        |
| <b>5 Increasing Plastic Bottle Recycling</b>                            | <b>23</b> |
| Household Recycling   | 23        |
| On-the-Go Recycling   | 25        |
| Deposit Return Scheme   | 26        |
| Legislated vs Voluntary Deposit Return Schemes                          | 27        |
| Impact on Local Authorities   | 28        |
| Impact on Retailers   | 30        |
| <b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>                                  | <b>32</b> |
| <b>Formal Minutes</b>   | <b>35</b> |
| <b>Witnesses</b>  | <b>36</b> |
| <b>Published written evidence</b>                                       | <b>37</b> |
| <b>List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament</b> | <b>41</b> |

































## 4 Shifting the Financial Burden of Packaging Waste

35. The UK produces 600,000 tonnes of plastic bottle waste a year.<sup>55</sup> The EU Waste Framework Directive provides the legislative framework for the collection, transport, recovery and disposal of waste, and includes a common definition of waste. The Directive requires all Member States to ensure waste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health or environmental harm. It includes permitting, registration and inspection requirements. The Directive also requires Member States to take appropriate measures to encourage: firstly, the prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness, and secondly the recovery of waste by recycling, re-use or reclamation with a view to extracting secondary raw materials, or the use of waste as a energy.

### Producer Responsibility Obligations

36. Within the EU Waste Framework Directive there is a Directive on packaging and packaging waste which is implemented in the UK by the Producer Responsibility Obligations Regulation (PRO). The Regulation places a legal obligation on businesses over a certain size which make or use 50 tonnes of packaging a year to ensure that a proportion of the packaging they place on the market is recovered and recycled. Relevant businesses then discharge their responsibilities by purchasing evidence of packaging recycling in the form of a Packaging Recovery Note (PRN) or Packaging Recovery Export Note (PERN). DEFRA's Deputy Director for Waste and Recycling, Chris Preston, explained how this system applies to producers and users of plastic bottles:

Coffee cup producers and plastic bottle makers, who put things on the market, are required to show that they have recycled through purchasing a PRN, a percentage of the packaging that they have put on the market. It will not necessarily be their plastic bottles, because it is not an individual thing, or their coffee cups, but in terms of the totality of packaging, they will have to show that they have contributed financially, through the PRN system, for some of that to be recovered.<sup>56</sup>

37. The price of PRNs fluctuates according to the market. The average fee charged to producers per tonne of packaging waste in the UK is around €20 per tonne. Other European countries have an average producer responsibility fee of €150 per tonne.<sup>57</sup> Deloitte's 2014 report on Extended Producer Responsibility shows the average fee charged to packaging producers across Europe<sup>58</sup>

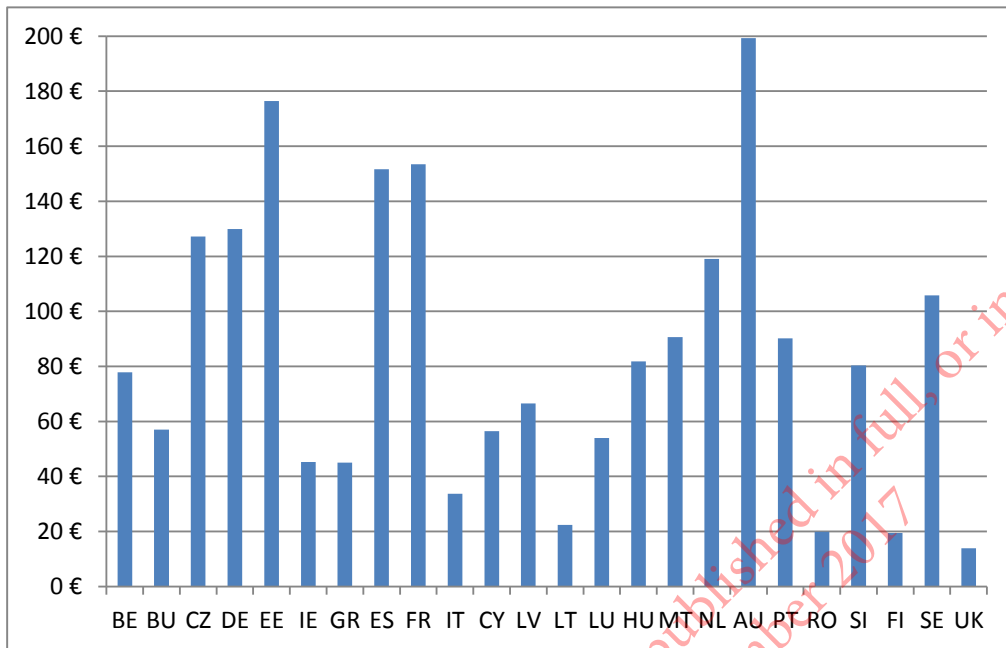
55 Environmental Services Association (PKG0046A)

56 Q451

57 [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/target\\_review/Guidance%20on%20EPR%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/target_review/Guidance%20on%20EPR%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf)

58 As above.

Fig. 1: EU Producer Responsibility Compliance Fees, Deloitte, 2014



38. Throughout this inquiry we have heard evidence from environmental researchers and local authorities that the UK's compliance fee contributes less than 10% of the cost of collecting, sorting and disposing of packaging waste. The Local Government Association noted:

The UK's limited packaging producer compliance scheme generated £111 million of compliance revenue in 2013, only £37 million of which went towards collection. This compares to the £550 million cost to local authorities for collection and sorting of packaging material.<sup>59</sup>

39. Producer Responsibility Obligations are intended to make producers of packaging (the polluters) responsible for the cost of the disposal of their packaging. On this point, Lee Marshall from the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Service told us "I think at the moment in the UK the producer responsibility scheme fails the Ronseal test. Producers are not responsible in terms of a cost point of view."<sup>60</sup> When asked about raising the UK's packaging producer compliance fee, Dr Coffey told us that it was an option the Government are considering.<sup>61</sup>

### **Reforming Producer Responsibility Obligations**

40. The Environmental Services Association have suggested that the PRN system should be reformed to respect the polluter pays principle and to make a system funded to a greater extent by producers.<sup>62</sup> Industry bodies, such as the Foodservice Packaging Association, the British Plastics Federation and the British Retail Consortium have been calling for

59 Local Government Association (PKG0076A)

60 Q368

61 Q450

62 Environmental Services Association (PKG0046A)

PRN reform for years.<sup>63</sup> The Government recently committed to exploring producer responsibility reform to be more resource efficient in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's October 2017 Clean Growth Strategy.<sup>64</sup>

41. We have heard that European countries have more robust producer responsibility schemes that give producers more financial responsibility for the kind of packaging they place on the market. Nick Brown from Coca-Cola explained:

Typically in other countries it is a modulated fee structure. There will be a certain contribution for packaging that meets a certain design criteria; there will be a higher contribution for packaging that does not meet that criteria; the same for recycled material usage.<sup>65</sup>

42. Industry bodies such as the Foodservice Packaging Association, the British Soft Drinks Association and the British Plastics Federation told us that producer responsibility should be reformed to incentivise design for recyclability.<sup>66</sup> Alice Ellison, Head of Environment at the British Retail Consortium described the current producer responsibility scheme as a "blunt instrument" that does not encourage responsible packaging decisions.<sup>67</sup> Nick Brown from Coca Cola explained:

A good producer responsibility scheme can encourage people to use eco design, design for recyclability principles that people were talking about before; some kind of credit for people who are using easy to recycle packaging.<sup>68</sup>

