



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

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# **Government Response to the Sustainable Growing Media Task Force**

**January 2013**

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PB 13834

# **Government Response to the independent Sustainable Growing Media Task Force**

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## Ministerial introduction

The Natural Environment White Paper published in June 2011 set out the Government's ambition for the horticultural sector to end its use of peat by 2030 through a voluntary partnership. As part of this the Government committed to establishing a Task Force bringing together representatives from across the supply chain with a clear remit to advise on how best to overcome the barriers to reducing peat use. The Sustainable Growing Media Task Force published its report and draft roadmap in July 2012<sup>1</sup>, setting out the challenges ahead and the actions that need to be taken to achieve a transition to sustainable growing media. I would like to thank all Task Force members for their dedication and constructive engagement to date, and give particular recognition to the work of the Chairman, Dr Alan Knight OBE, the Steering Group and Project Leaders (and sub-project leaders).

The horticultural sector, with an annual turnover of over £5bn, is an important part of the UK economy. The transition to sustainable growing media and away from an over-reliance on a finite and controversial material, peat, makes good business sense and will improve the long term sustainability of the sector as well as protecting the environment. The horticultural sector has already made significant progress in reducing its use of peat and the level of investment involved should not be underestimated. I would like to encourage the sector to continue to make progress and I am pleased to be able to set out here the Government's response to the Task Force's report (as well as to the feedback from Task Force members and other stakeholders) and the actions that Government will take to support the roadmap and the horticultural sector.

Although the Task Force's report does not contain specific recommendations, a number of key themes for action have become clear. This response sets out where Government will be focussing resources to take actions forward. However, not all of the actions set out in the roadmap are for Government and industry must also take an active role. A voluntary approach can only be delivered in partnership – we will if you will.



**Richard Benyon,  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries**

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Growing Media Task Force (2012): Towards Sustainable Growing Media: Chairman's Report and Roadmap.

# Chapter 1 Policy

## Sustainable Growing Media

The approach taken by the Task Force of setting the debate around peat into the wider context of sustainable growing media is welcome. We agree that all materials used in growing media should be assessed against the same sustainability criteria and that the focus should not be limited to the consideration of a single material. However, before this approach can be adopted for policy use to set the framework for the future, the work on defining what makes growing media ingredients sustainable needs to be completed and agreed. Without this any reframing of the policy and targets around the use of sustainable growing media though intellectually appealing would not work in practice. Therefore, whilst we support the principle of refocusing the targets set out in the Natural Environment White Paper towards promoting sustainable growing media it is not yet possible to do this. This lack of agreed definition also means that short term actions within the roadmap will continue to be described here in terms of achieving both the transition to sustainable growing media and continued peat reduction, as set out in Chapters 2 and 3.

## Policy review

The policy review will provide the next formal opportunity for revisiting the targets. The main focus of the review will be assessing the delivery of the roadmap and the further actions necessary to achieve a transition to sustainable growing media and reduce peat use. We believe that two years should allow sufficient time for an agreed roadmap (currently only published in draft) to have an impact before progress is formally assessed. Allowing for data collection prior to the review, the review will take place in the second half of 2015.

Progress will be assessed against the goals and medium-term success criteria set out in the draft roadmap (see Annex 1), which we fully endorse. The delivery of specific actions behind these goals will also need to be assessed.

Achievement of the roadmap will be the ultimate measure of success in 2015. Other streams of evidence which will feed into the review are:

- Volumes of different materials used within growing media sold in the UK. This will come from new annual monitoring jointly funded by the Horticultural Development Company and Defra in conjunction with the Growing Media Association and the Horticultural Trades Association, which started in September 2012.
- Degree of transformation of the supply chain as measured by the projected availability of different growing media ingredients. In 2009 Defra funded research on the availability and supply of alternative materials for use in growing media to

assess the future availability of these materials<sup>2</sup>. Defra will fund a repeat of this research at the beginning of 2015<sup>3</sup>.

