

[News story: Gove launches landmark blueprint for resources and waste](#)

Businesses and manufacturers will pay the full cost of recycling or disposing of their packaging waste, under a major new government strategy unveiled by the Environment Secretary today (Tuesday 18 December 2018).

The move will overhaul England's waste system, putting a legal onus on those responsible for producing damaging waste to take greater responsibility and foot the bill.

The announcement forms part of the government's ambitious new [Resources and Waste Strategy](#), the first comprehensive update in more than a decade. It will eliminate avoidable plastic waste and help leave the environment in a better state than we found it for future generations.

Producers will also be expected to take more responsibility for items that can be harder or costly to recycle including cars, electrical goods, and batteries.

Householders will also see the existing complicated recycling system simplified, with new plans for a consistent approach to recycling across England. Timings for introduction will be subject to discussions at the Spending Review.

Launching the strategy at Veolia's recycling centre in London, one of the most advanced sorting facilities in Europe, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Our strategy sets out how we will go further and faster, to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Together we can move away from being a 'throw-away' society, to one that looks at waste as a valuable resource.

We will cut our reliance on single-use plastics, end confusion over household recycling, tackle the problem of packaging by making polluters pay, and end the economic, environmental and moral scandal that is food waste.

Through this plan we will cement our place as a world leader in resource efficiency, leaving our environment in a better state than we inherited it.

To help drive up recycling levels further, the government will introduce consistent set of recyclable material for collection, subject to consultation. This will be funded by industry through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which will see industry pay higher fees if their products are harder to reuse, repair or recycle and will encourage sustainable design, subject to consultation. EPR for packaging will raise

between £0.5 billion and £1 billion a year for recycling and disposal.

The move builds on the Autumn Budget, which announced a world-leading tax on plastic packaging which does not meet a minimum threshold of at least 30% recycled content, subject to consultation, from April 2022. This will address the current issue of it often being cheaper to use new, non-recycled plastic material despite its greater environmental impact.

The Resources and Waste Strategy sets out how government will:

- Ensure producers pay the full net costs of disposal or recycling of packaging they place on the market by extending producer responsibility – up from just 10% now.
- Review our producer responsibility schemes for items that can be harder or costly to recycle including cars, electrical goods, batteries and explore extending it to textiles, fishing gear, vehicle tyres, certain materials from construction and demolition, and bulky waste such as mattresses, furniture and carpets.
- Introduce a consistent set of recyclable materials collected from all households and businesses, and consistent labelling on packaging so consumers know what they can recycle, to drive-up recycling rates.
- Ensure weekly collections of food waste, which is often smelly and unpleasant, for every household – restoring weekly collections in some local authorities. This will be subject to consultation which will also consider free garden waste collections for households with gardens, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill
- Introduce a deposit return scheme, subject to consultation, to increase the recycling of single-use drinks containers including bottles, cans, and disposable cups filled at the point of sale.
- Explore mandatory guarantees and extended warranties on products, to encourage manufacturers to design products that last longer and drive up the levels of repair and re-use.
- Introduce annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses. Should progress be insufficient, we will consult on introducing mandatory targets for food waste prevention.
- Clamp-down on illegal movements of waste at home and abroad by introducing compulsory electronic tracking of waste, and tougher penalties for rogue waste crime operators if they mislabel their waste to dodge tax rules.

The strategy sits alongside government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#), the recently published [Bioeconomy Strategy](#), and the [Clean Growth Strategy](#) which sets out how the UK is leading the world in cutting carbon emissions to combat climate change and driving economic growth.

Speaking at Veolia Southwark's Integrated Waste Management Facility in London, Richard Kirkman, Veolia's Chief Technology and Innovation Officer, said:

The government has listened to industry and these steps have the clear potential to dramatically change the way the sector operates

to increase recycling and recovery rates.

With consistent collections and advanced facilities like this at Southwark more recyclable materials can be collected for reprocessing into new products. As a business we are ready to invest, to take advantage of new technology, build more infrastructure and work with brand owners and local authorities to harness resources on an industrial scale.

It's the direction we have been hoping and waiting for, and with the public and businesses playing their part the UK can build a sustainable future.