43. We asked Dr. Coffey about whether a modulated fee structure will be introduced in the UK. The Minister told us:

I am not saying it is a definite policy, I am just saying that these are some of the ideas that could come through. Then if you have the manufacturers [saying] that they are the only person using a polymer and they have not created a scheme for it to be readily recycled, you might choose to have a higher charge, in effect, to deal with that. These are some of the ideas we are looking at now.<sup>69</sup>

44. We heard from several industry bodies that the current PRN system incentivises the export of recycling waste over domestic reprocessing, and consequently domestic recycling infrastructure is underfunded.<sup>70</sup> The British Soft Drinks Association wrote:

The current Packaging Waste Recovery Note system contains several abnormalities which can provide disincentives to increased recycling—such as the comparatively favourable position of exporting potential feedstock

63 Q127, Q128, Foodservice Packaging Association (PKG0067A), British Plastics Federation and Plastics Europe (PKG0106A), British Retail Consortium (PKG0109A)

64 Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy (October 2017)

65 Q244

66 Foodservice Packaging Association (PKG0067A), British Soft Drinks Association (PKG0069A), British Plastics Federation and Plastics Europe (PKG0106A)

67 Q299

68 Q243

69 Q424

70 Foodservice Packaging Association (PKG0067A), British Soft Drinks Association (PKG0069A), British Plastics Federation and Plastics Europe (PKG0106A) Coca-Cola European Partners (PKG0061A and PKG0033B)

through the Packaging Export Recovery Note (PERN), the limited transparency in the compliance system and the lack of incentives to invest in increasing recycling capacity in the UK.

We have significant concerns on the export of plastic feedstock that could be redeveloped into rPET and increase its use in the UK. The current potential volume and the quality is low in significant part due to the export of these materials—reform in this area is sorely needed.<sup>71</sup>

45. On 18 July 2017, China notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade that it would be introducing a ban on the import of 24 kinds of solid waste, including plastic, by the end of 2017 citing concerns over contamination. In August, China announced that it would set new standards limiting all imported recycled materials to a maximum contamination level of 0.3 per cent.<sup>72</sup> China is the UK's biggest export destination for waste products. In 2016, 55% of our exported recovered plastics went to China and Hong Kong.<sup>73</sup> There are therefore fears that the ban could lead to a glut of waste materials which we are unable to export. Plastics collected for recycling that are not exported could go to energy recovery (incineration), be stockpiled or even end up going to landfill. When asked about the impact of the imminent Chinese ban on waste imports and the preparations that DEFRA is making, the Secretary of State Michael Gove said:

I do not know what impact it will have. It is a very good question and something to which—I will be completely honest—I have not given sufficient thought.<sup>74</sup>

It has subsequently emerged that DEFRA officials held meetings with the waste industry in September.<sup>75</sup> We are alarmed by the Secretary of State's lack of awareness of this impending threat.

46. Evidence from the regulatory body of the producer responsibility scheme, the Environment Agency, revealed that almost twice as much money is invested in funding collection for plastic waste to be exported abroad than for plastic waste to be reprocessed domestically. Furthermore, over £7 million was invested in “reduction in price and developing end markets” for exported plastic waste, whereas just over £1 million was invested in the same areas for domestic reprocessing of plastic waste.<sup>76</sup> This demonstrates that the current incentive to export packaging waste, diverts funding from the UK plastics reprocessing market. Industry bodies and local authorities have called for a greater degree of transparency around how PRN/PERN revenue is spent.<sup>77</sup>

**47. *Currently, taxpayers cover around 90% of the costs of packaging waste disposal, indicating that the producer responsibility scheme is not working as it should. The Government's commitment to explore potential reforms to the UK's current producer responsibility schemes is long overdue. Industry has been calling for reform for years.***

71 British Soft Drinks Association (PKG0069A)

72 <http://www.wrap.org.uk/blog/2017/10/open-letter-chinas-waste-import-restrictions>

73 <https://www.mrw.co.uk/latest/gove-admits-ignorance-over-impact-of-china-import-ban/10024976.article>

74 The Government's Environmental Policy Inquiry, Environmental Audit Committee, Q114

75 <https://www.mrw.co.uk/latest/frustrations-with-defras-response-to-china-ban-revealed/10026265.article>

76 Environment Agency (PKG0043B)

77 Foodservice Packaging Association (PKG0067A), British Soft Drinks Association (PKG0069A), British Plastics Federation and Plastics Europe (PKG0106A) Coca-Cola European Partners (PKG0061A and PKG0033B)

*In order to make packaging producers more responsible for the type of products they are putting on the market, we recommend that the Government adapts a producer responsibility compliance fee structure that stimulates the use of recycled plastic, rewards design for recyclability, and increases costs for packaging that is difficult to recycle or reuse. This would incentivise producers to use more sustainable packaging, whilst reducing the costs on taxpayers. Additionally we recommend that the Government lower the de minimis packaging handling threshold from 50 tonnes to 1 tonne. This would ensure that all businesses who handle a significant amount of packaging are obligated to recycle.*

48. *The Environment Agency, which regulates Packaging Recovery Notes, told us they have no regulatory control over how the revenue from Packaging Recovery Notes is spent. Figures show that there is low investment in UK reprocessing facilities compared with waste exportation. This is grossly inefficient. We support industry calls for greater transparency over how recovery note revenue is spent and recommend the Government to require all waste reprocessors to report detailed information on actions funded by recovery notes. Waste reprocessors should be held accountable to the Environment Agency for exactly how they spend packaging recovery revenue, especially if they fund export considerably more than domestic reprocessing. This would provide sustainable investment to boost the UK's domestic recycling capabilities, as well as greater financial assistance to local authorities. Given the recent Chinese ban on mixed plastic waste from the UK, this investment is both urgent, to avoid a huge increase in landfill, and will save money and create jobs in the long run.*

### **Improving Design for Recyclability**

49. The European Commission has adopted the Circular Economy Package, which includes legislative proposals on the design of packaging to stimulate Europe's transition towards a circular economy. The proposals include "Economic incentives for producers to put greener products on the market and support recovery and recycling schemes."<sup>78</sup> A leaked European Commission Strategy for Plastic in a Circular Economy suggests that the Commission may seek to revise the requirements for packaging, to ensure that by 2030, all plastics packaging placed on the EU market is reusable or easily recyclable. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, told us that the Government intended to adopt elements of the EU Circular Economy Package even after leaving the European Union:

**Kerry McCarthy:** Can I ask quickly about the EU Circular Economy package? Obviously that is close to being finalised. We will be leaving the EU. Is it the UK Government's intention to adopt elements of that package or to continue with that sort of work?