## Roadmap oversight and governance

We believe that the Sustainable Growing Media Task Force has fulfilled its remit. We would like to thank all members of the Task Force for their work in moving the debate forward and in developing the roadmap and new initiatives, such as the performance standard and the emerging criteria for assessing responsible growing media.

As we move into the next phase of activity, delivering the roadmap, we believe that a new slimline governance and oversight arrangement better fits requirements. We need a group that can oversee and co-ordinate delivery of the roadmap and report on progress. Therefore we are bringing the Sustainable Growing Media Task Force to a close and establishing a new smaller Growing Media Panel.

The Panel will be chaired by Dr Alan Knight OBE and its membership will include the current members of the Task Force steering group supplemented with additional members from different parts of the supply chain and society. Actions and projects within the roadmap will each have their own governance arrangements (e.g. Steering Groups or Project Boards) and these will report to the Panel.

### Box 1: Growing Media Panel Terms of Reference

Finalise and adopt the roadmap.

Provide oversight on the delivery of the roadmap.

Provide high level co-ordination between actions under the roadmap.

Report progress annually to Defra Ministers.

Provide advice to Government on progress in delivering the roadmap to feed into the policy review in 2015.

In addition, Defra will host an annual industry meeting to facilitate the wider co-ordination of activities across the sector and allow the industry as a whole to take stock of progress. The first such meeting will take place in September 2013.

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<sup>2</sup> Defra research (2009): Availability and supply of alternative materials to meet the UKBAP target on peat use in horticulture (SP08019).

<sup>3</sup> To be placed by competitive tender in 2014.

## Making a voluntary approach work

We agree that the shift in focus to sustainable growing media, the collaborative work which has been undertaken and the nature of some of the issues that still need to be resolved favours a continued voluntary approach. We welcome the Task Force report's call on growing media manufacturers, growers, retailers and regulators to make a voluntary approach work.

The Government is committed to an industry led voluntary partnership approach; with Government working in partnership with industry to deliver a transformation of the growing media supply chain within horticulture. Chapter 2 sets out what Government is and will be doing to support this.

However, this cannot work without the horticultural industry and the full supply chain playing its part; no individual part of the supply chain can transform it single-handedly. Therefore, one of the key short-term success criteria within the roadmap is that 'within a year, the majority of the growing media supply chain has volunteered for one or more actions within this roadmap'. Some organisations have already volunteered to lead on various actions and chapter 2 sets out how Government will work in partnership with them to support delivery.

We call on organisations and individuals to take action to support the delivery of the roadmap and to make the transition to sustainable growing media.

## Europe

Two thirds of the peat used within the UK is imported from across Europe and we are a net importer of plants. Our horticultural industry needs to operate on the European stage and we need to work with partners throughout Europe to achieve a level playing field. The latest poor peat harvest all over Europe demonstrates that the over-reliance on peat is not only an issue in England.

Other parts of Europe have a long history with the use of alternative materials, although peat is still the dominant growing media used, and we should build on this knowledge going forward. We believe that the work undertaken by the Task Force also provides opportunities to underpin a pan-European debate on the sustainability of growing media.

## **Chapter 2 Government support for the horticultural sector and supply chain in its transition to sustainable growing media**

### **Research and Demonstration**

The Government is committed to working with commercial growers to overcome the barriers to achieving a transition to sustainable growing media. The funding of research into the use of peat alternatives by the commercial grower sector has been identified by the industry as a key means of doing this. In its 2012 Growing Media Review<sup>4</sup>, the Horticultural Development Company called on Government to fund research to overcome technical barriers to the use of peat-alternatives and technology transfer. The Task Force has now called for ‘the establishment of a 2 to 5 year programme supported by both Defra and the industry to create commercial scale demonstrations together with knowledge transfer within the industry.’

We recognise that there is a role for Government, in collaboration with industry, to fund research on the use of peat alternatives, to demonstrate their successful use and to encourage knowledge transfer. Therefore, Defra is partnering with the Horticultural Development Company to establish a new match-funded 5 year research programme (starting in 2013) with a total value of £1m.

It is imperative that this research programme is industry led and addresses industry priorities on the use of peat-alternatives; therefore the Horticultural Development Company will be the lead partner.

