

Resources and Waste: 10 Asks for a New Government

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) is the largest nature coalition in England, bringing together 83 organisations to use their joint voice for the protection of the natural world.

A decade of national renewal cannot be achieved without putting the circular economy at the centre of the Government's environmental, social, and economic agenda. A zero-waste agenda could inject over £70 billion into UK businesses, households, and the public purse and ensure resource security for years to come.¹ This briefing document outlines ten key policies the Wildlife and Countryside Link's Resource and Waste Policy Group are calling for to lower carbon emissions, improve resource efficiency and support green infrastructure growth up and down the country.

Delivering for the Present:

- 1. Implementing a Deposit Return Scheme including glass** will ensure over 7 billion drinks containers per year never reach landfill. A well-designed system, which is fully inter-operable across the four nations, will boost recycling rates and support the scaling up of reuse and refill systems.
- 2. Leveraging the 'polluter pays principle' to implement Extended Producer Responsibility schemes across packaging, textiles and waste electronics and electricals (WEEE).** Scheme designs should incentivise a reduction in overall material use, scaling up of reuse and refill systems and include payments for fly-tipping and littered items. A full net-cost recovery approach for pEPR will save local authorities over £2 billion a year.²
- 3. Support and ratify an ambitious UN Global Plastic Treaty which will phase out virgin plastic production** and end the requirement for single-use plastic. This will eliminate pollution across the whole lifespan of plastic goods and move us towards a just and inclusive low-carbon transition in a zero-waste, reuse-based economy.
- 4. Delivering a robust Chemicals Strategy and protective regulations which addresses the use of hazardous chemicals** will prevent the introduction of further harmful chemicals into our bodies and the environment and reduce hazardous waste. An ambitious, world leading position will prevent irreversible chemical pollution and bring health benefits to millions.

¹ [Labour says it would aim for zero-waste economy by 2050 | Green politics | The Guardian](#)

² [26069_Manifesto_A4Flyer_v6.pdf \(keepbritaintidy.org\)](#)

Creating a Circular Economy

5. **Setting cross sectoral resource efficiency and consumption reduction targets** will frame a new generation of reuse, repair and remanufacturing. A new Government must work across DESNZ and Defra to effectively legislate and implement policies to reach a zero-waste economy by 2050.³
6. **Introducing cross-sectoral design standards for efficient, long-lasting, and repairable products** will support households access high quality, durable goods and save money during the cost-of-living crisis⁴. By encouraging packaging, WEEE and textiles manufacturers to prioritise designing out waste, innovation across sectors will flourish.
7. **Rolling out the requirement for all new development projects to submit a Circularity Statement** to tackle material shortages in the construction sector and reduce costs of new housing⁵. Construction activity accounts for a quarter of the UK's carbon emissions and uses more raw materials than any other industry.

Growing Green Infrastructure

8. **Implementing a ban on the export of waste material to non-OECD countries by 2027** will kick start investment in a new generation of green infrastructure and jobs across the UK. A new Government must consider extending the ban to OECD countries where illegal waste management and its associated human rights implications continue.⁶
9. **Designing a critical mineral recovery path for electrical and electronic waste** will reduce reliance on precarious supply chains and guarantee resource security. By not buying, importing, or creating raw materials, valuable British businesses will save money on input costs across the board.
10. **Develop management measures to aid the disposal of end-of-life-fishing gear** which makes up 65% of all ocean litter globally. Without the infrastructure in place to properly dispose of this equipment, it will continue to disrupt coastal communities, the expanding offshore wind industry and precious marine wildlife.

For questions or further information please contact:

Cassie Rist, Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Wildlife and Countryside Link E: cassie@wcl.org.uk

³ assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64a6d9c1c531eb000c64fffa/environmental-improvement-plan-2023.pdf

⁴ [This article is not about plastic pollution. \(ellenmacarthurfoundation.org\)](https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/this-article-is-not-about-plastic-pollution)

⁵ [Circular-construction.pdf \(green-alliance.org.uk\)](https://green-alliance.org.uk/circular-construction.pdf)

⁶ [Exports of plastic to non-OECD countries on the rise in England | Sustainable Plastics](https://www.sustainableplastics.com/news/exports-of-plastic-to-non-oecd-countries-on-the-rise-in-england)