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By Ed Leahy

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£4.7m grant to boost recycling infrastructure



New government funds come as Sainsbury's unveils "reverse vending" scheme to recycle plastic bottles

UK recycling efforts received a double boost with a £4.7million recycling grant released, at the same time as Sainsbury's announced the trial of a plastic bottle return scheme.

The multi-million pound grant from Defra, will be managed by recycling charity Wrap, going towards growing recycling and reprocessing infrastructure for plastics and textiles.

Wrap aim to invest the funds in pioneering new projects which will help enable the recycling of plastic packaging such as pots, tubs, trays, films and pouches, diverting it from landfill or incineration.

The money will also go towards supporting textiles recycling infrastructure to process clothing.

Wrap director Peter Maddox said: "There is a growing public alarm about the impact of plastic and textiles on our planet. To really tackle this, we have to shift from the prevailing make, use and

dispose culture to a more sustainable one in which we keep resources in use as many times as human ingenuity can conceive.

"Modernisation is key to making this happen and I am delighted that this significant amount of money is being made available to unlock and enable that process. I'm really excited to see what the applicants will bring to the table."

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey added: "I encourage organisations to apply to Wrap for our multi-million pound grant to drive-up the recycling of plastics and textiles. We are committed to going further and faster to reduce, reuse, recycle and cut waste. It makes no sense economically or environmentally for these valuable materials to end up in landfill."

Around 40 per cent of all plastic produce in the UK is used in the packaging of goods, generating around 2.4 million tonnes of plastic packaging waste per year.

The new grant aligns with the work of the UK Plastics Pact, launched last year, which brings industry and the plastics supply chain together to meet plastic reduction and recycling targets by 2025.

The grant comes as Sainsbury's announced it was trialling a plastic bottle recycling scheme at a Lincoln store, allowing customers to return plastic bottles of any size up to 3 litres, as well as drink cans bought from Sainsbury's, in exchange for 5p coupons towards their shop.

Up to 500 items can be deposited per customer meaning shoppers could save up to £25 using the coupons.

Judith Batchelar, director of Sainsbury's Brand said: "We're delighted to offer a new way to help our customers recycle while saving on their shop."