### **Performance and responsible sourcing and manufacturing standards**

The two flagship projects that have emerged from the Task Force are those developing a performance standard for multi-purpose compost and a set of responsible sourcing and manufacturing criteria for growing media ingredients. Together these have the potential to transform much of the growing media market and provide consumers with confidence that the growing media they purchase is fit for purpose and has not been produced at an unacceptable cost to the environment. Momentum on these projects needs to be maintained and schemes for their use launched.

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<sup>4</sup> Horticultural Development Company (2012). Growing Media Review. HDC News supplement. Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.



For these projects to be successful they require continued strong leadership from the industry. However, we recognise the crucial function of these projects in the delivery of the roadmap and the transformation of the supply chain and believe that the Government has a role to play in supporting the industry's work on these projects. Therefore, Defra will support the Growing Media Association and Growing Media Initiative in seeing these projects to their fruition.

As identified in the Task Force's report the ultimate success of these projects is dependent on retailers demanding products that meet these standards. Therefore, we would encourage retailers to get involved in these projects at the earliest opportunity to provide the correct signals to the supply chain.

## **Retailers**

Whilst some retailers have already demonstrated strong leadership in reducing peat use (and we would encourage them to continue to do so), other retailers have yet to make significant progress on this issue. However, consideration of the wider context of sustainable growing media will be new to all.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has recently funded a successful project to support a small number of retailers through the process of introducing and implementing policies to reduce peat use in their businesses and supply chains<sup>5</sup>. For some retailers this has been in demonstrating how addressing this agenda fits within their companies stated goals, for others it has been in providing them with the tools to establish the baseline level of peat use in their supply chain (bagged growing media, plants and food) so that company boards are able to take a decision on appropriate levels of action for their company.

We endorse the Task Force's call for 'a new level of collaboration between retailers taking the lead in setting the direction and pace of change in the market, with growing media producers and growers actively supporting that ambition through innovation and collaboration'. The Minister will host a retailer summit in 2013 to explore how this can be achieved.

We would encourage growing media manufacturers and growers to continue to assist retailers in understanding the scale of the use of peat and growing media throughout retail supply chains.

## **Landscape sector**

The landscape sector (for example landscape architects and landscape gardeners) has been identified by Task Force members as a group that has yet to be properly brought into

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<sup>5</sup> WRAP (2012): Retailer support for switching to peat alternatives. Summary Report.

the sustainable growing media debate. Retail is not the only route by which plants are sold and the landscape sector is a key part of the supply chain. As a large customer of plants the sector has the potential to play an active role in shaping the supply chain by specifying plants grown in sustainable growing media.

In recognition of this, we are seeking opportunities to engage with the landscape sector and raise its awareness of the issue. For example, Defra is working with the British Association of Landscape Industries to examine issues around growing media specification in the procurement supply chain for plant contracts.

## **Waste management**

We recognise the burden of regulating some growing media ingredients as waste and the concern within the industry of how to achieve end of waste status. The legal definition of a material as waste<sup>6</sup> is important; it is the basis for waste management policy and the application of regulatory controls to protect the environment and human health. These regulatory controls are designed to be proportionate to the risk that these materials pose to the environment and human health, to ensure the safe recovery or disposal and provide a level playing field for all businesses. Defra and the Environment Agency will support the industry in achieving end of waste standards for appropriate waste.

## **Consumer education**

We agree with the Task Force that the transformation of the growing media market should be achieved through choice editing rather than campaigns to educate the consumer. It is clear that a large proportion of consumers do not know what is in a bag of growing media, including that it can contain peat; consequently a consumer education campaign would have a lot of work to do in providing simple messages that are of relevance to consumers and that can influence their behaviour. Therefore, we believe that the House of Commons' Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee's call for Defra 'to undertake an awareness campaign that promotes those alternatives to the use of peat that are already available and to encourage the public to grow plants which do not require the use of peat'<sup>7</sup> though well intentioned would not represent good value for public money.

