

News story: Strong public backing bolsters fight against blight of plastic waste

Individuals, businesses and campaign groups have expressed overwhelming support for action on tackling the impact of plastics on our environment.

The backing comes as HM Treasury publishes the [summary of responses](#) to its recent call for evidence on how tax can be used to reduce plastic waste. The call attracted an unprecedented 162,000 responses, the highest in the Treasury's history.

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, has reiterated the department's commitment to take action through the tax system to reduce the amount of single-use plastic waste. The views received will help inform and shape the government's approach ahead of this year's Budget.

Measures which received noteworthy public support and are being considered include using the tax system to:

- encourage greater use of recycled plastic in manufacturing rather than new plastic
- discourage the use of difficult to recycle plastics, like carbon black plastic
- reduce demand for single-use plastics like coffee-cups and takeaway boxes
- encourage further recycling as opposed to incineration

The Exchequer Secretary, Robert Jenrick, while visiting a plastic pollution clean-up operation on Perranporth Beach in Cornwall, said:

Tackling the scandal of plastic pollution is one of our top priorities and we know the public is right behind us. I've been overwhelmed by the public support and the responses we've received will be invaluable as we develop our plans for using the tax system to combat this.

Our duty to leave the environment in a better state than we found it is absolutely clear and what we've set out today is another important step to ensuring a cleaner, greener future for Britain.

Hugo Tagholm, CEO of Surfers Against Sewage, said:

Surfers Against Sewage is delighted with the huge public response

to the Treasury's recent call for evidence on how the tax system could be used to reduce plastic waste, which many of our supporters responded to.

This is a clear indication of the public appetite for more fiscal interventions to help reduce plastic pollution littering our environment, from inner-city streets and countryside to our oceans.

The Treasury is also looking at how it could further support measures to fund the development of new, greener products and innovative processes that will help ensure a more sustainable future for the country.

This work forms part of the government's overall commitment in its [25 Year Environment Plan](#) to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste. It builds on the recently announced £20 million plastics innovation fund – to support the production of sustainable and recyclable plastics – and follows the £61.4 million announced by the Prime Minister to be invested in tackling plastic in the world's oceans.

[News story: LLWR Manager wins share of industry honour](#)

LLW Repository Ltd (LLWR) Manager Mike Coward has received the prestigious Shared Services Alliance (SSA) Walker Award for Collaborative Working as a member of a team that undertook a pilot project predicted to lead to major cost savings across the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) Group.

The award-winning team, drawn from across the SSA, undertook a collaborative supplier assessment on the management system arrangements of Nuvia Ltd, and its assessment report has been well received across the Alliance.

Such joint assessments are expected to reduce the burden on resources across the NDA Group and the supply chain, creating significant efficiency savings.

In an extreme example, one particular supplier had been audited 135 days out of 250 potential working days because of a lack of collaboration between SSA members.

"I am delighted the team won the award which recognises the hard work that went into the collaborative assessment," said Mike, LLWR Operations & Projects Quality Manager.

"I think the potential huge cost and efficiency savings of this approach for both suppliers and resources across the NDA estate were a major factor in us

winning the award.”

The team, led by Martin George, from Sellafield, and including DSRL’s Mary-Jane Statham, and Karina Pellow, of the SSA, is now developing a collaborative assessment programme.

[Press release: Make it your business to be flood resilient](#)

The Environment Agency has launched a campaign to ensure North East businesses are prepared for flooding.

Since 1998 there has been at least one serious flood every year with businesses more likely to flood than be destroyed by fire.

And with recent events such as 2012’s ‘Thunder Thursday’ hitting businesses hard the Environment Agency is working with them to reduce the impact of a flood.

The campaign launches with an event in Yarm next week and will culminate with an event in North Shields in October.

The Environment Agency’s four Flood Resilience Community Engagement Officers for the region have already been in touch with more than 700 business across the region to raise awareness of flooding issues – more than 100 in Tyne and Wear, more than 500 in Durham and Darlington and more than 90 in Cleveland.

