

# ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FORUM

c/o Society for the Environment  
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## Response to the Defra consultation into:

### Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

#### About the EPF

The Environmental Policy Forum (EPF) is a network of UK environmental professional bodies promoting environmental sustainability and resilience for the public benefit. The EPF's member bodies have a collective membership of around 70,000 environmental professionals, many of whom are individually Chartered in environmental practice, science and engineering disciplines.

#### Introduction

The resources and waste sector in the UK stands at a critical juncture. The areas covered in these four consultations – packaging producer responsibility, consistency in recycling collection and the use of financial incentives as a means of encouraging the adoption of more sustainable practices – via a plastic packaging tax and Deposit Return Scheme – are central to the UK's commitment to a more sustainable future. We applaud the ambition of the Resources and Waste Strategy, insofar as it reflects the potential for the UK to take an international lead on tackling environmental challenges by wholly transforming its resources and waste sector.

In considering these four consultations, overarching priorities identified by EPF include:

- insofar as is possible, given the devolved nature of waste policy, the need for a consistent UK-wide policy framework to support the overarching environmental and behaviour change objectives articulated in the consultations
- the need for 'whole system' data and transparency to accurately monitor performance against objectives and targets, to identify and rectify any areas of sub-optimal performance, and to enable cost-effective enforcement – all of which will be critical to success.

## Response to the Consultation on Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

EPF supports the concept of Deposit Return Schemes in principle, particularly with regard to the potential to influence consumer behaviour, reduce litter, support the capture of high quality recyclable materials, and potentially support the capture of challenging material streams such as disposable cups.

EPF recognises that DRS has been successfully used in other countries. However, in many cases these schemes were rolled out without the mature kerbside collection and treatment infrastructure that is present in the UK, and the full impacts of the diversion of these materials from the existing system require more robust assessment.

Given the extent of the step change that the current consultations set out, EPF is concerned that the alignment of DRS to the other proposals has not been sufficiently considered. Failure to address this could risk adding significant cost and complexity to the task of delivering the desired step change in recycling and increases the risk of unintended consequences.

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## Notes

1. The Environmental Policy Forum (EPF) is a network of UK environmental professional bodies promoting environmental sustainability and resilience for the public benefit. The EPF's member bodies have a collective membership of around 70,000 environmental professionals, many of whom are individually Chartered in environmental practice, science and engineering disciplines.

[www.socenv.org.uk/EPF](http://www.socenv.org.uk/EPF)

2. The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) is the leading professional body for the waste management sector representing around 6,000 individuals in the UK. Established in 1898, CIWM is a non-profit making organisation, dedicated to the promotion of professional competence amongst waste managers. CIWM seeks to raise standards for those working in and with the sector by producing best practice guidance, developing educational and training initiatives, and providing information on key waste-related issues.

[www.ciwm.co.uk](http://www.ciwm.co.uk)

3. The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) is the leading independent Chartered professional body for water and environment professionals, promoting excellence within the sector.

[www.ciwem.org](http://www.ciwem.org)

4. The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3) is a major UK engineering institution whose activities encompass the whole materials cycle, from exploration and extraction, through characterisation, processing, forming, finishing and application, to product recycling and land reuse. It exists to promote and develop all aspects of

materials science and engineering, geology, mining and associated technologies, mineral and petroleum engineering and extraction metallurgy, as a leading authority in the worldwide materials and mining community.

<https://www.iom3.org/>

5. The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) is a membership organisation that represents professionals from fields as diverse as air quality, land contamination and education - wherever you find environmental work underpinned by science. A visionary organisation leading debate, dissemination and promotion of environmental science and sustainability, the IES promotes an evidence-based approach to decision and policy making.

[www.the-ies.org](http://www.the-ies.org)

6. The Society for the Environment (SocEnv) is comprised of 25 Licenced Bodies, with over 500,000 members between them. It received a Royal Charter in 2004, which empowers it to regulate the Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and Registered Environmental Technician (REnvTech) professional registrations globally. There are now over 7,000 environmental professionals currently registered who share a common vision of delivering sustainability through environmental professionalism.

[www.socenv.org.uk](http://www.socenv.org.uk)

7. The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) is the membership body for more than 14,000 environment and sustainability professionals worldwide. We support individuals and organisations in setting and achieving globally recognised standards for sustainable practice, in turn driving the development and uptake of sustainability skills. We add value for our members by providing the knowledge, connections and recognition necessary to lead change within organisations at all levels. We are independent and international. We apply the combined expertise of our members to provide evidence and influence decision-making, working towards our vision of transforming the world to sustainability.

[www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net)