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<sup>6</sup> A substance or object becomes waste when the holder discards it or intends or is required to discard. Discard here has a special meaning which is not necessarily the same as its dictionary meaning. It includes not only the disposal of a substance or object but also its recovery or recycling. Whether a substance or object is being discarded has to be decided on a case-by-case basis, and taking account of all the circumstances, to ensure that the aims of the Waste Framework Directive (i.e. protection of the environment and human health) are not undermined.

<sup>7</sup> House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (July 2012). Natural Environment White Paper. Fourth Report of Session 2012-2013. The Stationary Office Limited.

## A prosperous UK horticulture industry

The Government recognises the benefits to society, the environment and economy provided by gardening and horticulture and is already doing much to promote and support UK horticulture.

### Supporting horticulture to contribute to economic growth

The edible horticultural sector has an annual turnover of £3bn at farmgate and employs nearly 100,000 people. Meanwhile, the garden retail market makes an even larger contribution to the economy with turnover at £5bn of which 40% is directly contributed by plants, bulbs and trees. Horticulture also plays an important role in the tourist industry with top quality gardens and parks being key visitor attractions for both domestic and international tourists. With over 150,000 gardens to visit in the UK, the value of garden tourism is estimated at £200m per annum.

The Government is creating the right long-term framework for a dynamic and flexible economy in which people start, invest in and grow businesses. We are doing this in a number of ways, including: ensuring we have a predictable tax system that rewards endeavour; enabling better access to both debt and equity finance; reducing red tape; enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) more easily to access public procurement opportunities; and making sure that the support we provide SMEs is delivered in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Examples of the range of initiatives include:

- Increasing funds through the Business Finance Partnership to £1.2bn including proposals to help SMEs access non-bank finance;
- Reform of R&D tax credits raising the SME rate to 225 per cent from 2012;
- Support for innovative R&D in SMEs through the Technology Strategy Board's Grant for R&D scheme, now known as 'Smart'; and
- Unlocking the potential of stalled infrastructure projects through the £770 million Growing Places Fund.

The Government is also taking action to directly support the horticultural sector. For example:

- Introducing more flexible licensing for extracting water from rivers;
- Providing support for farmers through the Rural Development Programme, for example, to develop on-farm reservoirs to save water for irrigation during dry periods;
- Working with the industry to overcome the barriers to increased production and consumption of fruit and vegetables, through the action plan produced by the Fruit and Vegetable Taskforce; and
- Investment in horticultural research and encouragement of collaboration between researchers to deliver sustainable production.

## **Encouraging gardening to achieve biodiversity benefits**

It is estimated that there are 15 million gardens in the UK, covering some 400,000 hectares. Together, gardens and allotments form a network of green space that is a vital resource for butterflies, birds, bees and other wildlife – providing shelter, food and natural corridors as links between areas of town and countryside. Gardens can provide havens for many of the species now declining in intensively managed farmlands, if the right conditions are provided for them. They sustain populations of wildlife which benefit agriculture and maintain the natural systems which give our wider communities vital services like pollination, healthy soil, clean water and flood protection.

Natural England provides advice and encourages wildlife gardening and Defra has provided funding to support wildlife gardening. For example, in July 2012 the winners of the Big Wildlife Garden Competition were announced and received their awards at a special ceremony at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. The competition was run by the Wildlife Trusts and the Royal Horticultural Society with funding support from Defra (a Natural Environment White Paper commitment) and attracted 428 entries. Whether small or large, and the gardener new to wildlife gardening or not, it was clear that every garden could make a difference for wildlife.

## **Encouraging gardening to achieve health benefits**

Gardening is a good form of exercise for people of any age group. It is estimated that 22.7 million households (87% of homes) have access to a garden. The UK's Chief Medical Officers recommend that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week and certain types of gardening will qualify against this with benefits to health. Depending on what gardening task and for how long, a session in the garden helps to strengthen joints, increase flexibility, and offers cardiovascular benefits. Green exercise has also been found to improve mental health. Joining an outdoor activity group such as gardening or conservation is also a very social activity.

