

# PRESS RELEASE

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## ESA RESPONDS TO “DAMNING” PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE INQUIRY ON WASTE CRIME

The ESA has today responded to the findings of the **Public Accounts Committee (PAC) inquiry** into government action on waste crime and shares the PAC’s view that insufficient progress is being made to tackle this critical issue – which threatens not only the environment, but also future investment and job-creation by legitimate operators.

The ESA has long championed the need for tougher sanctions on waste criminals, in addition to effective, well-resourced and targeted enforcement. The PAC findings also refer to the total cost of waste crime in the UK exceeding £1 billion – which the ESA previously published in the latest of its series of **Counting the Cost of Waste Crime** reports, highlighting that failure to adequately fund waste crime enforcement is a false economy.

The PAC report describes Defra and the Environment Agency as only making “slow and piecemeal” progress in implementing the Resources and Waste Strategy and concludes that there is still no plan to reach the Government’s target of eliminating waste crime by 2043, or a means of tracking progress against this goal.

**Executive Director of the ESA, Jacob Hayler, said:** “*The damning PAC inquiry report sets out a depressingly familiar analysis of the impact of waste crime and the lack of progress made to tackle it, while also highlighting that current approaches appear to be failing.*”

*Waste crime is increasing, enforcement is decreasing and, in this ‘evolutionary arms race’, the criminals appear to be winning – viewing paltry sanctions as little more than a business expense and brazenly operating undeterred by under-resourced enforcement agencies.*

*ESA agrees with the PAC report’s helpful recommendations, which largely mirror those we made in our 2021 Counting Cost of Waste Crime Report. These recommendations advocate fast-tracking of regulatory reforms to tackle waste crime; drastically improving data and metrics to properly capture the impact and better benchmark enforcement progress; as well as stronger enforcement and tougher sanctions, so that the fine fits the crime.*

*In particular, we would like to see stronger application of Duty of Care requirements on waste producers and better use being made of the landfill tax illegal disposals regulations, alongside much more urgent reform of the carriers, brokers and dealers regime and the rapid introduction of digital waste tracking.”*

**ENDS**

Notes to editors:

A. The Environmental Services Association (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK's resource and waste management industry. Our members are directly delivering the UK's transformation to a more circular economy and are leading the sector's efforts to decarbonise recycling and waste management operations.

The ESA works with government, regulators and the public to deliver sustainable and high-performing waste and resource management solutions for the UK. Our strategic priorities are to set high operational standards for the sector; to deliver more recycling and focus on up-stream interventions to eliminate waste; and to decarbonise our sector by 2040. You can find out more about the ESA and our members' work in our Annual report for 2020/21.

B. For further details please visit [www.esauk.org](http://www.esauk.org)

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