**Michael Gove:** Yes.<sup>79</sup>

50. Producers of plastic packaging in the UK have no incentive to consider recycling when they design their products as they do not bear the full costs of waste management. Major packaging industry stakeholders, including producers, brands and retailers, have

78 European Commission, Circular Economy Package

79 Environmental Audit Committee, The Government's Environmental Policy, Oral Evidence Session (1st November 2017, Q119 – 122)



nonetheless signed a voluntary commitment to reduce waste and improve packaging design. The voluntary Courtauld Commitment supports the UK Government's policy goal of a 'zero waste economy' and is managed by resource efficiency charity WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme). The third and most recent phase of the Courtauld Commitment includes the following target:

Improve packaging design through the supply chain to maximise recycled content as appropriate, improve recyclability and deliver product protection to reduce food waste, while ensuring there is no increase in the carbon impact of packaging by 2015, from a 2012 baseline.<sup>80</sup>

51. We heard that manufacturers of plastic bottles have focused on reducing the tonnage of plastic used in their products, rather than on improving design for recyclability. Greenpeace conducted a survey of the top six global soft drinks companies, to examine industry plastic production rates and use of recycled PET. Greenpeace told us that the companies surveyed have focused their efforts on 'lightweighting'—i.e. making PET bottles thinner to reduce costs, plastic use and carbon emissions—or developing bioplastics which use alternatives to oil as a source material. Greenpeace told us that lightweight bottles still pose a threat to marine environments:

Lighter or bioplastic bottles still pose ingestion and choking hazards to marine life. They also still slowly break down into tiny pieces of plastic which can absorb toxic chemicals and contaminate the ocean food chain. Furthermore, lightweighting efforts have fallen far short of compensating for the huge growth in plastic production.<sup>81</sup>

52. The Courtauld Commitment makes a specific reference to maximising the use of recycled content. Producing a bottle from recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) uses 75% less energy than producing a bottle from virgin plastic.<sup>82</sup> We heard that Coca-Cola have committed to using 50% rPET by 2025, and that Ribena bottles are made only using rPET.<sup>83</sup> However, there is a lack of consistency across plastic bottle manufacturers, with no shared target on the use of rPET. When asked about a target, Gavin Partington from the British Soft Drinks Association said:

As soon as absolutely possible. We do not have a date set in mind but it is a very urgent ambition for us as a sector because we want to reuse as much of the materials that we have as possible.<sup>84</sup>

53. We challenged Barry Turner, Director of Plastics and Flexible Packaging at the British Plastics Federation on whether legislation is required to halt the industry's continuing use of mixed polymer plastics which make a circular economy more difficult:

**Chair:** We have wrappings on plastic bottles of unrecyclable polymers, the Lucozade wrapping for example. Why do we need a plastic film wrapping around a plastic bottle?

80 <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/courtauld-commitment-3>

81 Greenpeace UK (PKG0064A)

82 British Plastics Federation & PlasticsEurope (PKG0106A)

83 Coca-Cola European Partners (PKG0061A and PKG0033B) and British Soft Drinks Association (PKG0069A)

84 Q277

**Barry Turner:** The industry does not really dictate what label a manufacturer puts on a bottle.

**Q267 Chair:** So it is not your problem?

**Barry Turner:** No, I am not saying it is not our problem. We advocate that they use the right material but we cannot—

**Chair:** Why aren't you?

**Barry Turner:** We cannot dictate to a brand what they choose to use.

**Q268 Chair:** You just give them anything they want and if it is unrecyclable that is fine?

**Barry Turner:** With all due respect, it is a commercial world. If we didn't someone else would.<sup>85</sup>

54. Following this evidence session, The Times reported that the Lucozade Ribena Suntory bottles had committed to remove plastic films and sleeves on their bottles.<sup>86</sup>

55. Lucozade Ribena Suntory's actions indicate that industry can take quick action when pressed in public to do so. The British Plastics Federation's research shows the need for good regulation to set international standards for sustainable materials. This would ensure that all companies adopt an ever-increasing percentage of recycled and recyclable plastic.

56. *We recommend that as part of its reform of PRO the Government phases in a mandated minimum 50% rPET content for the production of new plastic bottles by 2023 at the latest. This would create a UK market for recycled plastic, which struggles against low oil prices which make new plastic cheaper. Introducing this legislation would help create a circular economy by ensuring that plastics are reprocessed. The legislative requirement would be a minimum standard. We expect that the reformed producer responsibility regime set out in the previous section would drive further design innovation.*

---

85 Q266, Q267, Q268, See also Q285

86 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/lucozade-sport-to-ditch-unrecyclable-bottles-v0z8vlnlm>

## 5 Increasing Plastic Bottle Recycling

57. Waste management and litter collection are devolved matters in the United Kingdom. The devolved nations have responsibility to set their own recycling targets. Local authorities in England are responsible for waste collection, management and disposal.

### Household Recycling

58. Since 2001, local councils have been responsible for running kerbside household recycling collections. These household collections are currently provided by over 99% of local authorities and have significantly increased household plastic bottle recycling levels, from 1% in 2001 to 57% today.<sup>87</sup> At present there are 326 waste collection authorities across England of which only 3 do not provide collection for plastic bottles.<sup>88</sup> The Local Government Association told us that the collection and disposal of waste is the third highest cost service for English local authorities. English councils spend £3.3 billion a year on recycling, collecting and disposing of waste.<sup>89</sup>

59. In order to part-fund household collection, local authorities generate revenue by selling valuable materials to reprocessing facilities. The price is determined by the market value of the material, which is sensitive to demand for that material. We heard that local authorities throughout the UK achieve different recycling rates due to market-based constraints on what material they can sell to local waste re-processors. Lee Marshall explained:

On the consistency front, the local authority collections are a function of the products that are placed on the market in the first place and then the treatment processes and the end markets that are available. We can only collect what is there and we can only take it to what is there.<sup>90</sup>

60. The Welsh Government has recently rationalised its local authority recycling system to increase collaboration among waste managers. Welsh local authorities have the opportunity to participate in a Collaborative Change Programme (CCP) to help ensure that Wales meets its recycling targets set out in Welsh waste strategy document, Towards Zero Waste. Towards Zero Waste sets statutory local authority recycling target of 70% by 2025.<sup>91</sup> Wales now recycles 75% of plastic bottles through household collection.

61. By contrast, the UK recycling rate for plastic bottles has plateaued at around 57–58% since 2012. This means that every year 5.5 billion plastic bottles are not collected through the household recycling system. Councillor David Simmonds from the Local Government Association explained why:

Plastic is not heavy and the way in which we measure recyclables is by doing it on tonnage. It does not make a huge difference if a person puts a lot more plastic bottles in their household waste or a lot less... The other big factor

87 REcycling of Used Plastics Limited, 2017 RECOUP Household Collection Survey (June 2017)

88 As above and Q406

89 Local Government Association (PKG0076A)

90 Q374

91 Welsh Assembly Government, Towards Zero Waste One Wales: One Planet (June 2010)

we are seeing is local authorities having, quite reasonably, realised that the weight of plastic was not going to have a significant impact and have then moved on to those areas that do have a bigger impact.<sup>92</sup>

62. The pressure to meet recycling targets, which are measured by weight rather than volume or financial value, creates a disincentive for local authorities to focus resources on the collection of plastic bottles. The recycling rate set by the EU is 50% by 2020, but the UK may miss that target. A lack of targets after 2020 also has a detrimental effect on investment in new reprocessing facilities as there is no long-term strategic signal being sent to the market by Government.

