

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1357
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/01298/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

31 July 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 10 July regarding Petition P-06-1357, "Draw up a new Microplastics Action Plan for Wales", and for sharing the correspondence of 18 June from the petitioner, Bleddyn Lake on behalf of Friends of the Earth Cymru.

I would like to begin by acknowledging Mr Lake's continued engagement on this important issue and the work undertaken by Friends of the Earth Cymru (FoE) and the wider coalition group. Their efforts to bring together a broad range of views in support of action on microplastics are appreciated. I recognise the valuable role they have played in championing collaboration between government, industry, and other key partners.

I am also grateful to FoE and the coalition group for supporting my officials and Environment Platform Wales to organise the two-day event, Plastic in the Environment, held in December 2024 at Cardiff University. This was a welcome opportunity to explore the latest research and thinking on micro-plastics, nano-plastics and associated chemical impacts. I was pleased to hear the event was well attended and encouraged useful cross sector discussion.

In reference to the point raised about a follow-up event, I recognise the interest in maintaining momentum and broadening engagement beyond the academic community. While a second event has not taken place, we remain committed to supporting inclusive dialogue and are continuing to explore the most effective way to facilitate this. The establishment of the Plastics in the Environment Group, which convened in March 2025, is one such step. This group brings together researchers and academia to share evidence and inform future policy development, and we expect it to play a key role in shaping our approach.

As part of our broader initiatives, my officials are undertaking early work to explore how we might strengthen our approach to addressing environmental hazards and threats to health and our natural resources. Microplastics have been identified as a specific area of focus, and we welcome stakeholder involvement as this work develops.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I have also asked my officials to explore ways to improve how information is shared with the public and interested parties on our approach to tackling plastic pollution. This includes making relevant updates and guidance more accessible in the future.

In reference to the suggestion of a litter and fly-tipping prevention strategy, I note the concerns raised. While Wales does not have a standalone strategy in this area, I want to be clear that we are taking action. We have a range of policies and programmes in place to prevent litter and fly-tipping, including continued support for Fly-tipping Action Wales and our work with Keep Wales Tidy and local authorities. On 25 July I published a [Written Statement](#) which updated our successes to date and our ongoing commitment to tackling these issues through a combination of education, enforcement and partnership working. This reflects our focus on practical, coordinated delivery.

Regarding the monitoring of microplastics in watercourses, I acknowledge the point raised about current testing practices. We are aware of the growing interest in this area and continue to monitor developments in the evidence base. As part of our broader work on environmental monitoring, we are considering how best to build a clearer picture of microplastic prevalence in Welsh ecosystems.

On the issue of plastic mesh netting in turf, I note the concerns raised and the recent decision by the UK Turfgrass Growers Association to phase out this practice. While we are not currently proposing regulatory changes, we will continue to consider the evidence and explore the levers available to us, including through planning and housing policy, where appropriate.

We recognise the petitioner's view that more visible and joined-up action is needed, and we agree that tackling plastic pollution requires sustained, ambitious and coordinated effort. However, this is a complex area that requires a multifaceted, evidence-led approach and time to get right, particularly where legislation and system-wide reform are involved. However, we are not standing still.

This Senedd term has seen the delivery of a comprehensive programme of action to reduce plastic pollution across Wales. This includes the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023, which has already enabled us to ban or restrict the use of a range of commonly littered items such as straws, cutlery, plates and polystyrene containers. Further regulations to ban wet wipes containing plastic were approved in June 2025 and will come into force in December 2026.

We have also introduced a ban on single use vapes in Wales, a clear example of our willingness to act decisively where the environmental and public health evidence supports it.

These legislative actions are part of our Circular Economy Strategy – Beyond Recycling, which sets out our ambition to phase out unnecessary single-use plastics, increase reuse and repair, and keep materials in use for as long as possible. We have introduced an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging scheme and are developing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), both of which will help reduce litter and ensure producers take greater responsibility for the waste they generate.

We are contributing to international efforts through the UN Plastics Treaty negotiations, ensuring Wales' voice is heard in shaping global solutions to plastic pollution.

In the marine and fisheries context, we are working through OSPAR, the Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. This regional treaty brings together 15 governments and the EU to protect the marine environment. Through the UK Government, Wales contributes to OSPAR's workstreams on marine litter and microplastics, including developing indicators for microplastics in sea floor sediment and exploring ways to reduce plastic waste from fishing and aquaculture.

I thank the petitioner for their thoughtful and detailed correspondence, and I appreciate the constructive dialogue that has taken place with my officials to date. This will continue to inform our thinking as we go forward.

Thank you for writing to me highlighting the petitioner's concerns on this important matter. I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name 'Huw Irranca-Davies'.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs