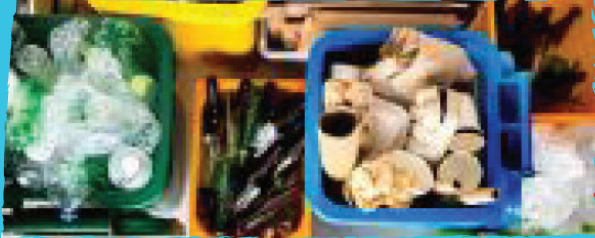


Bioclarity News

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BREAKING: UK Government opens packaging consultation and announces DRS delay



On March 24th 2021 Westminster set out its plan for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for the UK but also announced a delay to the implementation of a DRS for England, Wales and Northern Ireland until late 2024 'at the earliest'. A separate scheme is already under way in Scotland, and administrations will work to ensure compatibility between the schemes, Defra says.

The second EPR consultation focuses on specific policy proposals for its introduction, including the scope of full net costs, producer obligations, scheme governance, regulation of the scheme, and packaging waste recycling targets.

These new changes will further ensure that more of what we consume is recycled and reused. They will stimulate the creation of alternatives to single-use plastics and establish consistent rules to help people recycle more easily across the country.

A Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers: consumers will be incentivised to take their empty drinks containers to return points hosted by retailers. Every year across the UK, consumers go through an estimated 14 billion plastic drinks bottles, nine billion drinks cans and five billion glass bottles. The scheme would cover England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a separate scheme already under development in Scotland.

Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging: manufacturers will pay the full costs of managing and recycling their packaging waste, with higher fees being levied if packaging is harder to reuse or recycle. In 2019, approximately 11.7 million tonnes of packaging was placed on the UK market. We must ensure that more of this is recyclable or reusable. The scheme is being developed on a UK-wide basis.

The third of the major reforms will see the introduction of consistent recycling collections for all households and businesses in England. This will also be going out to consultation shortly, government says.

UK Plastics Tax



The government's Plastic Packaging Tax will be implemented in April 2022. Here's what we know... and don't know yet.

Liability: A cost of £200 per tonne will be applied to any 'tax liable' plastic packaging where 30% recycled content cannot be demonstrated. But who is liable for this?

The first party to 'commercially exploit' the plastic packaging, as a finished component in the UK, will be considered the liable party. In the case of imported packaging this will likely sit with the importer, and in the case of UK manufactured packaging, this will sit with the converter. Currently there are two key exemptions in place for the plastic tax: Packaging for human medicines and transit/transport packaging around imported goods.

Recycled content: Under the tax, 'recycled content' in plastic packaging components must be from one of either two sources. This means either post-consumer waste (plastic waste generated by households or by commercial facilities where it can no longer be used for its intended purpose) or pre-consumer waste: waste recovered from the manufacturing process that has been processed by a re-processing facility.

Payment: From April 2022, businesses will need to submit data to HMRC each quarter covering the tonnage of liable and exempt packaging and pay any taxes due. This will run alongside, rather than as a replacement to, the PRN regulations.

What we don't know: How will rounding up/down of units of measurement impact the 30% measure? What about packaging sold as a product (e.g. cling film or sandwich bags)? We also don't know what role biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics will play.

What next? We are hoping to see a secondary/final draft of legislation in the first half of 2021. Many producers have already begun preparing for the tax, but, with significant change in the future of environmental legislation over the next two years, time is beginning to run short.

UK Environment Bill Update

This should have been passed last Summer but is now likely to receive Royal Assent this Autumn. With a 2-year transition period, formal implementation will now be in Autumn 2023.

In March of this year, Defra outlined plans to add five legally binding principles to a legal footing on the Bill. The footing would apply not only to the Bill, but to all future policymaking.

These 5 principles include; **integration** (ensuring that policies are interconnected to maximise opportunities); **prevention** (aiming to stop or reduce harm to the environment instead of remediation after the event); **rectification at source** (ensuring that, when damage does happen, it is not offset as a first option); **polluter pays, and precaution**. This last principle is designed to ensure that potential threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage should be tackled as a priority and that policymakers do not cite a lack of certainty as a cause for inaction.