63. Under UN Sustainable Development Goal 12, the UK has committed to improving resource efficiency through sustainable and more responsible consumption and production.<sup>93</sup> The Goal includes 12 targets, of which two are particularly relevant to the issue of plastic bottle waste:

- a) By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.
- b) Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

64. The Government does not yet publish a comprehensive assessment of the UK's progress against the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In the meantime, the National Well-being Indicators provide a useful proxy for progress on sustainable development, as they cover environmental, social and economic issues. Of the 41 indicators measured by the Office for National Statistics, the National Audit Office (NAO) found that the amount of household waste collected for recycling was the only deteriorating indicator.<sup>94</sup> This suggests that the UK is not on track to meeting its target to substantially reduce waste generation by 2030 under SDG12. When asked about how the UK will ensure it reaches this target, Dr. Coffey told us that the Government was focusing on improving recycling rates in cities, as well as introducing food waste for every household.<sup>95</sup>

65. *Although nearly every local authority in the UK now provides household collection for recycling, the recycling rate for plastic bottles has plateaued in the last five years and the ONS found that household recycling rates are deteriorating. We have heard that plastic bottle recycling is stalling partly because recycling rates are measured by tonnage, which creates a disincentive for local authorities to focus on collection of lightweight, high-volume materials. We recommend that the Government sets a post-2020 recycling rate of 65%. Encouraging recycling of products which use high levels of energy when produced from virgin materials should be a priority. The British Plastics Federation told us that it takes 75% less energy to make a plastic bottle from recycled material than virgin materials. The Government should set out a timeline for this review process in the upcoming Waste and Resources Strategy.*

92 Q369

93 United Nations, Sustainable Development Goal 12, 'Responsible Consumption and Production', Targets 5 and 6

94 National Audit Office, A Short Guide to Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development (September 2017)

95 Q416

### On-the-Go Recycling

66. Although the UK provides recycling infrastructure for plastic bottles through household collection, we have heard that around 15% of the 13 billion plastic bottles used each year are used out of the home. Dr Coffey, told us that the UK has a particularly high on-the-go consumption pattern.<sup>96</sup> We have heard evidence that this is a significant factor in the stalling plastic bottle recycling rate. Hugo Tagholm from Surfers Against Sewage explained:

It seems there is no incentive for people to recycle these beverage containers when they are out and about and there certainly is not the infrastructure to capture them cleanly on our city streets.<sup>97</sup>

67. The provision of on-street recycling bins is at the discretion of local councils, and their availability throughout the UK is low and inconsistent. RECOUP have found that only 46% of all UK local authorities provide on-the-go recycling infrastructure.<sup>98</sup> Lee Marshall, Chief Executive of the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee, explained the challenges of on-the-go recycling:

On-the-go recycling is difficult generally. There are not many local authorities that have on-the-go recycling schemes and in the ones that do, the quality of material they get is very poor. People are interested in recycling and have got recycling to a point but not necessarily enough that they are prepared to take the time and effort, on the go when we are all busy and rushing, to put the things in the right places, which then causes problems down the line at the sorting facilities and reprocessors.<sup>99</sup>

68. Dr. Coffey told us that she was aware of the public demand for greater provision of on-the-go recycling facilities:

People do want to be able to recycle anywhere and everywhere. So that is where some of the litter strategy comes in. I recognise it is not that but it is about working with councils and businesses about improving 'binrastructure' in order to make it as easy as possible for people to do these things.<sup>100</sup>

69. The Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) which is partly funded by DEFRA, provides guidance for local councils on the provision of on-the-go and on-street recycling facilities.<sup>101</sup> However, we have heard that providing on-the-go recycling is a financial and logistical burden for councils, as it is difficult to capture a clean stream of material due to contamination. Dr Sue Kinsey from the Marine Conservation Society explained that it is often more financially viable for local authorities to landfill waste from

96 Q397

97 Q164

98 RECYcling of Used Plastics Limited, 2017 RECOUP Household Collection Survey (June 2017)

99 Q391

100 Q478

101 [www.wrap.org.uk/content/recycle-go-guidance-england](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/recycle-go-guidance-england)

on-the-go recycling bins due to the levels of contamination.<sup>102</sup> In 2013–14, a Freedom of Information request from the BBC found that 97% of contaminated recyclable waste was sent to landfill or incineration instead of being sorted for recycling.<sup>103</sup>

## Deposit Return Scheme

70. The flat-lining rate of plastic bottle recycling indicates that the UK requires an effective system to capture all plastic bottles, including those used on-the-go. Better prevention and recycling measures would complement one another.<sup>104</sup>

71. Throughout this inquiry we have heard a considerable amount of evidence about the potential of a Deposit Return Scheme as a solution to plastic bottle waste. DEFRA has recently established the Voluntary and Economic Incentives Working group to look at measures that can reduce littered and improve recycling and reuse of packaging.<sup>105</sup> The working group has begun by looking at measures for drinks containers, such as deposit return schemes, and will publish its findings shortly.

72. Deposit return schemes (DRS) encourage the return of plastic bottles into an organised recycling process. A DRS involves adding a small deposit on top of the price of a drink, which is then refunded to the consumer when the bottle is returned to an in-store collection point or reverse vending machine system. These bottles are then collected and taken for sorting and reprocessing. This creates resource efficiency for plastic bottles, as the recycled content can be reprocessed into new plastic bottles.

73. The UK has an opportunity to consult widely on the types of bottle to include in a Deposit Return Scheme. Additionally, there may be scope to include other beverage containers such as aluminium cans in the scheme, as happens in many other countries.

74. Deposit Return Schemes are currently in operation in around 40 countries worldwide as well as 21 US States. Typically, countries with Deposit Return schemes for plastic bottles achieve recycling rates of approximately 80 – 95%. Eunomia Research & Consulting and Coca-Cola European Partners have estimated that a similarly strong recycling rate could be expected if a Deposit Return Scheme was introduced in the UK.<sup>106</sup> In September 2017, the Scottish Government announced that it intends to introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks cans and bottles. We have heard that, while it is not essential that the nations of the UK have identical Deposit Return Schemes, it would be beneficial if they had Schemes that were compatible with one another.<sup>107</sup>

75. A recent YouGov poll found that 73% of people are in favour of introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in the UK. An e-petition calling for a UK-wide Deposit Return Scheme started by Surfers Against Sewage currently has over 230,000 signatories.<sup>108</sup> There is also significant support from the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Marine Conservation Society and Coca-Cola, amongst others.

102 Q190

103 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37159581>

104 Q193, Q194

105 <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/call-for-evidence-drinks-containers/>

106 Eunomia Research and Consulting (PKG0086A), Coca-Cola European Partners (PKG0061A), Q235

107 Q230, Q231, Q234

108 <https://www.sas.org.uk/messageinabottle/>

76. We have heard that providing a small financial incentive to return plastic bottles helps people understand their true economic value.<sup>109</sup> The success of the plastic carrier bag charge which saw an 83% reduction in the use of plastic bags in the first year suggests that financial incentives do cause a rapid behavioural change.<sup>110</sup> Derek Robertson, CEO of Keep Scotland Beautiful, explained:

One of the things that we see as an organisation is we have a social norm where it is now generally accepted that people can throw away and I think we need to shift that social norm. I don't think people understand the value in the product. A plastic bottle is quite a valuable thing. It has a structure to it and it can be reused, but I don't think the public realise the value in the product. We lack a consistency and a national message.<sup>111</sup>

77. Taxpayers currently fund most of the cost of recycling and disposal of 13 billion plastic bottles each year.<sup>112</sup> A Deposit Return Scheme seeks to provide an alternative funding mechanism for the collection and reprocessing of plastic bottles based on the polluter pays principle. Dr Chris Sherrington from Eunomia Research and Consulting explained:

Typically in a well-designed deposit scheme, the unredeemed deposits, along with the value of the high quality materials that are collected, are two of the key sources of funding to the scheme. Then the top-up is provided by the producers. The producer fees pretty much make up the difference between the revenue for the materials and the unredeemed deposits.<sup>113</sup>