The Department of Health's Change4life campaign encourages adults to achieve their 150 active minutes by taking up an active hobby or undertaking gardening activities in a Green Gym. Defra's campaign, Muck in4Life, offers conservation volunteering opportunities for people of all age groups.

# Chapter 3 Demonstrating leadership in the public sector

## Working in partnership with growers and the landscape sector

We agree that the Government needs to show leadership through its procurement activities. It is also clear that the supply chain for plants in the public sector is more complex than we had previously understood and includes the landscape sector which, as acknowledged in chapter 2, is a group that has not yet been brought into the growing media debate. We recognise that it is not practicable or commercially viable for commercial growers to duplicate their operations to grow the same range of plants in different growing media to meet the demands of an earlier transition to sustainable growing media and peat reduction in the public sector, whilst continuing to use their current growing media in the rest of their operation. In addition, we understand that it is not currently feasible to grow all of their plants in alternative growing media.

The aim of the public sector target has always been about demonstrating leadership in the transition to sustainable growing media and we agree that this must be done in a way that does not destabilise the market. Therefore, we will work in partnership with growers and the landscape sector to better target our actions and find ways to demonstrate public sector leadership.

## Defra leadership

The Defra estate<sup>8</sup> is not itself a large consumer of growing media and plants. However, Defra is committed to the transition to sustainable growing media and all contractors are required to comply with the Government Buying Standards, therefore no peat is used during operations on the Defra estate. A small amount of peat is used in scientific work using plants in the Food and Environment Research Agency.

Small amounts of peat are also currently used within the wider Defra network. This is being replaced wherever feasible, with new peat alternatives being trialled as they become available, and written out of new contracts.

In addition to demonstrating leadership through our own procurement of plants and growing media and supporting the industry (as set out in chapter 2), Defra will champion

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<sup>8</sup> The Defra estate comprises core Defra, the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency, the Rural Payments Agency, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, the Food and Environmental Research Agency and operational Natural England sites.

the transition to sustainable growing media throughout Government, as set out in this chapter.

## **Central Government leadership**

We are ensuring that all central government departments procure sustainable growing media and plants supplied in sustainable growing media by amending the Government Buying Standard for Horticulture and Park Services. The Government Buying Standard already included a requirement that directly purchased growing media must not contain peat. The latest amendment focuses on avoiding the purchase of plants supplied in or with peat from 2015. In recognition of current technical constraints the standard excludes, for now, any residual peat from the original propagation of the plant. We will revisit the Government Buying Standard when there is an agreed definition of sustainable growing media and as technical constraints are overcome.

All central government departments and their related organisations must ensure that they meet the minimum mandatory specifications set out in the Government Buying Standards when buying products and services. The Government is committed to embedding the Government Buying Standards in departmental and centralised procurement contracts by 2015, within the context of Government's overarching priorities of value for money and streamlining procurement processes.

## **Local Government and the wider public sector**

We welcome the Task Force's suggestion that Government should focus its efforts on specific projects, at a range of scales, where the public sector can work in partnership with the whole procurement chain to increase the chance of public sector procurement having a significant impact on the transition to sustainable growing media. We believe that whilst Central Government is too small a customer of plants and growing media to make a good focus for such demonstration projects, Local Government should provide a range of opportunities to demonstrate progress.

Though some Local Authorities are already committed to being peat-free and have made significant progress, the majority have not made a transition to peat-free (or sustainable growing media) planting schemes and may not have given it much serious thought. To pump prime activity in this area we will establish a £100k fund over 2 years to support Local Authorities, in partnership with community groups and companies within the procurement chain, to establish sustainable growing media planting schemes. We are currently working with the Royal Horticultural Society on the further development of this scheme<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Further details of the fund and how to bid for grants will be published in 2013.

In addition we will explore other opportunities to build on the progress already being made by Local Authorities and the wider public sector in this area.

We call on other parts of the public sector to work in partnership with their procurement and supply chains to identify opportunities to transition to the use of sustainable growing media. The public sector needs to become an exemplar customer for plants grown in sustainable growing media and an early adopter of both the performance standard and the responsible sourcing and manufacturing standard.

