



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP
From the Secretary of State

T 03459 335577
defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Rt Hon George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC423281/SC

9 March 2017

Dear George,

Thank you for your email of 24 February on behalf of a number of your constituents about microbeads.

Last year, the Government announced plans to ban the manufacture and sale of cosmetics and personal care products containing microbeads, which may cause harm to the marine environment. A consultation on our proposals has recently closed and we are now analysing the responses. As part of the consultation we also gathered evidence on the environmental impacts of other sources of marine microplastic pollution. We will use this evidence to inform future UK actions to protect the marine environment.

The UK Marine Strategy Part Three, published in 2015, sets out a comprehensive set of the wider actions we are taking to address litter in the marine environment:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-strategy-part-three-uk-programme-of-measures>

It covers actions to prevent land-based and sea-based sources of litter, actions to improve education and actions to remove litter that has already reached the marine environment. As marine litter is a transboundary problem we also work with other countries through the Oslo and Paris (OSPAR) Convention on the Protection of the North East Atlantic and other international fora. Through OSPAR, the UK and neighbouring countries have developed and are implementing a Regional Action Plan on marine litter.

I refer you to my colleague Thérèse Coffey MP's reply to the debate on 8 March:
<https://goo.gl/Q6pefK>.

I hope that this reply is helpful.

Best wishes,

Andrea Leadsom MP
Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