78. We heard that the deposit on a plastic bottle should be around 10 – 20 pence as, at this level, an optimum percentage of people would redeem the deposit, ensuring a high return rate while preserving some funding for the system through unredeemed deposits.<sup>114</sup> We also heard that it is vital to maintain an element of flexibility in the size of the deposit to enable it to be modified with inflation.<sup>115</sup>

### **Legislated vs Voluntary Deposit Return Schemes**

79. We heard that management of the revenue generated by a Deposit Return Scheme should be the responsibility of a dedicated not-for-profit organisation.<sup>116</sup> However, we heard differing views about whether a Deposit Return Scheme should be legislated or voluntary. For example, Norway's Deposit Return Scheme was voluntarily created by plastic bottle producers to avoid tax on plastic bottle packaging. In Norway, non-refillable beverage packaging carries both a basic levy and an environmental levy that falls on the producer. The size of the environmental levy falls as the rate of packaging recycling increases, and once the recycling rate reaches 95% it ceases to be applied at all. The Norwegian beverage

109 Q189, Marine Conservation Society (PKG0030A)

110 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carrier-bag-charge-summary-of-data-in-england/single-use-plastic-carrier-bags-charge-data-in-england-for-2016-to-2017>

111 Q166

112 Q361, Eunomia Research & Consulting (PKG0086A) Local Government Association (PKG0076A)

113 Q229

114 Q237

115 Q237

116 Q220, Q256

industry currently recycles 95% of plastic drinks bottles, removing the environmental levy.<sup>117</sup> We heard support for this kind of voluntary system from Eunomia Research and Consulting and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

80. However, Nick Brown, Head of Sustainability at Coca-Cola European Partners stressed the importance of legislated system to “level the playing field to make sure that everyone plays a role, plays their part.”<sup>118</sup> Nick Brown claimed that, from experience of participating in Deposit Return Schemes in other countries, plastic bottle producers benefit in a number of ways:

Improved recovery rates of packaging, improved quality of the packaging so more of it can be reused and they do make a contribution towards littering, which is something we feel very passionately and very strongly about.<sup>119</sup>

81. As the UK would be layering a Deposit Return Scheme on top of a pre-existing local authority recycling system, it might be more suitable to have a legislated Deposit Return Scheme here in the UK to ensure that the concerns of local authorities are adequately accounted for in the design of the scheme..

### **Impact on Local Authorities**

82. We heard concern from local authorities that a Deposit Return Scheme divert valuable materials away from household recycling.<sup>120</sup> Local authorities sell the materials they collect from households to generate the necessary revenue to fund collection. On average, a tonne of PET is worth £127. However, Dr. Chris Sherrington from Eunomia explained this loss of material revenue would be balanced out through other gains from a Deposit Return scheme:

Material revenues will be lost. The aluminium is high value and the plastic and glass. There is no question of material value revenues will decline. But we looked at the efficiencies in the collection. Collections can be strained by volume or by weight and we looked at a number of different situations. We have savings on the sorting. You have, importantly, savings on the beverage containers that end up in the residual waste stream. That will go for incineration or landfill. This is much more expensive, so stuff that is littered or in litter bins would typically end up in those routes. So you save money there.<sup>121</sup>

83. However, local authorities are concerned that Eunomia’s research did not effectively take into account the impact of layering a Deposit Return Scheme over the UK’s existing household recycling system. Lee Marshall from the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Service explained:

The trouble you have with this is that it will vary local authority to local authority depending on their circumstances. If you have a local authority that has low disposal costs and access to good recycling then the impact on

---

117 Q320, Q231

118 Q216

119 Q211, Q222

120 Q381 – Q385

121 Q255



them will be far greater than if you have a local authority that has very high disposal costs. It is difficult to draw a conclusion by aggregating a model over, say for argument's sake, 10 local authorities and saying, "This is what would happen in the UK".<sup>122</sup>

84. To account for this, Eunomia have suggested that revised working practices be put in place to ensure that savings are shared appropriately in the UK's two tier waste management system.<sup>123</sup> For instance, this could involve councils responsible for waste disposal - who would reap the benefits of reduced landfill tax and litter clearing - to share their profits with local authorities who are responsible for waste collection, to ensure the financial rewards of a Deposit Return Scheme reach local authorities. Local Authority Waste Partnerships also have potential to create a simpler system whereby a single client takes responsibility for organising waste collection and treatment/disposal.<sup>124</sup> Additionally, if producer responsibility schemes were adapted to make producers more financially responsible for packaging disposal, local authorities would bear less of the cost than they currently do.<sup>125</sup>

85. We have heard that reduced litter clearing costs would be one of the biggest financial savings for local authorities created by the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme.<sup>126</sup> Eunomia have estimated that a Deposit Return Scheme could reduce littering of plastic bottles by 80%, resulting in 600,000 fewer plastic bottles being littered every day.<sup>127</sup> Eunomia calculated that overall, this would save English local authorities £35 million per year.<sup>128</sup>

86. The beverage industry and some NGO representatives were concerned that a Deposit Return Scheme would only address a small proportion of the UK's litter problem.<sup>129</sup> However, in line with the theory that plastic bottles disproportionately encourage further littering, Dr. Sue Kinsey from the Marine Conservation Society emphasised that a Deposit Return Scheme for beverage containers could lead to positive gains:

Something that is specifically targeted at bottles and cans is only going to solve that part of the littering problem but that is quite a significant part of the littering problem. As we can see from the carrier bag charge, that kind of mindset, people thinking about environmental matters and litter, does carry over into further behaviour in their normal lives. I believe that targeting the beverage containers will make people think further about other types of littering as well.<sup>130</sup>

87. Environmental Psychologist, Professor Wouter Poortinga from Cardiff University explained that environmental policies often produce a 'spill-over effect'. Professor

---

122 Q381

123 Eunomia Research & Consulting, Impacts of a Deposit Refund System on Local Authority Waste Services (October 2017)

124 Q255

125 Q358, Q374

126 Have You Got the Bottle? (PKG0078A)

127 Eunomia Research and Consulting (PKG0086A)

128 Q255, Eunomia Research & Consulting, Impacts of a Deposit Refund System on Local Authority Waste Services (October 2017)

129 Q170, Q309, British Plastics Federation (PKG0058A)

130 Q170

Poortinga noted that following the introduction of the plastic bag charge, people “became more supportive of other charges to reduce waste” indicating that UK consumers are likely to be receptive to the concept of a Deposit Return Scheme.<sup>131</sup>

### **Impact on Retailers**

88. Several retail bodies have expressed concern that a Deposit Return Scheme would cause significant operational and financial burdens for smaller shops and stores. Based on data from Zero Waste Scotland, the Association of Convenience Stores has calculated that on average, 180 drinks containers would be returned to each convenience store each day.<sup>132</sup> Chief Executive of Association of Convenience Stores, James Lowman told us:

In our sector, there would be very significant costs to our small stores in terms of the proportion of space taken up by a reverse vending solution and manual returns. Every member I speak to says that the idea of taking back dirty containers over a counter where you are selling food is just not feasible.<sup>133</sup>

89. The Association of Convenience Stores told us that to accommodate an RVS, supermarkets would lose approximately £62,000 worth of retail space every year. There is no estimate for similar costs to small convenience stores.<sup>134</sup>

90. However, as in other countries with Deposit Return Schemes such as Norway, it would be feasible to provide participating shops with a handling fee to cover the costs of operating a Deposit Return Scheme. Additionally, many other schemes include an exemption for small convenience stores within the design of their Deposit Return Scheme. Dr. Sue Kinsey from the Marine Conservation Society explained:

