

Press release: Foreign Secretary orders plastic to be binned from Britain's diplomatic network

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) will eliminate avoidable single-use plastics from its UK operations by the end of the year, and from its global operations by 2020. It is the first UK government department to announce such a ban.

This ambitious target makes the FCO a leader in the fight against plastic pollution not just in the UK, but globally too.

In recent weeks, the FCO has already removed all plastic cups, crockery, cutlery, straws and single-use condiment sachets from its London staff canteen, and is providing re-usable or biodegradable alternatives.

It plans to increase its 'latte levy' from 10p to 50p to encourage staff to use their own mugs instead of disposable ones – and places the FCO firmly at the top of the pack in taking real action to end plastic waste.

The Foreign Secretary has set a deadline of year-end 2018 for the FCO to find alternatives to the remaining avoidable single-use plastics in use in its UK estate.

As well as a ban by year-end in the UK, the Foreign Secretary has given a 2020 target for its overseas estate, with a significant reduction this year.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

It is time for the world to truly wake up to the damage being done to the environment, and especially by the sheer volume of plastic that is dumped in our oceans.

If the UK is to turn the tide overseas on this crucial issue, it is only right that the Foreign Office leads the way at home.

Sir Simon McDonald, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office said:

Since 2009 to 2010, the Foreign Office has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 39%, waste by 45%, paper consumption by 42% and water use by 12.9 million litres in our UK operations. But we must do more to reduce our use of plastic. I am confident we can meet the challenge put to us by the Foreign Secretary.

In addition, the FCO is looking at how it can further reduce its

environmental impact beyond plastic. Projects identified for consideration include replacing existing vehicles with electric hybrid vehicles, waste to energy projects, and a global automated energy monitoring and reduction programme.

The drive comes on the back of the launch of the government's [25-Year Environment Plan](#) last month, which set out measures to eliminate avoidable plastic waste by 2042 across the whole of the UK.

Background

The drive comes on the back of the launch of the government's 25-Year Environment Plan last month, which set out measures to reduce plastic waste.

The FCO already has a strong record in sustainability. Its most recent [annual sustainability report](#) show that in 2016 to 2017 in its UK operations the FCO:

- reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 39%
- reduced water consumption by 12.9m litres
- reduced waste & recycling produced by 45%
- reduced paper consumption by 42%

In recognition of these efforts, we were shortlisted as a finalist in the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM) Awards 2017 for its actions to drive significant reductions in water and energy use across the UK estate – the first central government department to achieve this success in the 16 years the awards have been running.

Estimates of the amount of avoidable single-use plastics in the FCO include:

- 103,201 cold drinks bottles purchased by the FCO in the UK in 2017 (stretching from FCO in London to Heathrow Airport)
- 655,718 hot beverage cups purchased by the FCO in the UK in 2017 (FCO in London to Milton Keynes or Brighton)
- 285,600 plastic water cups purchased by the FCO in the UK in 2017
- 14,950 pieces of plastic cutlery purchased by the FCO in the UK in 2017
- 1.37 million avoidable single-use plastic items were used purchased by the FCO in the UK in 2017
- initial estimates suggest that the FCO globally is consuming at least 3.45 million items of avoidable single-use plastics

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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[Press release: Illegal Newcastle scrapyards charged with £7k fine](#)

A Newcastle man has been fined for operating a vehicle scrapyards without a permit in a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency.

Ronald Coulson Vincent Grieveson, 23, of Forest Hall, appeared at Newcastle Magistrates' Court on Friday, February 23.

He pleaded guilty to illegally storing and treating waste vehicles and parts without a permit. He was fined £3,628, and ordered to pay costs of £3,273.58 and a victim surcharge of £362.

Acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, solicitor Chris Bunting told the court Grieveson had been operating an illegal waste site at Unit C, Grieveson Industrial Estate, Byker, without an environmental permit.

Environment Agency officers visited the site on 16 November 2016 and saw oil seeping from loose car engines onto the concrete and into a combined sewer system nearby. Grieveson was told to stop illegal activities and stop oil leaking off site.

On a further visit a month later, Environment Officers found oil continued to leak off site from engines left on the concrete surface. More car engines were stored in a red skip and various car parts and tyres were stored elsewhere on the site.

Grieveson was issued with a legal notice warning him to stop all illegal activity on site and remove all waste by 16 January 2017. Yet, when officers returned again on 27 February 2017 they found little had changed.

In court solicitor, Jack Lovell, in mitigation stated that Mr Grieveson realised he had been naïve and foolishly thought he could operate legally with just a waste carrier's licence. Mr Grieveson produced photographs to show the site is now cleared of waste.

Jamie Fletcher, Area Environment Manager, Environment Agency, said:

It is important that waste materials are stored, handled and disposed of correctly to protect the environment and safeguard human health. The defendant in this case continued to operate outside the law despite numerous warnings, and by handling un-polluted vehicles and parts, he caused pollution.

Anyone who has information about waste crimes can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Notice: WS14 9PT, Horsley Brook Farms Ltd: environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- how you can view the application documents
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application
- what conditions to include in the permit (if granted)

Statutory guidance: The Margate and Long Sands European Marine Site (Specified Areas) Bottom Towed Fishing

[Gear Byelaw](#)

The byelaw was made by the Marine Management Organisation on 2 August 2017, confirmed by the Secretary of State on 1 February 2018 and will come in to force on 1 March 2018.

The purpose of the byelaw is to protect two specified areas of sandbank in Margate and Long Sands Special Area of conservation from the impacts of bottom towed fishing gear.

More information on the site from [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#).

A signed copy of the byelaw will be provided for inspection by emailing conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk

[Consultation outcome: The future for food, farming and the environment](#)

Updated: Summary of responses added.

Leaving the European Union and the Common Agricultural Policy will give us the chance for reform. We want to know your thoughts on the future of agricultural policy in England.