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**8<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

Dear Councillor Tucker

Thank you for your letter of 22 December 2021 about amendments to the Licensing Act 2003 to include a fifth licensing objective covering environmental protection. I am replying as a member of the Home Office Alcohol Team as the Department with responsibility for the Licensing Act 2003.

The Government has no plans to amend the Licensing Act 2003 to include the prevention of harm to the environment as a licensing objective. We have an extensive agenda in place to tackle the issues relating to the environment that you have raised, and I have set out the details below.

The Resources and Waste Strategy for England, published in December 2018, sets out the Government's plans to reduce, reuse, and recycle more plastic than we do now. Our target is to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste throughout the life of the 25 Year Environment Plan, but for the most problematic plastics we are doing our best to eliminate them faster. We have also included a number of measures in the Environment Bill to enable us, through regulations, to tackle plastics and plastic waste. These include measures to impose charges on single-use plastic items; introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers; and make producers cover the costs of collecting and managing plastic packaging waste.

The Environment Bill responds to a clear and urgent scientific case, and growing public demand, for action to address environmental challenges. This landmark legislation sets a new and ambitious domestic framework for environmental governance now we have left the European Union. These challenges include tackling biodiversity loss, climate change, waste and pollution of the air, water and land. The Environment Bill is part of the Government's manifesto commitment to improve the environment for future generations.

The Bill introduces a powerful package of new policies and tools. Biodiversity net gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, conservation covenants and a strengthened biodiversity duty on public authorities will work together to drive action, to create or restore rich habitats that enable wildlife to recover and thrive. In doing so, the Bill lays the foundation for the Nature Recovery Network.

The Environment Bill requires the Government to set at least one long-term legally binding target in four priority areas (air quality, biodiversity, water, and waste reduction and resource efficiency) as well as a target for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), to be brought forward by 31 October 2022.

In August 2020, we published a target policy paper, which sets out how we intend to develop and bring forward targets in the four priority areas through a robust, evidence-led process that seeks independent expert advice, provides a role for stakeholders and the public, and scrutiny from Parliament. We do not want to prejudge where this process will take us. In the paper, we set out the objectives for targets currently under consideration. This includes improving the condition of our protected sites on land and at sea, increasing species populations, and restoring and improving the quality of habitats. Taken collectively, these objectives will improve the 'state of nature'.

The paper can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/august-2020-environment-bill-environmental-targets>

## **Home Office Alcohol Team**

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