

Consultation Response

Standards for bio-based, biodegradable, and
compostable plastics

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Introduction

The Law Society of Scotland is the professional body for over 11,000 Scottish solicitors. With our overarching objective of leading legal excellence, we strive to excel and to be a world-class professional body, understanding and serving the needs of our members and the public. We set and uphold standards to ensure the provision of excellent legal services and ensure the public can have confidence in Scotland's solicitor profession.

We have a statutory duty to work in the public interest, a duty which we are strongly committed to achieving through our work to promote a strong, varied and effective solicitor profession working in the interests of the public and protecting and promoting the rule of law. We seek to influence the creation of a fairer and more just society through our active engagement with the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments, Parliaments, wider stakeholders and our membership.

Our Environmental Law sub-committee welcomes the opportunity to consider and respond to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' consultation on *Standards for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics*¹. We have the following comments to put forward for consideration.

General comments

In relation to the imposition of standards for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics, we note the importance of the standards being clear and understandable. We consider that there would be merit in consistency in the standards across the UK jurisdictions, both for commercial reasons and to avoid confusion for consumers. The more different standards and systems there are, the less effective the overall recycling effort is likely to be. However, we recognise that this could be challenging given that this is just one aspect of wider regulatory frameworks that might establish differing labelling and recycling requirements.

This work interacts with the development of DRS schemes² throughout the UK and a plastic packaging tax³. Where necessary, it is important that proposals are consistent to ensure that they can operate effectively.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-biodegradable-compostable-and-bio-based-plastics-call-for-evidence>

² <https://consult.gov.scot/environment-forestry/deposit-return-scheme/> and <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environment/introducing-a-deposit-return-scheme/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/plastic-packaging-tax>

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