In most of the systems that are in operation around the world, there is a size limitation for shops. They do not have to take part if they are below a certain square footage but they can if they want to. I know in certain countries, even though small businesses are below that limit, they choose to take part because it is beneficial for them. They get a handling fee for the products that they take back and also they have footfall through their shop that may encourage people to spend more in their shop.<sup>135</sup>

91. When we asked James Lowman from the Association of Convenience stores if they would be in favour of a Deposit Return Scheme if small stores were exempted, he responded:

I am concerned about any exemption. It is not a case it would take people - rather than coming to our store it would give them a reason to go to a larger store, so that is our concern[ ... ] I think that working on a system where there are incentives for smaller stores to opt in might lead to some sort of network that we would need to make a scheme effective.<sup>136</sup>

131 Professor Wouter Poortinga (PKG0026A), Robert Hickman (PKG0108A)

132 Association of Convenience Stores (PKG0014A)

133 Q309

134 Association of Convenience Stores (PKG0014A)

135 Q206

136 Q350

92. Dr. Chris Sherrington from Eunomia also discussed the possibility of small retailers working together:

One thing they can do in many places is if you have a lot of small stores nearby they can set up a communal return point, which can be a reverse vending machine in a shopping centre, that kind of thing. But just putting a blanket exemption for their participation on principle is not a sensible approach.<sup>137</sup>

93. **We have heard that Deposit Return Schemes for plastic bottles and cans achieve very high recycling rates. They help to facilitate a circular economy, as well as cutting down on the third most common litter type in the UK. A Deposit Return Scheme presents the opportunity to create a cohesive recycling mechanism for plastic bottles and other beverage containers throughout the UK. This could help boost the current stalling rate from 57% to around 80 – 90%. In particular, Deposit Return Schemes would capture the plastic bottles that are used on-the-go that currently escape household recycling. Deposit Return Schemes introduce a financial incentive for consumers to return their plastic bottles thereby reducing litter. We have also heard that a Scheme may encourage people to think twice about littering other items, due to the ‘spill-over’ effect. We have heard serious and legitimate concerns about the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme from local authorities, plastic bottle producers and retailers, however we heard that a well-designed Deposit Return Scheme can overcome these concerns.**

94. *We recommend that the Government introduces a legislated Deposit Return Scheme for all PET plastic drinks bottles. The upcoming Waste Strategy should also examine whether to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for other beverage containers, such as aluminium cans, to foster a culture of recycling packaging used on-the-go. It is vital that a Deposit Return Scheme is well-designed. It should be created after a consultation with stakeholders such as manufacturers, retailers and local authorities. Consultation should build upon the working group already in place and examine the innovations suggested to improve the functioning of a Deposit Return Scheme, such as local authority collaboration and retailer partnerships. We particularly encourage collaboration with Zero Waste Scotland, who are responsible for planning Scotland’s Deposit Return Scheme. Based on research, the scheme should place a 10 – 20p deposit on top of the price of product that will be refunded to the consumer upon return of the bottle or can. We believe a Deposit Return Scheme will create a source of good quality recycled plastic for manufacturers, therefore ensuring that fewer plastic bottles are incinerated, landfilled or littered in land or at sea.*

## Conclusions and recommendations

---

### Preventing Plastic Bottle Waste

1. The UK uses 38.5 million plastic bottles every day, of which 15 million are not recycled. 700,000 plastic bottles are littered every day, encouraging more littering and causing damage to natural habitats and human well-being. Plastic bottle waste is not simply a recycling or environmental issue; it is a social issue with considerable direct and indirect costs for taxpayers through litter picking and healthcare. (Paragraph 17)
2. Following the weak analysis of marine litter made in the UK Marine Strategy Part Three, we recommend that the Government set out a timescale for publishing a more accurate assessment of the current levels, properties and impacts of marine litter and the steps it will take to protect our oceans from plastic pollution. The rising tide of plastic waste in the ocean has been described by UN Oceans Chief as a “planetary crisis” and there is increasing public appetite for urgent action in this area. The Government has committed to protecting the marine environment from all kinds of pollution, including plastic pollution, under UN Sustainable Development Goal 14. However, the Government has only recently begun to address this by exploring the potential of a tax on single-use plastics. We have heard that tackling plastic pollution at source is the most effective way to mitigate the damage caused by larger plastic items, such as plastic bottles, as well as microplastics. The Marine Strategy Part One found that “significant amounts of litter appear in our seas and on our beaches”, bringing environmental and economic damage. At the very least the Government should increase clean-up resources to coastal areas, where, by function of tide or topography there is a large plastic pollution problem. We urge the Government to introduce a ‘Coastal Clean-up’ fund to support the removal of plastic from our beaches and seas. (Paragraph 24)

### Preventing Plastic Bottle Use

3. *Access to clean drinking water is a basic human right. The Government should prioritise reducing the use of plastic bottles. We believe that small changes can deliver big results. The UK has a ready supply of safe, clean tap water, yet the consumption of bottled water continues to grow. We have heard that providing more free drinking water taps and fountains in public spaces could lead to a 65% reduction in the use of plastic water bottles, but there is no obligation for unlicensed premises to provide free drinking water. We call on the Government to introduce a regulation for all public premises which serve food or drink to provide free drinking water on request, including sports centres and leisure centres. Businesses should volunteer to get involved with community water schemes such as Refill Bristol to advertise their provision of free drinking water.* (Paragraph 32)
4. *There are very few water fountains in parks and other public spaces. There are none in Manchester or Merseyside, one in West Yorkshire, and four in the West Midlands. We believe that the provision of free water fountains provides an opportunity for water companies to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility. We were disappointed*

*not to receive evidence from water companies given their filtration and sewage systems remove huge amounts of plastic debris from waterways. Yorkshire Water has installed three fountains in Hull, as part of their celebration of being 2017 City of Culture, we urge other water companies to follow suit. The Government should review the health and litter-reducing benefits of providing public water fountains, amend the Water Industry Act 1991 to give water companies formal powers to erect water fountains. Additionally, the Government should run a wide-reaching communications campaign to actively promote the use of refillable bottles to ensure that new water fountains and refill stations within shops and transportation hubs are used. (Paragraph 33)*

5. *Parliament and Government departments must show leadership and ban the sale of disposable plastic bottles in their buildings—providing water fountains and reusable bottles instead. We would like to see a plastic-free Parliament. (Paragraph 34)*

### Shifting the Financial Burden of Packaging Waste

6. *Currently, taxpayers cover around 90% of the costs of packaging waste disposal, indicating that the producer responsibility scheme is not working as it should. The Government's commitment to explore potential reforms to the UK's current producer responsibility schemes is long overdue. Industry has been calling for reform for years. In order to make packaging producers more responsible for the type of products they are putting on the market, we recommend that the Government adapts a producer responsibility compliance fee structure that stimulates the use of recycled plastic, rewards design for recyclability, and increases costs for packaging that is difficult to recycle or reuse. This would incentivise producers to use more sustainable packaging, whilst reducing the costs on taxpayers. Additionally we recommend that the Government lower the de minimis packaging handling threshold from 50 tonnes to 1 tonne. This would ensure that all businesses who handle a significant amount of packaging are obligated to recycle. (Paragraph 47)*
7. *The Environment Agency, which regulates Packaging Recovery Notes, told us they have no regulatory control over how the revenue from Packaging Recovery Notes is spent. Figures show that there is low investment in UK reprocessing facilities compared with waste exportation. This is grossly inefficient. We support industry calls for greater transparency over how recovery note revenue is spent and recommend the Government to require all waste reprocessors to report detailed information on actions funded by recovery notes. Waste reprocessors should be held accountable to the Environment Agency for exactly how they spend packaging recovery revenue, especially if they fund export considerably more than domestic reprocessing. This would provide sustainable investment to boost the UK's domestic recycling capabilities, as well as greater financial assistance to local authorities. Given the recent Chinese ban on mixed plastic waste from the UK, this investment is both urgent, to avoid a huge increase in landfill, and will save money and create jobs in the long run. (Paragraph 48)*
8. *We recommend that as part of its reform of PRO the Government phases in a mandated minimum 50% rPET content for the production of new plastic bottles by 2023 at the latest. This would create a UK market for recycled plastic, which struggles against low oil prices which make new plastic cheaper. Introducing this legislation would help create a circular economy by ensuring that plastics are reprocessed. The*