## Chapter 4 Task Force consensus points

Part 2 of the Task Force report set out the emerging messages and observations arising from the work of the Task Force. These were presented as a series of ‘consensus points’. This chapter sets out the Government response to each of the consensus points.

Consensus point	Government response
1. All growing media must be fit for purpose	We agree that all growing media must be fit for purpose and believe that the performance standard is a key tool for increasing consumer and retailer confidence in growing media.
2. Preference for peat is based on performance and price and not ideology	We welcome this consensus point.
3. The transition to sustainable growing media needs to be economically viable	We agree that the transition to sustainable growing media must be economically viable and believe that the move towards sustainable growing media is about doing things that are good for business.
4. All growing media should be made from raw materials that are environmentally and socially responsibly sourced and manufactured	We agree with this and believe that the responsible sourcing and manufacturing criteria work is a flagship output of the Task Force. We would encourage the supply chain to continue to develop and embrace this work.
5. The horticultural sector in 2030 will have undergone other transformations, as will society	We agree that changes in growing media and the supply chain need to be resilient to and compatible with other changes in society over the next 18 years and we will continue to share the outputs of our horizon scanning programme.
6. Removal of all peat from commercial horticulture will be very challenging and targeted action is required	We recognise the challenge and agree the need for targeted action where it is most likely to make a difference. The sector as a whole should continue to minimise its use of peat and to make the transition to sustainable growing media where possible. Innovations in growing media and growing systems over the next 18 years may make it possible to grow more plants commercially in peat free/sustainable growing media based systems than is currently possible.



Consensus point	Government response
7. Transformation should be encouraged through choice editing	We agree that choice editing is the best approach and do not believe that Government should spend further resources on consumer education. We call on retailers to take a lead in choice editing irresponsibly sourced and manufactured growing media out of the market.
8. The public sector needs to demonstrate leadership through its procurement activities, but must work in partnership with growers to deliver change	We accept the need for the public sector to demonstrate leadership whilst not disrupting the market and chapter 3 sets out how we will take this forward.
9. No peat should be sourced from pristine or high quality peat habitats	We welcome this statement and recognise that it has been part of the sourcing policy for most of the industry for a number of years.
10. Peat is an important carbon store and active bogs sequester carbon (providing a carbon sink)	We agree that peat is an important carbon store and recognise the concerns of the industry on the need to act when they contribute only a very small part of total UK emissions of greenhouse gases. However, in the context of the UK's climate change commitments, it makes sense for all sectors to reduce their emissions, however small, where it is economically viable for them to do so.
11. There will never be a consensus on the case against peat, but extraction of peat will remain controversial	We welcome the progress in the debate and acknowledge that a complete consensus on the case against peat is currently unachievable. However, given the continuing controversy around the extraction and use of peat we also agree that this lack of consensus should not be used as a barrier to moving towards sustainable growing media.

Consensus point	Government response
12. Extraction of peat for horticulture is only one of the pressures facing peatlands in England	We acknowledge that extraction of peat for horticulture is only one of the pressures facing peatlands in England. Extraction of peat for other uses in England is not significant <sup>10</sup> , but the use of peatlands for agriculture leads to their degradation. The Government is taking a wide range of actions to protect and enhance England's peatlands. Government provides protection for peatland habitats through statutory area designations as well as providing specific incentives for peat restoration through agri-environment schemes. We are also investing in research to improve our understanding of how to manage lowland peatlands for the best greenhouse gas outcome.
13. Labelling should help the consumer make a choice and not confuse them	We agree that labelling should help consumers make a choice and would encourage the industry to take a more consistent approach to labelling and language choice. Early consideration should be given to the work being undertaken by the European Commission to harmonise labelling of growing media under the revision of the EU Fertiliser Regulations 2003 so that effort is not duplicated.
14. Improving confidence in the use of green waste requires improved collection, segregation and sourcing of green waste	We agree that confidence in the use of compost in growing media needs to be improved. The specification for compost (PAS 100) was tightened in 2011; reducing allowable physical contaminants in response to market concerns. AFOR - the certification body for PAS 100 - will continue to work with operators and Local Authorities to ensure confidence in the specification. WRAP are commissioning work to 'demystify' the use of composts in growing media. This will include liaison with commercial growing media manufacturers as well as users. This work may lead to changes to the specification for the use of compost in growing media and the related best practice guide.
15. The waste regime is currently a barrier to the sourcing of materials	We recognise the burden of regulating some growing media ingredients as waste and the concern within the industry of how to achieve end of waste status. Government is committed to working with the industry and the action we will take is set out in chapter 2.