A consultation on the principles has already opened and will close on 2 June.

Ministers are considering new measures for single-use cups



Alongside the announcement of the new DRS for plastic bottles, Ministers will now look at introducing new orders to force companies to set up recycle bins for single-use cups.

DEFRA said that recycling targets will be introduced for laminated card by 2026, which will help create 'on the go' recycling of single use cups, in places like train stations to meet eco-targets.

The Government is still mulling over whether to force shops to add on a 'latte levy' for single-use cups.

Scottish update

Deposit Return Scheme

The Scottish government is launching a review of its DRS which, initially planned for April 2021, has been postponed to July 2022, due to the pandemic.

Any delay to the DRS in Scotland could bring it in line with the rest of the UK, which has planned to roll it out in 2023.

The scheme features 'all-in' model, covering PET plastic drinks bottles, aluminium and steel can and glass bottles, with a deposit level set at 20p.

Draft Environmental Protection Bill

In March 2021, the Scottish Government published a discussion paper to invite views on the draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products and Oxo-degradable Plastic Products) (Scotland) Regulations 2021.

Included within this Bill is the following:

The ban on the supply and the manufacture of single-use:

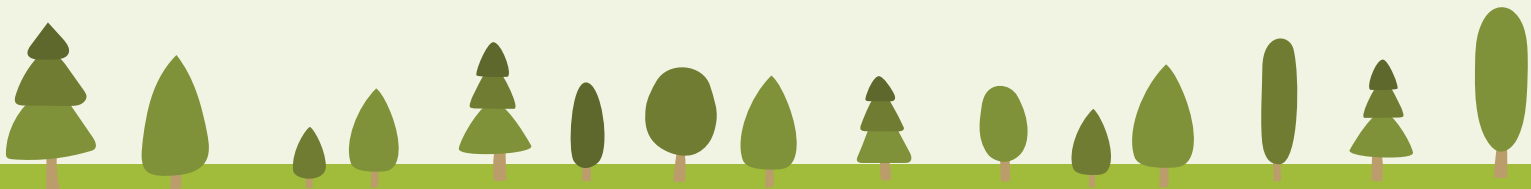
- expanded polystyrene beverage cups
- plastic expanded polystyrene beverage containers
- expanded polystyrene food containers
- plastic cutlery
- plastic plates (including trays and platters)
- plastic beverage stirrers
- all oxo-degradable plastic products.

The ban the supply to an end user of single use:

- plastic straws and plastic balloon sticks.

There is a fine of up to £5,000 for anyone liable in supplying any of these items.

There are exemptions for medical reasons and hospitality provided the straws are out of customers sight and available upon request alongside drinks or food at no cost.





In November of this year, the world will be coming to Glasgow to attend the pandemic-postponed COP26.

COP26 president, Alok Sharma, outlined his priority actions areas:

- 1. Adaptation and resilience:** 'Helping people, economies and the environment adapt and prepare for the impacts of climate change.'
- 2. Nature:** 'Safeguarding ecosystems, protecting natural habitats and keeping carbon out of the atmosphere.'
- 3. Energy transition:** 'Seizing the massive opportunities of cheaper renewables and storage.'
- 4. Accelerating the move to zero-carbon road transport:** 'By 2040, over half of new car sales worldwide are projected to be electric.'
- 5. Finance:** 'We need to unleash the finance which will make all of this possible and power the shift to a zero-carbon economy.'

This year's Budget was an opportunity for the UK government to showcase its leadership. There was little in the way of specific investments, but the UK's first 'Green Gilt' was announced. This could raise £15bn or more from people buying bonds from the government to fund green projects and infrastructure.

The other major announcement was that the Bank of England now has an additional goal to create a sustainable economy aligned with NetZero.

Downing Street will feel intense pressure to achieve a deal at COP26. Britain could also use its presidency of the 2021 G7 and its vast diplomatic network to make laggard countries more aware of the urgency we all face.

