



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Dr Thérèse Coffey MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
for the Environment

Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577  
defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk  
www.gov.uk/defra

Stephen Hammond MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Your ref: S Wood  
Our ref: MC2019/12608/KB

10 June 2019

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your email of 12 June on behalf of your constituent about plastic recycling.

The Government wants to strengthen demand for recycled materials among UK manufacturers and producers to reduce the need to export materials. We want to create a vibrant market for recycled materials in the UK, and last year, the Chancellor announced a new tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content. This, together with our commitment in the Resources and Waste Strategy to reform the producer responsibility systems (including packaging waste regulations), will help incentivise producers to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products. It will raise additional revenues for collection, and help guarantee a steady supply of materials for recycling.

While waste is a commodity, and there is a global market for secondary materials, it must be and is subject to strict controls. All waste exports must be in accord with the EU Waste Shipments Regulation and UK regulators have a system of inspections in place to verify compliance. It is a criminal offence to transport waste destined for disposal to a country outside the European Free Trade Area and illegal exports of waste are part of the Government's focus on tackling waste crime. Any UK operators found to be illegally exporting waste can face severe sanctions – from financial penalties up to imprisonment. We are looking at a suite of measures including increasing monitoring of international waste shipments, improved provision for waste repatriation, and charging higher fees to improve compliance.

The Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) sets out a number of aims which will give local authorities clearer direction regarding Government ambitions towards waste recycling. The Strategy sets out how we will effectively manage our resources in line with the waste hierarchy and our goal to be a world leader in resource efficiency, leaving our environment in a better state than we inherited it. We are keen to work closely with local authorities to develop our policies set out in the RWS.

On 18 February the Government published three consultations on reforms proposed in our RWS, to help overhaul the waste management system. This included consultations on a Plastic Packaging Tax, Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections in England, Reforming the Packaging Producer Responsibility System and Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme. The three resource and waste consultations closed on 13 May 2019 and the Plastic Packaging Tax consultation closed on 12 May 2019. The responses to all four consultations are currently being analysed and a Government response will be published in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Thérèse