<sup>10</sup> Extraction of peat for sale for other uses occurs on a very small scale within England. In the 2010 Annual minerals raised inquiry survey up to 1 thousand cubic metres of peat extracted in England was sold by extractors for other uses compared to 456 thousand cubic metres of peat extracted in England sold for horticultural use.

Consensus point	Government response
16. A voluntary approach will only work if people choose to take part	We agree with this and call for volunteers to take action to deliver the roadmap.
17. Monitoring of progress needs to consider more than only changes in the volumes of materials used, and this should be reflected in the 2015 policy review	We agree that success needs to be judged on more than the volumes of each material used and, as set out in chapter 1, the ultimate measure of success in 2015 (the policy review) will be based on achievement of the roadmap.

## Summary of Government commitments

Topic	Commitment
Policy review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review to be undertaken in the second half of 2015</li> <li>• Progress to be assessed against the goals and medium-term success criteria in the roadmap</li> <li>• New annual monitoring of volumes of materials in growing media starting in 2012</li> <li>• New research on the availability and supply of growing media materials starting in 2015</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a new Growing Media Panel to oversee and co-ordinate delivery of the roadmap</li> <li>• Host an annual industry meeting to facilitate co-ordination</li> </ul>
Government support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New jointly funded 5 year commercial horticulture research programme starting in 2013</li> <li>• Support the development and launch of the performance and responsible sourcing and manufacturing standards</li> <li>• Retailer summit in 2013</li> <li>• Work with the industry to achieve end of waste standards for appropriate waste</li> </ul>
Public sector leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend Government Buying Standard for Horticulture and Park Services</li> <li>• New Government funding to pump prime Local Authority planting schemes using sustainable growing media starting in 2013</li> </ul>

## Annex 1 Goals and success criteria

Goal	Success criteria
All growing media is fit for purpose	In the next 3-5 years the majority of multi-purpose compost sold in England should demonstrably meet the performance standard
All growing media and soil improvers should be made from raw materials that are environmentally and socially responsibly sourced and manufactured	Within the next 3-5 years audited products (growing media and soil improvers) meeting the threshold for responsible sourcing and manufacturing should be available on the market
Commercial horticulture uses only responsibly sourced and manufactured growing media.	The establishment of a 2 to 5 year programme supported by both Defra and the industry to create commercial scale demonstrations together with knowledge transfer within the industry
Retailers only stock products which meet the performance standard and responsible sourcing and manufacturing standard	In the next two years, the majority of growing media retailers have made a public commitment to only sell products which meet the responsible sourcing and manufacturing standard
All public sector procurement includes a requirement to source plants and products that have been grown in sustainable growing media	Within two years, positive examples of leadership by the public sector in moving towards sustainable growing media have been developed through a partnership approach
Consumers can make informed choices in their purchase of growing media (and soil improvers) and are confident in how to get the best performance out of them	Within two years, the majority of customers feel they understand how to use the growing media they have purchased effectively
Improved confidence in the use of green waste such that it is able to fulfil its maximum potential in the growing media market (estimated to be around 20% of the market)	Within 3-5 years, the number of growing media producers successfully incorporating green compost into their products has significantly increased
The waste regime is no longer a barrier to the sourcing of high quality waste derived materials for use in growing media and horticultural soil improvers	In the next year, the Environment Agency and growing media manufacturers agree a specific action plan for overcoming this barrier
A voluntary approach successfully delivers a transition to sustainable growing media within the horticultural sector	Within a year, the majority of the growing media supply chain has volunteered for one or more actions within this roadmap