*legislative requirement would be a minimum standard. We expect that the reformed producer responsibility regime set out in the previous section would drive further design innovation. (Paragraph 56)*

### Improving Plastic Bottle Recycling

9. *Although nearly every local authority in the UK now provides household collection for recycling, the recycling rate for plastic bottles has plateaued in the last five years and the ONS found that household recycling rates are deteriorating. We have heard that plastic bottle recycling is stalling partly because recycling rates are measured by tonnage, which creates a disincentive for local authorities to focus on collection of lightweight, high-volume materials. We recommend that the Government sets a post-2020 recycling rate of 65%. Encouraging recycling of products which use high levels of energy when produced from virgin materials should be a priority. The British Plastics Federation told us that it takes 75% less energy to make a plastic bottle from recycled material than virgin materials. The Government should set out a timeline for this review process in the upcoming Waste and Resources Strategy. (Paragraph 65)*
10. *We have heard that Deposit Return Schemes for plastic bottles and cans achieve very high recycling rates. They help to facilitate a circular economy, as well as cutting down on the third most common litter type in the UK. A Deposit Return Scheme presents the opportunity to create a cohesive recycling mechanism for plastic bottles and other beverage containers throughout the UK. This could help boost the current stalling rate from 57% to around 80 – 90%. In particular, Deposit Return Schemes would capture the plastic bottles that are used on-the-go that currently escape household recycling. Deposit Return Schemes introduce a financial incentive for consumers to return their plastic bottles thereby reducing litter. We have also heard that a Scheme may encourage people to think twice about littering other items, due to the ‘spill-over’ effect. We have heard serious and legitimate concerns about the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme from local authorities, plastic bottle producers and retailers, however we heard that a well-designed Deposit Return Scheme can overcome these concerns. (Paragraph 93)*
11. *We recommend that the Government introduces a legislated Deposit Return Scheme for all PET plastic drinks bottles. The upcoming Waste Strategy should also examine whether to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for other beverage containers, such as aluminium cans, to foster a culture of recycling packaging used on-the-go. It is vital that a Deposit Return Scheme is well-designed. It should be created after a consultation with stakeholders such as manufacturers, retailers and local authorities. Consultation should build upon the working group already in place and examine the innovations suggested to improve the functioning of a Deposit Return Scheme, such as local authority collaboration and retailer partnerships. We particularly encourage collaboration with Zero Waste Scotland, who are responsible for planning Scotland’s Deposit Return Scheme. Based on research, the scheme should place a 10 – 20p deposit on top of the price of product that will be refunded to the consumer upon return of the bottle or can. We believe a Deposit Return Scheme will create a source of good quality recycled plastic for manufacturers, therefore ensuring that fewer plastic bottles are incinerated, landfilled or littered in land or at sea. (Paragraph 94)*

# Formal Minutes

---

**Tuesday 19 December 2017**

Members present:

Mary Creagh, in the Chair

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Colin Clark    | Anna McMorrin |
| Caroline Lucas | John McNally  |
| Kerry McCarthy |               |

Draft Report (*Plastic bottles: Turning Back the Plastic Tide*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Paragraphs 1 to 94 read and agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[The Committee adjourned

EMBARGOED ADVANCE COPY: Not to be published in full or in part, in any form before 00.01 a.m. on Friday 22 December 2017

## Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Tuesday 10 October 2017

Question number

**Richard McIlwain**, Deputy Chief Executive, Keep Britain Tidy, **Gavin Ellis**, Co-founder, Hubbub Foundation UK, and **Professor Wouter Poortinga**, Professor of Environmental Psychology, Welsh School of Architecture

[Q1-57](#)

**Oliver Rosevear**, Energy and Environment Manager, Costa Coffee, **Martin Kersh**, Executive Director, Foodservice Packaging Association, **Neil Whittall**, Chair, the Paper Cup Recovery and Recycling Group, and **Martin Myerscough**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Frugalpac

[Q58-161](#)

### Tuesday 17 October 2017

**Fiona Llewellyn**, Project Manager, One Less Campaign, **Dr Sue Kinsey**, Senior Pollution Officer, Marine Conservative Society, **Hugo Tagholm**, Chief Executive, Surfers Against Sewage, and **Derek Robertson**, CEO, Keep Scotland Beautiful

[Q162-207](#)

**Dr Chris Sherrington**, Head of Environmental Policy and Economics, Eunomia Research & Consulting, **Nick Brown**, Head of Sustainability, Coca-Cola European Partners, **John Mayhew**, Director of the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (charity that spearheads Have You Got the Bottle?), and **Sam Harding**, Head of Litter Programme, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

[Q208-259](#)

### Tuesday 24 October 2017

**James Lowman**, Chief Executive, Association of Convenience Stores, **Alice Ellison**, Head of Environment, British Retail Consortium, **Barry Turner**, Director of Plastics and Flexible Packaging, British Plastics Federation, and **Gavin Partington**, Director General, British Soft Drinks Association

[Q260-353](#)

**Councillor David Simmonds CBE**, Vice-Chairman, Local Government Association, **Lee Marshall**, Chief Executive Officer, Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee, and **Jakob Rindegren**, Recycling Policy Adviser, Environmental Services Association

[Q354-396](#)

### Tuesday 31 October 2017

**Dr Thérèse Coffey MP**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and **Chris Preston**, Deputy Director, Waste and Recycling, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

[Q397-544](#)



## Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

PKG numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete

- 1 #OneLess campaign ([PKG0031](#))
- 2 38 Degrees ([PKG0037](#))
- 3 Andrew Brooks ([PKG0041](#))
- 4 Ask the Q ([PKG0004](#))
- 5 Ask the Q ([PKG0007](#))
- 6 Association of Convenience Stores ([PKG0014](#))
- 7 Axion Recycling ([PKG0021](#))
- 8 Bio-Based and Biodegradable Industries Association (BBIA) ([PKG0010](#))
- 9 BRITA UK ([PKG0008](#))
- 10 Chris Hesketh ([PKG0002](#))
- 11 Coca-Cola European Partners and Coca-Cola Great Britain ([PKG0033](#))
- 12 Confederation of Paper Industries ([PKG0042](#))
- 13 Costa ([PKG0040](#))
- 14 Defra ([PKG0017](#))
- 15 DEFRA ([PKG0045](#))
- 16 Delipac Ltd ([PKG0011](#))
- 17 Environment Agency ([PKG0043](#))
- 18 Eunomia Research & Consulting Ltd ([PKG0025](#))
- 19 Fidra ([PKG0019](#))
- 20 Field Studies Council ([PKG0013](#))
- 21 Green Alliance ([PKG0026](#))
- 22 Hildegard Hill ([PKG0029](#))
- 23 Marine Conservation Society ([PKG0030](#))
- 24 Mr Andy Ward ([PKG0034](#))
- 25 Mr Brendan Thomas ([PKG0003](#))
- 26 Mr James Marsden ([PKG0009](#))
- 27 Natural Hydration Council ([PKG0032](#))
- 28 Ofwat ([PKG0044](#))
- 29 Professor ERIC GOODYER ([PKG0001](#))
- 30 Recycle Waste International ([PKG0035](#))
- 31 Sue Duerdoth ([PKG0038](#))
- 32 Surfers Against Sewage ([PKG0027](#))
- 33 The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland ([PKG0015](#))