In Northumberland, the team worked with seven businesses during a drop-in about a potential flood scheme at Hexham Industrial Estate and 18 businesses attended a drop-in event at Prudhoe.

‘It will never happen to me’

Taryn Al-mashgari, Community Engagement Officer for Tyne and Wear, said:

A common phrase I hear when out visiting businesses is ‘it will never happen to me’. Some aren’t even aware they are trading in an area at risk of flooding. Flooding accounts for 33% of all losses to business property. This has a huge impact on our economy.

With climate change meaning extreme weather events becoming frequent and more severe in the future it’s more important than ever that businesses are prepared.

Most businesses can save between 20% and 90% on the cost of lost stock and moveable equipment by taking action now, before winter.

For every £1 spent preparing for flooding £5 is saved – this is money well spent.

- The campaign launches with a 'Business Breakfast' drop-in event in Yarm which takes place at Yarm Fellowship Hall between 7.30am-9am on Wednesday 22 August.

Businesses can come along and talk to Sarah Duffy, Community Engagement Officer for Cleveland, about their experiences of flooding and she will be helping them understand how to prepare for a flood, create a business flood group and ensure the safety of staff and customers during a flood event. Refreshments will be provided.

- This will be followed up by a community drop-in event at Redcar and Cleveland Leisure and Community Heart on Friday 24 August between 10am and 12noon.

And in October, the campaign will culminate with a big event for businesses at North Shields Fish Quay. Taryn added:

The impact of 'Thunder Thursday' on businesses across the country was estimated to be £200million, that's an extraordinary figure. There's lots that businesses can do to reduce the impact.

Things businesses can do to make them more resilient to flooding:

1. Understand the different types of flooding. Flooding can happen from the coast, river, surface water, sewer and groundwater.
 2. Check their flood risk. Businesses can check if they are at risk of flooding from rivers, the coast and surface water.
 3. Check they have the right level of insurance.
 4. Write a flood plan.
 5. Invest in flood protection measures and link up with neighbouring properties.
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Map: River Thames Investment programme 2018 to 2019 Map

Map of River Thames 2018 to 2019 investment programme to help you plan your cruising over the winter.

Guidance: Commons eligibility checks

Updated: Additional commons data added to the 2018 table

RPA regularly checks and [updates its digital maps](#). This includes common land.

How commons eligibility checks differ from other land eligibility checks

Land cover eligibility on common land is checked using the latest enhanced satellite images and a limited number of supplementary physical land checks. These checks are different from RPA's usual land eligibility checks. The main differences are:

- RPA is checking the eligibility of the land cover on commons and not land boundaries which RPA cannot change because they are legally defined
- RPA is surveying the eligible area of a common separately to the enclosed land farmed by the common land graziers who declared rights on the common for BPS
- Graziers claim for a common by declaring their grazing rights rather than applying directly for an area of land. This means that there will be no penalties for over-declaring if RPA discovers the eligible area is less than previously used

When and where to check for changes

RPA needs to make sure that all land data on their systems is up to date. Therefore the eligibility checks are carried out on an ongoing basis.

After a common is checked, if the eligible area has changed, RPA will write to those customers who declare rights on it as part of their BPS application.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission will also contact agreement holders if their schemes are affected. RPA will publish the new eligible area value on GOV.UK, the 'Commons eligibility checks updated areas' at the top of this page.

The changes might affect the value of customers' claims and payments for:

- BPS 2018
- stewardship schemes
- forestry schemes

This is because the 'notional area' used to calculate a customer's 2018 BPS payment may be less than last year. Therefore, their 2018 BPS payment may be lower than they are expecting.

Read more information about how the 'notional area' of the common is calculated on page 25 of the [Basic Payment Scheme: rules for 2018](#). The [example calculation](#) shows how the value of the common land part of the BPS payment is calculated.

What to do if you do not agree with the updated eligible area values

Customers who want to query the revised eligible area value need to discuss their query with the other commoners, and relevant Commons Association or equivalent organisation, to reach an agreed view.

