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Dear Rupert,

Thank you for your letter of 1 April about smoking related litter.

As you can appreciate, it is very important that the Government explores all options fully, taking into consideration the available evidence.

We convened the September roundtable to discuss smoking related litter in the light of emerging research which highlighted both the prevalence and the environmental impact of smoking related litter, including cigarette filters

At that time, the suitability of independent voluntary approaches was being explored and our research into the financial costs of smoking related litter to local authorities had not yet been completed.

While I encouraged parties to consider whether a non-regulatory producer responsibility scheme could be developed to tackle smoking related litter, I was also clear that all options remained on the table, and that Defra would continue to monitor the available evidence on this type of litter.

I also made clear that any scheme would have to be developed in accordance with the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its guidelines, which apply to all public bodies, including central and local Government.

Following evaluation of newly available evidence and subsequent discussions with the Department of Health and Social Care, we have jointly agreed that the best way forward is to now explore the suitability of regulatory options.

Taking a regulatory approach will allow for scrutiny of the proposals made by Government, ensure local authorities are able to fully benefit from the scheme and ensure manufacturers of cigarettes are held accountable for the litter arising from their use.

We plan to commission further research into these options this year, including consideration of extended producer responsibility principles.

Defra officials will contact you in due course to arrange a meeting as the findings of this research are established.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance with this or any other matters in the future.



**REBECCA POW MP**