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Mandatory Food Waste Reporting:

Food waste in the UK is a huge problem. It is an environmental disaster and a social catastrophe, considering the wasted food that could be provided to people in need.

As constituents may know, a large number of respondents indicated support for mandatory food waste reporting in the Government's consultation on the issue last year. However, the Government has said it will instead be "looking at options to improve the number of food businesses reporting through a voluntary approach" and that this will remain in place for at least the next two years. It says it has made this decision due to the greater costs involved with a mandatory scheme.

Personally, I do not understand why the Government continues to insist that mandatory reporting would introduce extra costs, when those who would be required to do it say it would be good for business. As you have also noted, the Government's own impact assessment found that even a very small reduction in food waste is enough to balance the cost.

More widely, I would like to see the Government provide funding for a scheme to cover the extra costs for farmers, growers and producers to distribute their good-to-eat waste food. A trial scheme which took place reportedly resulted in 85% more fruit and vegetables reaching frontline charities and community groups, but the funding ended in 2020 and has not been continued.

It is clear there is a long way to go in tackling food waste, and that we are not adequately distributing the food we produce. It is also evident that the environmental costs in water, energy and space to grow food that is not eaten is more than our environment can take.

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