EMBARCADERO ADVANCED COPY: Not to be published in full, or in part, is any form before 10:01 a.m. on Friday 22 December 2017

- 34 The Printed Cup Company ([PKG0005](#))
- 35 U.W.T.S.D. Lampeter ([PKG0023](#))
- 36 UWTSD ([PKG0006](#))
- 37 Valpak Limited ([PKG0012](#))
- 38 Vegware ([PKG0016](#))
- 39 Whale and Dolphin Conservation ([PKG0018](#))
- 40 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([PKG0020](#))
- 41 Wimborne War on Waste ([PKG0024](#))
- 42 Wine and Spirit Trade Association ([PKG0039](#))
- 43 WRAP ([PKG0036](#)).

The following written evidence was received in the last Parliament by the previous Committee for this inquiry and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

- 1 #OneLess Campaign ([PKG0083](#))
- 2 Alison Finn ([PKG0025](#))
- 3 Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE UK) ([PKG0043](#))
- 4 Andrew Ward ([PKG0041](#))
- 5 Anonymous submission ([PKG0001](#))
- 6 Association of Convenience Stores ([PKG0068](#))
- 7 Axion Recycling ([PKG0062](#))
- 8 Bericap UK Ltd ([PKG0060](#))
- 9 BIO BASED AND BIODEGRADABLE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION ([PKG0052](#))
- 10 British Beer and Pub Association ([PKG0080](#))
- 11 British Plastics Federation & PlasticsEurope ([PKG0058](#))
- 12 British Retail Consortium ([PKG0109](#))
- 13 British Soft Drinks Association ([PKG0069](#))
- 14 Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) ([PKG0081](#))
- 15 Coca-Cola European Partners ([PKG0061](#))
- 16 Confederation of Paper Industries ([PKG0037](#))
- 17 Cornish Plastic Pollution Coalition ([PKG0028](#))
- 18 Costa Coffee ([PKG0107](#))
- 19 David Orr ([PKG0014](#))
- 20 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([PKG0110](#))
- 21 Dr Jennifer Ferreira ([PKG0009](#))
- 22 DS Smith ([PKG0059](#))
- 23 Ecosurety Ltd ([PKG0075](#))
- 24 Ellon@Heart ([PKG0055](#))
- 25 Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) ([PKG0066](#))

- 26 Environmental Services Association (ESA) ([PKG0046](#))
- 27 Eunomia Research & Consulting Ltd ([PKG0086](#))
- 28 Federation of Wholesale Distributors ([PKG0073](#))
- 29 Fidra ([PKG0044](#))
- 30 Floreon- Transforming Packaging Ltd ([PKG0071](#))
- 31 Foodservice Packaging Association ([PKG0067](#))
- 32 Frugalpac ([PKG0050](#))
- 33 Grantham Centre for Sustainable Futures ([PKG0088](#))
- 34 Green Zone Community Climate Action ([PKG0002](#))
- 35 Greenpeace UK ([PKG0064](#))
- 36 GreenTech Corporation Ltd ([PKG0005](#))
- 37 Guy Hodgson ([PKG0113](#))
- 38 Have You Got The Bottle? ([PKG0078](#))
- 39 Hubbub Foundation UK ([PKG0079](#))
- 40 Hugh Counsell ([PKG0012](#))
- 41 Ian Nendick ([PKG0031](#))
- 42 INCPEN ([PKG0040](#))
- 43 Keep Britain Tidy ([PKG0084](#))
- 44 Keep Scotland Beautiful ([PKG0072](#))
- 45 LARAC ([PKG0054](#))
- 46 LINPAC GROUP ([PKG0039](#))
- 47 Local Government Association ([PKG0076](#))
- 48 London Councils ([PKG0045](#))
- 49 Marine Conservation Society ([PKG0074](#))
- 50 Michael M Armstrong-MacDonnell ([PKG0011](#))
- 51 Miss Harriet Cherry ([PKG0023](#))
- 52 Mr alexander melman ([PKG0020](#))
- 53 Mr David Perrow ([PKG0007](#))
- 54 Mr Ian Barr ([PKG0015](#))
- 55 Mr Michael Baker ([PKG0016](#))
- 56 Mr Robert Hickman ([PKG0108](#))
- 57 Mr Robert Shacklock ([PKG0019](#))
- 58 Mr Sam Elgar ([PKG0008](#))
- 59 Mr Thomas Cribb ([PKG0022](#))
- 60 Mrs Dawn Haig-Thomas ([PKG0013](#))
- 61 Mrs Marie Power ([PKG0034](#))
- 62 Ms Susan Hedley ([PKG0033](#))
- 63 Natural History Museum ([PKG0027](#))

- 64 Nicholas Cater ([PKG0032](#))
- 65 Penryn Town Council ([PKG0063](#))
- 66 Port of London Authority ([PKG0077](#))
- 67 Project Integra ([PKG0057](#))
- 68 Public & Commercial Services Union ([PKG0042](#))
- 69 RECOUP ([PKG0085](#))
- 70 Royal Holloway ([PKG0030](#))
- 71 RPC-BPI Group ([PKG0106](#))
- 72 Smart Planet Technologies ([PKG0049](#))
- 73 Starbucks Coffee Company ([PKG0089](#))
- 74 Surfers Against Sewage ([PKG0047](#))
- 75 Thames21 ([PKG0087](#))
- 76 The Big Green Pellet Co Ltd ([PKG0004](#))
- 77 The Independent Packaging Environment and Safety Forum ([PKG0029](#))
- 78 The Paper Cup Recovery and Recycling Group ([PKG0070](#))
- 79 The Renewable Energy Association ([PKG0048](#))
- 80 Transition Falmouth ([PKG0035](#))
- 81 Valpak Limited ([PKG0038](#))
- 82 Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University Wouter Poortinga ([PKG0026](#))
- 83 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([PKG0082](#))
- 84 Wilson Bio-Chemical ([PKG0065](#))

EMBARGOED ADVANCE COPY Not to be published in full, or in part,  
in any form before 00.01 a.m. on Friday 22 December 2017

## List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

---

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

### Session 2017–19

|                       |   |        |
|-----------------------|---|--------|
| First Special Report  | The Future of Chemicals Regulation after the EU Referendum: Government Response to the Committee's Eleventh Report of Session 2016–17 | HC 313 |
| Second Special Report | Marine Protected Areas Revisited: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2016–17                              | HC 314 |
| Third Special Report  | Sustainable Development Goals in the UK: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2016–17                       | HC 616 |

EMBARGOED ADVANCE COPY: Not to be published in full, or in part, in any form before 00.01 a.m. on Friday 22 December 2017