

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Leonie Cooper AM**

Chair of the Environment Committee  
London Assembly  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE12AA

**Our ref:** MGLA130417-9260

**Date:** 31 OCT 2017



Please find below my full response to the London Assembly Environment Committee bottled water report. I would like to thank you for allowing me the time to publish my draft London Environment Strategy before responding fully. As you are aware, this issue continues to gain momentum nationally, including Government's call for evidence on deposit return schemes and Eunomia's report sponsored by Keep Britain Tidy and others on the impacts of a Deposit Refund System on local authority waste services. However, I want London to be a leader on this important issue, and my recent draft London Environment Strategy sets out how I intend to do that.

Please find below my response to the report's recommendations;

***The Mayor must address plastic water bottle waste specifically in his upcoming Environment Strategy.***

Objective 7.1 of my draft strategy has a specific policy to drive resource efficiency and significantly reduce waste, focusing on food waste and single use packaging. It also includes specific proposals to reduce the environmental impact of plastic water bottles (see below). Adopting a more sustainable and circular approach to London's waste management will ensure we extract the most value from the materials we use, reduce the amount of virgin materials required to make new products, and ultimately reduce waste.

***The Mayor should explore the feasibility of a Deposit Return Scheme in London, with a view to approaching Government for London to be a trial site for a nation-wide scheme.***

GLA officers have spoken to Defra officials with a view to offering London as a test bed to trial a national deposit return scheme. Deposit return schemes are difficult to implement at a city level as bottles with deposits paid will travel out of London and bottles with no deposit paid will travel in. As part of their Litter Strategy, Government has committed to setting up a working group to explore the feasibility of a national deposit return system, and I have written to the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, to request that London becomes a testbed.

# MAYOR OF LONDON

***The Mayor should explore a number of options to reduce plastic water bottle waste, including:***

- ***encouraging community water refill schemes;***
- ***engaging with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to trial measures in specific areas of London***
- ***promoting apps to help consumers locate free tap water***

The policies and proposals in objective 7.1 in the draft London Environment Strategy specifically focus on reducing plastic bottles by working with community refill schemes to improve access to tap water. GLA officers are evaluating a series of intervention options with a view to potentially piloting a programme. In the meantime, officers continue to work with the likes of Hubbub and Zoological Society London who are leading the way in grass roots behaviour change.

- ***Improving access to tap water across the TfL network***

GLA officers are working with TfL to identify cost effective options for water re-fill across the TfL network.

- ***Ending the sale of plastic bottled water on GLA premises***

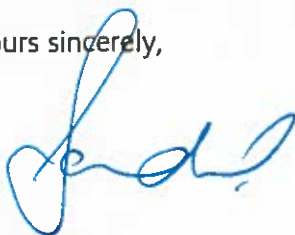
Access to tap water is already provided and promoted in GLA Group buildings and cafes. GLA officers are in discussion with OCS, which hold the GLA's catering contract, about trialling the sale of reusable bottles that could, if successful, replace bottled water sales. There are potential challenges with lost revenue that need to be considered as well as unintended consequences such as pushing customers elsewhere to purchase plastic bottled water, which my officers will consider as part of these discussions.

- ***Convening stakeholders through the Plastics Industry Recycling Action Plan***

GLA officers and the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB) are working closely with the Ellen McArthur Foundation and an SME called Unpackaged to engage with the plastic packaging industry on materials innovation. This includes calling on manufacturers to design for 100 per cent recyclability and developing reusable packaging supply chains. In June this year LWARB published a circular economy route map which has a specific chapter on plastics. The route map sets out a series of actions on how London can transition to a circular economy.

I understand that GLA officers are already engaging with you on this important area that is gaining increased public attention and interest. I look forward to working with Environment Committee in taking the measures set out above forward.

Yours sincerely,



**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London

Cc: Grace Loseby, Assistant Scrutiny Manager, London Assembly