HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

16 March 2018

Mary Creagh MP
Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your letter of 22 February 2018, regarding the government’s call for evidence on whether the tax system or charges can be used to reduce single-use plastic waste.

As you will be aware, this call for evidence was published on 13 March as part of the Spring Statement, and I would like to provide your committee with more information on how we plan to proceed. I can confirm that it will run for ten weeks, closing on the 18 May 2018, and the consultation process is being run by HM Treasury. However, my officials will be working closely with those in Defra to ensure that the outcomes of this process align with wider work Defra are undertaking in this area, continuing the collaborative work undertaken during the development of the document.

I understand the public concern over the environmental impacts arising from single-use plastic waste and that is precisely why I am calling for evidence as the first step in taking action on this issue. I want Britain to lead the world in tackling the single-use plastic littering our planet, following our strong track record of leadership in climate change agreements and protecting the marine environment. By assembling the first serious and comprehensive evidence base on this issue, this call for evidence will enable us to examine how changes to the tax system or the introduction of new charges can change the behaviour of companies and consumers to become more sustainable.

As I set out in the Spring Statement, this move to a greener economy will not only be about changes in consumption, but also about innovation. Developing new, greener products and improving our ability to recycle existing ones will be a vital part of this work. This process is about ensuring the right incentives are in place to encourage sustainable behaviours and drive technological progress. Britain’s businesses and universities are already rising to this challenge and we want the UK to lead the world in this area.

Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention and I am grateful for the ongoing work of the Environmental Audit Committee in this important area.

PHILIP HAMMOND