It is important that individual customers do not make any changes to the land cover on the common, such as removing scrub, without discussing it with the other graziers/commoners. This is because it might affect the scheme agreements in place with other commoners.

Once customers have reviewed and discussed the revised eligible area values with the other commoners, if they still want to query or disagree with RPA's findings, they can call RPA on 03000 200 301. There is no deadline to call RPA but if customers want to query or disagree with the findings, they should call RPA within 6 weeks of RPA writing to them. This will give RPA the best possible chance to consider mapping update requests before they start to make BPS 2018 payments.

Depending on the customer's query, RPA may email a digital map (PDF) to the customer. This is so that the customer can see the land cover changes.

It's important that customers check their contact details are up to date in the Rural Payments service. In particular, RPA needs their up to date email address.

If RPA cannot email a digital map to the customer, they may send the map on a disc by letter. If the customer will be unable to view the PDF maps sent by email or letter they must tell RPA this when they call to discuss their query. If RPA then send these customers a map, they will make sure that the customer will be able to view it.

When customers receive these maps (PDF or another format), they must check them carefully. If they agree with the updated eligible area shown on these maps they need take no further action.

What to do if you do not agree with the updated eligible areas shown on the maps RPA send you

Customers will need to discuss this with the other commoners, and relevant Commons Association or equivalent organisation to reach an agreed view. If they disagree with the information on the maps they will need to take action as a group. They will need to fill in and send an [RLE1 form](#) and sketch maps to RPA. They must send only one set of forms/maps for the common from their group. This is so that RPA does not receive conflicting information. Customers need to show all amendments on their sketch maps with as much detail as possible, including measurement or area size. Information on how to mark changes on sketch maps and how to fill in an RLE1 form is given in the [RLE1 guidance](#).

Requests for changes to your maps and land parcel details could affect your future payments. Only tell RPA about changes if you are sure they need to be made.

If customers need to send an RLE1 form and sketch map(s) to RPA they should check the email or letter they received with their digital map (PDF). It will advise them when they should send their RLE1 form and sketch map(s) to RPA. There is no deadline for sending the RLE1 form and sketch maps but depending on when you send them, RPA's focus may be on making payments using the updated eligible areas they identified and published.

Example calculation:

How the value of the common land part of the BPS payment is calculated.

The common has:

- an eligible area of 300ha; and
- grazing rights being claimed under BPS for 200 sheep and 70 cattle.

RPA must calculate the livestock unit (LU) value of all the rights being claimed for the common:

- Each sheep is equivalent to 0.15 LU, so the calculation for the sheep grazing rights being claimed is:
200 sheep x 0.15 LU = 30 LU
- Each adult cow is 1 LU, so the calculation for the cattle grazing rights being claimed is: 70 cattle x 1 LU = 70 LU
- The total LU being claimed for the common is therefore:
30 LU + 70 LU = 100 LU
- The area to be allocated for each LU claimed for the common is calculated as: 300ha / 100 LU = 3.0ha/LU
- If the farmer declared 40 LU of rights to activate entitlements on their BPS 2017 application they would be allocated 3.0ha/LU x 40 LU = 120ha of the total eligible area of the common.
- This area will be used to activate entitlements in the same way as any other land declared by the farmer on their application. The examples shown above under 'Main BPS payment' and 'Average entitlement value' show how this is done.

The above examples are based on a single common and do not take account of any split rights.

Common land eligible area values and total area values

Find the calculation data for commons with an updated eligible area in the Commons eligibility checks updated area table at the top of this page. Find the calculation data for all other commons in the 'Commons land grazing rights' table. This table is published each year and includes the eligible area and number of rights claimed (in Livestock Units) for each common for that BPS scheme year. The data is taken from the Rural Payments service. The 'Commons land grazing rights' table for BPS 2017 is published on the [BPS 2017 page](#). The eligible area of a common will alter as physical changes take place on the common and the information in this table may be updated to take account of information received from inspections or other sources.