Paul Vanston, CEO of the Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment (INCPEN) said:

Substantial credit is due to Secretary of State Michael Gove, Environment Minister Therese Coffey and officials for the high quality and depth of their engagement work in the lead up to this Resources & Waste Strategy.

The focus on whole-system changes is welcome including packaging reforms, consistency of councils' household collections, and ways to increase investment in recycling infrastructure.

Gudrun Cartwright, environment director at Business in the Community, said:

We welcome the Resources and Waste Strategy and the ambitious direction it sets for the UK. By making the most of valuable resources, businesses can lead the way and help turn the tide on waste by 2030. We know that businesses want to come together, take action and get results faster with over 80 major brands signing our Waste to Wealth Commitment to help double the nation's resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2030. Research carried out in partnership with Ipsos MORI told us that consumers welcome action from business to help them do their bit and reduce waste. Around 80% of people chose money-back incentives; dedicated spaces in shops to return used packaging and clothing; loyalty points and hiring not buying as the most popular actions from business when it comes to helping consumers reduce their own individual waste.

2030 is a critical year if we are to ensure we have an environment in which business and communities can flourish. The risks of inaction are enormous, but so too are the opportunities that could be created from a prosperous and resilient, low carbon economy. We must make the most out of precious resources, waste as little as possible and find ways of turning the waste we do create into new wealth. Business must now focus on setting targets to improve the

productivity of resources that are key for their business, work collectively towards doubling the nation's resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2030, redesign how resources are used in products, services and operations, collaborate across organisations, value chains and sectors and report on progress to share learning and keep the momentum going.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

We support a circular economy and welcome the resource and waste strategy that will help us all deliver it.

The plan embodies a solid commitment to tackling serious and organised waste crime, which drains the economy and blights communities.

Last year, the EA closed down over 800 illegal sites and carried out 93 successful prosecutions. The strategy sets to build on our successes, with additional resources, better innovation and improved partnerships across government and enforcement agencies.

The strategy builds on existing government work to tackle unnecessary waste including a [world-leading ban on microbeads](#) in personal care products, a [5p plastic bag charge](#) which has taken over 15 billion single-use plastic bags out of circulation, a [£15 million pilot scheme for reducing food waste](#), and [up to £10 million to clear the worst abandoned waste sites](#) that blight local communities.

On the same day, the government announced £8m of funding for eight new research projects that will explore new and different ways of making, using and recycling plastics.

The government is also investing £20m to tackle plastics and boost recycling: £10m more for plastics research and development and £10m to pioneer innovative approaches to boosting recycling and reducing litter, such as smart bins. This is in addition to the £20m for plastics research and development through the Plastics Innovation Fund announced in March 2018.

The government is committed to being a world leader in resource efficiency and driving international action, including through our ground-breaking Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance and a [£66 million package of funding to boost global research](#).

- 'Extended Producer Responsibility' (EPR) is a powerful environmental policy approach through which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-use stage. This incentivises producers to design their products to make it easier for them to be re-used, dismantled and/or recycled at end of life. Alongside stakeholders, we consider EPR to be a crucial tool in moving waste up the hierarchy, and stimulating secondary markets. It has been adopted in many countries around the

world, across a broad range of products, to deliver higher collection, recycling and recovery rates. The most successful schemes use a range of measures to encourage more sustainable design decisions at the production stage.

- The 'circular economy' is linked to the concept of the 'circle of life' – nature's way of returning life back to the earth so that when something dies, it gives new life to another. In terms of materials and resources, the circular economy relates to the re-use, re-fashioning, or remanufacturing of goods, thus extending their lifespan.
- Packaging reform is government's immediate priority. We will launch a consultation to reform the packaging waste regulations shortly. We will ensure that the reformed system will match or exceed targets set by the EU.
- Subject to consultation we will legislate to allow government to specify a core set of materials to be collected by all local authorities and waste operators.
- Timings of all the proposals can be found in the Strategy.
- Household waste recycling rates in England have risen from around 11% in 2000/1 to about 45%, but since 2013 rates have plateaued.
- Government recently commissioned and published the recommendations of an [independent review on Serious and Organised Crime in the waste sector](#).